

Ardrishaig Community Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6 October 2009.

Public Hall, Ardrishaig

Present:

Edward Laughton, Jeanette Laughton, Mary McLugash, Susan Cameron, Arthur Barclay, Peter Hogbin

Apologies:

Councillors Donnie McMillan, Alison Hay, Douglas Philand;

Gordon Hutton, Donnie McLeod, Sgt Martin Balkeen.

Item 1 – Welcome.

The Chairman welcomed all; there would be a presentation by Allt Dearg Wind Farmers.

Item 2 – Apologies.

As above.

Item 3 – Minutes of the last meeting, 1st September 2009.

Amendment made by adding the surname of Archie McGuire from Strathclyde police. Minutes of the last meeting accepted by Susan Cameron and Peter Hogbin.

Presentation by Allt Dearg Wind Farmers LLP

The Chairman introduced James Lithgow, Mary and Duncan Broadfoot, partners of Allt Dearg Wind Farmers LLP. James explained that he was going around to all the community councils in the local area to inform all about the forthcoming planning application for 12 wind turbines. After the failure of the Npower application it was decided not to appeal. However, much of the preparatory work could be applied to the new application and it was hoped to take this forward to the planning department in November 2009.

The location of the turbines will be slightly closer to Ormsary and they will be much smaller in height than previously proposed by Npower. A major issue from the last application was turbines “too big and visible”. The new site is less than one square kilometre rather than the three square kilometres of the previous application. It will be difficult to see it from the front green in Lochgilphead. When driving towards Tarbert it would be visible only from the road for approximately five seconds. There would be no visibility from any public space in Ardrishaig with the exception of the very end of the Pier where it would be just visible.

James Lithgow explained the desire to sustain the viability of the Ormsary community. Income was needed in support of the thirty seven dependent households. Landcatch is no longer viable as a source of revenue as the Norwegians have a fish farm monopoly. Sheep numbers have declined by one third since 1992 and agricultural jobs by the same amount. A new revenue stream was needed to diversify into other enterprises. The wind in the area is classed as clean and a natural green energy resource; the proposed wind farm could exploit this resource.

The Chairman of Ardrishaig Community Council had approached the partnership asking for community involvement. This approach had been welcomed with an offer to the community for buy-in. Ardrishaig could benefit financially from the revenue stream from ownership of a turbine. Over a period of twenty five years, at present electricity prices, it could bring into the village between three and four million pounds.

Other benefits to communities would include the setting up of a £30,000 annual education trust. How this money would be spent would be up to Trustees. Additional benefits will be in giving employment during the construction phase, a new timber link road and a new walking/cycling route.

The following comments were raised by Councillors and others after James Lithgow’s presentation.

1. Community Councillor Peter Hogbin wished that this could have been done first time around and that it was a much more acceptable scheme. James replied that it would have been prohibitively expensive to do this on their own first time; fortunately the information gathered by Npower
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was available for use. James said that they hoped that the application was more acceptable than the previous Npower application. However, there are still some hurdles to overcome with regard to SPA and with Black Throated Divers.

2. Community Councillor Arthur Barclay asked about connections to the grid. James said that in terms of mega watt hours per year, the figure is approximately 30,000. The power will be used locally going into the 33KV distribution network. The turbines being used are those specially developed for windy sites. James also thought that Steve Mackin, their project manager, has been conservative in his estimate and that the probability is that the wind farm will give more than the national average. SNH still have to sign off on the project but it is hoped that if planning permission is granted then building will commence early next year. Wind farms should ideally be built in the summer to catch the winter winds. The first cheque should come in mid term 2011. Guidance is being taken from Fintry community wind turbine people. The first ten years will include mortgage repayments. James also said that posts are out marking the site and anyone is welcome to go and look.
3. Lynne Girdwood asked what sort of objections might be raised by SNH. James Lithgow replied that although it is part of a scenic area he would hope that they will not make a statutory argument/objection. If this did happen then it would be up to Argyll and Bute Council to make a decision.
4. Community Councillor Peter Hogbin asked if there was a possibility of future expansion. The reply from James Lithgow was that he cannot tell what might happen in the future but there will be no change before 2016. A major limiting factor is grid capacity.
5. Mary Broadfoot said that as part of the planning application the area would at the end of life for the wind farm be returned to natural habitat and "rust buckets" would be removed.

James Lithgow was thanked by the Chairman for his presentation and giving up time to come to the Community Council.

Item 4 - Matters Arising.

- a. The Chairman stated that Keith Phillips, the Council's liaison officer, is dealing with the camera.
- b. Peter Hogbin objected to the fact that a technical workshop had been held and that the documents had not yet been tabled at a community council meeting. The Chairman explained that the document was still in draft form, was in the process of being formatted by the Place Making Organisation and would be tabled at the November meeting. The technical workshop had taken all the wishes of the community from the "Place Making" event and put them into three groups, high, medium and low priority, decided if they were short term achievable or long term achievable.
- c. Donald McMillan said he had found the plaque, prepared some years ago, to go on the James Chalmers memorial. It was acknowledged that Ruth Carruthers had written the information for the plaque and this was gratefully accepted by all present. The plaque was put on display for all to see. Donald has kindly offered to fix the plaque in place at the memorial. He was thanked for this.

Item 5 – Police report

No report tabled.

Item 6 Allt Dearg Wind Farm Report

The Chairman reported that a meeting had been held 8th September, between Allt Dearg Wind Farmers, Community Energy Scotland(CES), representatives from Ardrishaig Community Council and Ardrishaig Community Trust at Ormsary.

In pursuance of funding, the Community Council will need to carry out a poll of all living in the community to measure the level of support for the wind turbine project. CES have indicated that seventy five percent of all those who return the polling slip will need to be in favour. All community Councillors were happy to proceed with the poll.

Item 7 – Ardrishaig Community Trust

A report from the Ardrishaig Community Trust

The report was given on behalf of Donnie McLeod, the Trust Chairman, by another Director Hamish Nicol. He reported that the business of the cycle hire had been less than brisk. The Trust wanted to market the business better so a bid for money was made at a recent ABSSEN Dragon's Den and that

the pitch had been successful and the sum of £1,000 awarded. The Community Council gave its congratulations on this award. Donnie McLeod said very useful contacts had been made; he was pleased to note how many from outside the Ardrishaig Community were aware of what going on with the regeneration project in the village.

Item 8 - Correspondence.

A letter was read out from Charles Reppke concerning the walk to school. Once more the Council have failed to answer the questions asked and simply replied that there was no money for a free bus service. Lynne Girdwood had met with Alan Reid and he agreed with the Community Council that the route was not a safe one for walking. He has written to Argyll and Bute Council. Malcolm Mcfadyen had replied on day 20 of the 21 days allowed for a response but the attachment that should have accompanied the letter was not there. Alan Reid has written to the Council once again and has informed them that he considered that stages one and two of a grievance procedure have already been followed. Arthur Barclay suggested meeting with the Chief Executive. Lynne suggested that in Alan Reid's dealings with the Council, when they don't reply it usually means they are in trouble. Theresa Moore said that this item could be taken up by the Young Peoples Forum. It was noted that the Council have not responded in full to any of the Community Council correspondence. A mention was made to the comments about not using a Westminster MP at the last meeting and it was felt by a member of the public that it was unfair to discuss this as the person who made the remarks was not present to defend himself. This was duly noted.

Item 9 - Any Other Business.

1. Susan Cameron had met with a representative of a local organisation who might be willing to fund a community project in Ardrishaig. The Secretary was asked to contact a named person from the organisation to see if funding could be made available. One young mother in Ardrishaig had raised £250 at a dance held in the Argyll Arms Hotel. A swing for the front play area could cost in excess of £4,000.
2. Arthur Barclay said that the Cancer Care Group are proposing to plant a "river of daffodils" from Inverary to Tarbert.
3. Eric Dearie is now in place as the licensing standards officer and is happy to come and talk to any community council in his area.
4. Arthur Barclay asked that the community council keep up the pressure on Transport Scotland for a crossing in front of the CO-OP. This has been something that the community has wanted for a while and it is considered a hazard for children crossing to and from the bus as well as for others using the car park. The community Council will keep focused on this requirement.
5. Theresa Moore asked about the youth project and what is happening. She proposed opening the door and seeing what happened. The Chairman pointed out that no one had attended the kick-off meeting arranged by himself and Raymond Flannigan for 30th June. However, the Community Council would continue to support the project. To manage the project, the Chairman stated it needed a group of responsible people to take up the running of the group. Teresa agreed to help in finding this group support.
6. This is the last meeting of the present community council. Elections having taken place thirteen of the sixteen places have been filled so there is no need to go for elections. The Chairman thanked all the Community Councillors for their time and efforts over the three years the present council has been in existence. He expressed his thanks in particular to Mary McLugash who is standing down for all her hard work during her time as a community councillor. Arthur Barclay as the longest serving community councillor expressed his personal thanks to the Chairman for all his work. We hope that the new council will be up and running at the next meeting scheduled for Tuesday 3 November 2009. The Community Council will press Argyll & Bute Council to constitute the new council as quickly as possible. The chair for the first part of the next meeting will be Iain Jackson, the MAKI corporate services Manager.

Meeting closed at 21:30pm
