Campbeltown Community Council – Councillor's Report

Councillor Jennifer Kean – 11th March 2025

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1. Budget Meeting

Following the council's budget meeting 27th February 2025, a council tax increase of 9.9% and licence/fee and charges increase of 6% has now been agreed. I have attached a copy of the budget motion which was voted through by the administration group within the council for your information.

2. Roads & Infrastructure

Campbeltown Traffic Management System review

Previous note from Jan 25 - *I have been continuously asking for a review of the traffic management system within the town for over a year and have finally pushed the service to agree to a meeting in the next few weeks to start this process. Following my meeting with Police Scotland, they confirmed that they also agree that the "unofficial" crossing points on the A83 through the centre of town are dangerous as is the current situation with traffic exiting Burnbank Street on to Kinloch Road with no clear visibility of vehicles either side. There are a number of issues throughout the town that need to be addressed by a full review of the current system and the appropriate safety measures (proper crossings, nibs etc) being installed where required. 3. Cars parking on Ralston Road/Smith Drive junction causing obstructions - update Previous note from June - I was made aware of cars parking on Ralston Road near the Smith Drive which were causing obstructions particularly at the beginning and end of the school day for school traffic and buses. They are also causing visibility issues for anyone coming out of Smith Drive onto Ralston Road. I spoke with council officers and have asked that they look to getting a Traffic Restriction Order in place in this area and in the meantime they have spoken with the local policing team as whilst there are no lines to prohibit parking, the police can still move cars on/charge cars if they are causing a dangerous obstruction. Previous update from November Following on from the above, I received further complaints about this issue over the last week with concerned parents getting in touch to advise that people are again parking in this area, causing worry and alarm for parent's with children who walk to school by themselves as well as causing issues for the flow of traffic, particularly for the buses at drop off/pick up times. I have raised this again with the Council officers and asked for an update on their work to put a Traffic Restriction order in place in this area to prohibit parking immediately opposite Castlehill Primary School. I have also contacted Police Scotland direct again and asked for their support with this in the meantime. After speaking to West Coast Motors they have advised that this is issue is still causing serious problems for the buses. This is ongoing – council officers are currently refusing to engage with this issue further. I raised this again at the MAKI area committee meeting and visited the area with Roads & Infrastructure (RIS) representative following the meeting. The RIS representative then met with the Chair of the Friends of Castlehill*

parent council during the school/nursery finish time of 3pm that afternoon to see the issue in real time. I then organised a meeting with Police Scotland to discuss the issue further and stressed the need for regular policing in this area to move people from parking on the corners and causing a dangerous obstruction. The Police advised that, in their professional opinion, they do not believe this area to be an issue/ dangerous. The Police advised that they do believe that parking and traffic management at Dalintober Primary School to be dangerous. I have continued to receive complaints about the issue on Ralston Road and have received communication from hospital and surgery staff regarding cars parking along the road from Ralston Road towards the hospital leading to further traffic management issues and posing a hazard/danger/delay to ambulances being able to access the hospital during an emergency. I am continuing to push for this to be dealt with as soon as possible.

I chased the above up multiple times with the officer from Roads & Infrastructure and did not get a response. I therefore brought this up yet again at the MAKI area committee meeting last week and was told by the officer that they were awaiting the new parking warden being in post for a few weeks to see the results of parking enforcement before looking at the issues further. I made it clear that a number of issues (traffic coming on to Kinloch road, unsafe crossing points, lack of lines in areas) would not be dealt with by the parking warden's work and therefore a full review is still required regardless of the enforcement work. I also raised the issue of the unsafe crossing points on the A83 in town with the officer from Transport Scotland who was in attendance and highlighted the problems with these points once again.

3. Kidney Dialysis Unit

Previous note from Jan 25 *- Campbeltown Hospital Following contact from a constituent and further, following reading the minutes of the community council last week I contacted Gillian Neal and Charlotte Craig to query the current suspension of the Kidney Dialysis Unit at Campbeltown Hospital. The constituent that contacted me had been told that there was a local Campbeltown resident requiring dialysis and they were having to travel elsewhere for treatment due to the service being suspended. I have asked for clarification on this. If this is not true, I have asked how the service would be re-instated if someone within the local area requires dialysis in the near future. I noted that during your December meeting, Mr Alan Baker asked Gillian Neal if the equipment could be moved out of the area and the answer recorded was " yes." This is the opposite of the conversation had with Ms Neal at the Laggan Community Council I attended in November last year. I have therefore asked for clarification on this point and stressed that the service must consult with community of Campbeltown and the Kidney Dialysis Group who raised a substantial amount of funds for the equipment. Whilst I fully appreciate the difficulties with staff shortages and in particular, staffing a specialist service, and the benefit of the equipment being used to help as many patients as possible, I do not feel it should be moved without first consulting the community that fought hard and fundraised to set the service up here to alleviate travel time for local patients.*

Following the above, an open meeting was held to reinstate the Kintyre Kidney Dialysis Campaign Group in order to keep pressure on NHS Highland and be a strong local Kintyre voice during the on going review process.

Report from meeting - Tuesday 25th Feb 2025; Delighted to report that the meeting was attended by 42 people with a number of people who submitted apologies ahead of time and asked to be furnished with a copy of the minutes and updated thereafter.

Donald Kelly, Vice Chair of the Kintyre Kidney Dialysis Campaign Group chaired the meeting with Linsay MacPhail very kindly agreeing to take the minutes for the evening. Donald started by thanking Linsay for giving her time to open the Burnett Building for us to allow us to hold the meeting and for taking the minutes. He then gave an overview of the previous campaign to get the unit up and running in the first instance. Gillian

Neal, Local Area Manager attended and agreed to speak and give an update on the current situation with the Dialysis service in Kintyre. Gillian advised that the review for dialysis service as a whole in the west of Argyll is now underway following a meeting yesterday morning and also advised that in the meantime, work is ongoing to secure an agency contract to allow the unit in Campbeltown to reopen with an anticipated restart date of sometime in mid March if all goes well. Following Gillian's talk, Donald then discussed the need for the group to reform and for the positions on the committee to be refilled. We are delighted to report that all positions have been filled and we have also gained a number of new committee members.

I contacted Gillian Neal for an update today to see if they have confirmed a start date for the agency contract and await her response.

4. Campbeltown Hospital - Temporary Reduction of beds

I have received numerous concerns from constituents regarding the temporary reduction in beds at Campbeltown Hospital. I asked a large variety of pertinent questions prior to the SLT meeting and my understanding is that the reduction will relieve staff pressures by one staff nurse per shift. I fully understand and appreciate the pressures currently faced by the service however the very stark reality of this temporary reduction is that it will undoubtedly result in a number of Kintyre patients being displaced to other hospitals in the coming months and quite possibly some passing away without family or friends surrounding them. I am sure the managerial staff understand the levity of this situation for our community and I have stressed multiple times that we must do all we possibly can to ensure the bed numbers in Campbeltown are reinstated as quickly as possible and that this reduction never becomes permanent. As a community we have suffered continuous cuts to our hospital service for decades now, cutting our available services to the bone as it is. We cannot, and the community will not, allow our services to be permanently reduced further. I insisted that the HSCP issued a public statement to confirm that this reduction was only temporary until staff are in place to reinstate bed numbers. I have also asked that members are provided with the figures relating to occupancy and displaced patients, including how many patients are displaced from Campbeltown due to lack of capacity and which hospitals patients are being displaced to, at regular intervals during this reduction period so we can ascertain the full impact this has on our community. I am also still awaiting further information on exactly how this temporary reduction will affect our ambulance service in Kintyre.

5. Rural Growth Deal

Kintyre Seasports: The RGD will provide funding of £2m for a new water sports hub on Campbeltown Loch, creating an outstanding natural destination for sailing and other water sports. KS currently operates from Campbeltown Sailing Club; however, this facility no longer meets the required standards to sustain the increasing demand in the wide variety of water sports that exist in the community. The proposed new development will see the existing site redeveloped to form a two-storey building that will house changing facilities, space for learning, offices, a community café, a kitchen, and a range of storage space. Projected start date: 2025/26.

Machrihanish Innovation Campus: This project will be delivered by the University of Stirling, supported by an investment of £3.8 million from the UK Government. The RGD investment will enable research and development facilities to be upgraded at MIC to improve water quality, tank capacity, power and fresh water supplies, provision of a controlled laboratory environment and disease challenge facilities. These improvements will provide the facilities required to extend research and development opportunities for visiting researchers, students and other site users. MIC will continue to support growth in the blue economy by increasing high-value jobs both directly through the additional research and support staff required and also by enabling the expansion of

existing companies and the creation of new businesses through start-ups. Projected start date: 2027/28.

6. Visitor Levy Consultation - Drop in session Campbeltown

As per last report in January, just a reminder that the visitor levy consultation is still ongoing. Please encourage as many people as possible to complete this. I am still receiving regular correspondence from constituents regarding this and not one person has been in favour of the implementation of a visitor levy in Argyll & Bute so I am very interested to see the outcome of the consultation after it finishes in April. There is a drop in session next Monday 17th March in the Community Centre from 4pm – 7pm.

Monday 17 March – **CAMPBELTOWN** – Kintyre Community Centre - 4pm-7pm.

Argyll and Bute Visitor Levy - your voice matters | Argyll and Bute Council

7. General issues within the council

I noted in a previous report and mentioned again above the issues I was facing with lack of response from council officers and I am disappointed to report that this is ongoing and it also applies to lack of response from councillor colleagues too. Furthermore, I have been disputing the lack of content within minutes from meetings. My most recent experiences of this have been as follows;

1 – Council Officers – Lack of response from Roads & Infrastructure officers despite decisions/actions agreed at a public meeting in December and following a number of emails where the senior officers, head of service and policy lead councillor were all copied in.

2.- Councillors – Prior to the budget meeting this year I sent an email to my councillor colleagues two weeks prior to respectfully request that anyone proposing a budget motion shares same with all colleagues in good time ahead of the meeting so we could all digest and understand implications of the proposals prior to the vote. I have attached copies of the emails I sent, one response I received and my further response to this email. I was extremely disappointed that only two fellow councillors responded in total to my emails. Further to this, I have emailed fellow councillors about setting up regular local meetings amongst other things and have not received any response to these emails either.

3.- Meetings - I have raised the issue that the minutes from council meetings do not reflect all of the discussions/actions from the meetings yet again. Whilst I fully appreciate the minutes will not be verbatim and include the full discussions I think it is completely wrong that actions to be taken by officers are not noted down in the minutes and therefore there is no public and complete record of the discussions in black and white. I attach a copy of the recent report given by the Roads & Infrastructure department at the MAKI area committee last week to illustrate this point. This report tells the reader absolutely nothing and the link to the weekly RIS updates takes you to a webpage with no dates on any of the report links which are also not even in chronological order making it basically impossible for anyone looking to information to find what they require.