

Draft Minutes Bute Community Council	
Date	2024-03-20 1900 at United Church Bute
Online at	butecommunitycouncil.wordpress.com
Draft Minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance: G Fear, R Macintyre, F Martin, J Moffat, I Morisson, T Nelson, W Nelson, J Osborne, Cllr R Kennedy-Boyle, Cllr P Wallace Apologies: C Hall 2. Declarations of Interest: F Martin, J Moffat, T Nelson, W Nelson all Buteiful Seas and Shores 3. Police Report: attached, no officer was available to attend 4. Minutes of Previous Meeting: 21 February, 2024 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Proposed by J Osborne, seconded by J Moffat, unanimously agreed. 5. Community Council By-Elections: A&B Council called for by-elections to take place for Community Councils. It is possible to register for the election until 1600 tomorrow afternoon. There are places for 6 additional councillors on BCC. 6. A&B Councillors' reports <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Cllr Kennedy-Boyle had been unable to make a written report, as she usually does, this month, so spoke to those assembled about the various committee meetings she had attended and actions she had taken to support individual constituents and groups over the past month. Some points to note were: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A special meeting was held before the full council at which decisions on supporting a new campus on Mull and final stages of Rothesay Pavilion was deferred to May. At the full council a vote by TALIG Administration to raise Council Tax by 10% was passed, a budget that Reeni did not vote for. 2. As a member of the Audit and Scrutiny committee she said that the simple question of 'what is the amount of reserves set aside by ABC' has been actually quite difficult to find an answer to. She told the gathering that there seem to be various pots of money making up the reserve fund and thought that an additional £2.5m had been added to the reserves, while at the same time raising council tax was deemed necessary. She is continuing to pursue an answer to the 'simple' question and will report back. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A BCC councillor at this point asked whether the Strategic Housing fund was part of the reserve fund. He was told that the £7m fund is not part of the reserve fund as it is allocated to strategic housing. 2. Cllr Kennedy-Boyle explained that at a recent meeting she learned that Bute has a double digit rate of homelessness and that 20% of that number is comprised of 16 – 24 year olds. She will be looking into this issue further. Bute and Cowal Area Committee SHIP Update 2024.pdf (argyll-bute.gov.uk) An audience member asked if it was known whether those who

were homeless were Bute residents who had become homeless or homeless persons who had come to Bute. Cllr Kennedy-Boyle said that at the moment there were no statistics/data available to answer that question.

3. She has been supporting several constituents with planning issues, explaining that Bute and Cowal are the worst performing areas of ABC in regards to planning

1. Cllr Kennedy-Boyle was supporting Disability Bute as they undertake a study to identify access/motability issues on Bute.

b. Councillor Peter Wallace: Councillor Wallace had submitted a written report but fielded questions:

1. A BCC member asked what the Council meeting on 15 April was for. Cllr Wallace explained that a Council meeting on 25 March would be held to approve the audited accounts for the previous year and the meeting on 15 April would be held to discuss a freeze on council tax charges, with the expectation that this would be approved. ABC had negotiated a £6.2m package of funding that would alleviate the need for the 10% increase. Council Tax bills would need to be reissued and payments would be adjusted to compensate for the initial overpayments residents had made. The funding package breaks down as follows: 2.8m originally on offer, £1.1m from the UK budget, £2.3m weather related support.

2. Cllr Wallace was asked if the doubling of Council Tax for second homes would remain in place and he said yes.

1. Anecdotally, a BCC member said that she knew of two flats that had been put on the market as a result of this policy.

3. Concerns were raised about the striking of the budget line that had allocated £800k for the demolition of the old academy building. Cllr Wallace said that though the item had been removed as an individual budget line, the expectation was that the work would go forward and be funded through the Strategic Housing fund (item 6.a.2.1 above).

4. Cllr Wallace was asked about seawall repairs between Rothesay and Ardbeg. He explained that the initial repairs were 'emergency' repairs and so could be undertaken without consents (eg SEPA). Permanent repairs were on hold while the appropriate consents are being gathered. The money for the permanent repairs was allocated in last year's budget, so the repairs would be carried out once the consents were in place.

1. It was confirmed that repairs at Ettrickdale were on the docket for this year.

2. In related discussion, it was confirmed that £480k has been allocated for road repairs on Bute in the current budget.

7. Guest speaker: Tony Edwards of Positive Pedals

a. Tony explained to the assembly that he had been a lifelong cyclist, starting as a child then using a cycle for commuting and taking holidays.

He had run a bike shop on Bute for 10 years, starting in 1995. During lockdown, he had been taking garden waste up to the recycling site and noticed that there were bikes, perfectly repairable, being put into the metal skip. About the same time, Live Argyll asked him to run a cycle repair workshop with several men who were recent refugees that had come to Bute. Once that workshop finished, he stayed on as a volunteer and helped to form an organisation that would repair bikes and get them back into use on the island. To date, they have put 28 bikes back into use. The goal would be to be able to eventually pay the people doing the repairs as well as self-fund the organisation, by being able to sell repaired bikes and charge for repairs. To achieve this they would need to change from a community group to a limited company.

- b. Positive Pedals was fortunate in receiving a £20k grant from Cycling Scotland. This was meant to fund a container that would be used as a base for carrying out repairs and storing tools. It was originally meant to be placed near the Lade Centre, where a shed had previously been granted planning permission. However, that site now falls within an identified flood risk area and so can no longer be pursued. An alternative site has been identified but permission is held up in the planning department (see 6.a.4 above). Tony also wrote to HIE in January, regarding waste ground near to the TSE units. He has had no response from HIE. He asked the ABC councillors and BCC for any support they might be able to give him in moving enquiries forward, with both ABC Planning and HIE.
- c. A member of the assembly asked if young people on Bute might be trained to do bike repairs in the future and Tony said this was something they would like to see happen.

8. BCC Councillor reports:

- a. W Nelson reported that a planning application by the BID had been made to place banner signage in Guildford Square.
- b. R Macintyre said that ferry usage numbers were still unavailable from Transport Scotland.
 - 1. The topic of ferries led to a discussion regarding the Active Transport Proposals that were progressing for the ferry to joint campus route as well as Albert Pier to the Pavilion. Proposed changes included shortening the length of the ferry lanes and making changes to the pick up/drop off area. Cllrs Kennedy-Boyle and Wallace were not aware of the proposed changes and W Nelson is to send information on to the two councillors.

9. Matters Arising

- a. Update on West Coast Motors/ young riders being denied travel: J Moffat will follow this up and report back at the next meeting.
- b. Any advance on offer by CHall to use Coffee Stop once a week for teen only hot chocolate and chat session: At the last meeting 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. At this meeting, neither C Hall nor Shona were present so this item will be deferred to the next meeting.

- c. Any advance on receipt of report from Shona Edwards on results of consultation she carried out at Rothesay Joint Campus: the report has been received and is available on the BCC website and as part of the combined minutes and reports document.
- d. Update on derelict buildings in Port Bannatyne:
1. Since the last BCC meeting, a group of 16 residents has formed an action group in Port Bannatyne.
 2. At the February BCC meeting, it was reported that Brendan O'Hara had received a letter from ABC, Fergus Murray in relation to 12 – 16 Castle Street: "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." J Osborne reported that after identifying and then speaking with the architects who are working with the developer on 29 February, this information was incorrect. The issue that had been resolved was that the developer successfully sued the solicitors involved in the purchase for negligence based on the fact that the developer thought they were purchasing all flats in the property when in fact they ended up as owning only 22 of the 24 properties. The remaining two were owned by two individuals, so ownership issues was still a major stumbling block to any progress. As well, the architect said that due to deterioration in the building since 2017 it is now uneconomic to redevelop. The estimated costs of doing so are put at over £2 million. Demolition is now the only viable option. The building is now a liability rather than an asset. The only way forward would be a compulsory purchase order by the Council.
 3. The property at 21 Castle Street is owned by the McGoldrick family and is being marketed as a "development opportunity" in shell condition by Blosshomes, which is a estate agency owned by the McGoldrick family. To date no buyer has yet to be found..
 4. Lawrence Lyndsey, a member of the action group, had a discussion with Steven Gove of ABC Planning Department, regarding the process involved in reaching a decision to demolish. As Castle Street is within the conservation area Historic Environment Scotland will have to be satisfied that demolition is the only option. An up to date structural condition report will be required.
 5. The action group is now seeking to arrange a meeting with three different ABC Departments together – Planning, Building Standards and the Empty Homes Team. The group is seeking support from the local ABC Councillors to arrange this meeting.
 6. While waiting for the meeting in item 9.d.5 (immediately above) to be arranged, the group will let the architects and developer know of the obligation to pay full council tax on empty properties that comes into effect on 1 April.

1. Information on Second Home and Unoccupied Properties council tax can be found at:

1. <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/council-tax-and-benefits/council-tax/council-tax-empty-properties>
2. <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/council-tax-and-benefits/council-tax/council-tax-exemptions-and-discounts>

e. Survey on fish farms: T Nelson explained that the initial survey form that had been agreed at last month's meeting is live for the month of March. Paper copies are placed in Kilchattan Bay, Port Bannatyne and Rothesay for those who do not use the computer. An article about the survey and the process being followed was included in the Isle of Bute News on 8 March,

1. To date, 33 surveys have been completed – 17 online and 16 on paper.
2. To increase awareness of the survey and the number of responses, BCC will take the survey to the public by spending some time in Guildford Square.
3. G Fear, director of Bute Island Radio as well as being the newest BCC member, suggested a radio discussion about fish farms. This will be particularly applicable to stage 2 of the process, answering questions that island residents have asked.

f. Update on Arden Craig Gardens and Rothesay Pavilion:

1. Plug plants are due to be delivered to the Gardens starting later this week or early next week.
2. As per item 6.a.1 any discussion of the Pavilion by ABC has been deferred until 15 April.

g. Bute Island Foods Community Fund: in January 2024, three representatives of Bute Island Foods, spoke to the BCC meeting about the BIF Community Fund. Item 5.b.6 of the January minutes notes the following:

1. J Osborne shared that he had been involved with several successful and several unsuccessful applications to the fund. He felt that the criteria had not been applied consistently and that at times the reason/s for denial were not clearly explained. It was agreed that a meeting be arranged between himself and the Community Fund committee to discuss these issues.
2. J Osborne explained that he had duly contacted BIFCF via email on 18 January. Though BIFCF had acknowledged receipt of his email on 30 Jan, he has had no further contact from BIFCF since this.

10. Public Questions

a. The matter of having more than one meeting in Port Bannatyne per year was again raised. After this issue was raised at the last meeting, W

	<p>Nelson did some research into population numbers on the island. The last available figures were the 2011 census, which identified 6499 total residents on Bute and 470 living in Port Bannatyne. See the Bute Population Map (2011 Census) document for the generated map. Based on this information, sticking with the current plan of one meeting each in Port Bannatyne and Kilchattan Bay would seem fair.</p> <p>11. Date of Next Meeting: 17 April, 2024</p>
<p>Following Documents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Report • Cllr Report – Peter Wallace • Bute Population Map (2011 Census) • Youth Consultation Report • Argyll & Bute Council Council Tax Information

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