

**MINUTES of MEETING of OBAN LORN & THE ISLES COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM held in
the OBAN COMMUNITY FIRE STATION, OBAN
on MONDAY, 26 MAY 2014**

Present: Present

Cmdr. Alex Purdie (Scottish Fire and Rescue)
Cmdr. Martin Hill (Scottish Fire and Rescue)
Alasdair MacDougall (Cllr.)
Iain MacKinnon (Argyll and Bute Council) (Vice Chair)
Tracy Preece NHS Highland (Choose Life Coordinator)
Murray Humphries Lochwatch Loch Awe
Insp. Julie McLeish Police Scotland

In Attendance

Stephen Doogan Argyll and Bute Council (Governance and Law)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:
Fiona Scott (Planning and Regulatory Services)
Carol Keeley (Emergency Planning)
Robert Cowper (Anti-Social Behaviour Coordinator)

The meeting commenced at the designated time with Iain MacKinnon in the chair. Iain noted that as all forum members present would be aware, Cllr Glen Lee had resigned her position as a councillor in the last reporting period, and consequently she would no longer chair the forum. Iain stated that as Vice-Chair, he would chair the meetings of the forum until the Oban Lorn and the Isles Area Committee made a new nomination to the forum, at which point the Forum could, if it chose, nominate a new chair. Iain wished his thanks, and the appreciation of the Forum to be recorded in the minute of the meeting for all the work done and the projects promoted by Cllr Glen Lee. The Forum wishes her well in the future.

2. MINUTES

The minute of the previous meeting of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Community Safety Forum – 24th February 2014 was approved as a true record

3. MATTERS ARISING

The Area Governance Officer noted that following the previous meeting, he had recently been advised that responsibility within the council for “Community Resilience” had been transferred to Emergency Planning under Carol Keeley.

The Chair noted that following on from the issues raised previously, an exercise had been conducted on the Connel back road and that the result

of this had been put before the Area Committee. The Area Committee had agreed that the road did not meet the criteria for imposing a reduced limit, and consequently this issue is now resolved with no change to the speed limit.

4. PARTNER UPDATES

(a) POLICE SCOTLAND

Insp. Julie McLeish highlighted that the revised command structure was now in place; that Ch. Insp. Marlene Bailey had officially taken command, and that matters were progressing very well. Julie noted that she was pleased to report that Oban would have a boost in police numbers on the streets, with 3 new probationers taking up positions in the area, as well as an officer undertaking a summer secondment.

Julie noted the unfortunate light aircraft crash on Tiree last weekend, but was happy to report that none of the three occupants of the plane had sustained serious injuries.

She also noted that Operation Myriad continued to run, but that this was largely business as usual for her officers. The crimes receiving enhanced scrutiny include the use, sale and supply of controlled drugs and abuse of other substances, as well as speeding and other traffic offences. Julie noted that while there had been nine road fatalities last year, this year there had so far been none.

Julie noted that the Commonwealth games in July will present a real challenge for police but that her officers are confident and looking forward to it.

(b) SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE

Alex Purdie introduced himself to the forum. and outlined his role as Local Authority Liaison Officer. He highlighted a number of activities in which he had become involved, promoting home fire safety, visits which continue to be well received. Alex highlighted the recent successful RTC scenario carried out in Dunoon, and asked that forum members circulate some of the photographs - if they have the opportunity. The Dunoon scenario was very well received as was the staged "cut out" exercise which was undertaken at Hermitage Academy.

Alex also highlighted the project created by Mitch Dow in which he and Area Governance officer have been involved in promoting a positive change in social work practice as a result of modifications to the assessment forms used. The project has led to approx. 140 referrals, targeting the most vulnerable groups. Finally, Alex

confirmed a number of other activities which are planned to take place the OLI and surrounding areas. These are to include the Bikers Breakfast in Inverary, and the Home Sweet Home Plays in Cowal. The Area Governance officer was asked whether the plays could be brought to Oban as well, and it was agreed that he and Cmdr. Purdie would liaise to see if this was possible.

Cmdr. Martin Hill noted that the spring strategy had been a very successful. Cmdr. Hill indicated his view that that substantive, proactive engagement with the local community had reduced incidents, particularly the Muirburn initiative with only 4 low level grassfires, rather than the huge ones of last year. Going forward, Martin noted that the official summer start date was on 30 June, and it was hoped that the Bikers breakfast on that day would lead to a reduction in RTCs.

(c) **ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**

The Chair noted that the “Employment of Children” by-laws are to receive a “soft re-launch” in that the Environmental Health service were seeing a significant number of young people between fourteen and sixteen ,who were undertaking paid employment outside family businesses , without having the appropriate permit.

The purpose of the permit is not to restrict young peoples activities, but to provide evidence that, the young person’s parents, school, and the council are content that working will not damage the child’s education and that they are only undertaking age appropriate work.

(d) **NHS**

No update was received, however, it was noted that Tracy had provided the Area Governance officer with contacts for the wellbeing networks and that this would be used to see if NHS attendance could be improved.

(e) **LOCHWATCH LOCH AWE**

Murray Humphries noted that there had not been any major incidents on the loch in this reporting period. He also highlighted that Lochwatch had received a very generous cheque from one of the families of the victims of the accident four years ago, and that this would be largely used for the rescue Boat. Murray noted that Lochwatch and the forestry had agreed the transfer of title of an area of land around the monument, and that this area would both be maintained as a memorial, but also be used as a staging point for rescue operations on the loch.

Alex Purdie had to leave the meeting due to other commitments—

5. CHOOSE LIFE

Presentation by Tracy Preece, Choose Life Coordinator.

Tracy highlighted that "Choose Life" as an organisation has until very recently been working to a 10 year suicide prevention strategy. Two of the main targets of the strategy were to firstly train 50% of frontline staff in suicide prevention, and, in so doing reduce suicides by 20%. At the end of the period, it was found that 100% of frontline staff had been trained, and the number of deaths was also significantly down (by 18%).

Tracy noted that although she is based in the NHS, all "Choose Life" work is actually part of the Single Outcome Agreement and is undertaken through a Service Level Agreement with the council. This is likely to continue under the new SOA Agreement.

On reviewing the outcomes of the 10 year strategy, it quickly became clear that the first and most fundamental issue is the need that those at risk of acting on suicidal impulses be treated with compassion. It was noted that even with 10 years promotional work having been done, this does not always happen, and poor treatment of these people, who are often very vulnerable, still remains an issue.

Suicide in Scotland is a significant public health risk; there are however, significant variations of the levels of risk within the population.

Men are currently categorised as being at a higher risk than women; with the highest risk group being men aged 35-54. Mental health and addiction issues can also increase the level of risk, but so too can deprivation and stress.

Unemployment alone is itself not a major factor in most cases, but stress and uncertainty over income levels coupled with under employment or irregular working hours often is a significant factor. Over 60% of men within the 35-54 age group who actually committed suicide, were working, but in low paid or temporary employment.

The link with deprivation is not necessary direct, but it is a constant. Similarly, there is an increased risk for Farmers in this age group. There is insufficient research to be certain but the often isolated nature of the work may be a factor here, as well as a culture in which men typically do not express strong emotion.

Despite the recognised success of the 10 year strategy, the number of suicides in Scotland is still very high when compared with the European average, with Scotland being the 3rd highest in Europe (Only Hungary and Finland are higher).

The latest available figures which are from 2012 show 762 suicides in that year, compared with 174 road fatalities in, (9th lowest of the 40 countries for which figures are available).

Of the 762 suicides in 2012, 9 of the deaths were in Argyll. These deaths have a huge impact, not only on the person themselves, but in the knock-

on effect on friends and families who are then statistically at increased risk themselves, as they deal with the death of the friend or family member.

It is important to realise that research shows that suicide is not actually about people wanting to die; it is about showing them how they can live, and in some cases showing them an alternative way of maintaining control of their life. Many of the topics discussed at the Community Safety Forum can have an influence on suicide related behaviours e.g. ASB or self-harm and it is important to be alert to this.

Lack of access to resources is often cited as a reason for high suicide levels, but if individuals stop and consider what is actually available, there are a lot of resources on offer; although many are not specifically flagged as suicide prevention services. Advice and support is usually available if people know where to look - and want it. This is not necessarily only within an individual's own circle of friends, also but also at community classes, or organisations such as CAB, Money Advice or other advice groups, as well as dedicated support groups such as Dochas or the MS centre.

The work of "Choose Life" going forward now has 4 main objectives

- 1) Continuing Training via the provision of the 2 courses: - SafeTalk and ASIST.
- 2) Identification and intervention in specific instances where people are at risk.
- 3) Peer support for survivors of Suicide (A SOBS group has just started in Lochgilphead and a support group for men affected is also due to come during the summer – this will take the form of a SHED group).
- 4) A study of the availability and lethality of methodologies with a view to making them less attractive.

Key to all the work outlined above is getting people to talk about suicide, and "Choose life" have used comedy, plays and pub quizzes in the past. Tracy advised that they are willing to use almost anything as a platform for enabling discussion.

Another aspect of their future work is a new focus on self-harm prevention including the possibly changing role of role of teaching and pastoral staff.

Self-harm is noted as a specific issue among young people in Oban and it is hoped that this will be able to be targeted and reduced.

6. NO COLD CALLING

No update was provided, but, it was understood that some money had been located by the service for leaflets which had been distributed.

7. FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE GROUP

The Area Governance Officer gave a short verbal update, noting that the all the Community Safety groups are awaiting a strategic steer from Chief Superintendent McEwan, but that the General feeling from the Forums was a real concern that the focus on Community Safety could be lost if the Forums were disbanded. Overall it remains a watching brief

8. BIKER'S ROAD MAP

There had been difficulties in obtaining the necessary statistics, but it was hoped that this could now be resolved given that the command structures are resolved

9. AOCB

The Issue of attendance was raised and the Chair the Area Governance officer agreed to tackle this issue following the meeting by reviewing the mailing list and providing invites to a number of individuals

A question was raised about whether the NADICs signs outside the town could be used to promote road safety messages when not specifically being tasked with Incident updates – the Area Governance officer to liaise with the Chair to investigate

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The dates of the next two meeting were confirmed as 26 Nov 27 August both to be at 2.00 in Oban Community Fire Station.

