

**MINUTES of MEETING of BUTE AND COWAL AREA COMMITTEE held via MICROSOFT TEAMS
on TUESDAY, 31 AUGUST 2021**

Present: Councillor Bobby Good (Chair)

Councillor Jim Anderson	Councillor Liz McCabe
Councillor Gordon Blair	Councillor Yvonne McNeilly
Councillor Jim Findlay	Councillor Jean Moffat
Councillor Audrey Forrest	Councillor Alan Reid

Attending: Stuart McLean – Committee Manager
Mark Calder – Project Manager
Moya Ingram – Strategic Transport & Infrastructure Manager
Isobel Strong – Bute Community Council
Kenny Matheson – Dunoon Community Council
Robert MacIntyre – Bute Community Council

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence intimated.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bobby Good made a financial declaration of interest in items 6 – Roads and Infrastructure Services Update on the basis he is a part-time employee of West Coast Motors. He remained in the meeting taking no part in the discussion of this item.

3. MINUTES

(a) Bute and Cowal Area Committee - 1 June 2021

The minutes of the Bute and Cowal Area Committee held on Tuesday 1 June 2021 were approved as a correct record.

(b) Bute and Cowal Area Community Planning Group - 17 August 2021

The minutes of the Bute and Cowal Area Community Planning Group meeting held on Tuesday 17 August 2021 were noted.

(c) Cowal Transport Forum - 24 May 2021

The minutes of the Cowal Transport Forum meeting held on Monday 24 May 2021 were noted.

(d) Cowal Transport Forum - 20 August 2021

The minutes of the Cowal Transport Forum meeting held on Friday 20 August 2021 were noted.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Question from Kenny Matheson, Dunoon Community Council (DCC)

Mr Matheson read out the below question;

Kenny Matheson asked whether school teachers could take part in the School Hub consultation and whether DCC could have an update?

Response from Committee

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly confirmed that as discussed at the recent Community Services Committee, which she chairs, an exercise was undertaken in June 2021 which determined that due to covid pressures the educational change programme would not be taken forward at that point but that all agencies and partners would be embarking on a consultation exercise in due course, which would include discussions with trade unions and Head Teachers with a briefing paper due to be submitted to the Community Services Committee in December 2021.

Question from Kenny Matheson, Dunoon Community Council (DCC)

Kenny Matheson asked what support are Argyll and Bute Council giving to the people who lost their livelihood, through no fault of their own, due to the recent fire in Dunoon?

Response from Committee

The Chair confirmed that the Area Committee would give every support it could and, along with the rest of the Committee, commended the Roads and Infrastructure Service (RIS) for acting swiftly in helping during and after the fire along with other public sector partners.

Discussion focused on how to re-establish the pavements and access to the town and whether this unfortunate event offered an opportunity to re-design and improve the town centre.

It was noted that a local volunteer group had been formed with the aim to help support the re-establishment of the area. Councillor Audrey Forrest advised that she was involved with the group as a local volunteer and would feed back to members. Councillor McNeilly suggested it might be beneficial for the group to make contact with Dunoon BID as a statutory body to harness interest and resources.

Response from Project Manager

The Project Manager confirmed that the Business Gateway team in Economic Development would be best placed to advise on support available and that he would request they get in contact with DCC. The Committee Manager confirmed that he had obtained some information from the Employability team, which he would pass onto DCC.

Question from Isobel Strong, Bute Community Council

Isobel Strong asked if there was an impact analysis carried out before the decision was made to close the nursery at Arden Craig Gardens; had Officers established who they would procure the plants from and at what volume, where would they be stored; what would be the impact on the carbon footprint; and would gardeners be redeployed to other areas within the service?

Response from Committee

The Chair stated that there would be a full debate on this subject later on the agenda but invited the Project Manager to respond where possible.

Response from Project Manager

The Project Manager confirmed it was not appropriate to comment on any individual employees' situation but understood the main concern was over the quality of any future provisions and stated that members of the public should see no noticeable difference in the new model as the gardens were not closing and would remain open, planted and staffed. Processes and figures would be determined after the procurement exercise which would be structured towards the quality of plants. He confirmed all nursery services would be taken into consideration during the procurement exercise, not just those at Arden Craig.

Confirmation was sought and received on the amount of donations received and what income was generated by Arden Craig Gardens, with the figures to be issued to Isobel Strong.

Question from Willie Lynch, Dunoon Community Council

In Mr Lynch's absence, the Committee Manager read out the below question:

The lack of communication from the Roads and Infrastructure department is nothing short of a scandal. You raise an issue on their email address and receive an automatic reply and nothing else! Road planners do not answer emails, we do not know any managers in Amenities. The operatives who pick up the rubbish in the town centre do a superb job and the rest of the town is neglected. Sandbank Road and the A815 are in dire need of resurfacing. Sandbank Road must be one of the top five busiest roads in Argyll and Bute. It has ruts and is uneven. Articulated lorries, low loaders, vehicles with trailers and skip lorries bounce down the road making much noise which is a nuisance for people living on those streets and affecting their mental health.

Response from Committee/Project Manager

Councillor Gordon Blair, Councillor Jim Anderson and Councillor Alan Reid agreed that anonymous emails, as well as Casebook responses from services were not helpful and that Officers were to be encouraged to add their names to all methods of communication.

The Project Manager confirmed that when dealing with many emails each day, the communication model used for tracking enquires sent to the central inbox was the most efficient and practical method but would contact DCC to advise them on the best way to raise issues.

Councillor McNeilly stated that members of the public are also reminded that they can contact their ward councillors to pursue matters directly with Officers on their behalf.

Question from Willie Lynch, Dunoon Community Council

In Mr Lynch's absence, the Committee Manager read out the below question:

Can we gain funding for the pier? It is an iconic landmark but needs to be brought up to standard. We cannot wait for a decision on passenger ferries to be made before action. That will take a time. I do not think that there is necessary correlation between the two. A

lot of good work is being done or in the planning to improve our town and make it more attractive. Lets step up to the plate and add the pier to the action plan.

Response from Project Manager

The Project Manager confirmed that this was not for Officers to answer as allocation of funding was for Members to determine.

5. AREA SCORECARD FQ1 2021/22

The Committee considered the Area Scorecard report for Financial Quarter 1 of 2021-2022 (April-June 2021) which illustrated the agreed performance measures.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee;

1. noted and considered the performance presented on the Scorecards and supporting commentary;
2. noted that upon receipt of the Quarterly Performance Report the Area Committee Members could contact either the Performance Improvement Officer or the responsible named officer with any queries; and
3. noted that work was ongoing and to respond to the Performance Improvement Officer with requests or comments regarding the layout and format of the Report and Scorecard.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services dated 31 August 2021, submitted)

6. ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report which provided an update on the recent activities carried out by the Roads and Infrastructure Service. This included information on how the £10m Roads Capital Programme is progressing and how the Service continues to respond to covid-19 whilst focusing on delivering frontline services.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee considered and noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated July 2021, submitted)

7. RECYCLING PERFORMANCE

The Committee considered a report which provided details on the council's recycling and landfill diversion performance along with national policy, targets and regulations which are likely to impact on future performance.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee noted and considered the details outlined within the report including the national policy drivers that would likely impact over the next few years.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated 31 August 2021, submitted)

8. DUNOON TOWN CENTRE SPACES FOR PEOPLE MEDIUM TO LONG-TERM PROPOSALS

The Committee considered a report which provided a recommended approach to develop medium to longer term aspirations to improve the pedestrian and cycle facilities in Dunoon Town Centre as requested by Members at the 2 March 2021 Bute and Cowal Area Committee.

Discussion focused on the success of the Discover Dunoon smartphone app and how a version would be developed for Rothesay.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee;

1. noted the relevant responsibilities and funding situation of the Roads and Infrastructure Service and the Strategic Transportation Team;
2. acknowledged that the Strategic Transportation Team does not have budget or staff resource to progress any changes in Dunoon Town Centre and that there are no suitable challenge funds currently accepting applications which could fund such work;
3. welcomed the measures being implemented by the Strategic Transportation Team to support residents and visitors to Dunoon and Cowal to travel more actively; and
4. noted that future reports would be submitted at later stages to the Bute and Cowal Area Committee to discuss future aspirations.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 30 July 2021, submitted)

9. DRAFT BUTE AND COWAL AREA COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The Draft Bute and Cowal Workplan, as of August 2021, was before the Committee for noting.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee noted the Bute and Cowal Workplan.

(Reference: Bute and Cowal Workplan dated 31 August 2021, submitted).

10. NOTICE OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 13

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Moffat, seconded by Councillor Findlay:

Motion

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee request that the Council pause, for a period of 18 months from August 2021, the implementation of the decision of the budget meeting of 25 February 2021, regarding the future of Arden Craig Gardens making a saving of £5000 for the council and ask that the relevant service, in the meantime, find that saving from existing budgets. This will enable the community and other interested parties time to develop a business plan to still achieve the savings for the council and allow the gardens to remain open and operate commercially on a basis to be agreed. This would allow an opportunity for a very strong community group to get the required business plan and income revenue in place to continue the running and advancement of the gardens at no cost to the council whilst achieving the savings identified in the budget. This may also provide an income for the council.

Amendment

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee:

- (i) notes that all Councillors present at the Budget vote on 25 February 2021 voted to save £10,000 by stopping the nursery growing service at Kilmory and Arden Craig;
- (ii) notes that this decision has no impact on the continued operation of Arden Craig Gardens;
- (iii) welcomes the formation of the Arden Craig Garden Interest Group (AGIG) and the engagement of officers from Roads and Infrastructure with that group;
- (iv) thanks AGIG for carrying out their visitor survey and for engaging with the Council over the future of Arden Craig gardens and nursery; and
- (v) requests that Council officers continue their dialogue with AGIG and submit a paper to the December meeting of the EDI Committee with their recommendations regarding AGIG's plans for the gardens and nursery.

Moved by Councillor Reid, seconded by Councillor McNeilly.

The Members voted by calling the roll and voted as follows:

Motion	Amendment
Councillor Moffat	Councillor Reid
Councillor Findlay	Councillor McNeilly
Councillor Anderson	Councillor McCabe
Councillor Blair	Councillor Good
Councillor Forrest	

Decision

With the Motion receiving 5 votes and Amendment receiving 4 votes, the Committee resolved accordingly.