

Reports for R&SCC meeting 11th October 2023

Item 3a Police Report



Reported Crimes of Note			Detected Y / N			
		Location & Brief M.O				
14/8	Road Traffic	Gareloch Road, Rhu. Driving with No Insurance. One male cautioned and charged.	Y			
21/8	Vandalism	Gareloch Road, Rhu. Smash window and throw paint. Enquiry complete.	N			
1/9	Road Traffic	Rhu Ellen Court, Rhu. Driving with no licence and no insurance. One male cautioned and charged.	Y			
3/9	Assault	Ardencaple Hotel. Brandish chair and punch male. Enquiry ongoing.	N			
13/9	Breach of Peace	Gareloch Road, Rhu. Shout and swear at Police Officers. One male issued with a Recorded Police Warning.	Y			
27/9	Theft by House breaking	Glenarn Road, Rhu. Theft of electrical/garden tools. Enquiry ongoing.	N			

		24 incidents dealt with by Police Scotland during this period. Incidents include Road Traffic, Missing persons, Neighbour disputes, Assist member of the public and Public Nuisance calls.
1		
New & Ongoing Initiatives		
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Update on previous issues raised	
1	
2	

Feedback - Current issues raised	
1	
2	

Feedback - Equality and Diversity Issues Identified	
1	
2	
3	

Attending Officer add name to form, and obtain a copy of minutes of previous meeting?

Update form with details of any issues raised and return to Sgt Martin Miller

Rhu and Shandon Community Council
October 11th 2023

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Item 3b. HMNB Clyde Report- Supplied by Commander Peter Noblette

HMNB Clyde is looking forward to an extremely busy couple of years in terms of base infrastructure. As most of you will know the modern HMS NEPTUNE was opened in 1968 to base the new RESOLUTION Class Polaris submarines, so consequently a lot of the infrastructure dates from the same period. Whilst all current accommodation (2602 cabins) has been renewed over the last 20 years or so, there is still the need to build more accommodation to house the additional personnel that the Royal Navy Submarine Training Centre (RNSTC) will bring North from Torpoint in Cornwall when it opens fully towards the end of 2025. New accommodation of 1025 cabins will be built to cater for this increase. There are also many buildings in the working areas of the base which are nearing the end of their serviceable life; consequently there will be a lot of building work over the next few years replacing those buildings. Finally the introduction of the new DREADNOUGHT class Trident submarines within the next 10 years will require additional infrastructure work around jetties and docking facilities.

The good news for the local economy is that there are plenty of employment opportunities within the base, ranging from multi-million pound project managers to part-time catering and cleaning staff. There will undoubtedly be a huge demand for hotel accommodation for all the additional contractors.

Item 3c MDP Report Provided by Drew Omond

Police Scotland Youth Volunteers (PSYV) are still looking for opportunities to support the local community at different events over the coming months. If there is anything you believe would develop the skills of our youngsters then please contact Haining.Gallagher@scotland.police.uk or andrew.omand100@mod.gov.uk.

Drone Reports - HMNB Clyde is a 'NO DRONE ZONE'. Report any sightings to ext 2222 or 01436 655765. There is an evergrowing threat of drone incursion which the MDP aim to target. Details to report - time, location, description, direction of travel and details of any operator.

Roadworks (Appears to be on schedule) - Roadworks on the A814 at HMNB Clyde will continue until December 2023. We do apologise for any inconvenience when entering or leaving the base especially at peak times. Traffic control will continue and MDP will attempt to alleviate any congestion.

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Item 5: Ways of Working Group

The Ways of Working Group (Jeannette, John and Thomas) met three times since the last full Community Council meeting.

The purpose and objective of our group was to try and find ways of alleviating the workload of our secretary and streamline community council meetings, making their format more efficient and of shorter duration.

The group took cognisance of their obligations regarding adherence to the published rules, objectives and responsibilities outlined in the Role of the Community Councillor; Role of a Community Council, Model Constitution for Community Councils and Model Standing Orders which govern how Community Councils, Councillor's and Office-Bearers must operate and run their meetings.

It was agreed and accepted that Rhu & Shandon Community Council (R&SCC) must comply and abide by their obligations at the direction of Argyll & Bute Council (A&BC) and adhere to the officially published rules, objectives and responsibilities outlined in the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils.

It is the responsibility of the Secretary to arrange and administer the Community Council's Annual General Meeting and all regular meetings which are advertised, open to the public and includes hire of a hall for all such occasions. The order of business must be followed in accordance with the rules which include setting the Agenda, maintaining subject matter and item continuity, and ensuring the timeous updating and/or submission of all outstanding reports, actions or other matters.

The annual meeting programme, the time, date and venue of ordinary CC meetings, will be fixed at the first meeting following ordinary elections and thereafter at the AGM. The quorum at a meeting will be one quarter of the current number of members, but will never be less than three. (We currently have 11 members but are eligible to have 16).

During early discussions we identified the following subjects for the group to address and consider;

- frequency of meetings
 - moving to hybrid meetings
 - the use of technology including artificial intelligence
 - employing a minute taker
 - internal CC communication
 - how to improve the management of CC meetings
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Frequency of meetings - would hybrid meetings be more effective and efficient?

It was suggested we extend the number of meetings from the present 1 x AGM + 6 x ordinary meetings per annum (every 8 weeks) to 1 x AGM + 12 x ordinary meetings per annum (every month). The rules say 1 x AGM + a minimum of 6 x ordinary meetings will be held each year.

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Although monthly meetings could technically be arranged it was recognised there already exists significant difficulty for our current membership to find the time to attend ordinary meetings using the present 8 week frequency which is often due to family commitments.

Doubling the frequency of meetings significantly increases the commitment needed to become or maintain being a community councillor. It was felt increased frequency of meetings, particularly at a time when our current membership was low, would not improve attendance or help efficiency, but could act as discouragement to regular attendance and deter anyone new considering joining, especially those with children or other family commitments.

The practicalities of creating hybrid CC meetings open to members of the public appeared too problematic to operate and maintain and the process is likely to end up becoming an onerous responsibility that few members would endorse or accept. There was little proof such meetings had any public demand or would significantly improve efficiency.

Use of Technology

The possibility of utilising technology to help reduce the burden of work was scrutinised. This included the recording of meetings by video/audio and thereafter using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to quickly produce very accurate summaries of all conversations which could then be adopted by the secretary as accurate minutes of the meeting.

Although the end result seems extremely desirable it was noted that the use of video recordings in public places or settings could pose significant legal implications as recordings would likely become subject to Data Protection and CCTV Regulations. This could render R&SCC responsible for the recording equipment and the storage and uses of data held, opening them up to Freedom of Information Data Requests.

The use of AI also had technical problems in practice and although the group thought that this technology will probably be the way forward in the future, presently it was not suitable for our purposes. The Group concluded the potential problems that could arise with video recording and AI were too onerous and in practice would generate more work not less.

That said, it was noted at a recent meeting held by HMNB Clyde at the Off Site Centre in Rhu, those attending were asked if they had any objection to the meeting being audio recorded in the interest of accurate minutes...everyone agreed.

It was felt audio recording had the potential to significantly and effectively improve accurate minute taking and provided nobody attending a meeting had objections, there appeared to be ample justification to introduce this measure.

Employing a minute taker

The group discussed the possibility of employing someone solely to take minutes at our meetings to reduce the burden of the secretary. It was believed Sue Thornley, Chair of Rhu Village Hall Committee had recently employed a person to act as a minute taker. However it transpired the minute taker is Jess, a current committee member and the Hall Convener who had been employed to take the minutes, not someone outside committee.

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It was also ascertained that the Hall Committee minutes are very brief and uncomplicated, the complete opposite in comparison to R&SCC minutes.

Thomas, having carried out the minute taker role himself for a short period, expressed his doubts about how this idea would be effective or work in practice because the minute taker would not be able to do the job properly unless a member of the community council.

It was concluded if recruitment of a minute taker were to take place it would have to come from within the existing committee members but at present there are no volunteers from our membership willing to take up such a role.

Official correspondence, communications - how to improve the management of CC meetings

Generally speaking all bodies or entities officially dealing with R&SCC such as A&BC, HMNB Clyde, Police Scotland, Scottish Forestry etc, correspond or communicate with R&SCC through our secretarial single point of contact and are more often than not agenda items with reports that require discussions.

Recently it has been widely recognised the amount of business we are currently being asked to deal with has significantly increased. There is scant evidence to suggest this has been caused by residents' issues within our community but rather A&BC's increasingly using Community Councils to carry out functions that should be done by them. This was recognised by Councillor Maurice Corry who has stated he intends to address this matter with the Council.

The knock on effect has led to more time being spent discussing these additional matters at regular meetings and this has led to normal meeting over-run.

Thomas suggested some possible adaptations to CC ways of working to relieve pressure on the secretary role and meeting times, including;

1. Reduce the amount of business we 'accept' and vet items, only dealing with the issues we think we have the resources to deal with.
2. Vet items/issues we think we should deal with giving greater emphasis to signposting where people can go to get help.
3. Design a decision making chain for the implementation of 1 and 2 above which would consider any new work, making sure the CC has capacity before agreeing to take something on and ensuring that it doesn't land with the secretary by default.
4. Split the secretary role in half, creating a 'Meetings Secretary' to do all the admin associated with CC meetings, and a 'Communications Secretary' to monitor the CC inbox and liaise with externals.
5. Empower CC members to take the lead on more issues without running everything through the secretary.

These ideas were discussed in turn however it appeared some would not be viable while others prohibited under the Community Councils statutory roles, responsibilities and objectives. Signposting, where people can go to get help already takes place where appropriate and the vetting of correspondence to determine relevance is also already being done.

To develop these adaptations would probably require submission of a proposal to A&BC to alter the Constitution which requires a two third majority vote at our meeting and then the approval of A&BC. It is extremely important to note, any proposed alteration may not prejudice the terms and objectives contained

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within the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils. The group couldn't reach agreement that any of these options should be developed.

Streamline community council meetings - making their format more efficient and of shorter duration.

The group reached a consensus that the secretary is being asked to do too much work and that all members of the CC must try and help relieve that burden. Jean's roles should be fully understood and the workload we speak of is primarily concerned with her role as secretary. However her workload includes being a community councillor and sitting on two Community Council groups. No one is required to sacrifice their role as a community councillor when they become an office bearer.

It was established over the meetings we held other factors helped create greater workloads including;

- how meetings are managed,
- Issues/items being extended, more complex and burdensome than first meets the eye.
- newer members' understandable reticence to put them-selves forward
- a chronic lack of community council membership over last 18 months,

The group felt there is room for improvements to current business meeting practices, to save significant time being wasted on repeatedly reading out correspondence, reports etc and identified the following;

1. Meeting time can be saved if all members were sent copies of all reports and item updates prior to a meeting. Any member(s) unable to access this information, hard copies will be provided before the meeting starts. As reports or item updates arise in the agenda, and provided no one has questions, objections or comments to make, members can be asked if they have read and understood the particular document. If no further action is required, the item can be noted and the meeting can move on quickly. This saves the secretary having to repeatedly read out the contents of various documents as agenda items.

It has been established this process is viable and practicable for dealing with the agenda and copies of reports/item updates can be posted 10 days in advance instead of the current 7 days.

It should be noted from past experience, if minutes are too brief people, including members of the public, become disinterested in reading them which over time leads to less public engagement therefore some sort of balance needs to be struck.

2. If members intend to contribute at a meeting by speaking about matters such as a report or on a specific agenda item, where ever possible, they should help the meeting by submitting to the secretary in advance, a note giving written details of the matters upon which they intend to speak. This would alleviate the need for the secretary to take copious notes, save time and ensure accuracy of minutes. .
3. As previously mentioned, it was identified that audio recording of our meetings would be significantly more effective and efficient in reducing considerable time/working for the secretary creating accurate minutes. Therefore our group highly recommend our CC should adopt audio recording of meetings solely in the interest of creating accurate minutes, providing everyone present would be asked if they had any objection to the meeting being recorded. If agreed a suitable device should be purchased for this purpose.

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In regard to our on-going low membership issue, it was acknowledged the situation we find ourselves in is unlikely to be sustainable in the longer term and increasing membership is perhaps the most important issues needing addressed.

There is a great need to recruit more members of the public to join R&SCC as soon as possible, in the hope that someone within our ranks will be willing to put themselves forward for the post of Secretary while we still have Jean to mentor and pass on valuable knowledge and experience.

It was proposed by Jeanette that we could run a campaign to try and encourage residents and members of our community to join R&SCC. She suggested that the campaign could show the positive effect this can have on community life and recognised the importance that people coming forward need to have time they can afford to give up to carry out Community Council duties otherwise it does not work.

The Group concluded that the biggest driver that is likely to reduce pressure, not only on the secretary role but also on the current community council as a whole, would be an influx of new (co-opted) members. We therefore recommend that the council urgently sets up a group to run a recruitment campaign for new CC members.

Jeannette Loram
Submitted: 8 October 2023

Thomas Baylem

John McGall

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Item 7 Timber Haulage and Forestry Group Report

On 17 August 2023 R&SCC received a letter from Mr Roland Stiven, Forest Sector Development Advisor with Scottish Forestry stating Scottish Forestry is aware of the strength of feeling within our community over timber transport from Highlandman & Torr Woods.

He also stated that he hoped our community is aware that the possibility of an alternative access for timber extraction from Highlandman & Torr Woods is being explored by the owners (Gresham House) and their agent (Scottish Woodlands). Scottish Forestry has recently awarded the agent a Preparatory Project Grant to assist with scoping the viability and costs of alternative access. The aim of this grant is to put together a full proposal to the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme which, if successful and funding permits, would be funded in the next financial year (April 2024 – March 2025). We are closely monitoring this process.

After much cajoling Scottish Woodlands finally agreed to meet their 2019 commitments and hold a public meeting with local residents to advise them of the various forestry activities that are due to take place in the coming years. The event, a 4 hour community drop-in session, was organised by Mike Page, Forest Manager for Scottish Woodlands and took place in Rhu Village Hall on 7th September 2023.

Also present were Adam Mclean, Associate Director of Gresham House, the owners of the woodlands, Craig Armstrong, Senior Operations Manager from Scottish Forestry with responsibility for forestry policy, support and regulation and Joshua McCahill, Trainee Manager with Euroforest, the company who are in charge of the removal of diseased larch trees. Two representatives of Riding Sawmill at Cardross were also present but they did not make themselves known. Ridings Sawmill is not registered to handle diseased larch trees.

The public meeting event was advertised by leaflet insertion in the Community Advertiser which is hand delivered to Rhu residents. Rhu & Shandon Community Council (R&SCC) ensured further local leaflet distribution at - Ardencaple Hotel, Café Rhu, Brae Shop, Rhu Inn and the Parish Church. By all accounts the meeting was a congenial affair but despite significant publicity there was a very poor public turnout.

It transpired that many leaflets, intended to inform residents of the meeting were in fact not delivered because a significant number of Community Magazines weren't delivered though it has to be stressed this was not the fault of the organiser. A copy of a revised Argyll Timber Transport Group Highlandman & Torr Timber Traffic Management Plan (TTMP) was received prior to the meeting. It should be noted that the TTMP published on the Argyll and Bute website has still not been updated. Post meeting R&SCC wrote to Mike Page thanking him for arranging the meeting.

The information displayed to residents included; Road Construction Operation 2023 - building a road extension to connect Highlandman's Wood with a new woodland creation in Letrault & Stuckenduff which will require importing between 1,050t and 2,000t of aggregate stone; the 2023 harvesting of 1,800t of infected larch trees from Highlandman's Wood and the further harvesting of 10,000t from Highlandman's Wood in 2024. All deliveries and extractions of materials are to be made by HGV's using Station and Pier Roads as their haulage route.

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When the subject of road safety on Pier & Station Roads were raised by residents, this seemed to be a delicate subject and discussion quickly reverted back to forestry matters with one resident commenting Scottish Woodlands were tiptoeing away from the obvious problem that residents wanted addressed.

There was no mention that Gresham House and their agent Scottish Woodlands was actively involved in a process, funded by Scottish Forestry, looking at the possibility of an alternative access for timber extraction from Highlandman & Torr Woods.

Maps were posted around the hall and the forestry representatives were available to answer questions. Each member of the community had the circulated leaflet and the updated TTMP was available to view. This engagement with the community would have been more effective if the presenters had sort to elicit feedback for those present..

We were advised the diseased larch will be transported by S&D Smith to either Bankhill Sawmill at Inverkip (40 miles) or West Fraser Europe sawmill in Cowie by Stirling (55 miles). Its removal was declared imminent 5 weeks ago but we have since learned this operation has been further delayed because of difficulties securing the right market for this sort of timber.

With regard to the road extension into Letrault & Stuckenduff, there is still an outstanding issue with an Environmental Impact Assessment concerning archaeology matters. According to Cameron Maxwell from Scottish Forestry officials, Scottish Woodlands will need EIA approval from Scottish Forestry before they can start any major works on the site..

However we have photographic evidence which confirms Scottish Woodland have in fact continued facilitating this road building extension project and a new forest road has now been created well into the Letrault & Stuckenduff estate. Scottish Forestry have been informed. We therefore have a number of outstanding issues to address with the parties and authorities concerned which has or will happen in due course.

It is clear in the letter from Mr Roland Stiven the regulator that Scottish Forestry has the expectation that our community should be made aware of what is going on regarding the timber haulage extraction route issue. Due to limited resources and the onslaught of organising Christmas activities, unfortunately there will be some delay organising a face to face event to inform the community but in the meantime the Group will prepare a plan of action to do so.

Alistair Moore & John McGall

Submitted: 8 October 2023