

<b>Draft Minutes Bute Community Council</b>	
<b>Date</b>	2024-02-21 1900 at United Church Bute
<b>Online at</b>	<a href="https://butecommunitycouncil.wordpress.com">butecommunitycouncil.wordpress.com</a>
<b>Draft Minutes</b>	<p>1. Attendance: I Gillespie, R Macintyre, F Martin, J Moffat, T Nelson, W Nelson, J Osborne, Cllr R Kennedy-Boyle, Cllr P Wallace</p> <p>Apologies: C Hall, I Morisson</p> <p>2. Declarations of Interest: F Martin, J Moffat, T Nelson, W Nelson all Buteiful Seas and Shores</p> <p>3. Co-option of Gloria Fear as BCC Councillor</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. All BCC councillors had received a copy of Gloria’s form on 7 February</li> <li>b. An item had been placed on the agenda</li> <li>c. G Fear was unanimously co-opted as a member of Bute Community Council.</li> </ol> <p>4. Police Report: delivered by Sergeant Scott Thain</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. W Nelson asked the sergeant to clarify if it was the same individual in both firearms incidents: it was.</li> <li>b. A member of the public asked if fraud cases were handled on the island and the sergeant explained that for fraud over a certain monetary value, the incident would be dealt with by an off-island unit.</li> </ol> <p>5. Minutes of Previous Meeting: 19 January, 2024</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Proposed by J Osborne, seconded by F Martin, unanimously agreed.</li> </ol> <p>6. Guest speaker:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Richard Whitcomb, Bute Forest <a href="https://www.buteforest.org.uk/news">https://www.buteforest.org.uk/news</a> addressed the gathering to discuss where the community forest is, what is being done and what is planned based on the mission of preservation, conservation and restoration. The main points of Richard’s talk were: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bute Forest is approximately 400 acres/160 hectares</li> <li>2. He highlighted three main areas: Moss Wood, the felled plantation area that is being replanted with 16,000 trees and the SSSI [Site of Special Scientific Interest] area of native Scottish rainforest</li> <li>3. The ranger, Samuel Lindsay, has a contract until October and funding is being sought to extend this.</li> <li>4. Every child from age 3 to 11 has visited the forest to take part in educational sessions. Plans are in process to work with S1 and S2 students in relation to John Muir Awards</li> <li>5. There are currently two woodland management plans being enacted: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SSSI area with Scottish rainforest: solutions are being sought to address the overgrazing of this area by deer and improved access through creating paths is planned</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ol>

2. Plantation area: an area of larch was clear-felled due to the discovery of Larch disease within approximately ½ mile of the Bute Forest property. By felling before the disease arrived, the trees were felled at full value and this raised money to keep the ranger employed as well as replant the clear-felled area. The area will be replanted with a more sustainable mixture of 16,000 trees (Scottish pine, silver birch, hazel, willow and aspen).

6. Questions asked:

1. A member of the gathering asked if the ‘damage’ caused by the clear felling had been ‘worth it’ as a portion of the West Island Way trail ran through the area. Richard explained that the decision made by the board was based on the fact that the disease was very close and would inevitably affect the Bute Forest larch, rendering them of no commercial value. By felling before the disease affected the trees, approximately £30k was realised to continue to employ the ranger as well as plan for the replanting of 16,000 of more diverse species. As well, there would be the opportunity to improve the path access through the area. J Osborne reminded all gathered that at Mount Stuart an area had been affected by larch disease, leading to the closing off of the area for 5 years.

2. A question was asked about how the forest was funded: Richard explained that in addition to the money raised by felling, the two huts were an income stream. They had been built with £5k from Bute Forest and the rest raised through grants, so there was no money owing on them. The huts were very popular, being booked even at Christmas and New Year. In a partial operating year they had raised £10k in booking fees.

3. The issue of getting to the forest was raised. Limited bus journeys to the area was a concern and Richard was asked if Bute Forest could not speak with West Coast Motors. He explained that the old quarry had now been purchased by Bute Forest and that a car park/visitor welcome area was planned for the site, including a bus stop. He also said that they would be trialling a minibus for days when events were occurring in the forest.

4. A question was asked regarding lack of a path to the kayak shelter in the SSSI area. Richard explained that because it is an SSSI area, there are restrictions on path building. At the moment there are ribbons on trees as markers to lead to the kayak shelter.

b. Julie Semple, Bute Advice Centre <https://www.buteadvice.org.uk/> , addressed the gathering to explain the work being done by BAC. The main points of Julie’s talk were:

1. The mission of BAC for 40 years has been the alleviation of poverty and distress.

2. BAC has 6 paid staff members.
3. BAC concentrates on welfare benefits and money advice. Energy support is outsourced.
4. In the last year, BAC has supported 1,500 households in obtaining approximately £1.5m in assistance.
5. Due to its expertise, BAC administers the Flexible Food and Fuel Fund on behalf of A&B Council. This fund allows an individual/family to receive a first payment of £80/500. A month later, another payment of £80/500 is received. The month between payments allows BAC to carry out a benefits check, to ensure that the individual/family is receiving all support possible. Recently, a third payment has become available. The average client gain under this funding is £1400.
6. BAC administers the ACHA Welfare Rights programme.
7. BAC supported the resettlement of Syrian, Sudanese and Ukrainian people to the island.
8. BAC has done outreach work to persons living in sheltered accommodation, so that they can remain up-to-date with support that is available to them.
9. BAC coordinates a quarterly meeting of all food banks across A&B.
10. At the end of Julie's talk, a member of the gathering said that what she took from Julie's talk was that BAC was 'maintaining peoples' dignity'.

7. Matters Arising

- a. Any advance on offer by CHall to use Coffee Stop once a week for teen only hot chocolate and chat session: C Hall was not present but Shona Edwards was in the audience and said that she had not had time to speak with C Hall yet.
- b. Any advance on receipt of report from Shona Edwards on results of consultation she carried out at Rothesay Joint Campus: Shona Edwards has the finalised report and said that she would send it to T Nelson.
  1. Shona asked the gathering if they were aware of the problems that young people had recently been facing in the use of the free bus travel card for persons 22 and under. Many bus operators are refusing to take young people on their buses because the young people are using the buses as safe and warm places to hang out, not travel to destinations.
  2. Mariska Silkowski, Scottish Youth Parliament member for Bute, related how she had been refused entry onto a bus in Dunoon, after spending time at a friend's house, and her father had to race to Dunoon to get her, passing the bus that she had planned to be on. They just made the last ferry back to Bute that evening. She said that she knew of other incidents. W Nelson asked her to provide a list of incidents. J Moffat said that BCC would send a letter to West Coast Motors.

c. Report on community engagement Meeting held in Port Bannatyne Village Hall on 15 February: FMartin and JOsborne

1. This was not an extraordinary meeting, as reported in the Isle of Bute News. It was the third of three planned community engagement meetings, the first held in Rothesay and the second in Kingarth.
2. There was a good turnout and one issue dominated the meeting: the derelict buildings on Castle Street.
3. Since the meeting last Thursday evening, Jim had done research (Companies House, Land Registry, etc) and found that one person had purchased 19 of the properties in 2017. Two properties in the set of buildings were owned by other, unknown, persons. As well, on the weekend, Brendan O'Hare, MP for Bute, had been on the island and had visited the site of these derelict buildings with Jim. Brendan had then written to A&B Council and Jim had received a copy of the response. This response revealed that repairs had been ordered on 25 January after a complaint on 23 January by a local resident after a storm had caused bits to fall from the building. The response to Brendan O'Hare's letter had also revealed that the developer has told the A&B Council building standards office that they are now undertaking a feasibility study on how to take the development forward since ownership issues, which had been holding up progress, have been resolved. Jean was able to chase up the repairs with Hanson and received the contact details for the architects who had ordered the repairs. The residents of properties near to the derelict buildings would now have a contact point for raising their concerns. Jim offered to work with a group of residents from Port Bannatyne to pursue the matter further.

d. Survey on fish farms: T Nelson explained that the initial survey form that had been agreed at last month's meeting would go live for the month of March. Paper copies would be placed in Kilchattan Bay, Port Bannatyne and Rothesay for those who did not use the computer.

e. Update on Ardenraig Gardens and Rothesay Pavilion: with the budget for A&B set to be voted on tomorrow, it was agreed that discussion of funding for the Pavilion should be delayed until the next meeting.

8. AOCB

- a. W Nelson reminded those gathered that there was the online Ferry Users Consultation running, accessible through the BCC website.
- b. Also, that on Tuesday, 27 February, there would be a consultation in the Discovery Centre from 1730 to 2030 for the Active Travel Route between Albert Pier and The Pavilion.

9. At this point, the meeting ended due to time constraints.

- a. There was agreement that the order of agenda items would be altered at the next meeting to allow A&B Councillors to speak immediately after the Police Report, as 3 months had now passed without them having an opportunity to speak


	10. Date of Next Meeting: 20 March, 2024
<b>Following Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Police Report</li><li>• Cllr Report – Reeni Kennedy-Boyle</li><li>• Cllr Report – Peter Wallace</li></ul>

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<b>Community Council Debrief</b>
<b>Dates Between: 16/01/24 – 14/02/24</b>
<b>Location &amp; Beat: Bute – LB53/54</b>
<b>Reporting Officer: PC James Convery</b>

<b>Between the dates of 16/01/24 and 14/02/24, the number of Incidents and Crime Reports respectively are 128 and 42</b>	
 <p><b>SERIOUS ORGANISED CRIME</b></p>	<p>You identified drug dealing / drug misuse as a priority</p> <p>We identified human trafficking as a priority</p>
	<p>There has been 1 crime recorded in for possession of Class B drugs. This was detected and dealt with by way of recorded police warning.</p>

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 <p><b>ACQUISITIVE CRIME</b></p> <p>You identified homes being broken in to as a priority</p> <p>We have also identified fraud as a priority</p>	<p>There have been 3 crimes recorded regarding thefts. These are all ongoing enquiries.</p>
 <p><b>ROAD SAFETY AND ROAD CRIME</b></p> <p>You identified road safety as a priority</p> <p>We identified drink / drug driving and reducing road casualties as priorities</p>	<p>There have been 5 crimes recorded regarding road traffic matters, including, no MOT, defective vehicle, fail to update registered owner/keeper and no insurance. These are all detected.</p>
 <p><b>VIOLENT CRIME</b></p> <p>You identified violent crime as a priority</p> <p>We have also identified domestic abuse as a priority</p>	<p>There have been 3 crimes recorded regarding assault. 2 of these are undetected and the other has been detected.</p>



You identified protecting children and adults at risk of harm as a priority

We identified missing persons, sexual crime and the management of registered sex offenders as priorities

There has been 1 crime recorded regarding wasting police time. This has been detected.

There have been 5 calls recorded regarding misuse of the 999 system. 3 of these are detected and the remaining two are ongoing enquiries.

There has been 1 crime recorded regarding trespassing on land with a firearm. This has been detected.

There has been 1 crime recorded regarding being unauthorised to carry firearms. This has been detected.

There have been 3 crimes recorded regarding vandalism, 2 of these are undetected with the other detected.

There has been 1 crime recorded regarding malicious mischief, this is an ongoing enquiry.

There has been 1 crime recorded regarding failing to leave a licensed premises, this is detected.

There has been 1 crime recorded regarding possession of a knife in a public place, this has been detected.

There has been 1 crime recorded regarding livestock worrying, this is an ongoing enquiry.

There have been 5 crimes recorded regarding communications offences, these are all ongoing enquiries.

There have been 10 crimes recorded regarding threatening and abusive behaviour. 9 of these are detected and the other is an ongoing enquiry.



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<p><i>Useful Links/Contacts</i></p>	<p><b>Crimestoppers</b> – <a href="#">Crimestoppers in Scotland   Crimestoppers (crimestoppers-uk.org)</a></p> <p><b>Distress Brief Intervention</b> - <a href="#">Distress Brief Intervention - Connected Compassionate Support   DBI.scot</a></p> <p><b>Scottish Partnership against Rural Crime</b> - <a href="#">Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime   Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime (scottishparc.co.uk)</a></p> <p><b>Women’s Aid</b> - <a href="#">Home - Women's Aid (womensaid.org.uk)</a></p> <p><b>Citizens Advice</b> – 08081646000</p> <p><b>Trading Standards</b> - 08081646000</p>
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Since the turn of the year, my focus has very much been on constituency work as there have been no strategic committees sitting during January.

Subjects that have been explored include Council Budget, Rothesay Pavilion, Broadband Connectivity on Bute, Library Services, Provision of Amenity in relation to Ardenraig Garden and Rothesay Esplanade and a number of individual issues.

During February I will be attending Policy & Resources on 15<sup>th</sup> February, full Argyll and Bute Council meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, there is also a special meeting planned on the same day about Rothesay Pavilion.

The budget process has been made more difficult as a result of Westminster budget announced on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2023. This of course has the domino effect on Scottish Government, which operates within a legal framework that requires it to deliver a balanced budget annually, and then to local authorities. Not only was the timing unhelpful the continuation of an austerity agenda and reductions in capital budget has meant it there is a very difficult landscape for local authorities. At this time Tory/LibDem and Independents (TALIG) Administration are working through a number of options for presentation. The Opposition Group will seek to work constructively on this process, but inevitably there will be areas where we would seek to do things differently. This process is ongoing, the public papers should be published on 15<sup>th</sup> February however there may be items which are not presented until 22<sup>nd</sup> February full Council meeting.

Rothesay Pavilion – it will be extremely challenging to get this project over the line, however this major asset, which has international interest, must work for this community. We are currently benefiting from the construction work that has continued over the winter with contractors taking up beds, spending money locally and moving the project closer to completing phase 1. There are have great efforts by the Charity to raise the funds to complete the project and have Rothesay Pavilion open for business in the summer of 2026. I fully support the project, and I guess the question is this – if this project does not progress to completion what ideas do TALIG have for the economic regeneration of Bute?

With regards to Broadband on Bute we are experiencing issues, and Openreach have recently confirmed that whilst Rothesay Exchange is in the plan for upgrade there are no confirmed date for delivery. This could also impact on decision making for those considering moving to our area. I think this is significant and I will be following up through within the committee environments that I attend however I think there is an urgent need for Argyll & Bute Council to understand the potential impacts for service delivery and, although non-statutory, economic development activity.

An interesting question has arisen about the service provision of libraries. Argyll & Bute Council transferred management of libraries to Live Argyll in the last Council term. A constituent raised the issue of provision of local newspapers which was a library service pre-COVID19. This service is no longer provided on Bute, and the response received indicated that that decision would only be revisited if demand was established. I raise here for feedback and support from Bute Community Council to reinstate this service.

I have been following up on implementation of the policy to reinstate nursery services at Ardenraig Gardens and have included Cllrs McCabe and Wallace in correspondence. I asked for an update on the procurement of plants and the growing plans to service the region following the restoration of

nursery services at Ardenraig Gardens. I expressed my hope that this would be a good news story for Bute and the wider region this year.

The response I received on 25<sup>th</sup> January is below:

“We are currently going through a procurement process for the plugs and expect this to conclude in the next couple of weeks. The plants will be brought on at Ardenraig Gardens for planting out on Bute in early summer.”

On 7<sup>th</sup> February I raised further questions “I note that the notice for procurement was published on Public Contracts Scotland on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 and the deadline for quotes being 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024. Hopefully there have been successful bids.

An update would be appreciated and an outline of any contingency plans in event of market failure. Thank you.” I have not yet received a response.

The upcoming budget has dominated the Council agenda in the last month, and I have attended a seminar and several meetings in relation to this. In October last year the First Minister announced a Council Tax freeze without any consultation with local authorities, promising full funding.

The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) have said “Disappointingly the Scottish Budget has not provided our local authorities with a fully funded council tax freeze as expected. The Scottish Government has set aside £144m stating this will ‘fully fund’ a council tax freeze – this would only provide the income equivalent to a 5% rise.

However, Local Government’s core revenue budget was cut by £63m from the outset, essentially leaving just £81m compensation for a council tax freeze. As a result, Local Government is faced with the reality that the funding offered for a council tax freeze only equates to a 2.8% rise.”

This leaves the Council with a choice between going against the freeze or putting essential services at risk.

I attended a site visit with Fyne Homes to the former Rothesay Academy to see how the site could be repurposed for housing. The site is included in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan, and work is in the very early stages but could bring much needed additional housing to the island.

I attended the AGM of the Bute Ferry Committee and heard about issues facing ferry users across the network. I am delighted that one of the lifts at Rothesay Pier has been fixed and is operational again. The public consultation on the next generation of contract to operate the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service is underway and is open until 8th March. Everyone can put forward their views by completing the document online at: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/consultation/public-consultation-for-the-next-clyde-hebrides-ferry-services-contract/>

I attended the Scottish Night at Rothesay Joint Campus, which was a fantastic evening of food, entertainment and displays which demonstrated the wealth of talent at the campus and I congratulate everyone who was involved in putting on the event. I also attended the Parent Council meeting and heard about the academic and community achievements and success by pupils across the campus.

I had the pleasure of attending a Citizenship Ceremony in the new Council Offices in Victoria Street and witnessed the individual making their affirmation of loyalty to our country on being granted British Citizenship. I also was pleased to be able to attend a reception at Downing Street with colleagues from across the country.

I also attended a number of committee meetings and civic government hearings of the Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee (PPSL) including a site visit to Connel.

Councillor Peter Wallace  
Isle of Bute Ward  
Argyll and Bute Council