

Furnace Community Council

Meeting 25/01/2024

1: Welcome and apologies

Attendees: Martin Wilson, Mark Boston, Ruth Tott, Cllr Jan Brown, David Campbell, John Campbell, Sue Campbell, Sharon MacInnes, Peter Hogbin, Andy Henderson, Ronnie Dodd, Ann Dodd, Sarah Nixon, Phil Nilsson

Apologies: Louise and Kenneth Mackellar.

2: Adoption of November 30th 2023 minutes

Proposed: Sharon MacInnes Seconded: Ruth Tott

3: Matters arising

- Bridge Terrace – regarding the cleared land near Bridge Terrace. PH met with Jane Young and Hugh Nicol to discuss concern over the size of the area that has been cleared, and the potential for the inappropriate management of Japanese Knotweed (footpath opposite surgery). Investigations into who owns the land are ongoing – Argyll Estates are to report back.

4: Treasurers report

Total Net Assets: £2,883.66

5: Police report

Police report last issued 6thDec: (LB43) our area had 20 calls for service over the month of November with 6 crimes being recorded. These crimes were as follows:

- 2 x Fail to report an Accident
- 1 x Theft
- 3 x Road Traffic Offences

MW advised that the recent weather has been an issue in the area. Police advice is to be careful when travelling and to avoid travel as necessary during hazardous conditions.

6: Roads

- A83 – A site meeting was held with Bear Scotland, with MB and LMcKellar in attendance. It was agreed that the Whitebridge sign would be removed. It was agreed that the following settlement names would be fitted: Furnace, Sandhole and Cumlodden.
- Restricted visibility at the Powdermills B&B entrance – JC stated he will write to Bear Scotland.

Village – 20mph wheelie bin stickers have been delivered and passed to the SCIO for distribution.

7: Micro-grants

No applications received in the last month.

MW proposed that the CC make an award to Inveraray Primary who are organising a trip to Benmore for the pupils of Inveraray and Furnace. The cost of these school activities are prohibitive to some families in the area, and it was agreed that the CC could contribute. While micro grant awards are usually for £250, PH suggested a donation of £500 – PH to check policy on this matter. MW will also approach Inveraray Community Council to raise the idea with them. The trip is scheduled for April/May.

8: Furnace surgery update – see bullet points below:

MW and the CC thanked MB for all of the hard work he has put in on what has been an extremely challenging and frustrating issue.

- As previously agreed, Cllr Philand was contacted and appraised of the frustration expressed at last month's meeting relating to the lack of progress. FCC then sent a further 'chaser' letter requesting an update on any progress made between LMP & A&B HSCP on 19th Dec.
- 16th Jan – LMP issue letter notifying FCC of their intention to hand back the contract to A&B HSCP - letter now published in local press and on social media.
- 23rd Jan – A&B HSCP write to FCC informing them of the process that they are initiating to ensure continuity of care, engage new independent partners and begin a public consultation process aimed at determining the most appropriate way of meeting community healthcare needs going forward.
- Following the editorial coverage published by the Argyllshire Advertiser (Squeak) last week, MB has written to the editor. This letter provides detail not included in LMP's letter so as to give a more balanced view. Due to time constraints and in order to meet publication deadlines, MB's letter was sent from a resident (not on behalf of FCC) although it is likely that the content included reflects the wider views of FCC, but time did not allow for the content to be discussed.
- Regrettably, after FCC posted LMP's communication on the Everything Furnace FB site along with a preface that had been prepared, the FB site administrator edited the CC's preface without first seeking approval prior and before making this change. Unfortunately the change made took out any reference to the active role that FCC had played in bringing the surgery closure issue to a head and this change is considered to be out of order.

- Community councillors operate democratically and therefore statements they issue should not be altered, or amended, by third parties without first seeking approval from the CC.
As a result of the above, Furnace CC will now consider whether they should establish their own independently managed page, or simply revert back to the use of notice board type communications only.
- Further information and updates relating to the surgery will be issued as, and when, they become available.
- The GP principal of Strachur Medical Practice (Dr Robbie Coull) who previously expressed an interest in providing GP/Nurse services to Inveraray & Furnace residents, submitted a freedom of information request (FOI) to the LMP before Christmas and the results of this are now available on-line by following the link below:

https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/furnace_clinic_closure?nocache=incoming-2523165#incoming-2523165

There was discussion about what happens next regarding the surgery. At present, it is unknown what the notice period is for the “handing back” of the contract to provide medical services in the area. MB reported that Evan Beswick has advised that the process to engage new GP partners will be fast tracked.

JC expressed concern about the staff employed at Inveraray surgery and their future employment. This will be a matter that their current employer will need to manage.

It was agreed that a document should be put together, reflecting the views of the community, which outlines what services we would like to see in any new practice.

It was suggested that the Community Council reach out to the other CC’s in the area (Minard and Inveraray) to canvas opinions. MB agreed to reach out to the relevant people.

MW – Asked whether a sub group should be formed with members from all three CC’s

Actions:

1. MB to contact the local community councils
2. Guidance from the HSCP will be sought about the consultation and how we go about communicating our needs.
3. Compile ‘first pass’ “aspirational” document – list of wishes/needs.

9: Environmental

PN and PH attended a meeting with David Bowen regarding a potential cycle path between Lochgilphead and Inveraray. Whilst there is no firm plan of a route, it is thought that any potential path would cross through two separate forests, one owned by Land Forestry Scotland and the other by the Kenmore estate. There may be some resistance from privately owned land regarding potential footfall/camping along the route.

It was agreed that as the route would utilise some of the Leacainn walk, and the responsibility for agreeing this should lie with the SCIO.

Dog fouling – PH said that he had noticed no further occurrences.

10: Correspondence

No planning updates this month as the online planning site was inaccessible due to maintenance.

11: Any other competent business

- Facebook – the Everything Furnace facebook site belongs to Lynda Syed who is no longer a member of the CC. There was discussion about the possibility of setting up a new FB page, to represent the Community Council and the SCIO.
- MW – Police Scotland recently held a meeting with the guild about internet safety which was well attended. Does the CC and/or the SCIO want to organise a similar event in the village to discuss internet safety and scam awareness?
- MW informed the council about an ICE (in case of emergency) information card that he had come across whilst visiting another community in the area. The cards can be filled in by an individual, listing basic information ie, emergency contacts, medical information, location of nearest defibrillator etc. He pointed out that information like this is invaluable when the emergency services attend any kind of incident. MW to look into and report back.
- Next AGM – date TBA
- There has been an enquiry about the empty garages on Queen Elizabeth's Drive. ACHA have stated that these are not to be rented out (they own three of the five) and that the buildings are full of asbestos. DC has offered to cover the cost of an upgrade but has had no response. JB agreed to look into this.

Next meeting will be held on 29/02/2024 at 6:30pm in the village hall – All welcome!