**Troon Community Council Meeting**

Minutes of meeting held Tuesday 2nd December 2014 in council chambers.

**Sederunt:**

**T.C.C. Members:** Robert Pollock *(chair)*, Douglas Graham *(vice-chair),* Elizabeth McNish **(substitute secretary)**, Dawn Barr, Anne Cameron, Erica Williamson, Kay Workman, Frances Carson, Fiona McDonald *(council members).*

**Police:** P.C. Allan Corson & P.C. Blair Wood.

**Cllrs:** Nan McFarlane, Peter Convery & Philip Saxton.

**Press:** Stephen Houston *(Ayrshire Post)* & Eddie Harbison *(Troon Times).*

**Public Forum:** Tommy McAvenna, Lisa Jeffrey, Robert Milligan, M. Rennie.

**Apologies:** Moira Love, Helen Duff, Dennis Cram, Cllr W McIntosh , Annie Kerr.

**Chairman’s Welcome:** R.Pollock welcomed all attendees.

**Approval of Minutes:** Dawn Barr approved seconded by Kay Workman.

**Police Scotland:** P.C. Allan Corson reported a quiet month in Troon

P.C. Corson reported on the month’s figures:

* 5 Common Assaults
* 2 Offensive Weapon Charges
* 33 Stop & Searches *(this is down on last month due to the dark nights)*
* 8 Domestic Call-Outs

P.C. Corson reported on:

* Big push for the new drink-drive laws coming in on December 5th.
* Winter Campaign for awareness of road conditions etc.
* Speeding – all officers being trained on speeding policies and prevention
* Light at police station being left on will be addressed again, there is no local switch to turn it off
* Town Centre initiative – no start date decided upon as yet
* Policing Plan Community Officer -No information as yet *(Insp. Kelly is trying to fill position but this is a policing issue).*

**End of police report.**

* Dawn Barr thanked the officers for the police involvement in Wintertainment it was greatly appreciated.
* Elizabeth McNish passed on thanks also for the out-riders allowing the children to sit on the motorbikes, they thoroughly enjoyed it.

**Public Forum:**

**Gull Menace:**

Lisa Jeffrey of Bank Street reported on the activities of the local people to try to combat the menace of seagull attacks. The residents have formed a “Gull Action Group”. The behaviour of the gulls during mating season is getting more dangerous she reported, attacks on people and animals becoming more aggressive. She reported that Dumfries & Galloway have been removing nests from houses reducing the gull population by 10% each year. This has been an on-going project for the past 6 years. She proposed that South Ayrshire Council could consider a similar project. Her research had indicated that other forms of gull control such as employing wardens and falconers were more expensive and less effective. The contact details for the D & G Co-ordinator is Martin Taylor . Chairman R.Pollock concurred that disrupting the nests had proved effective at his current place of employment. Cllr. McFarlane suggested getting in touch with Scottish National Heritage as they will remove nests safely, the manager of the Marina might be able to offer advice in this regard as she believed that he had used this service. Ultimately the overall feeling was if the public stopped feeding the gulls they would stop nesting in urban areas. She said education of the public would also help highlight the nuisance the gulls are becoming. Leaflets and flyers were suggested.The Local Authority Cllrs. Advised that there were no resources available to tackle the gull problem though Cllr McFarlane suggested all Cllrs joining forces and asking the Scottish Government for help and the TCC could also send a letter to the Chief Executive highlighting the problem. Erica Williamson suggested installing gull proof bins in the town and on the promenade but Cllr Convery advised that they were too expensive to install, and previous experience had shown that they were of little practical effect. The TCC will contact the CEO of SAC re the problem and seek confirmation if they are aware of the D & G project, and whether something similar would be considered for the forthcoming year.

**Beach Grass:**

Tommy McAvenna: Reported the grass and weeds at the car park at North Shore are so high that to see the view over the Clyde Estuary you need to stand on the roof of your car, it badly needs cutting back. Cllr. McFarlane reported that this is an area of Specific Scientific Interest and is used by nesting birds and, as a consequence, the grass must be left longer than other areas.

**Public Toilets:**

It was asked by the public forum if any new public toilets were planned for Troon, Cllr. McFarlane said theadvised that the council is not obliged to provide public toilets; Cllr Saxton said the need for public toilets in and around the town has been discussed often as has the budget for them. It is planned to install additional toilet facilities at North Shore for the coming summer. However it was noted that there are numbers of useable toilets around the town centre which are maintained to a reasonable standard. Some discussion then ensued on issues associated with public toilets, such as being used for drug abuse which can attract

**Costa Coffee Outlet & New Retail Unit:**

Robert Milligan *(New resident to Troon)* obtained the plans of the new development of the Costa Coffee being built on the old Safeway site he asked what was proposed for the retail unit but no-one was sure as of yet. He was concerned about the loss of 30 – 39 parking spaces. D. Graham *(TCC)* reported objections were lodged by the TCC but the plans were passed by the SAC subject to conditions. Red Button who are developing the site were written to and invited to a meeting with TCC members and the public but declined as the plans have already been passed by the SAC. They would only comment that new retailers would hopefully bring in new trade to Troon. Cllr. McFarlane advised that two applications were made for different areas within the site, and that there appears to be some public confusion as to where the retail units will be. The Planning Application clearly shows their respective locations. She also commented that the loss of so many parking spaces is concerning. She was also concerned about the lack of disabled parking within the Retail Arcade. R. Pollock *(Chair)* commented that there are plenty of parking spaces in and around the town but people are not prepared to use them and walk to the town centre. He also asked the Local Councillors if there were plans to open the town centre school for additional parking during the summer break. Cllr Saxton replied that it was the intention to do so. Cllr Convery also advised that the intention is still to improve the signage to available car parking once funding becomes available. Cllr. Saxton agreed there are plenty of spaces; he commented Costa Coffee would increase the footfall for new businesses. He said the bigger picture was to encourage new businesses and create job opportunities, not deter them over parking issues. Kay Workman *(TCC)* said there was no objection to businesses taking over empty shops, the public were objecting to the loss of parking spaces as Costa customers would be using the available spaces as well as the general public. Cllr Convery advised that an express purpose of the Local Development Plan is to attract new business into the town, and to other areas of South Ayrshire. It was pointed out that there were no valid reasons to object to Costa Coffee although it was noted there were 460 objections on “Facebook” saying they were trying to protect other established coffee shops in the town. It was also noted however that no-one mentioned the number of new jobs Costa Coffee would bring into the town.

**Play Area:**

Cllr Convery provided an update that funding had been secured to upgrade the facility.

**Town Beacon:**

R. Pollock *(Chair)* advised that as a result of a letter sent to the CEO of SAC, it had been confirmed by Gus Collins, Facility Manager, that, from official minutes of TCC, held by the Council;

the Beacon lies on South Ayrshire Council ground

the Beacon was erected by the Millenium Group which was a sub-group of TCC. SAC and local businesses also provided support.

The Millenium Group also appeared to have obtained an independent source of funding which was not recorded through TCC ledgers. This is not unusual, and SAC are only interested in auditing how public administration grants are spent. (This is at odds with previous advice and audits, and requires further clarification.)

SAC have note of two signatories to the Millenium Group funds, both of whom are known to TCC.

The Beacon was inspected at the time of erection and was declared fit for use.

The Beacon would appear to have been maintained until recently by local businesses.

Further clarification is required on whether the Beacon requires to be inspected on a regular basis, and if so, what the nature of the inspection should be.

Further clarification is required on whether TCC Public Liability Insurance covers The Beacon, and whether additional insurance would be required if The Beacon was lit again. R Pollock advised that he had tried to contact Mr Collins to discuss the outstanding matters, without success, and that he would endeavour to clarify them before the next meeting. However it is clear that, in the meantime, TCC does have responsibility for The Beacon.

**Defibrillator at Pool:**

Cllr Convery advised that a possible funding source has been identified and that an application would be submitted. Discussion arose as to whether there were defibrillators at any other swimming pools with SAC, and whether they could be re-distributed if a facility held more than one. Cllr Convery also pointed out that it was not a matter of simply obtaining the equipment, as thereafter there would be ongoing maintenance costs, which can be high.said one can be applied for at a reduced price, Paul Wilson will put in the application. There are two at the Citadel and none at Troon. It was noted that Troon pool would be responsible for replacing any parts etc. D. Graham commented that East Ayrshire have them in place at pools and council buildings also, the staff are all trained on how to use them. He inquired of the Cllrs if the council chambers have them in place. Cllr. McFarlane replied that with the Council Buildings, certain staff are trained to use them but shewill enquire about their provision and the regulations concerning pools etc.

**Councillors Report:**

***Cllr. P. Saxton:*** Nothing to report

***Cllr. P. Convery:*** Reported there are 3 times more parking here in Troon than there is in Prestwick. On Strategic Parking *(Red Button/Templehill/Town Centre)* he reported that cars arrive in the morning and are parked all day. Morrison’s car parking is a 3 hour period; all other parking in the town is free or unlimited. He said there are enough spaces but very few drivers move on after they have parked. The council will look at timings of strategic parking. He highlighted the fact there are two bus services into the town centre so cars can be left at home.

* Anne Cameron said people who work in the town park in the strategic parking areas.
* Robert Pollock advised that this is a long standing issue and that previous studies had shown that in the region of 30 per cent of the parked cars occupying strategic parking areas belonged to traders. He also said beach parking should be included in strategic parking plans.

***Cllr. McFarlane:*** Reported that at a parent council meeting at Marr College the head teacher asked about the possibility of dog bins being put in the playing field. She has e-mailed the Department of Environmental Health who advise that says dogs are banned from sports fields but there is no legislation to enforce this. It is a matter of respect not law. There is a management rule in place for cemeteries which is enforceable but no such rules apply to schools. Surveys done in other schools show they have the same problem with dogs.

* The new bus shelter in Walker Avenue has been put in wrong way round
* The No. 15 bus has been reviewed and the service is to be withdrawn as every second bus of the No. 14 bus goes through Barassie so no need for two.
* She advised that due to the impending shortage of cemetery spaces, work is going on to establish how old graves must be before they can be re-used.

Cllr. Convery commented if the bus service isn’t used it will be lost. He also stated that SPT concessionary fares group have no way of contacting blind people, as currently they get sent letters they cannot read. The out-dated cards are being removed on buses and trains and the date is being removed from new cards which will be lifetime cards. This will be done over a two year span.

**Other Business:**

**Wintertainment:**

The day was a great success. Activities group and all attending members were thanked for their hard work on the day. R. Pollock advised that he had been contacted by another CC seeking advice on how Wintertainment and other community events were organised, and that he had passed on details of the Activities Group if they wished to pursue this. K Workman advised that all Hi-Vis jackets were returned. The banners on show were decorative and highlighted the clubs available to join within the town. Erica Williamson (*TCC)* reported a complaint from an elderly disabled lady who was refused access to the Town Hall through the Walker Hall. She was refused admission because of the large queue to see Santa. Cllr. McFarlane said she would make sure the RNLI were aware of the equalities act. She would be writing to them to ask that in future elderly/disabled should be allowed access. She also commented that the RNLI could be legally challenged. Tommy McCormack (*MTRA)* said the old lady was very upset and she is new to the town.

**Car Park Signage:**

Erica Williamson *(TCC)* asked if a letter could be sent to Red Button with reference to the entrance / exit signage, drivers are unsure which is which. She also suggested that the directional signage within the car park requires refurbishment.

The entrance/exit signs at the Co-Op in Dundonald Road have been removed and the cars come in and out both ways almost hitting each other all the time. This needs addressed ASAP. The Cllrs replied this is in progress.

**New Lighting:**

The council were informed the new lighting in the town has greatly improved the area and safer insomuch as it highlights dangers otherwise unseen.

**Dog Bins:**

Cllr McFarlane again reiterated her previous discussions. All Cllrs and members agreed this is a major problem in Troon not just in parks but also on the beach. Tommy McCormack *(MTRA)* has offered to distribute the Toxicaris Canis posters used in Muirhead to the Council. R.Pollock *(chair)* advised that photos of offending dogs should be taken, and that the matter should be reported to SAC Dog Warden Service or to the Police.The TCC will draft a letter to David Thompson supporting the introduction of new management rules.Dawn Barr *(TCC)* said parents who attend games on the playing fields bring their dogs with them. Anne Cameron *(TCC)* said the same problem occurs in play parks but it’s not always local people. Erica Williamson *(TCC)* remarked this is a hard thing to stop. Tommy McCormack *(MTRA)* reported that Holly Shivas *(Community Police Officer*) and Paul Scully *(Community Safety Officer)* patrol Muirhead early in the morning for offenders. It was noted this is a big problem around all of Troon and the Toxicaris Canis posters will be distributed and posted everywhere possible to highlight the dangers of this problem.

**Tree Debris:**

Kay Workman (TCC) asked for a contact no. for Network Rail, she told the meeting the debris from cut trees is not being cleared from Dundonald Road Railway Bridge. Though she said thanks must be extended to the chap who picks up the litter.

**Roads Alliance Website:**

Anne Cameron *(TCC)* reported issues within the website. For example, when Troon is selected as a location, it brings up a map of Cornwall. Cllr Convery advised that the Alliance was aware of teething troubles. However there is a Troon in Cornwall, and to an extent the public has to be careful of its information input.

D. Graham *(Vice-Chair)* was sent a book of “Spatial Development & Planning”. He asked that a letter be sent to the Chief Executive to invite someone from planning to come along to a meeting.

**Troon in Bloom:**

Cllr. Convery spoke of the possibility of this event, which had been very succerssful in the past, being resurrected. Discussions also took place on the possibility of bringing a Craft Fair to the town, even if only a part of the Summer Mini Fair. The success of the Sandcastle Competition, sponsored by TCC, was also discussed, with a view to holding another one during the summer.

 **British Legion:**

It was reported the Royal British Legion is to have its name changed and this is causing some upset among Legion members. R Pollock advised that TCC was contacted by the Deputy regarding suggested improvements to the way the Armistice Day Parade was organised. Details of the organiser had been passed to the Deputy Lord Lieutenant.

**Walkway:**

D. Graham reported the access through Wilson Avenue/Ottoline Drive has been closed off, he contacted SAC Planning Dept. The plans reveal a walkway through will be left as this is one of the conditions.

**Congratulations:** Congratulations were expressed to Anne Cameron who, at the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Conference, received the Outstanding Tenant of the Year Award, having been nominated by South Ayrshire Council Housing Service.

There being no other business R. Pollock *(Chair)* closed the meeting by wishing all present a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

**Next Meeting: January 6th 2015.**

**Chairman – Robert Pollock**

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