

South Cowal Community Council

AGM 2021 held on 9 June 2021

Attendance in person at Innellan Hall and by Zoom VC

Present

Kyle Armstrong, Michael Breslin, Eleanor Stevenson, Dot Braham, Joyce McEwan, Martin Anstess, Linda Payne, Alistair Lennie, Alan Stewart, Linda Murry

In attendance

Mary Fryer Stevens, Jan McCormack

Apologies

Audrey Forrest, Lisa Marle, Cathy Fagan, Gillian Judd, Jim Anderson

Declarations of interest

None

Minutes of 2020 AGM

Correction: It was noted that 2 of the 3 people (Mary Fryer Steven and Cathy Fagan) co-opted at the September 2020 AGM as per the minute were deemed not to have been co-opted due to the mid term election being called a day earlier.

The minute was approved otherwise, proposed by AL and seconded by Jmce.

Matters Arising

- The community support for Covid will end at the end of June.
- Grit bins have now been installed.

Adoption of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021

AS proposed & KA seconded.

Convener's Report

It's great to be back home in our own hall! Zoom meetings are fine and have worked well for us but personally I much prefer to see people face to face. One facility on Zoom which is potentially very useful is the ability to mute people but SCCC members are too well behaved to need that anyway!

I would like to welcome everyone here tonight and to thank you all for maintaining your interest in SCCC. Particular thanks to those who have gone the extra mile in their particular role eg planning, secretary, treasurer, website, Facebook and those who have helped with on-going work involved with the community help group'. Thanks are also due to Police Scotland for their input. Last, but not least, thanks are due to our three Councillors who have tried hard to liaise with the Council on our behalf.

When I read over my report from last year, I was disappointed to note that so many things mentioned then are still not finished. The Pandemic can be blamed in part but now things are moving on and we will be looking to get work completed. I refer to dropped kerbs and the repairs to the Pier in particular but there are other things which have been started and just left. For example, the wall at Eleanor Lane has been pulled down and left. There are still cones designating unfinished work along the shore road and what happened at the Pier? All sorts of activity and then the inevitable fence put up and the area left.

The latest on the dropped kerbs is that work will begin in November or maybe before if possible. We were promised these years ago and nothing happened. Wait and see yet again. The Council can't just go on putting up fences or forgetting about work which has been started and then left. Eleanor Lane was much used and it is ridiculous that it has been left barricaded off for so long. The Pier car park will be in the water if something is not done soon so this year is going to one of constant nagging at the Council to finish what they have started.

Some progress has been made with regard to the War Memorial but at present we are awaiting to see what our solicitor makes of the proposed agreement with the Council. In the meantime, the buttercups are looking lovely and the dock is growing ever higher – not really what is wanted at such an important site.

Some progress has been made with the Trim Trail proposal but this is on hold until further clarification of some points is had from the Council officer dealing with this.

On a more positive note, the Burnamakiman Hydro Scheme has generated more money for groups in the area. It is good that we are able to help the groups to make efforts to improve their facilities as these in turn make the area more attractive for residents, visitors and potential newcomers.

There seems to be an upsurge in visitor numbers and also in people coming to live in the area. To have a post office and shop, golf, tennis, bowling and sailing available makes South Cowal an attractive area and when you add in the activities which should be restarting soon at the Village Hall it is easy to see why people like living here. The opening again of the Royal adds a choice of venue with the Osborne for a night out. We still have a church – just – and our two schools are thriving so this all adds up to making South Cowal head and shoulders above any of the other local villages – in my opinion anyway!

A good example of partnership working in the area is shown by Toward Sailing Club and SCCC (with a little help from Inspiring Innellan) getting together to erect lovely information signs and two cycle repair stands at Toward and Innellan. These are attracting great interest and particular thanks are due to Michael and Martin for their help in completing both projects.

With the prospect of more freedom looming now that things look a little more settled it is good to see the South Cowal area thriving and with your help this will continue.

Co-option of members

The following people were unanimously co-opted onto the community council:

Mary Fryer Stevens Nominated by MB and seconded by ES

Cathy Fagan Nominated by MB and seconded by ES

Jan McCormick Nominated by MB and seconded by ES

Election of Office Bearers

Convener Eleanor Stevenson, proposed by AS and seconded by LP.

Treasurer Joyce McEwan proposed by ES and seconded by AL.

Secretary Michael Breslin proposed by ES and seconded by KA.

AOCB

None

End of AGM

Business Items

Minutes of last meeting held on 12 May 2021

Proposed by JMCE and seconded by DB

Matters arising

- There remained an issue with glass and debris being left around glass recycling bins after being emptied.
- Lights at Knockamillie have been repaired.
- There is still a litter problem at Brackley Point. Can a large bin be located there?
- The issue of rats at Knockamillie was discussed as there was still no satisfactory resolution to the problem.
- We have not heard what is happening to the changes to the bus service that were started at the beginning of the pandemic, namely there are still no services doing the high road in Innellan and the early evening bus times have been changed to ensure the bus does not meet the ferry, for reasons unknown.
- A larger than expected bill had been received from Calico. It was agreed Joyce would not pay this for a week and MB will try and resolve the matter. It has been caused by the new web site being a much larger file than expected.
- There was a discussion about how long it took for councillors to respond, recognising that in many cases they were waiting for council officers. No matter, it was unacceptable and there was a general feeling things had to improve.

Motorhome parking spaces

There had been no consultation on the location of these and in the case of Sandy Beach there was little space between the 2 motorhome areas. Why is this?

Education Changes

Concern was expressed about the short notice period for consultation and other aspects of the proposals. It was agreed an email would be sent to the 3 councillors by MB after the meeting closed, cc all community council members.

Planning

AS read out a prepared statement as follows:

“ On May 20th Michael received an email from Keith Punler of Castle Toward, suggesting I had not been acting under the directions of the Community Council when I lodged our objections to the closure of two paths through the estate. The suggestion was that I had a private agenda and was using the cover of being the planning spokesman for the community council to attack the Punlers’ plans for the estate.

This was specifically in relation to the objection I raised on our behalf in April 2019, where we said that we wanted the paths that had been blocked by the deer fence that had been erected without planning permission should be re-opened.

Michael copied Eleanor and myself into the correspondence and after some digging , he was able to show community council correspondence that showed that I had indeed simply recorded the opinion of the council, based on contact we had had from the community itself. I’d like to thanks Michael and Eleanor for their support and research for this evidence.

I have never at any time recorded any comment on a planning issue that did not reflect what we have discussed, nor have I ever recorded an objection at any time for any item we have not discussed. To suggest otherwise I find offensive.

I have refrained in a personal capacity to make any comment or objection to any application that the Punlers lodge. I have always felt that because of the buyout, I would be seen as having a bias against them, and that any objection would be seen as sour grapes, regardless of how realistic any objection may be. It looks very much that all members of SCCC from that time have taken the same view.

In one of his last emails though, Mr Punler said that he had raised this matter as he had been told by a member of the local community that I was pursuing a personal agenda and was attacking their plans under the guise of it being the community council’s opinion. This local person is a member of this community council.

I would like to ask two questions at this point.

Firstly, do the community council agree that I have merely been acting on your instructions when lodging comments on planning applications? They are all publicly available if anyone wants to look them up.

Secondly, who is the community council member who made the comment that I had a personal agenda? As far as I recall no one has raised any objections to the decisions we made during the meetings, either publicly or privately, so to say to an external individual that they disagreed with what was said without raising this with the community council is wrong. “

The meeting agreed with the statement from Alan.

Annual Awards

AL proposed that instead of an individual, the community council should congratulate everyone who helped in any way with the community support during the pandemic. It was agreed AL will write accordingly.

Sandy Beach

Concern was expressed at the state of the picnic benches at Sandy Beach but Inspiring Innellan was awarded funds from the hydro scheme to enable new benches to be installed.

Treasurer's Report

Joyce confirmed funds of £4,767 but after commitments such as the trim trail, the free funds were just over £1,000.

Joyce will pursue the issue of electronic banking with a single signatory now that there are no changes to the community council signatories.

Next Meeting

Wednesday 11 August at 1930.