

Ardrossan and Arran, Saltcoats and Stevenston Area Committee
20 August 2009

ARRAN, 20 August 2009 - At a Meeting of the Ardrossan and Arran, Saltcoats and Stevenston Area Committee at 11.00 a.m.

Present

David Munn, Anthony Gurney, Margie Currie, William Gibson, John Hunter, Peter McNamara, Ronnie McNicol and Alan Munro.

In Attendance

E. Murray, Chief Executive Designate; J. McHarg, Learning Manager, Capacity Building, and B. Anderson, Performance/Grants Information Officer (Community Learning and Development) (Educational Services); Nigel Marshall, Resource Co-ordinator (Arran Outdoor Education Centre and M. Anderson, Committee Services Officer, (Chief Executive's).

Also In Attendance

Inspector I. Ness and Sergeant B. Mackay (Strathclyde Police); Station Commander L. Elliot and L. Brady, Community Safety Co-ordinator (Strathclyde Fire and Rescue); B. McNicol, Arran Volunteer Fire Brigade; and J. Nichols, Arran Council for Voluntary Services.

Chair

Councillor Munn in the Chair.

1. Chair's Remarks

On behalf of the Area Committee, the Chair extended a warm welcome to Elma Murray, who will take up the post of Chief Executive of North Ayrshire Council on 24 August 2009.

Thereafter, the Chair invited Nigel Marshall, Resource Co-ordinator, to say a few words about the of the Arran Outdoor Education Resource to say a few words about the work of the centre and its staff.

2. Arran Outdoor Education Centre

Nigel Marshall, Resource Co-ordinator for the Arran Outdoor Education Centre provided Members with some background on the history of outdoor education in Ayrshire, from initial trips to West Linton, to the construction and later closure of Corrie Croft, the move to Whiting Bay Youth Hostel and the establishment in 2008 of the current purpose-built facility at Lamlash.

The Arran Outdoor Education Centre affords young people, including those with special needs, an opportunity to participate in a range of activities, such as sailing and camping, which both contribute to their personal development and help to promote educational attainment in subjects like maths, IT, geography and art. The value of the practical field work opportunities provided at the centre is demonstrated by the achievement, by 8 Largs Academy students, of 'A' passes at Advanced Higher Geography.

The centre, which is staffed by a small team of well-qualified staff working extended hours, generally operates to capacity during the school term. The funding shortfall created by the offer of free places to young people in receipt of free school meals and clothing and footwear grants, is offset by the provision of courses to the wider public.

Noted.

3. Strathclyde Police

Inspector Ness provided information on arrangements for publicising and distributing local Community Policing Plans, which show how the Community Police service intends to tackle a number of local priorities identified as a result of a public consultation exercise carried out last year. Leaflets on the Community Policing Plans for communities within the Committee's area, were circulated at the meeting.

Thereafter, Sergeant Mackay provided details in relation to the Police Service on Arran, including:-

- the importance to tackling driver behaviour and road safety issues associated with both the rural nature of the island and visits by significant numbers of tourists unfamiliar with its relatively narrow, winding roads;
- the necessity of regular beach patrols to monitor and ensure the safety of 'wild campers';
- the work of the Arran Alcohol Forum, which involves monthly meetings between a variety of agencies on the island, such as the Police, Health Service, educational services and local Councillors, and aims to tackle alcohol abuse by young people and identify more positive diversionary activities; and
- the positive performance of the Police Service on Arran over the past year.

Members asked questions, and received further information, on the following:-

- the need to tackle the issue of 'boy/girl racers' in the Three Towns area, which continues to be a problem although not identified as part of Community Policing's public consultation;
- the value of exploring how an initiative such as the Arran Alcohol Forum might be extended to areas on the mainland;

- the nature of the diversionary activities arranged for young people on Arran; and
- the growing willingness of the public to contact the Community Police team and the importance of staff continuity in building relationships within the community.

Noted.

4. Strathclyde Fire and Rescue

Submitted report by Strathclyde Fire and Rescue on activity from 26 May to 2 August 2009, which provided information on property fires, secondary fires and community initiatives in the Three Towns and Arran area. Copies of a tactical assessment report for the period 26 May until 2 August 2009, were circulated at the meeting. This report provided further locational information on incidents and, where available, gave data to allow a comparison between the number of incidents within the Committee's area and the total number Council-wide for the same period.

Station Commander Elliot highlighted the additional information provided within the tactical assessment report and the potential it provided for identifying where resources might be focussed to address particular problem areas. Members were invited to consider whether this more detailed type of report should be submitted to future meetings of the Area Committee.

Liz Brady, Community Safety Co-ordinator with Strathclyde Fire and Rescue then addressed the Area Committee in relation to the following community safety activities:-

- work on educational packs to alert P6 and P7 pupils to the dangers of fireworks;
- preparations for Arran Avoids Accidents events in March 2010; and
- the introduction of a new community safety bus, which will be used to promote fire safety, act as a mobile class room and publicise information on initiatives such as Home Fire Safety Visits.

Members asked questions, and received further information, on the following:-

- the incidence of grass fires, which can be linked not only to youth disorder, but also factors such as periods of dry weather and the popularity of disposable barbecues;
- the youth engagement work carried out by School Liaison Officers and via the Fire Reach programme;
- the value of early liaison between the Fire and Police services to identify any incidents which might be associated with youth disorder;
- the problem of refuse fires, which can relate not only to wheelie bins being set alight, but to items of furniture, including mattresses, which are left out by householders awaiting uplift by the Council's refuse collection staff;

- false/malicious calls from schools and the role of School Liaison Officers in seeking to address the issue;
- how the Fire service engages with local businesses to try to address false alarms associated with equipment faults;
- the difference between 'deliberate' and 'malicious' dwellinghouse fires; and
- any incidents involving violence towards Fire and Rescue staff.

The Committee agreed (a) to receive the new tactical assessment style of reporting at future meetings; and (b) otherwise to note the information provided.

5. Arran Volunteer Fire Brigade

The Committee received a short presentation by Bill McNicol of the Arran Volunteer Fire Brigade. The service, which comprises 2 retained stations and 3 stations staffed by volunteer fire fighters, works closely with other emergency services on the island. Information was provided on the following:-

- the largely self-sufficient nature of the fire service on Arran, particularly given the constraints of the ferry timetable in the event of additional support being required from the mainland;
- the predominantly modern nature of the fire stations on the island, with the exception only of the Brodick station;
- the particular issues for the fire service on the Arran, including the significant numbers of tourists and the presence of an oil depot, hospital, castle, ferry service and remote hillsides; and
- the difficult role of volunteer fire fighters on the island, particularly with regard to road traffic fatalities, some of whom will inevitably be known to, or indeed relatives of, those attending incidents.

The Committee agreed (a) to record its thanks and appreciation to all of those involved in volunteer services, including fire fighters serving the Arran Volunteer Fire Brigade; and (b) otherwise to note the information provided.

6. Community Development Grants and Local Youth Action Fund 2009/10: Applications for Financial Assistance

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on applications for financial assistance under the Council's Community Development Grants Scheme and the Local Youth Action Fund. The Learning Manager, Capacity Building, clarified that the amount requested by the Arran Civic Trust should read "£2,000" and not "£1,000" as indicated, in error, in the report.

The Committee agreed (a) to make the following awards:-

Community Development Grants Scheme

Organisation	Award
Arran Civic Trust	£2,000
Ardrossan Elderly Forum	£200
Ardrossan Wednesday Pensioners Club	£500
Stevenston Elderly Forum	£500
Saltcoats Town Centre Initiative	£1,000

Local Youth Action Fund

Organisation	Award
Arran Theatre Arts Trust	£2,000

(b) to continue consideration of the application by Ardeer I.T. Support Group pending clarification on the latest position on all necessary insurance associated with the services of the tutor; and (c) to refuse the applications from (i) St Mary's Minibus Committee, on the grounds that the vehicle has already been purchased and due to the significant sum of money requested by the group when considered in the light of the overall grant budget, and (ii) 1st Stevenston Boys Brigade, on the grounds that the proposal only marginally meets two of the funding priorities and does not indicate how the long term maintenance and fuel costs associated with the vehicle will be met.

7. Stevenston Common Good Fund

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on an application received in respect of funding from the Stevenston Common Good Fund.

The Committee agreed to award the sum of £3,500 to the Community Led Action and Support Project (CLASP) in connection with the HOPE (Helping Older People Evolve) project.

8. The Volunteer Sector on Arran

The Committee received a presentation by Jim Nichols of the Arran Council for Voluntary Services (ACVS) on the community and voluntary sectors on Arran and their involvement in the work of Community Planning Partnership (CPP).

The Committee was provided with information on how the ACVS, which has been operating on the island for some 40 years, engages with CPP groups such as the Economic and Learning Partnership, the North Ayrshire Housing Partnership and the Compact Reference Group. The service, which has Scottish Government funding in place until 2011, is currently considering how it will operate in future to provide a more integrated service.

Noted.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Area Committee will be held on Thursday 22 October 2009 at 2.00 p.m. at a venue to be confirmed.

10. Future Agenda Items

The Committee agreed that any items for consideration at the next meeting of the Area Committee, with specific reference to Arran, should be submitted to M. Anderson or D. McCaw.

The Meeting ended at 12.50 p.m.