

## KILNINVER AND KILMELFORD COMMUNITY COUNCIL

A meeting of the above Council was held on Wed. 21<sup>st</sup> January 2004 at Kilmelford Village Hall.

**Present:** Community Councillors: Angus MacFadyen (Chairman), Neil Manchester (Secretary), Dorothy Carmichael, Jayne Brown, Stuart Cannon, Jamie Mellor

Also in attendance were 38 members of the public.

### **1 Apologies:**

Apologies were received from Georgina Dalton, and John and Jane Rentoul, who had also expressed the wish that their objections to the planning application under discussion be minuted.

### **2 Application to The Crown Estate, Ref: XX100/165B, by Mr Alan MacDonald for permission to cultivate mussels/ scallops at Loch Melfort (NM 830 125 & NM 818 131)**

The chairman opened the meeting by inviting comments and opinion on the above planning application. The secretary outlined the details of the applications, and there then followed much discussion on the reasons why this application should be objected to.

The chairman asked for a show of hands of those in favour of the Community Council objecting to the application. There was unanimous support for the chairman's proposal. As such, it was agreed that the secretary should compose a letter to be sent to the Planning Department, and copied to the Crown Estate, voicing the Community Councils objection to the application on the following grounds:

1. The currently acceptable balance between industry and tourism would be destroyed. The businesses operating within Loch Melfort are all long established and operate in harmony with each other and with the environment.
2. The visual impact of this proposal is grossly understated within the application, and both proposed farms will be highly visible from the roadside, surrounding hills and within the loch. This area is world renowned for the unspoilt beauty and tranquillity, which would be destroyed by this proposal and would inevitably reduce the attractiveness of Loch Melfort as a tourist destination. Since tourism is the largest employer and revenue generator within the area, it is unacceptable to consider any type of enterprise that could easily lead to job reductions in the tourist industry.
3. The proposals represent a real hazard to navigation of pleasure and commercial craft. Both proposed sites are on the approach to two busy yachting establishments, and the risk to pleasure and commercial craft, and most importantly their crew, will be very high.
4. One of the proposals represents a real obstruction to anchorage of craft within Ardenstur Bay, which is an area frequently used by visiting yachts during the summer months.
5. Biologically Loch Melfort is unsuited to shellfish production, as demonstrated by numerous failed attempts in the past. The tidal flows at the head of Loch Melfort do not sustain a significant wild mussel population, so will not provide adequate feed resources for a commercial operation.
6. The proposals will obstruct all users of Loch Melfort:

7. Recreational fishing and general leisure use of these popular areas, traditionally enjoyed by locals and visitors
8. Commercial fishing activities, especially small scale (i.e. local) creel fishermen who presently use the more sheltered areas of the loch
9. Local wild salmon netmen, since the proposed location will block wild salmon runs and netting areas used by locals for over forty years

The free access to all reaches of Loch Melfort is currently available to a great number of people, both local residents and visitors to the area. It is unthinkable that this would be denied to all for the commercial interest of just one person.

10. The introduction of new fish farms will present a threat to the existing fish farms within Loch Melfort, which have operated for over thirty years, by the potential introduction of disease pathogens, and the increase in biomass of production within the ecosystem
11. The application clearly states that there are no finalised plans for the provision of service access points. If permission is approved by the Crown Estates, compulsory purchase of adjacent land is unavoidable, and will only lead to further development and industrialisation of the area. This would be unacceptable to the community in general, and in particular to the potentially affected landowners.
12. Concern was raised about the potential impact on wildlife following the development of this type of aquaculture, especially since the areas selected in the application provide sanctuary for a large variety of wildlife, enjoyed by locals and visitors to the area.
13. That this application is from someone with no connections to the area, is purely speculative and is of questionable motive. If permitted, there will be no local employment or income to the community generated. The impact of such a proposal, were it approved, would be severe in terms of local employment and revenue generation of a diverse range of businesses currently operating in the area, and would detract greatly from the natural beauty of Loch Melfort and the environment.

It was also agreed that a copy of the letter be made available in Kilmelford Post office to allow members of the public to use a s a template for their own letters of objection.

### **3 Any Other Business**

The secretary advised that he had received notice of a second mussel farm application, by Celtic Seafoods Ltd, for two installations at the mouth of Loch Melfort. It was agreed that this would be discussed further at the forthcoming Community Council meeting, when full details of the application would be available. The chairman advised that it was important for as many members of the public as possible to object to both applications, if there was to be any chance of preventing this type of development.

### **4 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of Kilninver and Kilmelford Community Council will be held in Kilmelford Village Hall on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2004 at 8.00pm.

There being no further business, the chairman closed the meeting at 9.05 pm

Neil Manchester  
Secretary

Signed as approved:  
Date:

Angus MacFadyen  
Chairman