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MINUTES of MEETING of MID ARGYLL PARTNERSHIP held in the COUNCIL CHAMBERS, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD on WEDNESDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2014

Present: Councillor Sandy Taylor (Chair)
Councillor Robin Currie
Councillor Anne Horn
Councillor Donnie MacMillan
Councillor Douglas Philand

Attending: Lorna Elliott, Community Governance Manager
Jim Smith, Head of Roads and Amenity Services
Antonia Baird, Community Development Officer
Kathleen Munro, Trading Standards Officer
Sgt Stuart Watson, Police Scotland
Rod Buchanan, ACHA
Jim Frame, SEPA
Ben Tustin, SEPA
Jeanette Laughton, Ardrishaig Community Council
John Woods, Ardrishaig Community Council
Jim Martin, Dunadd Community Council
David Kent, South Knapdale Community Council
Leonard MacNeil, West Lochfyne Community Council

1. APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the order of the meeting, and advised that due to the bad weather conditions, and also to accommodate officers in attendance the SEPA and Roads Reconstruction Capital Programme presentation would be taken following item 4 of the agenda (Trading Standards – Protecting Vulnerable Consumers).

Apologies were intimated by:

Mary Smyth, Craignish Community Council
Adrian Davis, Inveraray Community Council

2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 11 JUNE 2014

The Minute of the previous meeting held on 11 June 2014 was approved as a true record, subject to the addition of the following sentence at item 6(h):

Councillor Horn also noted that a member of the Community Council is undertaking the challenge of doing a sponsored kayak paddle around the Kintyre peninsula to raise funds for the mini outdoor gym.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

4. TRADING STANDARDS - PROTECTING VULNERABLE CONSUMERS

The group were given a presentation by the Council's Trading Standards Officer, who outlined the Trading Standards team structure. The presentation, about protecting vulnerable consumers, outlined the corporate outcome, which is to ensure that vulnerable adults, children and families are protected and supported within their communities. It highlighted the Trading Standards service goals, which included protecting the health of our communities through effective partnership working. Ms Munro spoke of the consumers right to cancel; the updates to the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 and also highlighted the consumers protection from unfair Trading Regulations 2008.

Ms Munro advised of call blockers which are a system that blocks nuisance callers but lets friends and family and legitimate callers through. She explained that these had been funded by COSLA, and that Argyll and Bute Council had bought 10 units. She explained that these can be provided to anyone considered to be vulnerable in the community by a simple referral. She further advised that although they were coming to the end of their stock, the Service are actively pursuing additional funding to continue to supply these.

Ms Munro also spoke of the cold calling notices and the buy with confidence scheme, which had been brought into force in November 2014.

The Chair, thanked Ms Munro for the informative presentation.

5. SEPA

Jim Frame of SEPA addressed the group with regard to the role of SEPA within the community. He advised that the remit of the team covers water, waste and air. He advised that the main role of SEPA is to protect and improve Scotland's environment within each phase of the environment. He further advised that this is achieved by helping business and industry to understand their environmental responsibilities, enabling customers to comply with legislation and good practice and to realise the many economic benefits of good environmental practice. Mr Frame advised that SEPA operates Scotland's flood warning service, which is a 24 hour information service, which includes direct warnings by phone and online flood warnings and updates through its dedicated telephone number. He advised that this service also gives advice on what to do before, during and after a flood.

General discussion took place in regards to SEPA's involvement in matters such as forestry plantations, fishfarms, sewage issues in Ardishaig and the offensive smell which often emanates from the Industrial Estate in Tarbert. Mr Frame reminded the group that SEPA operate a 24 hour service, should they have any particular concerns.

Mr Frame advised that he was keen to re-establish the partner engagement with the Mid Argyll Partnership as it provides an effective base for communication with Community Council's.

The Chair, thanked Mr Frame for his informative presentation.

6. ROADS RECONSTRUCTION CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The group were given a presentation by Jim Smith, Head of Roads and Amenity Services in relation to the rationale behind repairing the road network. He advised that following the harsh winters of 2009 and 2010, Audit Scotland advised that Transport Scotland and Council's should review their road maintenance strategies and plans to confirm that adequate prioritisation is given to those routes which are likely to contribute greatest to economic growth and improved quality of life. Mr Smith outlined the procedure for determining the Capital programme. He advised that the budget is allocated to each local Area Committee on an annual basis. He outlined the capital expenditure formula, which was agreed by the Council's Strategic Policy Committee on 8 December 2005. He further advised that in the last 3 years, the Council have spent over £23 million repairing roads within Argyll and Bute.

Mr Smith highlighted the method of measuring the surface condition of carriageways which included ride quality, rut depth, cracking, texture depth and edge condition and explained that this was consistent throughout the UK. He further outlined the annual survey of skidding resistance on the A Class road network on the mainland.

Mr Smith spoke of the joint work undertaken together with other agencies, such as Transport Scotland, Utility Companies, Forestry Commission and contributions to other local projects, such as CHORD to ensure, where possible, that works are correlated to ensure the best possible service for road users.

General discussion was had in relation to the sharp edging on the road side, the trunking of the A83 in its entirety and what involvement the Council have with Transport Scotland since the date of trunking on 1 August 2014.

The Chair, thanked Mr Smith for the information provided.

7. COMMUNITY

(a) ARDRISHAIG

Jeanette Laughton advised the group that at the beginning of September 2014, the North Hall was purchased for the Community. She advised that a Planning application had been lodged to replace the windows and heating facilities. Ms Laughton spoke of the difficult relationship the Community Council were experiencing with Scottish Canals. She advised that it began to deteriorate following the refusal of the request for funding from the Community Council for the implementation of their (Scottish Canals) plans.

Ms Laughton advised that the Community Council were keen to revisit their

Community Plan with a view to update. Further information was provided in terms of the problems experienced over the clean up operation of the War Memorial, and also the issue of rats in Victoria Terrace. Ms Laughton advised that the Council's Environmental Health team were contacted around 6 weeks ago, and to date nothing had been done. Councillor Taylor advised that he would look into this matter personally.

On behalf of the Community Council, Ms Laughton extended thanks to the Street Council's Lighting team for their assistance in the erection of the Christmas lights and also banners over the year.

(b) DUNADD

Jim Malcolm advised the group of the recent renewed interest in the Community Council and noted that attendance at meetings is now between 20 and 30 persons. He advised that there had been an extensive consultation exercise in the three villages (Kilmichael, Kilmartin and Ford) and as a result the broadband issues were moving forward with the possibility of the community getting a say in where the green boxes for Fibreoptic will be sited.

Mr Martin advised that the Community Council had also managed to secure funding for their own Christmas lights display.

(c) SOUTH KNAPDALE

David Kent updated the group in terms of the issues experienced in relation to Broadband and mobile phone coverage. He advised that he had been told that the area was not considered to be big enough to constitute the works required. He advised of the frustration felt by the community in this regard. The Chair advised of a presentation at the last meeting of the MAKI Community Planning Group and suggested that the Community Council contact Campbell Cameron from Community Broadband Scotland in this regard. Mr Kent advised that a lack of funding is an issue.

(d) WEST LOCHFYNE

Leonard MacNeil addressed the group in relation to the re-dedication of the War Memorial in Minard Hall. He advised that the service was conducted by Rev. MacLeod and that it had been well attended. He advised of the grant from the Scottish Memorials Trust which had been topped up by the Wind Farm Trust so that the work could be undertaken without having to be paid for by the Community Council. He spoke of the War Memorial in Tullochgorm and advised of the state of disrepair he found there. He advised that the War Memorial falls within the jurisdiction of the Council and urged elected Members to apply for a grant from the trust before the money runs out. Councillor Taylor advised that he would address this matter with the relevant department and also take forward the possibility of the Area Committee looking at the repair of all War Memorials within the MAKI area.

(e) TARBERT

Councillor Horn reported on the press coverage of the poor Christmas tree in Tarbert. She advised that this had now been rectified and the Council's Street Lighting department had done an excellent job in relation to both this and the Christmas lights in Craighouse on Jura. Councillor Horn highlighted a number of initiatives currently ongoing in the area. She advised of the development day which had been run by Tarbert Community Trust to review the Community Action Plan, the meeting with Transport Scotland regarding the co-op crossing and the planned pilot scheme in conjunction with the Harbour Authority to run a bus service which will transport travellers to and from the Waverley when it is in Tarbert.

Councillor Horn advised of the communities delight that a new business was to open in the former Post Office premises. She advised that this was to be a candle making workshop.

8. COMMUNITY PARTNER

Sgt Stuart Watson of Police Scotland spoke of the festive campaign which is now underway throughout the area. He advised that there had been an annual leave restrictions to ensure increased patrols in the area. He highlighted the new drink drive limit and advised of the Shop a Dealer initiative which would be in the press this week.

Mr Watson urged the group to ensure that they kept additional supplies in the car, including blankets etc in case of severe bad weather.

Discussion was had in relation to the loss of the addiction service "Encompass" in the area, with emphasis being put on the gaps in service over the festive period which will inevitably fall on the emergency services.

The Chair thanked Mr Watson for the information provided.

Rod Buchanan of ACHA reported that the regeneration of the eight units in Tarbert was still on course for the scheduled completion date of January 2015. He advised that the twelve units of various sized housing was well under way in Invereray as the contractors were now on site.

The Chair thanked Mr Buchanan for the information provided.

9. COUNCIL SERVICE

Councillor Philand advised that he recognised the Chair's wishes to proceed in future with themes, with the next theme being "health". Councillor Philand advised that he hoped that the current integration of Health and Social Care would also be incorporated in this theme. Councillor Taylor advised that he would take this forward.

Jeanette Laughton advised of an email which had been sent on behalf of the Community Development Officer, which offered Community Councils training, she advised that it was unclear what the training would cover. The Senior Area Committee Assistant agreed to take this back to the Community Development Officer and advise the Community Council's of the outcome by email.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair, spoke of the role of the group going forward. He explained of his intention to take forward themes that reflected what was important within the Community. He advised of the intention to link MAP into the MAKI CPG meeting. The Community Governance Manager explained her role in the CPG process and highlighted the timelines involved in the plans to localise the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). Mrs Elliott advised that following the recent meeting of the MAKI CPG, it had been agreed that she would invite representatives from groups on the proposed membership list to the next meeting, which would be in March 2015. Mrs Elliott further explained that MAP was an organisation on the list and as such she was happy to accept nominations for representatives.

Following general discussion the group expressed their concern that this appears to be “going over well trodden ground” as there had been several attempts in the past to engage with Community Council’s and local organisations which had been fruitless. Mrs Elliott agreed that there had been difficulties in the process, but explained that this was different from area to area. She advised of the caucus of Community Councillors who regularly participated in the Bute and Cowal CPG. She explained how there would be a feed in to the CPP Management Committee which would take the issues which mattered within the local community, as identified by Members of the CPG and progress them.

It was noted that the general feeling of the group was that an elected Member who also attends the MAP meeting, could take forward the issues being discussed on behalf of the group.