

KILNINVER AND KILMELFORD COMMUNITY COUNCIL

The meeting of the above council was held on Tuesday 14th June 2011 at Kilmelford Village Hall.

Present: Nigel Mitchell (NM) Chair, Antoinette Mitchell (AM), John MacLean (JM), Sarah Edwards (SE), Lucy Files (LF)

Also in attendance were Councillor Duncan MacIntyre, Fergus Murray - Development Policy Manager ABC and 14 members of the public.

Apologies: Matthew Anderson, Councillor Elaine Robertson, Councillor Neil MacKay, Councillor Donald MacDonald

Minute of the previous meeting: All present were given the opportunity to read through the draft minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th April. Stuart Cannon asked whether the only opportunity to read draft minutes is at Community Council meetings. NM stated that draft minutes are posted on the notice board at the Village Hall and the shop and at the bus stop at Kilninver. Approved minutes are posted on the Community Council website and later in the Kilninford News. The minutes were then taken as a true and accurate representation of the meeting and approved. Proposed AM, seconded JM

MAIN ISSUE REPORT , LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND RURAL RENAISSANCE SETTLEMENTS

NM introduced Fergus Murray (FM), Development Policy Manager for Argyll and Bute Council who attended the meeting to present the Main Issue Report to the Community Council, and to answer any questions. FM explained that The Main Issue Report (MIR) is one stage in new approach to planning introduced by The Scottish Government in 2006. The MIR questionnaire is to be submitted by 18th July 2011 following presentation to and consultation with communities. It deals with the main issues of change in Argyll and Bute, it will be the guiding document for planning decisions in the area and it will inform the creation of a new proposed Local Development Plan (LDP). The proposed LDP will be published in March 2012 and there will follow a 3 month consultation period giving communities the opportunity to look at and comment upon the proposed LDP before it is finalised.

At the current stage in the process FM stated that concepts of planning are under review and he then presented the concept of Rural Renaissance Settlements (RRS) with the suggestion that KKCC consider carefully whether the community wishes to become an RRS. He also invited opinions and alternative suggestions from those present.

FM explained, in clarification of the concept of RRS, that rural populations are losing economically active families. Figures in Argyll and Bute have decreased from 90 000 to 88 000 and are still drifting down. There is a need to hold on to the population of economically active families and generate economic activity. If a community becomes an RRS then the emphasis will be on a settlement plan to attract and hold economically active families and ABC will work with communities to try and achieve this. The concept of Potential Development Areas (PDA) will disappear.

NM pointed out that the MIR covers a number of areas in Argyll and Bute and suggested that attention at this meeting be focussed on Kilninver and Kilmelford and on Oban as having most relevance and impact on our own community. It was also observed that that the MIR contains a

great deal relating to Oban, and Kilninver and also to infrastructure issues in Oban and along the Dunbeg corridor.

FM clarified that the Local Development Plan (LDP) looks at a 20 year vision but is updated every five years. This plan will replace the current Development Plan that currently consists of the Structure Plan and the Local Plan. 20 year plan refreshed every 5 years.

Stuart Cannon (SC) asked for clarification of the colour-coding on the plan. FM responded that the colour-coding shows land scheduled for release for development. It does not, however, denote land subject to compulsory purchase but rather land being released by way of responding to developers. FM stated that compulsory purchase is "not the way they (ABC) go".

Christopher Liversedge (CL) queried proposed development of the Dunbeg Corridor with reference to carbon emissions/reduction and fuel poverty. FM responded that over a 20 – 30 year period the Dunbeg Corridor is projected to have potential for a further 1500 households. CL asked about transport infrastructure to support this growth asking whether there would be more efficient use of the railway and whether there was any possibility of future provision of electric buses. FM responded that the Dunbeg Corridor would in all probability be served by the existing fossil fuelled buses. He also stated that efforts will be made to balance rural living with a view to reducing car-dependence.

Fergus Gillanders (FG) pointed out that Kilmelford has increased substantially in size and asked whether funding of infrastructure would reflect this. He voiced concern that Dunbeg would take the lions share leaving a village like Kilmelford with very little. FM answered that funding would be directed into communities where it was perceived to be most needed. He stressed that communities need to work together with him to make the best use of what they already have and he warned that competition for further investment is fierce right up to the highest level.

FM recommended that communities approach him with their own plans and ideas for generating income and he gave it as his opinion that this is the way forward. Communities need help to help themselves although it is not the intention to force this approach onto any community.

FM explained that being designated a RRS gives a community flexibility to provide employment opportunities and housing and development opportunities. The RRS concept is not proposing radical change in Kilmelford but rather consolidation of what the area already has.

The concern of many present, however, was that the infrastructure is barely adequate and won't support this.

FG asked whether the LDP will prove to be a series of unstructured ad hoc arrangements. FM answered that 12 key agencies (including Scottish Water, Transport Scotland, SEPA and Historic Scotland) would be involved and consulted on any proposals. They would look in detail at the infrastructure capacity for each community. Any growth would need new investment and would have to be phased in. The agencies, moreover, would have to sign up to it for it to go ahead.

NM voiced concern that any new development must ensure that water and sewerage services can be adequately provided. FM responded that growth will be focussed in certain communities to ensure that the infrastructure to support growth is there. Dunbeg does have potential for growth and arguments can be made, at the right level, to ensure that there is input there to support this. There has to be rationing of funding.

FG asked if planning would be denied where there was no infrastructure to support development. FM answered that a lot of projected development is now denied at pre-application stage for this

reason. Alternatively some applications are granted provided the owner/developer accepts a phased approach to providing infrastructure that could take several years to put in place.

NM enquired whether Kilmelford as a community would have more control if we become a RRS FM responded that he hopes we will become an RRS so that he can work with us. He stated that Some communities lobby to become an RRS whereas others want no part in it. If the community wants to grow and change then it should become an RRS. He added that the under the RRS approach to business development could be flexible where such development might add to the local economy.

AM asked why health, hospitals and emergency services are not covered in the challenges. FM answered that the challenges came from the stakeholders.

NM raised the point that the primary school has a limited capacity. Were the population to increase would consideration be given to the building of a school in Kilmelford? FM replied that any addition to the population in the area will only stabilise numbers rather than increase it. An impact assessment regarding possible increase in numbers of children would have to be carried out so that plans could be made accordingly.

AM stated that she agreed with most things in the MIR but she queried the implications of point 5d regarding increased population density on specified sites and voiced concern about over-housing and cramming.

FM advised that the densities applied on housing in this area are lower than the national average. He also stated that the budget for affordable housing has dropped from £300m to £20m and the subsidy for an affordable house has dropped from £100k to £70k then £40k. This means that social landlords will be building smaller houses and looking to get more houses on one site. Design, therefore, will be a big issue and present a big challenge. He warned that there is a huge demand for housing in Argyll especially in the Oban area.

AM asked why Kilmartin Glen, Seil and Easdale are not designated primary tourist areas in the MIR.

FM clarified that in this document the designated primary tourist areas are those most vulnerable to change eg holiday homes being changed to residential, change of use of a caravan site.

AM raised point 7d in the MIR regarding flooding areas. She pointed out that Lochavullin is a known flood plain but there is still a lot of building there.

FM agreed that problematic land is being built on at Lochavullin but none of this is housing. There is no housing in Lochavullin.

Renewable Energy

AM asked about renewables in the MIR .

FM responded that the question of renewables does not just focus on on-shore wind farms. The possibilities of Mini Hydros and Solar energy are also being investigated.

AM then asked about planning for LPG stations and also drew attention to the fact that there seem to be no charging points for electrical vehicles.

FM acknowledged that this was a fair point.

NM asked whether we were missing anything or whether there was anything we can look into in the MIR.

FM answered that he didn't think we were missing anything. He confirmed that renewable energy is a big thing for us and that a landscape capacity study for on-shore wind-farms is underway to determine the area's capacity thresholds. There are also to be design guides for individual turbines. Regarding grid connections it will be necessary to work with the grid providers to see how the infrastructure will be affected.

Off-shore wind farms are also being looked at.

Road Infrastructure

SC voiced concern about the road infrastructure around Kilmelford and pointed out that if the roads were improved it would help us all. He enquired as to the likelihood of the roads being improved. FM confirmed the importance of connectivity and road infrastructure. He stated, however, that new money cannot be conjured up for this although attempts to get new investment are being made. SC asked what priority status this has. FM confirmed that priority 1 is to improve the road network. SC emphasised that the roads are vital to us all.

CL pointed out that the railway line is under-utilised. He suggested pressing the use of rail for goods transport.

FM agreed that the railway is under-utilised. He stated that the main focus of his department is planning but that it supports other agencies ie roads and transport, broadband.

CL then gave it as his opinion that the inclusion of Helensburgh puts Argyll and Bute out of balance.

FM countered by saying that the MIR recognises that one size does not fit all. Policies are changed to adapt to the needs of each different area so the inclusion of Helensburgh does not give an unfair weighting to the issues covered.

Public Transport

Sarah Henderson (SH) stated that buses and trains for Glasgow leave at the same time as each other and enquired about changing the timetable.

Duncan MacIntyre (DM) countered that this is not entirely true. There are now 8 buses leaving Oban every day which means that a bus is departing every 2 hours. These buses have other destinations apart from Glasgow. He agreed, however, that the times for the Glasgow services remain the same.

CL asked about a midnight train from Glasgow to Oban.

DM explained that there are plans to provide connectivity with other train services but that funding is an issue. There is also a problem with increasing train speeds to facilitate connectivity with other services. He confirmed, however, that it is on the list of priorities to look at rail.

FM added that in terms of economic priorities road and rail are recognised as significant in the MIR.

Jane Rentoul (JR) enquired whether as a RRS area there would be different categories of settlement as there has been under the PDA concept.

FM responded that PDAs were a concept of the council to provide a planned approach to the development of an area. He stated that the zones outlined in PDAs will remain largely the same. There will be no settlement boundary expansion. The RRS might, however, involve a different allocation for land but the intention is to give communities control.

Land surrounding the Village Hall

NM pointed out that there are extant PDAs in our area and referred specifically to the land around the Village Hall. He stated that people still have concerns regarding the control the community would have over this land. A PDA has been applied for. If the area were to become a PDA could this be changed under the RRS? Could the community lose control?

FM advised that the most certain way to retain control is to specifically tie the land to a mixed use allocation.

CL commented that if the site remains agricultural it does not stop development later but it does stop development in the immediate future. He also commented that in his opinion the river forms a natural boundary to development in the village.

AM enquired whether in CL's opinion the Degnish Road is not part of the village.

FM stated that natural features do not constitute a boundary to development. If, however, an area is designated an Open Space Protection Area this designation remains in force for 5 years.

CL asked for confirmation that a PDA changes the designation to that of a development site?

FM stated that this is so but explained that if the land is not developed after 5 years it could be re-designated and no longer be a development zone.

NM stated that there is an application in for the land around the Village Hall to be made a PDA.

Will it be included in the draft plan when it comes out?

FM Answered that it would be but the opinion of the community would be sought and if people were against it then it would be pulled out.

AM enquired whether without the PDA we would still be eligible as a RRS.

NM pointed out that at Kames there are PDAs on two properties. He enquired whether in the new plan we would need to re-designate this land as sensitive countryside.

JR suggested that it be designated as an Open Space Protection Area.

FM stated that all PDAs are being looked at:

Some are not to be developed any more

Some are being reduced in size

Some are being re-designated as sensitive countryside.

Even in the draft proposal people can oppose a PDA. If a PDA is either built out or not proved effective the PDA can be removed.

NM Stated that in March we sit down and discuss what we want.

JR asked whether now is the time to comment on potential issues.

NM yes, now is the time to raise concerns as an individual but as a community we must do so in March after seeing the draft plan.

FM Advised that now is the time to raise issues that are important since the MIR deals with developments of 50 houses and above.

Thanks

On behalf of KKCC NM thanked FM for attending the meeting especially since he had done so at very short notice.

FM invited members of the community to email him with any questions.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

- a) **Clachan Wind Farm:** NM said very few people attended the drop in session in Kilmelford; 14 people attended in total with 2 from Easdale. There had been no replies to NM's email from Mr Young. NM advised that the application will go in next month and recommended that people look out for this and make any feelings felt. When the application is submitted KKCC will submit a letter stating that we have an interest in this application. Also a hard copy of the application has been requested and it will be necessary to wade through this. KKCC will need to see it and there will need to be a meeting about it or it will form part of the business of the next regular Community Council meeting. This is not a major application such as the one for the Raera wind farm and in this case the landowner is submitting the application. It is still, however, of considerable significance and will be treated accordingly. KKCC will be a consultee on this and NM warned that it is likely to be processed quickly so any letters will have to be submitted to ABC planning Dept without delay.
- b) **Kilmelford Notice Board:** One notice board has now arrived and Colin Gibson (CG) has it
- c) and is to put it up. Alasdair Oatts has approved it. The other notice board is expected to arrive very soon from France. NM clarified that notice boards made in the UK are priced between £1000 and £2000 hence the purchase being made from France.

- d) **Fences Around The Glebe:** Councillor DM explained that there are Health and Safety issues over excavations and pipes and that this is why the contractors have erected the Harries fencing. He stated, however, that ABC does want this area tidied up. NM enquired whether the contractors might consider enclosing the area with a good wooden fence. DM stated that Health and Safety insist that the present fence remains in situ although he agreed once again that the area does need to be tidied. He also mentioned the need for a dropped kerb. Sarah Edwards asked where a dropped kerb was needed.
- e) **Road Signs:** AM pointed out that the village still needs street name signs for The Glebe and Cuilfail Gardens.
- f) **Council Elections:** NM advised that KKCC elections will not take place until after August. SE enquired about procedure and NM responded that candidates are appointed to KKCC by nomination. Only in the event of more than ten candidates presenting themselves will there be elections. AM stated that Lucy Files has requested to be nominated and has offered to be Minutes Secretary.
- g) **Planning Applications:**
- 11/00704/PB New House and ancillary development. This was originally an application for a house and caravan but has been amended to house and ancillary development. Validated 26.05.11.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. NM has received a letter from ABC regarding the Queens forthcoming Diamond Jubilee in June 2012. It is proposed that as part of the celebrations that beacons be lit throughout the UK on 4th June 2012. Kilmelford has been invited to participate and build a beacon. NM said he understood that there had been a beacon in 1977, the year of the Silver Jubilee and also one for the Golden Jubilee in 2002. NM asked if there were any volunteers to take charge of the 2012 beacon. It was decided to carry the matter over to the next KKCC meeting but those present seemed to feel the community could make an occasion of this event.
2. NM had received a letter from Alison Robertson, the Convener for Luig Community Council suggesting a petition to protest against proposed cuts to the 418 bus service. Sarah Henderson clarified that the 418 is a service to Oban that has been running 4 times daily but is to be cut to provide only a service for the Oban schools. Councillor Duncan MacIntyre responded that the 418 had come about as an enhanced service and it had done extremely well. Numbers using the service had increased from 6000 to 16000. The proposed reduced service is timed to arrive in Oban at 8.50am and leave again at 5.50pm to facilitate people going to work and returning home again. Councillor DM stated that the issue with this 418 service is that, hitherto, there has been a big subsidy on it. There is presently a debate over whether the full service can survive without this subsidy and if it is felt that this is so the service might not be cut after all. SE and SH both commented on the need for buses that enable people to get to and from work.
3. NM has received a notice from the police regarding a big drugs bust in Oban. This operation actually made the national press.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Stuart Cannon asked if there is any further information about proposed planning for a wind farm and houses above Kames. NM stated that the community can do nothing unless this development is included in the draft LDP.

Olga Salmond raised the point that the grass verges along the main road coming into Kilmelford from the south are a disgrace and enquired who is responsible for cutting them. Councillor DM stated that this has previously been done by ABC but this is a service that has been cut.

LF raised the point that in some cases signage is being obscured by trees and bushes that are no longer being cut back and that this is causing dangerous situations on the road. Visitors who are unfamiliar with the area are apt to slam their brakes on when at the last minute they read a sign directing them to turn off that they had been unable to see earlier for being overgrown. LF made particular reference to signage for the Easdale turn-off at Kilninver.

Judith Stannard referred back to the verges on the south side of Kilmelford and recollected that at one point the Village used to be responsible for maintaining the tubs of flowers. She enquired whether this was not still a village responsibility. There was also a suggestion that households along the main road could be asked to look after the verges. Fiona Wylie asked whether there were community funds to cover the cost of maintaining the verges but NM responded that this is not a Community Council issue. AM suggested that Colin Gibson might be willing to do the work for a fee but this still raised the issue of who would fund this. Councillor DM confirmed that ABC will carry out one cut per year only.

AM referred back to the issue about the signage for Easdale and LF reiterated the point that where the line of sight for the directional signage is obscured by overgrowing vegetation there is a safety issue at stake. Councillor DM acknowledged the problem agreeing that obscured directional signage is a Health and Safety issue but stated that nothing will be done because of cuts in the budget.

NM raised the issue of the need to replace reflective bollards. Councillor DM said that this has been postponed because of cuts.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of Kilninver and Kilmelford Community Council will be held in the Kilmelford Village Hall on Tuesday 9th August at 8.00pm. NM thanked everyone for attending the meeting. There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.40 pm .