

Port of Menteith Community Council

DRAFT Minutes of the Meeting held in Port of Menteith Village Hall at 7:00pm on Monday 19th February 2024

- Present:** Jim Riach (Chair), Peter Stewart (Vice Chair), Becky Saunders (Secretary), Robin Armstrong, Alastair Orr Ewing
- In Attendance:** Councillor Gene Maxwell (Scottish Nationalist Party), Esther Lim (Minute Taker), PC Lorna Deans
- Apologies:** Dave Mackie (National Parks)
- Residents:** Claire Outterside, Martin Stewart + 3 local residents

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting.

2. Declaration of Interest in the Items of Business

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Adoption of the Draft Minutes

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2023 were approved having been proposed by Becky Saunders (BS) and seconded by Peter Stewart (PS).

4. Community Council Business

4.1 Welcome New Minute Taker – Esther Lim

On behalf of members, Jim Riach (JR) welcomed Esther Lim, the new Minute Taker.

4.2 Welcome to Attendees responding to the Call for New Members

JR welcomed local residents attending the meeting as a result of the call for new members.

4.3 Co-option of a New Community Council (CC) Member

The Chair explained that Claire Outterside had stepped down from Port of Menteith Community Council (PCC) as she has moved out of the area. Several local residents were in attendance and expressed willingness to join PCC. JR explained that only one new member could be co-opted at this time due to a maximum allowance of 6 members. PCC are specifically looking for a member who will be willing to take on the role of Treasurer. An email to the community to this effect had been sent out to all community members on 5th February 2024. Nomination forms were therefore to be required back by 26th February. At the meeting Martin Stewart (MS) requested a nomination form and it was agreed that we would submit the forms on his behalf, along with any other nominations

received before 26th February. The Chair encouraged the other residents to stay involved with PCC and they expressed a willingness to do so.

MS completed the form and BS will forward to Stirling Council (SC) along with any other forms received before 26th February. SC will then begin the process of verifying that nominees are resident in the area and on the electoral register at which point PCC members will be given 14 days notice of the intention to co-opted the new member onto PCC. **[Action: MS/BS/Stg Council]**

Members will hold a short meeting in advance of the AGM on 15th April to agree the co-option. **[Action: Members]**

4.4 Proposal of Claire Outterside as an Associate Member carrying out the work of Treasurer

Claire was in attendance as a member of the public and was offered an associate membership for the purposes of carrying out the work of a treasurer until a new co-opted CC member is put in place. This was proposed by JR and seconded by BS.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 4th December 2023

5.1 Website Update – Becky Saunders (BS)

No further progress has been made. PCC are awaiting further funding in April 2024. Any suggestions or input would be much appreciated.

Members discussed the management of the PCC facebook account once CO steps down. CO agreed to try adding other members as administrators. **[Action: Claire Outterside]**

A member of the public asked how residents who are not on social media can access the information on Facebook. CO explained that Facebook updates are linked to the PCC website and should be accessible through the website. Key information is also distributed through the community newsletters.

5.2 Inchmahome Update – Robin Armstrong (RA)

RA has been in touch with Joyce at HES re: Inchmahome. It is looking positive that things will start up again at the beginning of the season. They have successfully recruited new staff and training is in progress. He is hopeful there should be some action before Easter. He will continue to monitor progress.

[Action: Robin Armstrong]

BS informed members that the osprey nest is being taken down at the end of February.

Members discussed the situation of the car park. RA confirmed that the chain had been interfered with and the lock changed but this has now been sorted out. The car park is owned by a private landlord but PCC will continue to push for this to be accessible to visitors.

5.3 The Community Ownership Fund

The Chair asked Councillor Maxwell (GM) if he could brief members on this fund. GM was not aware of the fund but agreed to look into it on behalf of PCC.

[Action: Councillor Maxwell].

5.4 Local Place Plan (LPP) – JR

There is no further progress to report. A lot of work will be needed to implement a consultation with the community. The next step is to approach SC for their support.

GM reminded members they only need to produce one plan for both the National Park and SC and he reiterated the importance of having a LPP in place to secure funding in the future. JR will follow up with SC **[Action: Jim Riach]**

5.5 The Big Conversation – JR & RA

Following the combined actions of rural CCs working together to represent to SC the impact proposed cuts would have on their rural communities, the CCs were disappointed at the relatively weak and generic responses from SC which showed the lack of information or qualitative analysis undertaken to determine the viability or impact of the cuts in rural areas.

GM reminded members that the majority of SC funds are ringfenced and that the budget has to be balanced. There was some discussion and criticism of the way the Big Conversation was handled and the scaremongering and anxiety engendered. GM spoke about the need for SC to improve the way it works to save money. He expressed the hope that the budget could be balanced with a series of improvement measures that will avoid the majority of unpalatable cuts put forward in the Big Conversation.

JR commended the very positive work that came from CCs working together and praised Paul Mackintosh, Chair of Strathard CC, for his leadership of this initiative.

JR noted that discussions with SC revealed that they do not have a current road asset management plan, which is a statutory requirement. He has been told this will be updated for the meeting at the end of February, although this does not currently appear on the agenda.

5.6 Road Closure Protocols Following our Letter to Council

BS wrote to SC regarding their road closure protocols following road closures which had been sprung on the community without sufficient notice. The response received was very bland and didn't answer the questions asked. BS has written back to them to this effect and is awaiting their reply. This led onto discussion of the comms on Cardross Bridge just released on the day of the meeting and equally poorly thought through.

6. Roads and Other Issues

6.1 Cardross Bridge – Update from Alastair Orr Ewing

SC has confirmed that they intend to close the Cardross Bridge to traffic (except emergency services) for 8 months from May 2024.

AOE expressed his frustration at the lack of attention to the bridge from the roads department over the past years which has led to this problem, as well as their lack of dynamism and flexibility. He expressed disappointment at their lack of empathy and understanding of the impact the bridge closure will have on businesses, farmers, commuters, suppliers, tourists and the community at large.

Members discussed options to alleviate the impact of the closure such as a temporary bridge, closures only when necessary, adequate notice with details so people can plan accordingly and community and business engagement. GM suggested a meeting be arranged locally between representatives of the road department and the local community. **[Action: Roads Dept via GM]**

GM assured the meeting that all the Councillors were outraged at the closure and had submitted an article for publication in the Stirling Observer. GM suggested postponing publication of the Stirling Observer article till nearer the closure date. **[Action: Councillor Maxwell]**

6.2 Relevant Information from Big Conversation - JR

Addressed above.

6.3 Gritting of B8034 for School Bus - BS

The Police Report details 3 accidents on this road in recent weeks. BS wrote to SC requesting the road be gritted but receive a response in the negative along with advice for drivers to drive more carefully. BS will forward the SC response to GM who will follow up. **[Action: Becky Sanders and Councillor Maxwell]**

7. Financial

7.1 Latest Statement – need for funding – CO

The Current balance is £840. There is currently little movement of funds. The Minute Taker will be paid out of the administration grant.

GM queried the position of the village hall. CO confirmed it is owned by a trust but is not much used. It provides space for the school to hold PE lessons. It is currently solvent and is managed by CO.

7.2 Bank Account Signatories – discuss CO as Signatory going forward - ALL

CO, BS, JR are all now signatories. Martin Stewart will be added subject to co-option.

JR noted that some of the finance correspondence is still going to Penny, the former Treasurer. JR will collect this. **[Action: Jim Riach]**

8. Correspondence

8.1 Collymoon Moss Forest

AOE explained that this correspondence is the result of a misunderstanding. He assured members that there would be no felling of Collymoon Moss Forest other than scrub clearance. The next phase will be a ditch block to retain water on the Moss. Nature Scotland is working there under contract. He will ask them to prepare a brief and will forward this to PCC. **[Action: Alastair Orr Ewing]**

The picture included with the correspondence relates to Forth Mosses which is a different area. This area is being restored back to moss and the peripheral area being planted with shrubs. There is extensive information about Forth Mosses online for those who are interested.

8.2 Julia Welchman (Blair) and pp Simpsons

These residents are concerned about when they will be joined up to broadband and asked for contact details for the contractor. AOE will pass on details of a helpful contact at Openreach. **[Action: Alastair Orr Ewing]**

8.3 Trossachs Visitor Management Group

Members have been invited to attend the Trossachs Visitor Management Group meeting on 18th March. JR has attended in the past and would encourage others to attend if they have specific issues they would like addressed. He informed members that NP have an email address which they should encourage local businesses and community members to use if they have any issues. BS will send the link to members. **[Action: Becky Saunders]**

8.4 Polmaise and Callander Household Waste – Online Booking

GM explained that the household waste and recycling facilities have moved to an online-booking system. This is to reduce the number of businesses and out-of-area users from Falkirk and Clackmannanshire making us of the sites.

Members discussed the feasibility of the change and expressed the view it would lead to more fly-tipping. They agreed to send a letter requesting this be treated as a trial. **[Action: BS]**

8.5 Portrait of King Charles III

All UK CCs have been invited to apply for a framed portrait of King Charles III. JR asked anyone who has a particular view on this to send it to Becky. **[Action: Members]**

8.6 Park Management Rules Consultation

PCC received correspondence from Stephen Bly at SC asking members to give their opinion on the following byelaws.

- No person can allow a dog other than a guide dog or assistance dog inside a safety surface around children's play equipment.
- No person may allow a dog other than a guide or assistance dog on a prepared sports surface/multi-use games area.
- Persons may not drive any vehicles, go-karts, quad bikes nor radio controlled craft, drones etc nor caravans, trailers etc into a play park without prior written consent of the council. This did not apply to personal disabled transport.

All members agreed to the 3 byelaws.

9. Planning and Licensing Issues

No matters of concern were raised.

10. Reports

10.1 Councillor's Report

See above

10.2 National Park Authority (NPA) Report

There was no NPA representative in attendance and no report provided.

PCC are still making representation to have a NP entry sign put up in Port of Menteith and will continue to push this forward.

10.3 Carse of Stirling Project Group Report

There is currently no update. This will be brought forward to the next PCC meeting.

10.4 Strathard and Trossachs Visitor Management

No update.

10.5 Port of Menteith Kirk and Cemetery – RA

It is proposed that Port of Menteith Church will sever the linkage with Aberfoyle and will link with Gargunnoch, Norrieston and Kippen and the minister of the later charge, Ellen Larsen Davidson will become the minister of the larger linked charge. A vote will be taken on 3rd March by multiple churches for whom this will impact. We will have to wait to find out the outcome of that. No discussions have taken place yet as to how the new linkage will work and we have no reason to believe that it will change anything for us.

10.6 Port Hall Committee Report

As CO has moved out of the area, a volunteer is needed to take over the practicalities of managing the hall. The Hall Committee AGM is scheduled for the end of March and new members would be welcome. CO agreed to put out a call for volunteers to join the committee. **[Action: Claire Outterside]**

10.7 School Report

BS read the School Report which had been forwarded by Ben Outterside, Chair of the Parent Council.

- Mr Stuart Fleming has been offered and excepted the role of Permanent Headteacher of Port of Menteith Primary School (along with Gartmore Primary School).
- The School has two new pupils join the school this term from outside the catchment which will increase school numbers to 11.
- The school are currently wanting the yellow school lines re-painted on the main road. Mr Fleming has spoken to Stirling council but still no action. Could the Port CC please assist with this.
- Forth Valley police are due to come to Port of Menteith to teach the pupils about speed awareness and also operate some speed enforcement.

Councillor Maxwell offered to follow up with SC regarding the re-painting of yellow school lines on the main road. **[Action: Councillor Maxwell]**

A member of the public drew attention to the water bubbling up near the school pond and spreading onto the road causing a skidding hazard. Members confirmed that there is a natural spring there and speculated that this had been punctured during the erection of the new fence. This has been reported to SC but no remedial action has been taken. GM will follow up with SC. **[Action: Councillor**

Maxwell]

10.8 Police Report

PC Lorna Deans (LD) read the Police Report for the period 01/12/23 to 16/02/24. There was one incident of antisocial behaviour involving damage to a vehicle parked overnight in the Karma Hotel car park. In addition, there were 3 traffic collisions on the B8034 due to weather conditions and 1 traffic collision on the A81. There were no thefts reported but LD encouraged residents to stay vigilant and report suspicious vehicles due to an increase of quadbike theft in surrounding areas.

A member expressed concern at the increase of speeding through the village. LD explained that their handheld speeding radar had been sent away for calibrating so officers had not been on speed detection duties recently. She explained briefly the Speedwatch Scheme whereby communities can purchase their own cameras and be trained to use them. GM suggested that a few CCs could potentially purchase a camera between them. LD promised to forward the relevant information on this scheme to PCC. **[Action: PC Deans]**

In response to a question from BS, LD confirmed the police have made representation to SC following the accidents on the B8034.

JR queried why an accident he had seen recently was not included in the police report. Officer Deans explained that depending on how the incident was reported, it may have been reported in Aberfoyle.

10.9 Forestry and Land Scotland Report

BS circulated this report to members prior to the meeting. There is nothing to report.

Members noted that the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park had closed quite a few tracks.

Members noted that the bridge at the lodge, Aberfoyle on the National Cycle Network Route 7 has been found unsafe. This will remain closed until it can be replaced sometime after March 2024.

11. Any Other Competent Business

No business was raised.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next PCC meeting is scheduled to take place at 7pm on Monday 15th April 2024 in Port of Menteith Village Hall.