

**MINUTES of MEETING of OBAN LORN & THE ISLES AREA COMMITTEE held in the ON A HYBRID BASIS ON MICROSOFT TEAMS AND IN THE MCCAIG SUITE, CORRAN HALLS, OBAN
on WEDNESDAY, 14 JUNE 2023**

Present:

Councillor Andrew Kain (Chair)

Councillor Kieron Green

Councillor Amanda Hampsey

Councillor Willie Hume

Councillor Jim Lynch

Councillor Luna Martin

Councillor Andrew Vennard

Attending:

Wendy Brownlie, Head of Education – Learning & Teaching

Peter Bain, Head Teacher, Oban and Tiree High School

Shelley Carmichael, Head Teacher, Tiree High School

Aileen Jackson, Deputy Head Oban High School

Aine Cooney, Tiree High School

Susie Carmichael, Head Teacher Lochdon & Ulva Primary School

Bernie MacMillan, Head Teacher Taynuilt Primary School

Rachel Binnie, Education Manager

Mark Calder, Project Manager, Roads and Infrastructure

Adrian Jackson-Stark, Project Manager, Development and Economic Growth

Melissa Stewart, Governance Officer

Stewart Watson, Assistant Networks and Standards Manager

Genna Lugue, Regeneration Officer, Development and Economic Growth

David Hagerty, Community Development Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Councillor Julie McKenzie.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated.

3. MINUTES

(a) Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee - 8 March 2023

The Minute of the meeting of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee, held on 8 March 2023, was approved as a correct record.

(b) Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Community Planning Group - 10 May 2023

The Minute of the meeting of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Community Planning Group, held on 10 May 2023, was noted.

(c) **Oban Common Good Fund - 30 March 2023**

The Minute of the meeting of the Oban Common Good Fund held on 30 March 2023, was noted.

4. OBAN HIGH SCHOOL ATTAINMENT REPORT

The Committee heard from Mrs Jackson, Deputy Head Teacher of Oban High School, who picked out some highlights from the school report which had been provided to Members. The report included information in relation to vocational additions to Curriculum for 4th, 5th and 6th year pupils; the pass rates of National qualifications and the Insight dashboard, shows the school is above the virtual comparators in most subjects. Information in relation to wider achievement qualifications; equity and attainment and Pupil Equity Funding was also provided.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee noted the contents of the report and information provided.

(Reference: Report by Head Teacher, Oban High School, dated June 2023, submitted)

5. TIREE HIGH SCHOOL ATTAINMENT REPORT

The Committee heard from Ms Cooney, Senior Deputy Teacher of Tiree High School, who picked out some highlights from the school report which had been provided to Members. The report relates to the attainment of Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy and Gaelic; the pass rates of National qualifications and the Insight dashboard. 75% of the Teachers are now dual qualified which allows pupils to be offered 52 subjects compared to on 31 last year; NAT 5 results in literacy and numeracy had improved; and that 100% of pupils gained full employment going to university.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee noted the contents of the report and information provided.

(Reference: Report by Head Teacher, Tiree High School, dated June 2023, submitted)

6. TOBERMORY HIGH SCHOOL ATTAINMENT REPORT

The Committee heard from Ms Carmichael, Head Teacher of Tobermory High School, who picked out some highlights from the school report which had been provided to Members. The report included information in relation to attainment of Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy and Gaelic; the pass rates of National qualifications and the Insight dashboard. Since the COVID pandemic the focus has been on wellbeing working with community links and there was a recent trip on the Waverley Steamer from P1s and up which was a successful and enjoyable experience for all.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee noted the contents of the report and information provided.

(Reference: Report by Head Teacher, Tobermory High School, dated June 2023, submitted)

7. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Duncan Martin – Oban Community Council

The opportunities for more academic pupils has been talked about. How well are schools stretching more gifted pupils?

Peter Bain commented that there are 98 subjects on the curriculum and that the number of students leaving with 8 or more highers places the school in the top 20 in the country. Mr Bain also explained that academics were not purely the focus and that pupils, in addition to qualifications, also required to demonstrate experiences of disciplinary learning and personal endeavour.

Duncan Martin reflected that he was a friend of a parent whose child went to Cambridge University and that they hadn't felt the support offer to pupils going to University outside of Scotland had been as well supported.

Mr Bain advised that Schools seek to support every individual and provide any necessary certification to get into any University in Scotland. He commented that schools do have networks that pupils going to Universities in England or Europe and pupils are put in touch with others who have direct experience. He also stated that schools offer interview training and support to sit entrance tests.

The Secondary School Head Teachers, and Depute Head Teachers, left the meeting at this point and the Committee considered the questions that had been submitted in advance of the meeting before taking questions from those attending.

Question 1 – 4 - Frank Roberts, Oban Community Council

It has often been suggested to me that parking wardens are routinely sent from OLI to other areas, leaving Oban under resourced. Will the Council please advise therefore:-

1. During the year 2022-23 how many parking wardens (FTE) were employed in each respective council area (by quarter)?
2. Were parking wardens re-allocated from OLI to other areas during their normal working hours and on how many occasions also by quarter?
3. Were parking wardens from OLI offered overtime to work in other Council areas and if so what areas?
4. Have other parking wardens from other Council areas been sent to OLI either during their normal working hours or as overtime?

I would like to Council to respond in writing and would like a time limit on the response.

The questions will be put to the relevant department and Councillor Kain will request that the response is issued timeously.

Question 5 – Roddy McCuish

Roddy submitted the following question prior to the meeting by email:-

I recently reported rat increase of some alarming numbers at the junction of Polvinister Road and Glencruitten Road. I thought the quickest way to investigate this problem was to approach one of my elected members. I contacted Cllr Lynch who replied very promptly and reported it to the relevant department. Unfortunately he was told the warden was unexpectedly unavailable at the moment and would look at it on their return. I fully understand that staff may be unavailable for various reasons. Surely there are other staff who can cover for the warden or even have someone seconded from another area. As you are all very aware Oban is very busy and to be without a warden of any sort is not a good position to be in as their duties are many. Also I hasten to add the workload this person will have to come back to will place tremendous pressure on them.

Mark Calder responded to the question stating that in reality the answer is No; there is no mechanism in place to cover unavailable environment wardens in each geographical area. Mr Calder, commented that as a former Councillor, Mr McCuish may recall, the service underwent significant savings which resulted the Environment Wardens cut from 9 to 4. As a consequence there is no provision to cover when a warden is off.

Question 6 – B T MacDougall

B T MacDougall submitted the following question by email prior to the meeting:-

Have any of the representatives been to visit the two Piers in Taynult recently which are overcrowding with motorhomes, stealth caravans and tents which have resulted not only in human excrement and toilet paper in almost every shrub along the beach and repeated anti-social behaviour such as emptying cassette toilets into the Loch, driving on the beach and reckless driving on the single track road towards the Piers.

This has been reported to the council and the police, yet police patrols seem to have ceased or greatly reduced since the arrival of the sunny weather.

What needs to happen before this issue is being addressed by the council and police?

The local resident Otter population has already moved further up the river and it will only be a question of when and not if with all the fire pits etc before the wildlife is further impacted.

I am all for tourism but this is purely vandalism.

Mark Calder was able to pick up on part of the question, in that the Council would not have any responsibility for the piers or adjacent car parks as the land belongs to someone else. Any anti-social behaviour should be reported directly to Police

Scotland, however, fly tipping can be reported to the Council using the online form or by phoning the Council's Contact Centre.

Chair stated that in essence the problems should be reported to the relevant Land Owners.

Question 7 – Neil MacIntyre

Question submitted by email prior to the meeting:-

Could you please put a question to Mark Calder or any officer that's present about how much CCTV plans will cost if it goes ahead. Even a projected cost would be great if they are putting these plans together and are waiting for further information.

Mark Calder advised that the costs are negligible between £500 - £2000 which could be absorbed as part of the existing budget. We would be looking at installing 1 – 2 cameras at Ganavan possibly on the toilet block and one elsewhere to cover the area. At the moment we are working with the Council's Term Contractor who provides support for all our CCTV systems across the whole area, to agree a specification with them and get their professional advice on the appropriate system for the area.

Question 8 – Laura Corbe, Keeping Oban Beautiful

Laura submitted the following question by email prior the meeting:-

We, a community collective led by Keep Oban Beautiful & with volunteers from amongst others Oban High School, would like to ask for permission to work on council land to rehabilitate a small stretch of woodland located close to the high school. The goal is to create a wellness walk & woodland heaven in this otherwise unused scrap of land. We do not wish to acquire the land, which may not be possible anyway as I believe Scottish water may have an interest there, but would like to have all permissions/risk assessments/training/ paperwork in place to begin work by the start of the 23/24 academic year. There are several invasive species which we will endeavour to remove however there is a small amount of Japanese Knotweed establishing on site & we'd also like to request Council arrange for its permanent removal as soon as possible.

Mark Calder advised that this is not something that they were aware of but are happy to work with any group who are willing to take any vacant and disused land and do something positive with it for the Community. He confirmed he had Laura's contact details and will get in touch with her directly to take this forward and that he hoped to have an update for the next Area Committee.

Duncan Martin asked if the Council have any plans to deal with the eradication of Japanese Knotweed at the Black Lynn next to the Bridge Café?

Mark Calder advised that he is not sure of the areas specified and would need to find out if the Council is responsible for the removal Japanese Knotweed in the areas. The Council does have a Policy for the Eradication of Japanese Knotweed which he will circulate to the Members and Duncan for their perusal.

Councillor Hume advised that the Council Policy is to spray the Japanese Knotweed in the Autumn which does not eradicate completely, it is an invasive species which requires to be pulled out at the root.

Councillor Luna Martin believes the Council Policy is to inject the Knotweed twice a year, however, there has been a couple of issues raised concerning the cleaning of the council vehicles after the treatment of the Knotweed, which could cause cross contamination?

Mark Calder did not agree that this was the case, there are mechanisms in place for the cleaning of vehicles following work will all invasive species.

Question 9 – Marri Malloy – Oban Community Council

Following a recent visit to Ganavan I witnessed 2 large Campervans parked in the bays with them a car taking up a further space and all their diving equipment taking up another space. It has been in the papers recently that with the issue of camper vans councils are employing specific wardens for this problem which are funded by the Scottish Government – are Argyll and Bute Council going to employ such wardens in Oban and if so, will they be deployed to Helensburgh as the current traffic wardens are. I know the TRO is coming up later in the Agenda, but we will not be permitted to ask questions during that items, so will the TRO cover Ganavan?

Councillor Kain advised that the funding and wardens is not something we are aware of and asked Mark to add this to his list. Councillor Green added that the wardens in Highland were funded by Nature Scotland.

Stuart Watson advised that the Council has 6 traffic/amenity wardens to cover 116 carparks and 2.5km of road, they are put out to where they are most needed and where the demand is higher. Oban has the highest rate of attendance at 80% for a traffic warden to be on site within the town. In terms of Ganavan the Traffic Order was never installed there to raise revenue, the 2 hours free time was to allow people to walk dogs, walk the cycle path and recreational time. The traffic wardens do attend Ganavan, we have worked closely with the Police and the Environment Wardens done joint site visits and there has never been any evidence to what is reported to us. The police have written to us to state there has been no evidence anti-social behaviour.

In comparison to Highland Council where they have a warden to every 500 spaces, Argyll and Bute have a warden to every 1200 spaces, also the Oban wardens are not just covering Oban they are OLI wardens so have to travel to Craignure, Fionnphort and Iona which is a whole working day away from Oban.

Councillor Hampsey asked if the traffic wardens have a schedule to kept to and show how often they attend Ganavan and whether there is an aim as to where these wardens should be and how much time they attend these areas?

Stuart advised that wardens do not have a schedule to follow as the public would pick up on when and where they would be in the area. Wardens also do cash collections and whilst they are carrying out these duties they are unable to do enforcement.

Question 10 – Marri Malloy – Oban Community Council

On reading the report on Play Parks, Helensburgh received £368,500 for 11, play parks, Oban received £33,500 for, it seems, 2 Play Parks, MAKI received £368,500 for 12 and Bute & Cowal received £167,500 for 5. The report mentions 1 new playpark, and I can only assume that is Atlantis Leisure.

As the Play Park at Atlantis Leisure has been deemed new it has not been funded, it has been closed on numerous occasions as it supposed to be maintained by Argyll and Bute Council and we have been told it is because there is no funding. So why has Oban not received more of the funding to allow Atlantis Play Park to be maintained up to standard? It also seems that the children in OLI are unimportant when they only have 2 playparks and the other areas have 11 and 12.

Councillor Kain advised that the funding was for improvements not maintenance. Mark Calder agreed that the funding from the Scottish Government was for playparks, which the Council are responsible for, to be used for improvements and upgrades, broken or unsafe equipment to be replaced.

Mark also stated that there is a live consultation going on at the moment regarding Play Parks, which can be found on the Council's website. The Governance Officer confirmed that the information and link had been emailed to all Community Councils, but will send around again.

Question 12 – Duncan Martin

Duncan had a question in relation to the TRO which is coming up later in the Agenda. The Chair confirmed that he would allow the question to be raised at the relevant item.

Duncan's second question - Oban's raison d'etre is its harbour and the project to create a 21st century governance structure for our harbour is the single most important task at the moment yet neither Mr Smith nor Ms Flanagan consider it important to attend these meetings. I consider that an insult to the people of Oban and the users of our Harbour.

I would like to ask whether at this stage it is possible for the Area Committee to ask the Harbour Board to revisit its decision 18 months ago to proceed towards a municipal port.

Five years ago in this building Mr Smith stated that the Council did not want to run Oban harbour because it lacked the expertise and capability to do so. Over the past five years the Council Officers have established the truth of that statement beyond any doubt.

The task of creating a new Harbour Authority is one which, following Scottish Government Policy, should have been co-produced with the communities - the geographical and the users. The role of the Council should not have been to lead the project but to provide administrative and legal support. But there is a problem : community empowerment means that centre loses power. And those at the centre will always find reasons why they can't let go.

After stalling for at least two years they convinced the Board 18 months ago that a municipal port was the simpler and therefore presumably quicker option and anyway OCHDA didn't have a Business Plan.

Now we still don't have an HRO and there's no sign of the Council's Business plan either.

Everyone around this project is convinced that if the proper co-production process had been followed we would have had a Harbour Trust in place at least two years ago. Even now, I believe that the expertise within or available to OCHDA could produce the proper paperwork in a few weeks.

Councillor Kain, in response, pointed out that he was fairly knowledgeable on the Harbour having read all the paperwork going back to 2012. Kirsty Flannigan and Jim Smith are both significantly engaged and properly exercised in their duties to Oban Harbour, Oban and the wider community. Jim is in other meetings today and Kirsty, as a Director, is significantly engaged but I did talk with both yesterday. With regards to the process, the Harbour Revision Order is sitting with the Scottish Government, and the Council awaits that response. At the appropriate time there will be a special Harbour Board. We are due to have a Harbour Boards Business Day where a designated person, independent from the Council, will be in attendance to brief us, he is the designated person for several ports and is fully aware that the Council is on track to getting a Harbour. If, as suggested, at the December Harbour Board Meeting, that we delay in submitting Revision Order, we would be significantly behind in the process now. This is going forward it is out with our hands, it sits with the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland to get to the next stage, where there will then be a Special Harbour Board Meeting to approve it, followed by a 40 day statutory consultation with all users. The extent of the views on the Harbour Board are to such an extent we are not looking at a parochial harbour but it is a strategic port for Argyll and the whole of Scotland and the broader community and stakeholders include Barra, Mull, Iona, Coll, Tiree and Colonsay. It is their lifeline and once this is established OCHDA will be involved in the Port. Councillor Kain reiterated that it is just not an Oban Bay Port, it is a strategic port for Scotland, and Jim Smith and Kirsty Flannigan are well exercised in the importance of this harbour.

There were follow up questions and comments from Marri Malloy, Frank Roberts and Duncan Martin regarding the need for public consultation on the Order, that there was no monetary benefit for the residents of Oban, perceived lack of financial planning and vision, and that there would be a public enquiry and potential for delays if the Order was as reported.

Councillor Kain and Councillor Vennard made the point that there was no sense in revisiting the historic situation. Councillor Lynch agreed commenting we were dealing with the here and now and that he hoped the community council could play a role in widening access when the public consultation was undertaken.

Councillor Kain commented that there has been considerable misrepresentation on what the Order is going to be and its intent. He felt that the intention would become clearer when the actual Harbour Revision Order comes back, and he re-iterated the intention to create a municipal harbour which will have greater economic development across Argyll.

Phil Hamerton, OCHDA, commented that a development plan could follow the Order. He said that he had hoped there would be a role around future vision and plans in co-creation but until the Order was in place then it's a chicken and egg problem.

Mark Calder responded on the point about financial planning, setting out that the marine estate is managed through a 10 year rolling asset management plan and that there were examples of return on investment across the marine estate. He did not feel statements about lack of financial planning were borne out of any evidence.

8. PRIMARY SCHOOL AREA ATTAINMENT REPORT - OBAN, LORN AND THE ISLES (OLI)

The Committee gave consideration to a report and presentation given by Ms Carmichael, Head Teacher of Ulva and Lochdon Primary Schools and Ms MacMillan, Head Teacher for Taynuilt Primary which provided a range of key information about primary school provision in the Oban, Lorn and the Isles area during the school session August 2022 to June 2023 and reported the National collection of attainment and achievement data from June 2022.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee considered and noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated June 2023, submitted)

9. AREA SCORECARD FQ4 2022/23

Consideration was given to the Area Performance Report for financial quarter 4 of 2022/23 (January to March 2023) which illustrated the agreed performance measures for this period.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee:

1. noted and considered the performance and supporting commentary as presented;
2. noted that upon receipt of the Quarterly Performance Report the Area Committee should 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 and Scorecard.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services, dated 4 May 2023, submitted)

10. CEMETERY MAINTENANCE AND ROAD ACCESS FUND

The Committee gave consideration to a report that provided options on how to spend £75,000 that had been allocated from the Crown Estates funding to a Cemetery Maintenance and Roads Access Fund.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee:

1. agreed the package of proposals up to the value of £75,000; and
2. noted that regular updates would be provided via the Roads and Infrastructure weekly briefings.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services, dated June 2023, submitted)

11. TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER PROPOSED FOR OBAN

The Committee gave consideration to the updated draft report of the Oban on street Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) following officer engagement via the Community Participation Request process.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee agreed that the draft "Argyll and Bute (various streets Oban) (Amendment) Order 220_(TRO) is made.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services, dated June 2023, submitted)

12. ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report which provided links to the recent activities of Roads and Infrastructure Services relevant to the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee considered and noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services, dated June 2023, submitted)

13. GIBRALTAR STREET PUBLIC REALM PROJECT UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to an updated report on the Gibraltar Street Public Realm Project.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee:

1. Noted the content of this report and
2. Considered and agreed an officer approach with regard to public consultation on proposed bespoke signage.

14. HSCP BI-ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT

It was noted that representative, Evan Beswick, had left the meeting due to a prior commitment and that if anyone has any comments, the Governance Officer is happy to feed back to HSCP. Consideration was given to the HSCP Annual Performance Report for 2022-23. The report detailed how the HSCP had performed and also provided progress updates on how they have improved and adapted services which are fit for the future.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee considered and noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Partnership, dated June 2023, submitted)

15. SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES FUND 2023/24

Consideration was given to a report which detailed recommendations for the award of the Council's Supporting Communities Fund (SCF) for the 2023/24 round of funding that had been made available in the Oban, Lorn and the Isles area.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee agreed that the 18 applications, marked as 'Award' within Appendix 1 of the report, are awarded funding from the Supporting Communities Fund Budget totalling £35,843.79, as follows:

16. JOHN OF LORN BEQUEST

(a) Report by Executive Director responsible for Legal and Regulatory Support

The Committee gave consideration to a report which provided information regarding 23 applications that had been received for support from the John of Lorn Bequest. Of the applications received 3 were refused as they did not meet the criteria with £1.9k being awarded to 20 applicants.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee noted and considered the number of awards made since December 2022.

17. DRAFT OBAN, LORN AND THE ISLES AREA COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

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

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee considered and noted the contents of the workplan.