

Community Planning Partnership Area Committee Report
Time for Change Argyll and Bute October/ November 2022

<https://timeforchangeargyllandbute.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/timeforchangeargyllandbute/>

As a group of residents concerned about climate change, TfC continues to meet fortnightly on zoom, raising awareness and campaigning on climate change. Members are currently pressing politicians to stand against expansion of oil and gas in the latest licensing round.

TfC were pleased to welcome 60 plus residents, MSPs and Councillors to an in person Land and Sea event in Lochgilphead to listen to speakers and explore around a dozen stalls showing the good work around Argyll.

<https://timeforchangeargyllandbute.org/land-and-sea-event-goes-swimmingly/>

RESILIENCE

As a group we are increasingly concerned with need to build resilience in all areas and communities in Argyll and Bute.

There was a great response from A&B Council, Public Sector Partners, the Third Sector and indeed neighbours and friends during the covid epidemic. People and Organisations at all levels are exhausted and this may in part reflect the number of Community Councils that will no longer be or are quorate in the 2022-2026 cycle.

Unfortunately the current economic, energy and climate situation is almost certain to require another winter of pulling together.

We ask those listening, as a Planning Partnership to think and build in, a longer term and broader view than just this winter. To use the difficulties we will face as a feed into cooperative strategic planning for what is acknowledged as the climate crisis and the need for community resilience.

Public Sector Bodies are likely to be ahead within their own parameters and hopefully can and are building partnerships. Outwith this, in communities and in some third sector organisations there is lack of knowledge and surety as to what can be done or is allowed to be done.

A great deal of resilience comes simply from knowing who can be turned to, who has capacity or access what is needed.

Many Community Councils and community groups and organisations kept going through covid, with the use of teams or zoom but others either didn't have the technical capacity or know what was ok, to keep in the way of data and email contacts etc.

Our world is built around communication, can communities in whatever form build a resilient back up.

Think of the recent instances where communities have been left stranded, to their own devices and do a 'what if' scenario.

On the 20th Oct 2022 two cables carrying internet and telephone and mobile services to Shetland telephone were cut and there was potential for other services to be at risk. A major incident was declared.

Weather events such as storm Arwen (Dec 2021) are likely to become more common. This brought down power lines, communications, closed roads and left many in the north-east on their own with no services and no way of calling for help or knowing who was in need.

The inter connector to the Western Isles fractured in 2020, power and communications were lost. Due to the cable fault power was neither available from the GRID or was able to be exported, income from community wind farm enterprises was lost and polluting back-up diesel generators

installed for around a year. <https://renews.biz/64100/call-for-upgrade-to-failed-western-isles-interconnector/>

BT has paused the national roll out (scheduled for 2025) of VOIP (voice over internet protocol) which works through broadband but many of us have been switched already and are vulnerable to power and internet outage. BT has admitted that they have more work to do on getting better back-up solutions in place when storms and power cuts disrupt the service.

SPNetworks are beginning to install monitors but currently don't know there is a power cut or how wider spread it is until enough of us call 105 to report it. If mobile phones are out of charge or towers are down we are on our own.

E.g. Climate Ready Loch Ken in rural Galloway listed tractors and power saws, who had freezers or open fires etc, to provide clearing for storm or flood or snow or places where people could safely gather and share.

This is a 10-year plan, we may need to react sooner. Climate change is approaching more rapidly than we think and world and national events are upon us now. <https://lochken.org.uk/lochkenplan/>

Warm spaces are opening to help communities through the winter energy crisis, could these be hubs for information to be permissively collected, who has a landline, what resources are locally available.

This is not a harbinger of doom but an ask for everyone to think ahead strategically, not easy when fire fighting in a crisis and to ask at every turn will this action exacerbate or mitigate climate change, solve or promote problem in the future.