

Appendix 3: CONVENOR'S REPORT FOR AGM, 8 JUNE 2016

I am pleased to report that the Rhu & Shandon Community Council has been active throughout the past year dealing with a number of issues on behalf of the local residents.

During the year R&S CC have continued to make representations to Argyll & Bute Council (A&BC) for improvements to roads and drainage around the villages. Active interest continued in the control of Japanese Knotweed along the lochside with several working parties helping with pulling up and burning the weed and encouragement of local organisations, including A&BC, to spray and clear infestations.

The hope that faster Broadband would be delivered throughout the community by the end of 2015 proved to be mis-placed and we continue to await an improvement in service. Despite the CC's best efforts obtaining reliable information is proving impossible.

Planning applications are a key part of the CC's work and several of a minor nature have been discussed. The unapproved work at the Peace Camp has been continually raised with Argyll & Bute Council who continue to claim that it is sub judice and decline to provide any meaningful feedback. The bottom line is that nothing has changed on the ground. The inability of A&BC to deal with this issue is a source of disappointment to the CC.

It is understood that work on the Rhu Marina Masterplan is awaiting the absorption of the Crown estates organisation into the Scottish Government. .

The Bowling Club continues to deteriorate and although the CC has maintains some contact with the remnants of the Bowling Club to understand their views, and there has also been some discussion of alternative community uses, nothing concrete has been proposed to date.

The application for the proposed Helensburgh Wind Farm which lies within the boundaries of Rhu and Shandon CC has been withdrawn following objections from Glasgow airport.

An application was made to demolish the existing Lochside Care Home at Gullybridge and replace it. R&S CC objected on the grounds of excessive mass and inappropriate access and parking. These objections were moderately successful in that the application was approved by A&BC subject to conditions including reducing the roof level and publishing a traffic management plan.

R&S CC proposed that a TPO be placed on the Blairvadach estate and grounds to ensure the protection of mature species. This was accepted by the Planning Committee of A&BC.

An application by the Navy/MOD to convert the Ardenconnel rugby pitch to a 3G surface and to install floodlights and fencing caused considerable controversy in the village. After taking soundings the CC objected to the application because of its impact on a Conservation Village which did not appear to be balanced by adequate community benefit. The A&BC Planning Committee however approved the application. Subsequently it appears that the School and Football Club are likely to get good access.

Early notification by means of a Pre-Application Consultation for 85 new homes to be built by Persimmon on the former Dobbie's site has raised concerns. Although outside our CC boundary the increase in the number of

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planned homes over the LDP allocation causes us concern and possibly sets a precedent for over-riding LDP recommendations. The CC is monitoring the situation.

No progress was made with a Conservation Area Appraisal for Rhu village. This is a responsibility of A&B C who appear to have it as a low priority. The CC is pressing the case with A&B C, possibly to progress it ourselves as the basis for a Conservation Area Charter.

The CC was awarded a grant from Act Alfresco, Coast & Countryside Trust, towards the purchase and siting of a new public bench at the spit. Several local residents also contributed to the balance of the cost and the seat is now finished and in use.

Fireworks at weddings at Rosslea Hall Hotel have upset some residents' dogs. The CC arranged for the hotel to provide advance notice to affected parties but nevertheless complaints continued. The Hotel has now agreed a noise management plan with the appropriate authorities in A&BC and also agreed new arrangements for stewarding events to reduce the impact on neighbours.

During the year the continued existence of Rhu Post Office came under threat with the departure of the then Postmaster. The CC made representations to the Post Office, local MP and MSPs and received assurances that it would remain open. The Post Office however secured an arrangement with newcomers Jas Judge and his niece for the continuation for the service.

At the time of the 2016 AGM key current issues are: unauthorised building at the Peace Camp, the future of the Bowling Club and its land, and continuing the attack on Japanese Knotweed, as well as the usual maintenance issues.

The R&S CC website has continued to show improvement within the past year due undoubtedly to the dedicated work of our secretary and the small sub-group dealing with communications.

As Convenor my role has been made much easier by the tremendous support and work done by all members of the Community Council. It is appreciated that everyone is a volunteer and gives freely of their time to serve the community but without the energy and commitment given by the individual members we would achieve much less. A big thank you to everyone.

Jack Rudram, Convenor
Rhu & Shandon Community Council
31 May 2016