

Draft Minutes Bute Community Council	
Date	2024-02-21 1900 at United Church Bute
Online at	butecommunitycouncil.wordpress.com
Draft Minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance: I Gillespie, R Macintyre, F Martin, J Moffat, T Nelson, W Nelson, J Osborne, Cllr R Kennedy-Boyle, Cllr P Wallace Apologies: C Hall, I Morisson 2. Declarations of Interest: F Martin, J Moffat, T Nelson, W Nelson all Buteiful Seas and Shores 3. Co-option of Gloria Fear as BCC Councillor <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. All BCC councillors had received a copy of Gloria’s form on 7 February b. An item had been placed on the agenda c. G Fear was unanimously co-opted as a member of Bute Community Council. 4. Police Report: delivered by Sergeant Scott Thain <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. W Nelson asked the sergeant to clarify if it was the same individual in both firearms incidents: it was. b. A member of the public asked if fraud cases were handled on the island and the sergeant explained that for fraud over a certain monetary value, the incident would be dealt with by an off-island unit. 5. Minutes of Previous Meeting: 19 January, 2024 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Proposed by J Osborne, seconded by F Martin, unanimously agreed. 6. Guest speaker: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Richard Whitcomb, Bute Forest https://www.buteforest.org.uk/news addressed the gathering to discuss where the community forest is, what is being done and what is planned based on the mission of preservation, conservation and restoration. The main points of Richard’s talk were: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bute Forest is approximately 400 acres/160 hectares 2. He highlighted three main areas: Moss Wood, the felled plantation area that is being replanted with 16,000 trees and the SSSI [Site of Special Scientific Interest] area of native Scottish rainforest 3. The ranger, Samuel Lindsay, has a contract until October and funding is being sought to extend this. 4. Every child from age 3 to 11 has visited the forest to take part in educational sessions. Plans are in process to work with S1 and S2 students in relation to John Muir Awards 5. There are currently two woodland management plans being enacted: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SSSI area with Scottish rainforest: solutions are being sought to address the overgrazing of this area by deer and improved access through creating paths is planned

2. Plantation area: an area of larch was clear-felled due to the discovery of Larch disease within approximately ½ mile of the Bute Forest property. By felling before the disease arrived, the trees were felled at full value and this raised money to keep the ranger employed as well as replant the clear-felled area. The area will be replanted with a more sustainable mixture of 16,000 trees (Scottish pine, silver birch, hazel, willow and aspen).

6. Questions asked:

1. A member of the gathering asked if the ‘damage’ caused by the clear felling had been ‘worth it’ as a portion of the West Island Way trail ran through the area. Richard explained that the decision made by the board was based on the fact that the disease was very close and would inevitably affect the Bute Forest larch, rendering them of no commercial value. By felling before the disease affected the trees, approximately £30k was realised to continue to employ the ranger as well as plan for the replanting of 16,000 of more diverse species. As well, there would be the opportunity to improve the path access through the area. J Osborne reminded all gathered that at Mount Stuart an area had been affected by larch disease, leading to the closing off of the area for 5 years.

2. A question was asked about how the forest was funded: Richard explained that in addition to the money raised by felling, the two huts were an income stream. They had been built with £5k from Bute Forest and the rest raised through grants, so there was no money owing on them. The huts were very popular, being booked even at Christmas and New Year. In a partial operating year they had raised £10k in booking fees.

3. The issue of getting to the forest was raised. Limited bus journeys to the area was a concern and Richard was asked if Bute Forest could not speak with West Coast Motors. He explained that the old quarry had now been purchased by Bute Forest and that a car park/visitor welcome area was planned for the site, including a bus stop. He also said that they would be trialling a minibus for days when events were occurring in the forest.

4. A question was asked regarding lack of a path to the kayak shelter in the SSSI area. Richard explained that because it is an SSSI area, there are restrictions on path building. At the moment there are ribbons on trees as markers to lead to the kayak shelter.

b. Julie Semple, Bute Advice Centre <https://www.buteadvice.org.uk/> , addressed the gathering to explain the work being done by BAC. The main points of Julie’s talk were:

1. The mission of BAC for 40 years has been the alleviation of poverty and distress.

2. BAC has 6 paid staff members.
3. BAC concentrates on welfare benefits and money advice. Energy support is outsourced.
4. In the last year, BAC has supported 1,500 households in obtaining approximately £1.5m in assistance.
5. Due to its expertise, BAC administers the Flexible Food and Fuel Fund on behalf of A&B Council. This fund allows an individual/family to receive a first payment of £80/500. A month later, another payment of £80/500 is received. The month between payments allows BAC to carry out a benefits check, to ensure that the individual/family is receiving all support possible. Recently, a third payment has become available. The average client gain under this funding is £1400.
6. BAC administers the ACHA Welfare Rights programme.
7. BAC supported the resettlement of Syrian, Sudanese and Ukrainian people to the island.
8. BAC has done outreach work to persons living in sheltered accommodation, so that they can remain up-to-date with support that is available to them.
9. BAC coordinates a quarterly meeting of all food banks across A&B.
10. At the end of Julie's talk, a member of the gathering said that what she took from Julie's talk was that BAC was 'maintaining peoples' dignity'.

7. Matters Arising

- a. Any advance on offer by CHall to use Coffee Stop once a week for teen only hot chocolate and chat session: C Hall was not present but Shona Edwards was in the audience and said that she had not had time to speak with C Hall yet.
- b. Any advance on receipt of report from Shona Edwards on results of consultation she carried out at Rothesay Joint Campus: Shona Edwards has the finalised report and said that she would send it to T Nelson.
 1. Shona asked the gathering if they were aware of the problems that young people had recently been facing in the use of the free bus travel card for persons 22 and under. Many bus operators are refusing to take young people on their buses because the young people are using the buses as safe and warm places to hang out, not travel to destinations.
 2. Mariska Silkowski, Scottish Youth Parliament member for Bute, related how she had been refused entry onto a bus in Dunoon, after spending time at a friend's house, and her father had to race to Dunoon to get her, passing the bus that she had planned to be on. They just made the last ferry back to Bute that evening. She said that she knew of other incidents. W Nelson asked her to provide a list of incidents. J Moffat said that BCC would send a letter to West Coast Motors.

c. Report on community engagement Meeting held in Port Bannatyne Village Hall on 15 February: FMartin and JOsborne

1. This was not an extraordinary meeting, as reported in the Isle of Bute News. It was the third of three planned community engagement meetings, the first held in Rothesay and the second in Kingarth.
2. There was a good turnout and one issue dominated the meeting: the derelict buildings on Castle Street.
3. Since the meeting last Thursday evening, Jim had done research (Companies House, Land Registry, etc) and found that one person had purchased 19 of the properties in 2017. Two properties in the set of buildings were owned by other, unknown, persons. As well, on the weekend, Brendan O'Hare, MP for Bute, had been on the island and had visited the site of these derelict buildings with Jim. Brendan had then written to A&B Council and Jim had received a copy of the response. This response revealed that repairs had been ordered on 25 January after a complaint on 23 January by a local resident after a storm had caused bits to fall from the building. The response to Brendan O'Hare's letter had also revealed that the developer has told the A&B Council building standards office that they are now undertaking a feasibility study on how to take the development forward since ownership issues, which had been holding up progress, have been resolved. Jean was able to chase up the repairs with Hanson and received the contact details for the architects who had ordered the repairs. The residents of properties near to the derelict buildings would now have a contact point for raising their concerns. Jim offered to work with a group of residents from Port Bannatyne to pursue the matter further.

d. Survey on fish farms: T Nelson explained that the initial survey form that had been agreed at last month's meeting would go live for the month of March. Paper copies would be placed in Kilchattan Bay, Port Bannatyne and Rothesay for those who did not use the computer.

e. Update on Ardenraig Gardens and Rothesay Pavilion: with the budget for A&B set to be voted on tomorrow, it was agreed that discussion of funding for the Pavilion should be delayed until the next meeting.

8. AOCB

a. W Nelson reminded those gathered that there was the online Ferry Users Consultation running, accessible through the BCC website.

b. Also, that on Tuesday, 27 February, there would be a consultation in the Discovery Centre from 1730 to 2030 for the Active Travel Route between Albert Pier and The Pavilion.

9. At this point, the meeting ended due to time constraints.

a. There was agreement that the order of agenda items would be altered at the next meeting to allow A&B Councillors to speak immediately after the Police Report, as 3 months had now passed without them having an opportunity to speak

	10. Date of Next Meeting: 20 March, 2024
Following Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Police Report• Cllr Report – Reeni Kennedy-Boyle• Cllr Report – Peter Wallace

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