

PORT OF MENTEITH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

The approved minutes of the general meeting of the Port of Menteith Community Council at 7.00pm in the Port Hall on Monday 21st October 2024.

Minutes

1. Members Present and Apologies for Absence

Jim Riach - Chairman

Becky Saunders – Secretary (remote)

Peter Stewart – Deputy Chairman

Ken Higgins – Community Member (Roads)

Martin Stewart - Treasurer

Lindsay Neil – Community Member (School/Hall)

Robin Armstrong – Council Member

Kevin Harrison – Community Member (Hall)

Gene Maxwell - Councillor

Apologies: Alastair Orr Ewing

2. Declarations of Interest in the Items of Business

None

3. Adoption of the Draft Minutes of the General Meeting held on 19th August 2024;

Minutes adopted. Proposed by Peter Stewart, Seconded by Martin Stewart

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the GM on 19th August 2024;

Website progress and wider village comms

Website is now up and running. Needs more updating, integrating Port Life FB page more and conversation with Tony about how/if we might integrate the Hall website. Email switched over as of today with help from Colin Clark.

Village Hall clear up, funding and progress – See report 10.7 below

5. Roads & Other Issues

5.1 Cardross Bridge Update

Nothing to add to weekly updates from Maria Lucey. Bridge currently due to be completed on time and council have dealt with all enquiries from residents and local businesses. There was some hope that the good weather to date would have allowed them to get ahead with the project but this does not appear to be the case!

5.2 Pavement project

Correspondence below from email just after last CC meeting. We are keeping nagging about this and Stephen Bly has been helpful in this respect.

There is a footway on the north side of the A81 running from the school through to the properties known as Woodend and Currach Cottage. There is no footway on either side of the B8034. The distance from the A81 down to the Lake of Menteith Fishery car park to the south of the cemetery is approximately 366 metres. The cost of constructing a footway of this length would be in the region of £131,000.00.

This could not be funded from Stirling Council's budget, but consideration could be given to the eligibility of this scheme to be funded from the Cycling, Walking, Safer Roads grant funding we receive from the Scottish Government. This budget is fully committed this financial year, but the scheme could be considered for inclusion in the programme for the 2025/26 financial year. Officers will investigate the feasibility of constructing this footway before putting this scheme forward for consideration. Please note

that this is not confirmation that this scheme will be taken forward, however, I am satisfied that it merits further investigation. I will update you once a feasibility study has been carried out. Angela McGibbon, Team Leader - Roads (Network)

5.3 Traffic and car speeds entering the village

KH indicated that potholes and gravel at entrance to school have not been dealt with. KH has spoken to the Headteacher and put it through the Report It function. So far nothing has been done. He also reported about the build up of water at the exit to the school. Someone came out from council and checked the drains and agreed that something needed to be done but so far nothing has happened. RA & KH have been monitoring speeds coming into the village. RA sent an email to traffic Stirling on 1st October but so far had no response. See section on Police Report for their engagement with school pupils and speed monitoring.

ACTION RA

RA asked how we can go about getting the 30mph sign on B8034 moved to beyond the Priory car park. All were interested in how we go about getting the village speed reduced to 20mph. Gene Maxwell said he would ask about this.

ACTION GM

Gene Maxwell indicated that both SC and Police tend to think the other is in charge of this issue but promised to follow up on all matters above

ACTION GM.

6. LPP Update

LPP Committee has:

- Obtained funding of £3500 from the LLTNPA for the employment of a consultant to assist in the development of the LPP report.
- Identified a consultant (Imagine If, Chiara Fingland) with a quote of £2950.
- Draft flyers have been prepared.
- Place Standard tool prepared and registered for community involvement.
- Emerging draft report started
- GIS Maps required identified and requested from LLTNPA (Ewen Kinninment).
- Stirling Council Statutory Local Plan, LLTNPA statutory plan and the National Planning Framework 4 examined for matters affecting Port of Menteith Community Council area.

Now to :

- a. prepare program
- b. confirm loan from VH trustees
- c. appoint consultants
- d. develop emerging draft
- e. develop public consultation details

7. Financial

7.1 Statement of accounts

CC currently has £579 in the account, £340 due from the council for Admin Grant for 2024-25, £250 due to be paid to BS for website costs. Funds for the hall defibrillator were ring-fenced by the previous treasurer - about £350 – we need to look at previous minutes to identify the exact detail.

7.2 Website costs

Will be around £150 for this year and £100 for next year as hosting is on a 2 year deal but domain and email will need to be paid annually

8. Correspondence –

8.1 Premises Improvement Grant – See report on Village Hall 10.7 below,

8.2 Ken Higgins – School entrance and Speeding – see section 5.3 above,

8.3 Trossachs Explorer – Despite its success it is unknown if this will return next year. JR is keeping a close ear to the ground on this and many letters of support have been submitted. Discussion was also had on a round route (both ways) that would join up Callander and Port but it was felt that, until we had some confirmation that there would be a bus at all, this was a moot point.

8.4 Sandra Shields – DRT – Significant discussion on this topic which centred on lack of DRT provision particularly now that the bridge was closed. Vulnerable people were not able to join up journeys from Balfron back to PoM via the diversion. Various members of Stirling Council sent this report:

*[I] have [been] engaging with our public transport team regarding the ongoing [DRT] issue, which has been exacerbated by our closure of the B8034, and have received the below response;
Since COVID we have had a reduction in the number of operators undertaking DRT in the Trossachs area and despite increasing the reimbursement rates and retendering, we have not been able to replace these operators. As such it would be difficult to extend this scheme due to limited resources providing DRT within the current scheme parameters.*

Councillor GM confirmed that there was a lack of drivers due to them not being paid for dead mileage. It was agreed that we would continue to push the council on this matter as our lack of transport is some of the worst in the country.

JR Suggested that an application is made/being made to the National Lottery Climate Action Fund along with other local areas for funding of between £500k and £1.5million for local transport.

GM suggested that we speak to Kate Beauville in Aberfoyle about their volunteer driver scheme whereby requests are phoned in and put out to a network of volunteer drivers who are paid per mile by the user. It was not clear if dead mileage was paid for. This may be primarily used for healthcare appointments.

ACTION BS TO REPLY TO S SHIELDS

[JR has subsequently sent a full email to Maria Lucey and Stephen Bly on the need for better DRT provision in rural areas]

9. **Planning & Licensing Issues** – One approval only for Mr & Mrs Hogg – extension and car port.

10. Reports

10.1 Councillor's Report

Councillor Gene Maxwell

- Councillor Maxwell discussed: Spending cuts
- The 34 Acre MOD site in Stirling being turned into a film studio (possibly with an educational element attached) and also development plans for land around Engine Shed.
- Large areas of Stirling being used for housing
- That plans to sell off surplus council office space have been put out to pasture
- Still a lot of conversations about saving money but with some councillors asking that they focus on making money instead using existing infrastructure etc.
- Ongoing Big Conversation pieces are being communicated via email.

10.2 NPA Report & Entry Sign progress

David Mackie

None received and David Mackie has not responded to Jim's requests to make contact. JR also chased Convener and put in a request via the contact form. JR will try his contact Heather next and also Martin Earl as he sits on the board of the National Park.

ACTION JR

10.3 Carse of Stirling Project Group Report

Jim Riach

Nothing to report on this. Next meeting is on 4th November. Time has been spent making funding applications recently.

10.4 Strathard & Trossachs Visitor Mgmt

Jim Riach

No recent progress here. Speculation that this may be due to National Park procedures. Plans were submitted at their last meeting in August but no feedback has been received.

10.5 Port Church & Cemetery

Robin Armstrong

Efforts have been concentrated on working out how the new linkage with Kippen, Thornhill, Norrieston and Gargunnock will operate. Still a lack of regular worshippers at Sunday services but more support from hotel to do joint wedding and receptions and more weddings are booked in.

Remembrance Service will be 10th November

Carol Service will be 24th December. Discussion as to whether the school children could sing at the CS.

It was noted that the Trossachs Church is for sale.

10.6 Inchmahome Report

Robin Armstrong

As of end September, visitors numbers to Inchmahome Priory were down by around 46%, compared to 2019. As you rightly pointed out to Simon, the weather this summer had a big impact on our visitor numbers especially in the high season of July and August when we closed whole days due to high winds. Also being closed for 4 years meant we were a bit under the radar this year. Hopefully, now people realise we're open again and with your support, we will see an increase in numbers next year.

Overall, the prebooking system has worked well and has smoothed the visitor flow throughout the day, meaning there hasn't been the same pressure on the car park, which we hope is welcome news to the residents of Port of Menteith.

We welcomed an educational visit from the Port primary school and would love other local community groups to consider visiting us next season.

10.7 Port Hall Committee Report

Kevin Harrison

Jodie Fowler has now signed up as a Trustee for the hall bringing the total to 5. Hall Committee have been working on a programme of events for the VH to be in line with needs for LPP. They have also been pulling together ideas and costs for hall to make a plan for next 5 years. Plans include upgrades to windows, insulation, doors, outside render, solar panels, wet room with outdoor access, electric charging points in car park and app payment for their use.

Committee have looked at the various ways of funding these improvements and are working on an application for a Premises Improvement Grant (PIG!) . See also Section 6 on LPP.

In addition Jamie from Briskona has been helpful in directing the committee on how the hall might connect with Broadband free of charge (funded for 2 years) – this would increase potential to create a work hub.

10.8 School Report

Ben Outterside

None received formally but L Neill advised that the role had jumped to 15 with sibling/others interested in joining the school too. The regular Saturday Activities have had a really positive impact on the school. A more joined up transport option from PoM to Callander and back would help. The closure of Cardross Bridge was causing a slight issue in the short term. The fisheries BBQ is scheduled and a Christmas Craft Fair is planned for 7th December. A nativity is planned – date TBA – and suggestion that if a tree can be sourced, the lights could be turned on at the same time. BS asked that any flyers be circulated to her so she can promote via direct email.

ACTION: BO, LN

Police Report

Lorna Deans/Donald King

See attached. In brief: Police have started engagement with the school on speeding. Some outdoor furniture was stolen from one of the restaurants in the village.

10.9 Forestry and Land Scotland

Julie McAlpine

See attached. In brief: works continue as before but please be minded of the spread of phytophthora virus and stick to open pathways.

11. Any Other Business

11.1 Defibrillators – Servicing and responsibility for checking. Hall, Dykehead, Fisheries, Island

Following an enquiry from a local resident the cc had a discussion about local defibrillators which showed that we (CC) were not 100% clear of responsibilities for the various Public Access Defibrillators, it was assumed that those at the Fisheries and Island would be the responsibility of the operating agency/organisation. It was also noted that some businesses also had a defibrillator, principally for staff (Tradstocks)

The one at the Hall was provided by fund raising by a resident and following installation some training offered to all community members. Originally, the key contact had been through the Hall Committee, and at some point the original fund which had covered the training, a few years of servicing and pad replacements had run out. The Hall Committee indicated that they could not fund or assume responsibility, TSaR had insufficient funds to service for free, so the CC became the contact point, and carried out some subsequent fund raising (I think a raffle at the Jubilee celebrations at the Hall), and the unit was brought back into service after it had been out of operation for a period of time.

It is recalled that the unit has been used on a couple of occasions - potentially with positive outcomes for the casualty (but that needs to be checked for accuracy)

TSAR is the only known organisation responsible for the Dykehead one, and questions were asked about the one on the Island. We agreed to go away and find out a bit more info on all of them, before agreeing to any subsequent actions. MS was going to visit the Dykehead one and see if it had any further info.

*[In follow up research, it seems that TSAR maintain and service all of them, therefore it was suggested that we ask them for an update on status of all and in particular the one that the CC are responsible for. We should then consider whether we should/need to do some refresher training and any new fund raising. **This item should stay on the agenda.**]*

ACTIONS: JR,MS, BS/NF

11.2 Community Benefit from Bridge engineers

Cardross Bridge engineers wish to confer some 'Community Benefit' and asked for a list from us to submit to them. Suggestions included: Village Notice Board to go in VH grounds, signage at the bridge saying River Forth (maybe a SC thing?), signage for Village Hall. More discussion at LPP Consultation with Residents meeting in mid November.

11.3 Back Doune the Rabbit Hole (possibly) 1-3 August Cardross Noted – depends on ticket sales.

11.4 Christmas tree

Discussion about getting Xmas Trees donated for hall and school. Outdoor lights will need to be sourced.

ACTION: BS will put in a newsletter.

11.5 Minute Taker

NOT DISCUSSED! Take forward to next meeting.

12. Date of Next Scheduled Meeting : Monday 9th December 2024. 7pm PoM Village Hall