

Item6:Convener's Report for the period June 2022 to June 2023

The second quarter of the 2022/2023 year for Rhu & Shandon Community Council saw the retirement of several very experienced and long serving members and the stepping down of Convener Fiona Baker. On behalf of the Community Council I would like to thank them all for the many years of tremendous service and dedication they gave to our community.

The Highlandman's Wood timber felling operation is still a significant on-going issue with public road safety at its heart. On 6 September 2022 a cross party meeting was held with representatives from Scottish Forestry, Scottish Woodlands and Argyll Timber Transport Group where meaningful discussions, for the first time, resulted in all parties agreeing quote "R&SCC and the local community have legitimate concerns with the current haulage route and every effort will be made to secure a new route that does not make use of village roads". This has since led to further discussions with the land owners Luss Estate and Gresham House.

October 2022 saw several residents from Quarry Knowe attend our meeting to complain about the state of their environment, parking and road safety. The Community Council attended and compiled a comprehensive report which was circulated to local councillors. Since then the residents have formed as Residents Group and received support from Councillor Maurice Corrie and all agencies are now cooperating to improve the situation.

On 16th November 2022 our Inaugural meeting took place where I was installed as Convener, Susan Castle as Vice Convener and Jean Cook as Secretary and Interim Treasurer. Although our membership was significantly depleted, the co-option of members brought our numbers up.

November also saw the delivery and erection of our village green Christmas tree. It was found the electrical infrastructure for our lights needed a complete overhaul with new underground cabling, sockets and switches to current electrical standards. On Friday 2nd December 2022 an organised Christmas Lights Switch On event took place where a large crowd of mums, dads and children attended. There was choir singing, Santa's Dancing Elves, professional singing acts, hot food stands and even Santa himself! Though the event proved to be a huge success and received positive community feedback - it was a lot of hard, time consuming work.

Since December 2022 we seem to have been dominated by many planning applications and other planning issues including;

- Blairvadach - a large development concerning the erection of 34 dwellinghouses,
- Bowling Club's demolition order hampered by legal access difficulties,
- Rhu Lodge change of use and access issues eventually approved by the Planning, Protective Services and Licencing Committee (PPSLC),
- Ferry Point with an on-going enforcement order,
- Duneira - enforcement issues required submission of new planning application. Since nothing changed the C.C. reiterating the same objections and Roads Department again approved application subject to conditions on vehicular ingress and egress,
- Formation of Forest Track – Work started on laying stone from a borrow pit to form the base of a forest road into the proposed Letrault & Stuckenduff plantation. Council website shows this application is still "awaiting decision".
- Currently we are dealing with another significant planning matter as the Royal Northern & Clyde Yacht Club has submitted a proposed Masterplan prior to their formal submission of

a planning application to develop ground purchased within the Rhu Marina site. This includes the erection of a new clubhouse and workshop, the creation of a new slipway and car parking facilities and the expansion of the marina site to the west by infill. A private meeting and presentation with R&SCC was held on 15th February 2023 where we subsequently responded “in principle and in general terms favourable”. On Thursday 1st June 2023 a public meeting was jointly organised at RN&CYC clubhouse, with an exit survey to gauge public opinion. To ensure wide public consultation R&SCC will provide further opportunity for comment at the Rhu Gala event on 10th June 2023. Final submissions will be made as soon as our consultations and surveys are complete.

In the next few years, there is a new threat to Empress Fields, green belt land which separates Rhu village and the west end of Helensburgh. The 10 year Land Use and Development Plan for Luss Estates proposes dwelling houses for this land in the event of its release from from the green belt in the next local development plan.

There is no denying this last year has been an extremely demanding and challenging one and unfortunately this state of affairs show no sign of letting up. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank all current members for their help, dedication, commitment and support during this past year and in particular our Planning Group Alistair Moore, Jim Duncan and Jean Cook who have worked tirelessly for the good of our community and Community Council.

John McGall