

**MINUTES of MEETING of MID ARGYLL, KINTYRE & THE ISLANDS AREA COMMITTEE held
by MICROSOFT TEAMS
on WEDNESDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Present:

Robin Currie (Chair)

Councillor John Armour
Councillor Jan Brown
Councillor Garret Corner
Councillor Robin Currie

Councillor Donald Kelly
Councillor Tommy MacPherson
Councillor Dougie McFadzean
Councillor Douglas Philand

Attending:

Shona Barton, Committee Manager
Mark Calder, Project Manager
Anna Watkiss, Senior Planning Development Officer
Seymour Adams, Vice-Chair, CHARTS

Prior to the commencement of business, the Chair made the following tribute to Councillor John McAlpine who passed away in July 2022;-

I take the chair of our Area Committee today very reluctantly due to the saddest of circumstances.

As we all know, our colleague and friend, John McAlpine, passed away suddenly on Monday 18th July after a short period of illness.

It is several weeks since his death, but this is our first Area Committee meeting since, and it is fair to say, I think, that the sense of shock and sadness is still very much with us all, and that we feel it especially today here, at this committee.

John was a fierce champion for Kintyre and the islands over the years, both in his council life and in his personal life. His election campaign earlier this year was full of determination, vigour and vitality. He was absolutely delighted to chair this committee with its focus on local matters of significance and importance. It is a tragedy that he did not get the opportunity to fulfil the promises he made with such passion and energy.

We know too that outside of council life John was very much involved in his home community of Tarbert, taking a very active part in local clubs and organisations, both as a keen supporter and a sportsman, too. There have been many stories shared not only of his talents as a footballer (in his younger days) and a bowler in later years, but also of his sense of fun and good craic away from the sporting arena. His community remember him as a great character and with much fondness. We remember him as a good friend and committed colleague who wanted to do the best for his community. And, of course, our thoughts are still very much with Karen, his wife, and Sam, his son, as they come to terms with the loss of John.

Colleagues, let us pause for a moment to remember John McAlpine.

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies intimated.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. MINUTES

(a) Minutes of the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee held on Wednesday, 8 June 2022

The Minute of the Meeting of the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee, held on Wednesday 8 June 2022, was approved as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Sarah Moorcroft from Carradale submitted the following question, which was read out by the Committee Manager:-

I refer to the recent BBC news article entitled the Kintyre Windfarms 'gold rush'

The article refers to the siting and planned sitings of large Windfarms across the whole of Kintyre, and highlights the deal that has been made between the Windfarms operators and the global giant Amazon, providing Amazon with fixed rate electricity.

I quote from the article

Scottish Power Renewables signed what is known as a power purchase agreement for Beinn an Tuirc 3 with Amazon. It means that all the power generated at the 14-turbine wind farm belongs to the giant US corporation. The deal also means that Amazon benefits from a fixed price for the duration of its 10-year deal with SPR.

During this time of extreme financial hardship, with massive increases in electricity prices, and with families across Kintyre having to make decisions about how to prioritise food or heating for their families, does the council consider that it is fair, that electricity generated on the Kintyre peninsula is being used to support a rich multinational organisation over and above the people who live and work on Kintyre? What support is being given by the council to help local communities negotiate with these energy suppliers, so that local people can benefit from local and reduced tariff electricity powered by Kintyre winds. The people of Kintyre need access both to locally generated electricity similar to the 20% ownership schemes in Denmark, business skills to assist with complicated negotiations with multinationals, and support with lobbying the Scottish Parliament for a fair share of renewable energy generated on local soil.

Can the council outline how they are supporting Kintyre in this area?

The Committee Manager advised on a response from Fergus Murray, Head of Economic Development as follows:-

The council determines the suitability, or otherwise, of on shore wind developments through the planning system. Windfarms over 50MW are determined through the section 36 process by the Scottish Government with the council consulted on to provide a local view. Wind farms under 50MW are determined by the council as a Planning Authority.

Private funding arrangements with the developers of on shore wind farms and third parties are not a matter the council has any jurisdiction on. Developers have to go down these routes to obtain the necessary finance to develop their schemes. Without access to this type of funding on shore wind was/is unlikely to be viable although the market is constantly changing depending on the price of electricity and Government subsidy. A key issue considered by the council when determining the suitability of a wind farm or otherwise is the impact on local communities and the landscape. This has resulted in a number of refusals being given and we also look at cumulative impacts.

It should be noted that not all the profit from these farms leave Argyll and Bute. Most companies have developed community benefit schemes that give back to communities and in Kintyre the latest scheme through Scottish Power Renewables distributes circa £270k split between 3 Kintyre community councils. We also have the example of Glen Barr a wind farm developed by Fyne Futures and of course Gigha which was one of the first community owned wind farms. Other commercial windfarms give discounted energy to neighbours including in Kintyre and other benefits some give nothing apart from the jobs during construction and maintenance.

The Scottish Government has encouraged communities to buy into wind farms but the raising of finance to achieve this has proved problematic and I am not aware of this been achieved in Scotland albeit I do not have detailed information on this at this time. This is something to check with the Government.

The council has prepared a Renewable Energy Action Plan and created a community renewables opportunity portal to assist communities in negotiating with developers. It should be noted that contributions are entirely voluntary in Scotland and there is no requirement to have community benefits through the planning process. Our ability to do more for communities is limited due to the need for budget savings and the reduction of ABRA meetings as a direct result of this.

Given the power to compel companies to go down certain routes lies with both the UK and Scottish Governments the council will have to determine if it wants to go down that route, or not. The situation is made more complex with the urgent need to reach net zero which will require additional renewable energy at a price that is affordable to consumers.

It should be noted that the council is working with Naturescot to see if a coordinated approach to the further development of on shore wind Kintyre is feasible. An approach to the Scottish Government for funding to assist this process was recently rejected. Alternative funding sources are being looked at to take this forward and this will include direct approaches to established operators of wind farms.

[Community Renewables Opportunity Portal \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](http://argyll-bute.gov.uk)

There were no other questions received.

5. CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ARTS ASSEMBLY FOR THE ARGYLL AND THE ISLES (CHARTS)

Seymour Adams, Vice Chair, of the Cultural Heritage and Arts Assembly for the Argyll and the Isles presented the annual review of 2021-22 to the Committee, highlighting the works and activities that have been carried out by the Assembly within the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands area. Seymour advised that there is a particular focus on youth engagement and providing opportunities for young people such as gaining qualifications in Heritage. He also advised that they had secured funding to employ a Gaelic Officer who will work on developing a Gaelic cultural strategy for Argyll and Bute.

Work on other projects including “Heritage Horizons” was also highlighted with it being noted that CHARTS has secured additional funding to allow for a museum technician apprenticeship at Campbeltown Museum.

The Chair thanked Seymour for his most informative presentation and commended him for the work which CHARTS continues to undertake.

Decision

The Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee noted the information provided in the presentation.

(Reference: Presentation by Seymour Adams, CHARTS)

6. AREA PERFORMANCE REPORT - FQ1 2022/23

The Committee considered the Area Scorecard report for Financial Quarter 1 of 2022-2023 (April - June 2022), which illustrated the agreed performance measures.

Decision

The Committee

- 1) Noted and considered the performance and supporting commentary as presented.
- 2) Agreed to contact either the Responsible Named Officer or Sonya Thomas with any queries; and
- 3) Noted that work is ongoing and to respond to Sonya Thomas with requests or comments regarding the layout and format of the Performance Report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with Responsibility for Performance and Improvement, dated September 2022, submitted)

7. ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report which provided an update on the recent activities of Roads and Infrastructure Services and highlighted works being undertaken which were relevant to the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands area.

Decision

The Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee considered and noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with Responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services, dated September 2022, submitted)

8. RECYCLING AND RECOVERY PERFORMANCE

The Committee gave consideration to a report on the Recycling and Recovery Performance which highlighted details on the steady progress made on recycling and composting performance during 2021 after being affected during the early months of the pandemic in 2020.

Decision

The Committee noted and considered the details as outlined in the report and the national policy drivers that will likely impact over the coming years.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with Responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services, submitted)

*** 9. TARBERT AND LOCHGILPHEAD REGENERATION FUND - PROJECTS UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the projects which have been undertaken funded by the Tarbert and Lochgilphead Regeneration Fund and sought approval for the allocation of any unspent funding from the Lochgilphead Front Green Project to support the delivery of the Ardrishaig North Public Realm project:-

Decision

The members of Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee agreed

1. To note the progress made with the projects as detailed within the report; and

2. Recommended to Policy and Resources Committee the transfer of any unspent funding from the Lochgilphead Front Green project to support the ongoing delivery of the Ardrishaig North Public Realm project.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth Public Document Pack, submitted)

10. REFERRAL FROM THE AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER REVIEW

The Committee gave consideration to a report which had been referred by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on the Scrutiny Review of Community Asset Transfer Review.

Decision

The members of the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee noted the information provided.

(Reference: Extract of Minute of Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 23 June 2022 and report by Chair of the Community Asset Transfer Scrutiny Panel, Submitted)

11. MID ARGYLL, KINTYRE AND THE ISLANDS AREA COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The Committee gave consideration to the Area Committee workplan for future meetings.

Decision

The members of the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands agreed:-

1. That the Committee Manager would make contact with Education to ascertain if the Secondary School reports scheduled for December could be split to allow for 2 to be considered at the December 2022 meeting and 2 to be considered at the March 2023 meeting;
2. To request that a report on cemetery provision and maintenance in the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands area be provided to the December meeting of the Committee;
3. To communicate to the Head of Roads and Infrastructure Services that consideration be given to allowing input from the Area Committee on the Roads Capital and Revenue Plans prior to them being submitted to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee for decision ; and
4. That the Workplan would remain on the agenda for future meetings as a discussion item.

(Reference: Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee Workplan, submitted)