

PORT OF MENTEITH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the General Meeting of the Port of Menteith Community Council held on Monday, 6th December, 2022.

Present : Peter Stewart, Chair
Claire Outterside
Alison Forrester

Councillor Elaine Waterson
Valerie Graham, Minutes Secretary

1. Members Present and Apologies for Absence

Apologies from Sheena Makgill-Crichton, Jim Riach and Matthew Woods were noted.

2. Declarations of Interest in the Items of Business

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Adoption of the Draft Minutes of the General Meeting held on 3rd October, 2022

The adoption of the Draft Minutes was proposed by Peter Stewart and seconded by Alison Forrester.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd October, 2022

4.1 Port of Menteith Church & Cemetery

4.1.1 Port of Menteith Church

In advance of the meeting, Sheena Makgill-Crichton had reported that as a result of the survey of the local community regarding the future of the Port Kirk, it had emerged that in general people wanted the building kept as a church for Baptisms, Marriages, Funerals, Christmas, Easter and Remembrance Day etc., and a few people said that they were prepared to be involved with helping at events but didn't really want to be involved in the complex running of it. However, it was felt that the survey had been worth doing and there had been some interesting ideas for other events.

4.1.2 Port of Menteith Cemetery

Sheena had also reported that she had a meeting with Mr. Rennie, the officer standing in for the Cemeteries Officer. This had initially been to discuss the steps up to the Church which someone had recently fallen as they are rather slippery and dangerous as a result of the incorrect stone being used in the most recent repair to them. During the conversation, it emerged that there is some question as to actually owns the steps – the Church or Stirling Council – and this is now involved in legal discussions.

There had also been a discussion about the condition of some of the paths in the cemetery but Mr. Rennie advised that the Council had now agreed to tarmac them.

4.2 Inchmahome

The response from HES regarding Inchmahome had been previously circulated. In Sheena's opinion it had been as expected but she, Alison Forrester and Jim Riach all suggested that the Community Council should request an update of the situation at the beginning of next year as an article in the press had suggested that Scottish Government cuts in funding to HES could result in sites being lost for good which would be a tragedy for Inchmahome.

Action : SMC

4.3 Designation of Rednock Forest as a Local Nature Conservation Site

Sheena Makgill-Crichton was of the opinion that the response Councillor Maxwell received to his enquiry as to why Stirling Council did not have prior contact with the landowners concerned was because it was not known who they were, was totally unacceptable. Jim

Riach pointed out that the Council must have that information for the purpose of Council Tax and other services.

4.4 Force 9 Community Benefit Scheme

Sheena Makgill-Crichton expressed the view that Force 9's decision not to include Port of Menteith in its Benefit Scheme had been very narrow minded but thanks were due to Councillor Earl for all his efforts.

4.5 NPA Entry Sign

There was nothing new to report from the NPA on this subject. Peter Stewart was of the opinion that even a simple metal sign would be an improvement and that the item should continue to be discussed at future meetings.

4.6 Meeting Dates for 2023

With one change from the dates circulated at the previous meeting, the proposed dates for 2023 were approved as:

Monday, 6th February; Monday, 24th April; Monday, 19th June (AGM & General Meeting)
Monday, 21st August; Monday, 2nd October; Monday, 4th December.

5. Roads & Other Issues

5.1 Roads & Verges

5.1.1 Members were advised that following a report at the previous meeting that some of the section of the recently resurfaced A81 near Aberfoyle golf course was already breaking up, Councillor Maxwell had raised the issue with the Council's Roads Department and had been told that the matter was being investigated. However, he had heard nothing further. **Action : Cllr.GM**

5.1.2 As a result of the notices that the B8034 would no longer be gritted due to the weight limit on the Cardross Bridge being reduced to 3T, Stirling Council had been reminded by the Port School, several residents and on behalf of the Community Council, by Councillor Earl, that the section from the junction with the A81 to Cardross Bridge is a school bus route. After review, the Council had subsequently announced that the B8034 would now be gritted between its junction with the A81 down as far as Dykehead but that the remainder of the road to Arnprior would not.

5.1.3 Members were advised that following the Community Council's complaints about the dangerous condition of some of the verges on local roads, the Council Roads Department had agreed to take remedial action but this did not appear to have yet taken place. Councillor Watterson said that she would chase this again. **Action : Cllr.EW**

5.1.4 Members were advised that despite a complaint by the CC at the previous meeting that the siting of the brown tourist sign at the junction of the B8034 and A81 was blocking visibility to the drivers of tractors and heavy vehicles, the Roads Department had responded to say that it wasn't a problem. However, at Councillor Maxwell's request, Sheena Makgill-Crichton had forwarded photographs taken by a tractor driver to show exactly what the problem is but no action had been taken. **Action : Cllr.GM**

5.2 Cardross Bridge

There was nothing new to report about the Bridge. However, members were advised that Councillor Earl had asked for the existing 10T weight-limit signs to be covered to prevent confusion while the 3T limit is in place.

6. Financial Statement

6.1 Statement to 16th November, 2022

Members noted the statement of accounts which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

6.2 Claire Outterside asked for approval for the historical paperwork, currently held by Penny McCoull, to be destroyed now that the accounts have been transferred to her. This was approved by the Chair and supported by Jim Riach. **Action : CO**

7. Correspondence

7.1 General Correspondence Received

Members noted the list of correspondence received which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

7.2 Request from the School Parent Council

Valerie Graham reported that the Parent Council had enquired whether the Community Council would be interested in producing some kind of local information leaflet/flyer that could include details of any upcoming events, website links for the School and Hall etc., and which could be handed out at the Sunday Blethers? Peter Stewart proposed that this should be discussed at the next Community Council meeting. **Action : VG**

8. Planning & Licensing Issues

8.1 New Planning Applications

Members were advised, that following consideration by members, "No Objection" responses had been submitted on behalf of the CC to the following applications:

2022/0266/DET: Replacement of existing holiday unit at Lochend Chalets, Port Of Menteith;
2022/00617/FUL: Conversion of garage to form holiday let accommodation at Newton Granary, Port Of Menteith;
22/00666/FUL: Erection of a single storey, single span steel portal framed canopy at Tradstocks, Ruskie.

8.2 Planning Updates

Members were advised that the following planning application had been approved with conditions;
22/00666/FUL: Erection of a single storey, single span steel portal framed canopy at Tradstocks, Ruskie.

8.3 Planning Notifications

There had been no new Notifications.

8.4 Stirling Council "Local Place Plans" survey

Valerie Graham reported that in preparation of the production of a new Local Development Plan, Stirling Council was seeking information from community groups regarding the development of "Local Place Plans" and had issued a short survey to establish what support there is for them and which communities are already working on one or are considering doing so. The CC's response had been that it was not planning to develop a LPP at the present time.

9. Forestry

9.1 Malling Farm Woodland Creation Scheme

Members were advised that Scottish Forestry has now been asked to put together a woodland creation scheme for the Farm covering an area of approx. 85ha, although the planting area will be reduced to approx. 50ha following a peat survey.

This will be a combination of plantings using species suitable for the conditions and will include Broadleaves & Native Broadleaves, to enhance the current mixed woodland. Additionally there will be areas of open ground to enhance the existing biodiversity of the area and to improve the landscape value by creating a mosaic of habitats. Current land use focuses on grazing of varying quality with the owners looking to diversify the ground. To

ensure establishment, due to a high deer population in the area, the plan is to deer-fence the blocks which will retain access where currently available.

Jim Riach welcomed the creation of a mosaic of habitats to support biodiversity but would be interested to know what provision would be made for public access and if there would be any links to the wider path network as it is well documented that places which are loved and cared for will be better for biodiversity as well as the health and wellbeing of users.

9.2 Forestry & Land Scotland Local Activities Report

Members were advised that no further report had been received.

9.3 Tree disease *Phytophthora ramorum*

Members were advised that a request had been received from Forestry and Land Scotland for a representative to attend a Community Council meeting in the New Year to update members on the tree disease *Phytophthora ramorum*, a fungal-like organism that causes the death of a wide range of trees and shrubs, with impacts on forestry, landscape and local communities.

Members agreed that this would be useful and Jim Riach also said that it would be good to get an update on what could be done by FLS to ensure that the Port of Menteith community is connected to the surrounding forests and woodland by path links and asked for this to be included in the update. **Action : VG**

10. Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park

The November edition of "News from the National Park" had been circulated.

11. Countryside Trust

Jim Riach reported that the Countryside Trust has a new Director, Sue Morris, who previously was the Area Visitor Services Manager for Forestry & Land Scotland & the Project Manager for The Great Trossachs Forest National Nature Reserve. She has worked and lived in the National Park for the past 12 years. Also, that Ellie Mayhew had joined as the new Project Development Manager with a wide-ranging experience in the conservation sector over the past 10 years.

12. Strathard & Trossachs Place Based Visitor Management Group

Jim Riach reported that he had attended the October meeting of the Strathard Strategic Tourism Consultation when an outline of the proposed strategy, which included a specific section on Port of Menteith, had been presented. Jim said that he had reiterated the point that it is a gateway to the Park and that there should be some indication of this by signage/interpretation etc.

He had also spoken to the consultant and outlined the lack of affordable, accessible and available public transport in the area and the absence of connections to the active travel networks. Areas of visitor pressure within the Park had been highlighted and Jim stressed the need to consult with landowners/managers with regard to any proposed developments.

The Gartur-Cobleland potential connection had been identified by the consultants but no other connections to neighbouring communities had been included and Jim had emphasised the need to show connections to adjacent areas such as Flanders Moss, neighbouring communities and service centres for retail, healthcare etc. Comments by all consultees will be reviewed and an updated version created.

13. Reports

13.1 Councillor's Report

In addition to her comments on other items, Councillor Watterson reported that the Refuse Collection survey had closed on 28th November and the results were anticipated to be produced early in 2023.

13.2 NPA Report

In David Mackie's absence, there was no NPA report.

13.3 Carse of Stirling Project Group Report

Jim Riach reported that COSP was currently supporting a funding application by the Forth Rivers Trust to engage with communities and carry out conservation volunteering and engagement relative to the "Forgotten Fish", the European Eel, which is in an endangered position. Discussions have also taken place with the Nairn Family at Lochend Chalets and the Lake of Menteith Fisheries regarding the restoration of the silver eel trap on the Goodie Water.

13.4 Port Hall Committee Report

In Matthew Woods' absence, there had been no report from the Port Hall Committee.

13.5 School Report

A report from the new Chair of the Parent Council, Ben Outterside, had been circulated prior to the meeting. Of particular interest to Members were the programme of forthcoming events and the following items:

- Three new P1 pupils had joined the School at the start of the new term replacing four students who had moved up to the High School;
- The Parent Council had held its AGM via Zoom with the Link Officer at Stirling Council and had been re-assured that at this time there are no plans to close the School;
- The School now has a new website and it is planned to link the Port Hall and the School in order to promote both;
- As part of the Royal Highland Education Trust's programme of events to give pupils an hands-on experience of what careers and opportunities there are within the rural and tourism sector, the entire School had visited the Rednock Estate;
- The Parent Council had expressed its views about the choice parents have to send children to other schools as an alternative to those locally. As a result, this is having an effect on smaller schools like Port of Menteith, which may cause potential new parents to consider the Port School as being too small. Consequently, there is not an even ratio of P1's coming in to the number of P7's leaving.

13.6 Police Report

Members noted the Police Report which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

14. Any Other Competent Business

14.1 Callander Dental Service

Members were advised that Sheena Makgill-Crichton had said that she had already heard from people locally that they won't be going to the alternative Dental practice and Jim Riach had reported that he had made representation to the Callander Dental Practice, Local MSP and Councillors regarding the withdrawal of this basic healthcare service which will further disadvantage rural communities and widen existing inequalities. In addition, withdrawal of the service will result in additional journeys to be made which is at odds with government policy to reduce car use. It will also have significant consequences in relation to additional healthcare costs with regard to nutrition, hospital visits and major interventions which could have been avoided by appropriate local provisions. He was of the opinion that the Community Council should make strong representation to the local MSP and the local Health Board and this was also supported by Peter Stewart and Alison Forrester.

Councillor Watterson reported that she, together with Alexander Stewart, MSP, Evelyn Tweed MSP, Cllr Earl and Cllr Watterson had raised this matter with NHS Forth Valley and Infinity Blu which owns the dental practice. Although the company still has NHS Dental Services in Killin, this does nothing to alleviate or solve the problem of the provision of a local NHS Dental Service. NHS Forth Valley has been placed in special measures and Councillors were to have a meeting at the beginning of December with NHS Forth Valley to get an update on current position.

14.2 Stirling Council DRT Service

Prior to the meeting, Valerie Graham had reported that she had been contacted by a local resident who has a son who suffers from Asperger's Syndrome. Until recently he had been reliant on the DRT service to get him to his part-time job with the NHS in Glasgow. However, the service is now so unreliable, he is unable to get to work as he will never be able to drive.

Councillor Earl had asked the Council about improving the service but apart being told that it was renegotiating rates, there had been no further information.

Members agreed that the Community Council has a duty to support local residents in matters concerning Stirling Council services, including DRT and Councillor Watterson agreed to raise the issue with the Council.

15. Date of Next General Meeting : 6th February, 2023