

## Furnace community council meeting

30<sup>th</sup> November 2023

### 1: Attendees:

Mark Boston, Peter Hogbin, Ruth Tott, Sharon MacInnes, Andy Henderson, Louise MacKellar, Kenneth MacKellar, John Campbell, Sue Campbell, David Moncrieff, Sarah Nixon.

Apologies: Cllr. Dougie Philand

### 2: Adoption of last month's minutes

Approved: Andy Henderson      Seconded: Sharon MacInnes

### 3: Matters arising

- Cleared land by Bridge terrace – We are no further forward with this issue. The land is owned by Argyll Estates. PH is soon to meet with the Estate and so will raise this query with them.
- Restricted foot path adjacent to Furnace surgery - MB has spoken with Julian Green (Team Leader A&B Dept. of Development & Infrastructure) who advises that Argyll Estates are being slow to respond and uncooperative in dealing with this issue.
- River Leacainn debris – following concern expressed at last month's meeting, MB spoke with SEPA (Benedict Trustin) who agreed to bring this matter to Scottish Waters attention. SW have inspected this obstruction and have engaged a contractor to deal with it. Post meeting note – The tree debris has now been removed.
- An Suidh Wind farm panel – MW was to explain this but was not present. SN attended the panel training and most recent panel meeting and asked if council members had any questions about the procedures – no questions raised.

### 4: Treasurers report

Total funds = £2877.25 of which £1591.31 is restricted.

### 5: Police report

The police report was issued on 08/11/2023 and covers Inveraray, Minard and Furnace. The police received 46 calls for service in the month of October. Of the calls received, five crimes were recorded;

1 count of vandalism, 1 count of failing to report and accident, 2 counts of speeding and one count of dangerous driving. There were no press releases for our area.

### 6: Roads

- A83  
MB has now conducted a full audit of the route to establish the status of the 40mph repeater & settlement nameplate signage works, following a request from Jan Brown. The results have been sent to Jan Brown, and the road safety manager for Bear Scotland (Kevin Mckechnie). Of the eight planned name signs, five are still to be fitted, and the positioning of the Whitebridge sign has been challenged. A request has been sent to Bear Scotland for a site meeting to discuss the relocation of the Whitebridge sign and we await their response.

- Village roads  
20mph signs/stickers have now been ordered following a successful application from the SCIO for a An Suidhe micro grant of £250.

Cllr. Philand has escalated the complaint about speeding along Queen Elizabeth Drive which was discussed in the September meeting. We have now received a speed survey request form from the Council's Roads & Infrastructure Services department and the community council was asked if this was a procedure that we wished to initiate at this point. It was agreed that we would wait to see if the stickers (20mph) made a difference first.

JC commented that the road sign at the Powdermills Bed and Breakfast was obscuring the view of the road, and this was exacerbated by the bracken when it is overgrown. Visitors to the premises can struggle to enter and exit the premises safely due to the signs location. MB suggested that JC should write to Bear Scotland (and possibly A&B council) to raise the matter. JC agreed to do this and copy the community council into any email communication.

PH stated that the rubbish has been cleared from Furnace bends by Bear Scotland staff.

#### 7: Micro fund grant applications

The SCIO made an application to the fund for the purchase of 20mph "please slow down" stickers for residents to place on their wheelie bins.

#### 8: Furnace surgery closure – update

- Following clarification of the information previously provided, detailed Furnace surgery attendance figures was compiled and has now been sent to the Lochgilphead Medical Practice Manager. This covered the requested period 2016-18 (prior to the surgery closure) and clearly shows the significant demand for both Nurse and GP services locally within the village, which was a factor of 1.88 times higher than the demand in Inveraray on a per capita basis.  
This information has also been sent to A&B Health & Social Care Partnership with a request that they support the re-opening of the surgery on a part time basis. To-date the only response received is a statement from A&B HSCP stating that they are working through a consultative process with the Lochgilphead Medical Practice and this may take some time!  
Further more detailed information is available for anyone interested in seeing it – please ask.
- Separately the GP Principal of Strachur Medical Practice has made a Freedom of Information (FOI) request for information from the Lochgilphead Medical Practice who are responsible for the Furnace/Inveraray surgeries. The Strachur Practice have also provided a draft outline covering the range of services that they could provide locally should NHS Highland/A&B HSCP allow a transfer of service responsibilities to occur.

It was suggested that as it has been some time since the council last met with members of the practice and representatives of the local HSCP, that another meeting should be convened to discuss the statistics and push the issue.

JC suggested that the council should approach the local MPs Brendan O'Hara and Jenny Minto. As there has been very little movement or response from the parties involved and it was suggested that a more radical approach may be needed. JC suggested visiting local MP's at their surgeries and approaching local media/press.

Meeting attendees agreed that if no progress seemed possible then all options, including the 'nuclear option' should be considered.

MB stated that he would go back to Cllr. Philand to get his input and discuss the best way to proceed.

NHS survey – Paper forms have now been sent to those who have not completed the survey digitally. The paper form allows recipients to make more detailed comments about the level of services available in a box at the end of section 1. MB produced a copy of draft wording relating to the closure of the Furnace surgery which may be of use to anyone wishing to make comment when completing the paper form.

#### 9: Environmental

Potential development of new off-road cycle trail/route: Lochgilphead to Inveraray – Discussion now rescheduled to New Year. David Bowen will now meet with the SCIO.

#### 10: Correspondence/notices

- Update on road closure night works: A83 INVERNEIL TO WEST TARBERT – Due to the low temperatures currently forecast the works north of Erines, will now be postponed until Tuesday 5th December and works at West of Tarbert will now start Wednesday 6th December. All works are now scheduled to be finished on the morning of Friday 8th December at 5am, subject to weather.
- Planning: No new planning applications posted in November.
- Shopping survey – Proposed draft questionnaire received from West Lochfyne CC for comment & feedback – see copy – Is there still community interest in participating? Members of the CC agreed that the proposed draft questionnaire needed some work as it was long and somewhat complex.

**Date of next meeting: Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2024 @ 6:30pm in the village hall**