

# PORT OF MENTEITH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the General Meeting of the Port of Menteith Community Council held in the Port Hall on Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023

## Present :

Jim Riach, Chair	Cllr Elaine Watterson
Peter Stewart, Vice-Chair	David Mackie, National Parks
Becky Saunders, Secretary (Minutes)	PC Lorna Deans, Police
Claire Outterside, Treasurer	Joyce Kitching, HES
Robin Armstrong	
Alastair Orr Ewing	

## 1. Members Present and Apologies for Absence

All Members present and no apologies for absence.

## 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 21st August 2023

The adoption of the draft Minutes of the General Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2023 was proposed by BS and seconded by PS.

## 4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2023

### 4.1 Recruitment of Minute Taker

CO advised that there had been no response from anyone in the local community expressing an interest in taking up the position of minute taker. It was agreed to approach Jean Cowie who was present at the Inaugural Meeting and said that she knew of a minute taker in Callander. **Action : BS**

### 4.2 Inchmahome

Joyce Kitching, Central Mid District Visitor and Community Manager of HES, joined the meeting to explain the position with regards to the reopening of Inchmahome Priory to the public.

JK explained that sample surveys identified potentially concerning masonry at high level (which is being exacerbated by a number of factors, including exposed masonry, stone type, historic intervention methods, climate change, etc) resulting in access restrictions being put in place at 70 properties to ensure that visitors, staff and contractors were not exposed to any risks.

She explained how the current 70 HES 'at risk' property closures were prioritised and that Inchmahome fell into their second group defined as 'sites where access restrictions had a significant adverse community and economic impact'.

A masonry inspection due at Inchmahome in the Spring of this year was then postponed as a protected species of bird had moved onto the island to nest, pushing the inspection back to 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023. HES is working with the bird specialist who confirmed that the chicks have fledged and the parents have now migrated for the winter. AOE asked if they could be discouraged from returning. HES are working with the bird specialist to ensure that the birds would have new nesting opportunities elsewhere and not nest on the island next season.

The inspection of week commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> October will be done via ladders, ropes and potentially drones due to the difficulties of getting cherry-pickers or mobile elevated work platforms onto the island. There will be groundsmen going out to the island in the next couple of weeks to clear the ground in advance of the inspection.

RA expressed concern about the car park being used for BBQs and its proximity to the wooden shed there. BS said she had spoken to one of the owners of the car park who was not happy with amendments to the contract between them and HES and suggested to JK that she contact the owners of the car park asap to ensure that any issues with the tenancy of the car park are cleared up. JK will pass this recommendation on to HES's factoring team.

PS reiterated that the community were very invested in Inchmahome and that its closure had had a knock on effect on many local businesses and JK confirmed that it was a priority and there was a will to open it. All being well they are aiming to have it open for next summer.

JK promised to keep us updated on progress – next contact being once the site report was back with them. She noted the next meeting was on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

The CC thanked her for taking the time to come along to the meeting and explain the process in person. **Action : RA**

#### **4.3 Renewal of Data Protection subscription**

CO has renewed this at the cost of £35 for the year. The exemption did not seem to be available.

#### **4.4 Renewal/cancellation of subscription to Bluehost for Domain Names, Website etc.**

Account details and bank details with BlueHost switched to ours and Valerie Graham's card removed from the account. BlueHost has early auto-renewed one of the 3 subscriptions (SiteLock) so it may be that we stick with it for this year. It was noted that the Domain Name portofmenteith.org expires on 10<sup>th</sup> October. A change of name would require a change of email address and letting all contacts know. JR & BS working on a website option before 10<sup>th</sup> October but likely to be a simple WordPress option via BlueHost for this year at least. EW suggested Colin Clarke at STEP would be able to help us for free. **Action : BS/JR**

### **5. Roads & Other Issues**

#### **5.1 Roads & Verges**

Discussion centred on the number of road closures in the area. The work at Ruskie seems to have closed the road even though it was not flagged as a closure on the council information sheet. Similarly the Lake Road has been flagged as shut from 18<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> despite only needing to be shut for 3 days of that time for 200 yards at the PoM junction. Elaine Watterson agreed to look into this and report back. **Action: EW**

Speeding was discussed with PC Lorna Deans (in attendance) see section 11.7.

#### **5.2 Cardross Bridge**

EW advised putting in an enquiry for a status update on the Cardross Bridge to Stephen Bly and cc'ing in all councillors EW, GM and ME. **Action: AOE**

### **6. Financial**

#### **6.1 Statement to end September**

CO did not have a bank statement but confirmed that funds from Stirling Council had been added to the account.

#### **6.2 Bank account & signatories**

CO wrestling with vagaries of Bank of Scotland mandate form but it is in hand. **Action : CO**

#### **6.3 Community Council Administration & Minute taker Grant**

Confirmed received by CO

### **7. Correspondence**

#### **7.1 General Correspondence received**

No local correspondence to report

#### **7.2 Invitation to Create a Local Place Plan**

Discussion with EW and DM on the merits of having a Local Place Plan which pulls together the wishes of a community for its area and is used by the council/National Park when considering

planning applications. EW said it was expensive and time-consuming, DM thought less so and said he would forward another LPP for us to look at and ask Susan Brooks from NPA to get in touch. EW said that there was a form on the ScotGov website for this. **Action: DM**

### **7.3 Access to Polling Stations (Ramps & Transport)**

Not actively discussed at the meeting but BS had corresponded with Cllr GM about this on behalf of the Community Council saying access was good at the PoM but that transport should be considered on polling days.

## **8. Planning & Licensing Issues**

### **8.1 New Planning Applications**

Nothing to report at the meeting. Licensing application for Collymoon Craft Gin Distillery received on 3.10.23 which was forwarded to all Council Members. Deadline for objections/representations to this application is 29.10.23.

### **8.2 Planning Updates**

Nothing to report.

### **8.3 Planning Notifications**

Nothing to report.

## **9. Forestry**

### **9.1 Forestry & Land Scotland Local Activities Report**

No report received from F&LS.

### **9.2 Auchyle & Malling Woodland Creation Consultation**

No objections were noted as to the Woodland Creation schemes at Auchyle or Malling. It was noted that both schemes were mixed trees. PS expressed concern at the amount of Sitka spruce in the Auchyle scheme.

## **10. Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park**

### **10.1 Port of Menteith NPA entry sign**

Robust discussion on when this sign might be put up. PS said that the signs had been picked up 18 months ago however DM acknowledged that the whereabouts of these signs is now unknown. DM agreed that having emailed Kenny Auld from Visitor Services at NPA 7 times this year it might help to have a face to face catch up with him and make a plan for either finding the existing signs and getting them up or producing new ones. The CC were in agreement that the plans for this sign had been ongoing for 5 years and this was unacceptable. DM said he would have an update well before the next meeting. **Action: DM**

## **11. Reports**

### **11.1 Councillor's report**

EW advised that Stirling Council are looking to find £12 million of savings by next April for the year ahead. The shortfall a result of rising prices and reduced budgets. There is currently a voluntary redundancy scheme ongoing. They continue to look at cost savings in all departments. More positively there is a move to find a new NHS dentist for Callander but this could be up to a year before they are in post so residents are advised to find alternatives in the meantime. EW reported that a new Dementia Café is being set up in Doune from Nov following on from the successful introduction of the same in Dunblane. The recent STEP rural business event in Callander went well but being in the morning some could not attend so another is planned for the evening. The Rural Business FB page has been well supported.

### **11.2 NPA report**

DM's report is attached as Appendix 1.

### **11.3 Carse of Stirling project group report**

Nothing to report at present

### **11.4 Port Church & Cemetery**

Nothing to report at present

### **11.5 Port Hall Committee report**

CO provided a verbal report that the hall remains in need of volunteers to join the committee of 5 at present. Bookings are still low and the hall requires upgrades as previously mentioned. EW mentioned grant funding may be available from Rural Network Scotland or Community Pride and that Jean Cowie at Stirling Council was particularly helpful on getting grants. The car park extension is now complete and fence has been removed. At present no 'Blethers' are scheduled and there was brief discussion on how we could encourage people to get involved with 'Blethers'. This kind of thing could form part of the communication plan around the website and FB page.

### **11.6 School report**

Ben Outterside had nothing to add to his last report but asked to remind the community about the fisheries BBQ on 12<sup>th</sup> November to which everyone was invited. He also asked to reiterate the frustration with the council policy on placing requests. EW confirmed that at a Council level the parameters for placing requests at primary level were loose and acknowledged that this was having a knock on effect on the school role.

### **11.7 Police report**

From Lorna Deans in attendance. (Attached Appendix 2) Following on from the attached report LD asked that we make residents aware that motorbikes have been stolen from outside homes in the area. In addition bikes have been stolen from the back of cars in the Aberfoyle area. LD further explained that the CC need to report concerns about speeding to SC to get traffic monitoring in place and that we cannot apply directly to the police. RA reported that rush hours were much the worst times for speeding and LD advised that a project had been successful in Strathyre using the school children to raise awareness of the dangers of speeding and that they were having similar discussions with the head teacher at PoM Primary School.

## **12. Any Other Competent Business**

### **12.1 Formal note of thanks from the Community Council to Peter Stewart for Keith Graham's Bench**

Formal thanks was given to Peter Stewart for the beautiful bench provided in memory of Keith Graham. The bench is made of inscribed granite and sits in the cemetery on a base provided by Keith Burnett. The bench is much in use already and very comfortable and will endure for many years to come. Valerie Graham added that, after much discussion as to where the bench would sit in the community, she now felt that its present position was the best place for it.

## **13. Date of Next Scheduled Meeting : Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 7pm**