

Minute of Regular Meeting

Rhu and Shandon Community Council

Wednesday 19th April 2023

Location: Rhu and Shandon Community Centre

Abbreviations:

A&B(C): Argyll and Bute (Council) HMNB: His Majesty's Naval Base NPF4: National planning Framework 4 MDP: Ministry of Defence Police PAS: Planning Advice Scotland RNCYC: Royal Northern & Clyde Yacht Club HLAC: Helensburgh & Lomond Area Committee	PPSLC: Planning Protective Services and Licensing Committee TPO: Tree Protection Order TTMP: Timber Transport Management Plan ATTG: Argyll Timber Transport Group SF: Scottish Forestry PS: Police Scotland Cdr: Commander
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IN ATTENDANCE:

John McGall Convener (**JM**)
Jean Cook Secretary (**JC**)
Alastair Moore (**AM**)
Arnold Bretman **AB**
Susan Castle (**SC**)
Laura Freeland (**LF**)
Sally Grummit (**SG**)
Jeannette Lorem (**JL**)
Alan Kennedy (**AK**)

Visitors

PC Robert McGregor **PS (RM)**
PC Gordon Ellingham **PS (GE)**
Cllr Maurice Corry (Cllr**MC**)

1. APOLOGIES

Received from Jim Duncan **JD**, Thomas Baylem **TM**, Drew Omand **DO**, **Cllr** Mark Irvine, **Cllr** I.S.Patterson(**CllrISP**)

2: CO-OPTION OF ALAN KENNEDY

Proposed Jan Crawford, Seconded LF,

Agreed unanimously.

Post Meeting Note. Alan has realised that he does not have the necessary time to commit to the Community Council, therefore he has reluctantly withdrawn.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

4. GUEST REPORTS:

a. **Police Scotland. PCs** Robert McGregor and Gordon Ellington in attendance

Two instances of housebreaking in Torwoodhill Road, Rhu were highlighted, one from a Garden shed and one from a Utility Room. No suspects and enquiries are complete. Also a theft from a Garden Shed in Pier Road, no suspects and enquiry is complete.

30 incidents were dealt with by Police Scotland since the last meeting, including concern for persons, Road Traffic collisions, offences, assisting external forces, intruder alarms, damage to property, assisting members of the public and abandoned vehicles. .

Constable Robert McGregor expanded on this summary and promised to supply further details of incidents concerned with road safety.

There was a lively discussion about tailgating, bad driving, speeding, speed limits, cyclists, and we are encouraged to call the police if anything untoward seems to be happening.

R&SCC are particularly concerned about recent accidents and road safety issues on A814 and Pier & Station roads. We asked if it be possible to be given fuller details on accidents or incidents of speeding or dangerous driving that have taken place on these roads over the last 3 months and asked that future reports should contain such information. We need to look at the facts to back up any claims we make that these roads are dangerous.

We will return the standard form to Caroline McDonald for onward transmission to Sgt Martin Miller, the officer who is named on the form, and include a request for details of traffic incidents in the past three months.

b. **HMNB Clyde Update.**

The Community Council was disappointed that there was no report

c. **MDP Report.** This report was prepared by DO and delivered by AK.

Fly Tipping at Peace Camp is still an issue. DO is working with Craig Callaghan on this. The caravan which has been parked on the verge by the bus stop will be moved behind their fence in the next few days

Protests - Four arrests were made by MDP/PS two weeks ago after protests had taken place between north and south gate. Traffic was disrupted briefly.

The MDP are aware of traffic control on A814 at the North Gate which is causing delays at peak times during the week. The MDP/MOD Guard Service will continue to keep delays to a minimum. Scottish Water is renewing the main water main between the north gate and Maidstone Road and the work will go on until Christmas. Residents in Shandon have been leafleted warning them of possible water problems.

Police Community Drop In - A drop in session will be taking place **Wednesday 26th April 2023 between 1pm and 4pm** at the Drumfork Community Centre where the community can pop in and chat to officers about community matters. MDP, PS and the Royal Navy Police will have representatives there to offer advice and guidance to locals. The leaflet provided has been posted on our website and will be included in the next Newsletter.

Protest related activity is expected to increase in the next few months.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 8TH 2023

These were accepted as a true record of the meeting
Proposer LF, Seconded AM.

Agreed unanimously

6: MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA

Village Clutter: No further information on the clutter in the village caused by the orange barriers and the broken fence posts. Tom Murphy has not supplied the requested update for this meeting.

Bowling Club: There has been an informal complaint about rats living in the old clubhouse at the Bowling Club. Council members who live locally were not aware of this. It is recommended in such circumstances that Environmental Health be approached.

Defibrillator signs. CllrMC is still working on the supply of defibrillator signs and will report back. It was pointed out that there is an app which highlights the location of Defibrillators in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs. Click [here](#) to view. The police would like to know the codes. Without the app, residents can call 101, give your location and you will be directed to the nearest defibrillator and given the access code. It was suggested that the locations of the defibrillators in the area be publicised.

Aldonaig Farm Property. The mailbox remains on the gate, the ex-tenant is still visiting and the off roading has restarted, but so far no animals are being kept there.. CllrMC informed the Council that A&BC have taken an enforcement action against the land owner in regard to the severe water run-off from this land which is causing constant flooding on Lineside Walk and the adjacent car park with subsequent damage to the surface of both the road and the car park.

Blairvadach: The intended drainage plan for the development has not yet been published and until this is assessed by Scottish Water, no development [can take place](#). The main house renovation work is very impressive.

The Management plan for Torr Farm has still not been supplied by SF

Cables on Rhu Spit: An Openreach engineer inspected the cables on Rhu spit. He asserted that they are power not telecommunications cables. Argyll Estates, **the owner** of the shore, was asked for advice on how to proceed. The King's Harbour Master and CdrPN, were copied in, but there has been no real progress. It was pointed out that these cables have been there for a long time, and even those that disappear into the water are probably not in use. This area is very busy with tourists, pedestrians, dog walkers, children and fishermen, and as it stands the cables pose a dangerous hazard to children and animals. Environmental Health will be contacted. CllrMC offered to help.

Action JC & CllrMC

Quarry Knowe: AK, as a resident and on behalf of the residents, raised the issue at the last HLAC meeting, and CllrMC offered to help. He has met with AK on site and is aware of the problems and the agencies involved. Action has been instigated to control the runoff from Aldonaig Farm, see above. ACHA have cleared the drains. The pathway down to Manse Brae is still dangerously slippery. The upper part of the path is on ACHA land and the lower part goes through the woods which are owned by Luss Estates. There has been a recent accident on the former. A Residents Association is being formed. In summary, there has been some progress. Until the issue of lighting for the car park is resolved, the parking situation will not improve. .

The Proposed Felling and Thinning of Darkwoods Woodlands 22/01556/TPO is still Awaiting Decision.

Response to the Demolition of Workshop 23/00139/NMA.The CC sent Planning an updated response on It was circulated and posted on the website

Proposed Woodlands at Blairnairn. The CC responded to RDS Forestry on this as agreed. We commented on the amount of Sitka Spruce and made a request to see and comment on archaeology, habitat and bird reports. We also asked for confirmation of the timber transport route proposed. No response so far.

7: PLANNING MATTERS

7a. 23/00080/PP. Renewal of Planning permission 19/01573/PP. Change of use of dwelling house (Class 9) to a residential training centre.
Since nothing has changed the CC reiterated its objection. Roads have done the same, i.e. approving subject to conditions on ingress and egress. The house is still being actively used for short term lets, despite the enforcement order 22/00053/ENFOC.

7b: Rhu Lodge: Application for Variation of Conditions 21/02709/PP and Ferry Road Change of Use.

This was considered at the March PPSLC meeting and approved subject to conditions

The alleged Change of use- 22/00052/ENBOC is unchanged from the December minute. Enforcement Orders are no longer available for scrutiny on the Council website.

7c: Formation of Forest Track 21/02614/PNWAY

As expected work has started on preparing stone for the road which is still "Awaiting Decision" on the Planning website. We understand that a revised Archaeology report will be posted. This is likely to mean that the path of the proposed road may change.

7d: Other Significant Planning Issues. None

8: OTHER MATTERS

8a: Forestry / Timber Haulage Issues

At a meeting in September 2022 attended by ATTG, SF and SW, the agent for Gresham House PLC, an Asset Management company who owns most of the woodlands behind Rhu, it had been unanimously agreed that "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. They agreed every effort would be made to try and create a proposed alternative route east of Highlandman's Wood onto A818..Within weeks, RSCC also confirmed that Patrick Colquhoun of Luss Estates had no objection in principal and SW were informed accordingly; then we heard nothing.

The C.C. sent SW several letters for updates in the knowledge an SSTS grant funding application had to be submitted to SF before early March 2023 and is the first crucial step in starting formal negotiations. SW failed to submit this application form, missing this

deadline. On Tuesday 14th March 2023 three members of our Group attended Helensburgh & Lomond Area Committee and submitted the following questions;

“We believe that Phase 2 of Highlandman’s Wood harvesting is due to begin this year. I would ask our Councillors to ensure that proper communication and consultation will take place in good time prior to any forestry activity and serious consideration is given for the current Highlandman’s Wood TTMP to be paused until the conclusion of these recent developments in the interest of road safety.

Provost Maurice Corry stated the heart of the problem lies with Gresham House and agreed to try and arrange a meeting with this land owner.

Cllr Iain Shonny Paterson raised this item as an action with officers and it was allocated the incident reference number 23040-000398. He promised to contact R&SCC as soon as he has further information.

LF highlighted the need to remind all the parties concerned of the agreement reached during the emergency meeting held at Café Rhu on 23 January 2019 where the minute shows the timber parties, prior to any further haulage activity, would issue information leaflets to residents and hold a public meeting in our village hall. We need to insist this takes place.

AM gave a brief but comprehensive potted history of some significant facts and circumstances from 2017 to 2022 in order to give new members of the Community Council some context and a reasonable understanding of the background to this extremely difficult and complex issue. For the record, a fully detailed documented version will be completed as soon as possible.

CllrMC explained he had held telephone meetings with Joshua Phillips of Gresham House and Patrick Colquhoun of Luss Estates which he felt had been extremely positive and constructive, and in his view there is will on all sides to get agreement. CllrMC intends to contact Adam McLean, Associate Director of Forestry at Gresham House. There are issues of cost as Gresham House has a responsibility to deliver profitability to their clients. Patrick Colquhoun has no issue with the new route crossing Luss Estate land but certain financial arrangements need to be put in place by agreement with Gresham House.

In short, the horrendous road safety problems in Rhu Village and the provision of an alternative safe and unfettered haulage extraction route which can be used in perpetuity can be achieved to the benefit of all parties and the wider community provided a financial deal can be struck between Gresham House and Luss Estates and the tenant farmer. This deal could benefit from significant Government STTS grant funding thereby reducing the financial burden to Gresham House. CllrMC is continuing to engage with these parties and expects R&SCC to be involved.

The appendix to this minute contains information provided by LF and AM.

8b: Marina Masterplan and RNCYC

The RNCYC made a presentation to the CC on 15th February. The CCs response was favourable in general and in principle at this stage. It concerned mainly Phase 2, the construction of a new clubhouse. Phase1 is land owned by Crown Estates leased to Boatfolk. Phase 3 is an infill. We expect to be consulted further as the other two Phases are finalised. Although not a planning matter, CC members made suggestions on how the club could integrate more with local residents. The new clubhouse is planned for the

area where boat parking currently takes place, so Phase 3 will have to be the first stage in this development. JD responded to RNCYC on behalf of the CC.
Full consultation will take place should the club submit formal planning applications.

8c: Place Plans

In the absence of TB, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

8d: Safety on A814 in Shandon.

There was a serious accident on 21st March involving 4 cars. All drivers attended hospital, one with spinal injuries. The road was closed in both directions for some considerable time. The issue of safety was considered earlier on when the police were present. It is recognised that the behaviour of drivers going to and from the base plays a big part in the safety on the A814, and it was suggested that an awareness campaign in the base could highlight the issues.
Most of the points of this discussion were raised in item 4a. The officers from Police Scotland agreed to speak to the Traffic Section as enforcement measures in regard to careless/dangerous driving including tailgating and speeding would appear to be the initial way of tackling this problem.

9: CONSULTATIONS

There are links to make a response to any of these on the [Active Consultations page](#) of our website.

9a: St Joseph's Primary School. Closing date May 12th

The following two consultations were published after the agenda was sent out

9b: A&B HSCP 3 Year Plan. Year I assessment. Closing date May 4th

You can either give your feedback at a Drop in session Helensburgh Civic Centre Thurs 27 April 10.30 to 12.30 or by an anonymous online survey which is included in the plan which can be accessed on our website.

It was agreed that any response to the above should two consultations should be on an individual basis.

9c: Forest Grant Scheme: Closing date 17th May

This is a public consultation to help shape future forestry grant support in Scotland. This is the opportunity to comment on timber transport provisions, planning etc

Action Forestry subgroup

10: TREASURER'S REPORT

The Health and Wellbeing grant of £850 which was awarded at the start of lockdown has been returned. All the expenses concerned with the Christmas Lights Switch On have now been paid and the RSCC funds stand at £3851.

SC and JM completed and submitted a form to the bank to become signatories on the Accounts. This process is not yet complete.

11: CORRESPONDENCE

a. We have been approached by Tracy Mayo from and Michael Russell from Colintrave and Glendarnel CC about the need for Community Councils to have more opportunities to influence decision making. If some joint action is undertaken by the Community Councils to seek such changes, in keeping with best practice, we would support this.

b. Robert Ryan of the Brae Shop asked for advice about acquiring some short term parking on Manse Brae for his customers. The Brae Shop is the only shop in the village and as such is vital to residents. It would appear that there is justification for making an application to ABC Roads Department for two short terms formal parking spaces to be created outside the shop during its opening hours i.e. 0900–1700. Cllr MC said that he had this in hand. JC to inform Robert Ryan.

Action CllrMC &JC

12: COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS:

CllrMC advised he has, using discretionary rules reserved for a Provost, started a project of cost cutting exercises in a number of A&BC functions to raise money which can spent non-statutory matters. He highlighted unnecessary grass cutting of private properties which is not the responsibility of A&BC and has so far identified savings of approximately £100,000. Some landowners have been having their grass cut for years for free. This will stop and if they still want the council to cut their grass, they will have to pay the going rate.

Also in catering, working with staff at the Helensburgh Civic Centre and new Swimming Pool complex, an extremely efficient business plan has been devised which is becoming very profitable and bringing more money into A&BC coffers. It is hoped this plan can be rolled out into other areas. In addition he has also identified that much of the Helensburgh Civic Centre lies empty, with more people working from home etc. He is exploring the possibility of all council staff working upstairs to be brought down to the ground level and the upstairs offices rented out which would generate more income for A&BC to spend on communities

13: PUBLIC QUESTIONS: None.

14: MEMBERS REPORTS:

JC: A letter has been sent to Raymond Kane asking how we can get the old A814 into the queue for a complete overall. It was agreed that resurfacing would be useless if the drains are not fixed first. There are serious drainage problems which has caused extreme erosion of the road surface. This is the designated cycle path, but multiple pot holes exist to the extent that cyclists consider it too dangerous to use forcing them onto the main road. Constant flooding, up to ankle deep is a common occurrence and it would appear the old culverts are blocked and/or too narrow to deal with the amount of water that runs off the hill and down roads and driveways. This has had a negative impact on older residents who have reported the surface of the road is so poor that they no longer feel safe using it. We are aware that there on-going discussions about upgrading the cycle path. No reply so far. JC to chase.

Action JC

JC: The CC has no notice board in which to display the minutes. The Agenda, being a single page can be displayed in the window of the hall. The wall of the Toilet block in Rhu is a central place in the village, but it appears that we may be required to submit a full planning application. CllrMC suggested that we approach the Governance Officer, Melissa Stewart, for advice.

Action JC

15: AOB

- a. **AM:** After the successful training session provided by PAS, AM received a standard letter which had a clause asking for a donation. It was agreed that since PAS received funding from the Scottish Government to run such courses, we would not make a contribution.
- b. **AB** reported a major leak from the main sewer on Station Road by Auchengare. Scottish Water were in attendance.
- c. **AB** reported that Pier and Station Roads are increasingly being used by walkers heading up to the walks on the hills above Rhu. There are no waste bins for rubbish disposal. It was suggested that John Urquhart be asked for advice

Action JC

- d. **AB:** Rhu Gala will be held on June 10th from 12.00 to 4.00pm. It was agreed that this would be advertised in the next Newsletter.

Action JC

16: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Both SG and JL have young children and had to leave the meeting early. It was agreed to ask them and tonight's other two absentees whether a 7pm start would be better. All responded positively.

The next meeting, will be on Wednesday June 14th at 7pm in Rhu Hall.

As usual in June, the AGM will be held at 7pm and the regular meeting will follow on.

APPENDIX TO MINUTE.8a. The text in this appendix was provided by LF and AM.

LF

During the last felling and haulage from Highlandman's Wood, (an unusually large coupe), a resident witnessed a serious incident on Station Road around 8am on 22.1.19. The road has a very steep gradient, lies above the snow line, is narrow and only has pass through at a few places. It is risky when one driver has to reverse e.g. into a junction, a private driveway, or at a blind corner. Weather conditions were treacherous as snow had fallen the previous evening and black ice was evident on the road and driveways at 8am. Despite the increased risk, a 44 tonne timber haulage vehicle was operating on the road. In disbelief the resident checked the A&B Council Roads Dept's website. It gave a red warning and clearly stated that due to severe weather across the Council area the gritting policy was put in place, i.e. priority routes first. These were stated as Priority 1 from 4am and Priority 2 from 6am. Snow was forecast to fall until approx 1800hrs. Station Road is classified as "a minor, unclassified route. As the bad weather was widespread, it clearly warned that not all roads could be gritted for some time. For that reason, a warning was given, not to drive unless the journey was absolutely necessary.

The resident immediately fired off an email to A&B Lomond North Councillor, George Freeman to complain about a perceived risky decision to put timber haulage on the route despite the agreed Timber Transport Management Plan. Such a decision would have to be sanctioned by an A&B Roads Officer, who was clearly

unaware of severe weather warning on their own website. Perhaps someone else, not listed on the TTMP took the decision outwith agreed months of operating. George Freeman copied the resident's email into his very wide circulation list including Jackie Baillie, MP. Less than 24hrs later a hurriedly arranged cross party meeting was held in Cafe Rhu.

The haulage did continue later in better weather and scheduled to end in June. It continued until October 2019. However an extremely important agreement was reached at the Cafe Rhu meeting and minuted as follows;

Resolutions/Actions -item 4

Barry Harper(SW) will draft a leaflet, with the assistance of RSCC that will provide information on the extraction programme, contact numbers, links to health and safety and timber extraction guidance. RSCC to provide a list of the issues they wish addressed in the leaflet. This leaflet will be distributed as an insert in the Helensburgh and Lomond Community Advertiser magazine, distributed to all houses in Rhu. Copies will be made available at local outlets (Brae Shop, Cafe Rhu and Rhu Inn.) The objective of the leaflet is to provide information on the timber extraction programme, clearly identify which organisation is responsible for which aspect of the extraction and provide health and safety advice for users of Highlandman's Road and woods during the timber operations. Prior to the next phase of timber extraction in 2023-2024, a public meeting open to all residents will be held and a flyer circulated in advance to advise the community of the timber operations.

RSCC, acting within their remit of representing their community, respectfully insist that Scottish Woodlands and Woodland Forest Manager Mike Page fulfill the agreed resolutions of this meeting at Cafe Rhu prior to any further works taking place which require a TTMP the definition of which was given at the September 2022 cross party meeting by ATTG member Iain Catterwell

AM

In September 2017 Woodland Agent 'Scottish Woodlands' promised essential community information by means of a public consultation event to take place in Spring of 2018 but this failed to materialise.

A&BC roads authority permitted timber transport supported by Scottish Woodlands on unclassified restricted and dangerous Pier & Station Roads Rhu Village commencing late October 2018, without any impact assessment, proper due diligence, with residents posing the question why are the Council making important decisions without consulting our community.

Residents were left aghast at the vast 44 ton logging lorries causing disruption in a first phase operation over one year. We were soon to learn this would carry on in perpetuity. And worryingly the Scottish Woodland Agent tells us they hope for this activity to commence again soon.

An asserted Timber Transport Management Plan (TTMP) signed off by A&B council roads, that none of our public were afforded consultation, demonstrates 50 loads, 100 movements per week, 5000 journeys per year.

Restrictions were placed on school run times, which were found to be breached time and time again and reported to the Council, The Regulator, and all the bodies involved, but no discipline or action was taken.

A timber haulage driver was also found to be operating on Station Road Rhu against the Council and the Met Office Amber Weather Alert, that not to be on the road due to extreme ice road conditions.

A meeting was called on January 2019 with the relevant bodies, the council roads team were asked to attend but failed to be present. The agent responsible for promoting this activity Scottish Woodland's again agreed to implement public consultation by way of a meeting in the village hall, or at least a newsletter ensured to be delivered to all houses within Rhu. This again was neglected by Scottish Woodlands.

On July 26th 2022 an interview provided and circulated around Scotland by Heartland FM Radio, the Scottish Governments Regulator Scottish Forestry who approved the felling of Highlandman's Woods Rhu, Director Cameron Maxwell stated "People are entitled to have the opportunity to engage. Ultimately we expect the

Woodland Agent to engage with neighbours, and the people that the lorries pass by, and get their views” And making it clear “The Agent should be looking for a safe and sustainable route”

CONFOR and the Timber Transport Forum Group, a cornerstone to the timber industry, both funded by the Scottish Government, bring attention to “The process of involving people in the decisions that effect them in making plans, and specifically mention neighbours, community councils, local councillors, MSP’s and MP’s, all to be engaged.

Scottish Forestry is responsible for regulation, policy and support, affirm they have formal ‘management plans’ in place and assert due processes must be followed.

Unfortunately in our case this did not come about in connection with a range of factors, within the forest, and within Rhu community, and consequently the plans and process were flawed.

At Helensburgh Civic Centre Area Committee meeting last month (March 2023) R&SCC were in attendance, discussions transpired concluding a request for the Council to withdraw the route they provided termed as a ‘Consultation Route’ peculiarly with no public consultation, with the CC specifically requesting bringing a halt to any further Timber being hauled through Rhu conservation village.

At a meeting on September 2022 the relevant bodies in attendance agreed that Rhu Community have legitimate concerns and a new route must be found.

An alternative route has been acknowledged by all the parties (Highlandman’s Woods progressing East onto the A818) with SF confirming government funding (STTS Funds) should be available.

Letrault & Stuckenduff currently farms, gained by investment company Gresham House, under the advocacy of Scottish Woodlands, in pursuit to build a forestry link road, which would involve 30 tonne HGV’s carrying aggregate on a large scale over a timely period on Pier & Station Roads once again, determined by SW themselves as “high risk of impact” As of April 2023 we await public consultation and proper due diligence.

Past and recent correspondence with Scottish Woodlands and Scottish Forestry has proved slow and indifferent.