

Community and Recreational Services Committee
19 January 1999

Irvine, 19 January 1999 - At a Meeting of the Community and Recreational Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Stewart Dewar, James Clements, John Donn, Elizabeth McLardy, Peter McNamara, Margaret Munn and Robert Reilly.

In Attendance

The Corporate Director (Educational Services); D Anderson and F Keddily (Heads of Service) (Educational Services); T Baulk, Accountant (Financial Services); and S Paxton, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Chair

Mr. Dewar in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Jane Gorman, James Jennings, John Sillars and George Steven.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 24 November 1998, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. The Kilwinning Celtic Cross

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on a request to display the Kilwinning Celtic Cross within the North Ayrshire Campus building of James Watt College.

The sandstone Kilwinning Celtic Cross is an example of intricate Celtic knot-work. The Cross was found in the gable of a house in 1925 and extensive restoration work was undertaken on it by Cunninghame District and North Ayrshire Councils. The Council's Museum Service is researching the precise date of the carving of the stone and will produce a leaflet for the Millennium Celebrations explaining its significance. It is intended that the Cross be displayed in the Kilwinning Abbey Tower following completion of internal improvements.

A request has been received that the Cross be displayed in the new James Watt College Campus in Kilwinning, subject to security, environmental, insurance and display conditions as this will provide a link between the new College Campus and North Ayrshire's history. It will also serve to promote the existence of the Cross to a wider

audience. It is anticipated that the College will meet the costs associated with the relocation of the Cross.

The Committee agreed to loan the Kilwinning Celtic Cross to James Watt College, Kilwinning for an agreed period, subject to appropriate display and security conditions.

3. Junior Football Grounds

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on requests from Junior Football Clubs to re-acquire their home grounds and issues relating to the provision for Junior Football.

The Council, in addition to its recent purchase of Abbey Park, Kilwinning, owns six sports grounds which are designated as Home Grounds for Junior Football Clubs, namely:-

- Merksworth Park, Dalry (Dalry Thistle);
- Ladeside Park, Kilbirnie (Kilbirnie Ladeside);
- Bellsdale Park, Beith (Beith Juniors);
- Campbell Park, Saltcoats (Saltcoats Victoria);
- Ardeer Stadium, Stevenston (Ardeer Thistle); and
- Barrfields Stadium, Largs (Largs Thistle).

The Council maintains and manages the grounds while Junior Football Clubs have priority use. The Council recognises the need not only for new grounds but for significant improvements to be made to existing grounds. It will not, however, be possible to undertake such work as a result of financial constraints and the low level of community use of the grounds.

Requests have been received from Dalry Thistle, Kilbirnie Ladeside, Beith Juniors and Saltcoats Victoria Junior Football Clubs to re-acquire their grounds by lease or purchase. If the Clubs were to re-acquire the grounds there would be opportunities for them to acquire external funding from a number of agencies. With regard to Abbey Park, Kilwinning, the Council could either lease the ground to Kilwinning Rangers Junior Football Club or make available access to it on a priority basis as with other Junior Football Clubs.

The Committee discussed the implications of Clubs re-acquiring their grounds by lease or purchase and agreed to continue consideration of the matter to a future meeting of the Committee.

4. Capital Programme 1999/2000

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the proposed Capital Programme for 1999/2000. The Programme has been prioritised on the basis of (a) legal or statutory requirements; (b) opportunities to derive external match funding; and (c) repairs and maintenance to sustain income generation opportunities. The proposed Capital Programme 1999/2000 totals £761,150.

After discussion, the Committee agreed (i) the proposals outlined in the Director's report; and (ii) to remit the proposals to the Corporate Strategy Committee for its consideration.

5. Vikingar! Development Plan

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the proposed Development Plan for the Vikingar! Visitor Attraction and the opportunity for external funding.

Vikingar! which opened in 1995, incorporates a Visitor Attraction providing information on the way of life, culture, religion and general history of the Vikings in Scotland from the 9th Century to the Battle of Largs in 1263. The Attraction has proved popular with schools and 153,000 attendances have been recorded since its opening. Attendances have, however, been in decline which is not unusual for an Attraction of this type. Attendances at the swimming pool while lower than in previous years are not as low as other leisure centres, while the refurbished soft play, fitness room, health suite and theatre attracted increased attendances.

In order to retain the level of interest and relevance of the Visitor Attraction it will be necessary to change and expand the Attraction and its associated elements. A Development Plan has therefore been prepared, following market research, which identifies proposals to develop the Attraction over the next six years. The Development Plan proposed a number of internal modifications including (a) the conversion of the Holmstead area to a Viking Longhouse, a workshop, and a marketplace; (b) the expansion of interactive IT provision; and (c) the purchase of additional equipment and artefacts. The total cost of the Development Plan is £99,000 and the Project is eligible for up to 90% funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The balance could be met from existing revenue funding over the next six year period with possible supplements from other organisations such as Enterprise Ayrshire.

The Committee agreed (i) the Development Plan for the Vikingar! Visitor Attraction; and (ii) that the Corporate Director (Educational Services) arrange for the submission of an application to the Heritage

Lottery Fund for funding for the implementation of the Development Plan.

6. Museum of the Cumbraes

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on accommodation proposals in respect of the Museum of the Cumbraes.

The Museum of the Cumbraes was situated in the Garrison House, Millport from its inception in 1979 till the closure of the Garrison House due to structural problems in September 1997. The collection is now stored in partitioned areas within the Town Hall and Ballroom Hall in the Garrison House grounds.

Small temporary museum displays have been established in Cumbrae Primary School and the British Legion's Room, funded by the Scottish Museums Council, as it is intended to maintain a museum presence on the Island. Limited cataloguing and inventory work on the collection has continued but since the closure of the Garrison House it is proving increasingly difficult to find accommodation to undertake the basic task of maintaining the collection.

A Studio Room has become available for rent in the Garrison Craft Studio which will provide appropriate at an annual rental cost of £1,300. Resources are available in the Museums Service budget and it is proposed that the Council rent the Studio Room for a period of initially one year.

The Committee agreed the lease of a Studio Room at the Garrison Crafts Studios for additional storage and workroom purposes to maintain the Museum of the Cumbraes collection.

7. Leisure Centres: Programme

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the forthcoming programme within Leisure Centres. The report gave full details of special events to be held at the Magnum Leisure Centre, Auchenharvie Leisure Centre, Vikingar! and the Garnock Swimming Pool to be held in the period January to March 1999 as well as information on the recent programme of maintenance closures and the effects of storm damage.

The Committee was also advised that Brodick Country Park was currently closed as a result of storm damage which had felled around 200 trees.

The Committee approved the Programme as detailed in the report.

8. Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park: Agricultural Properties: Request to Declare Land Surplus to Requirements

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on a request received from the tenant of Blairpark Farm to purchase the property which is situated within North Ayrshire and within the boundaries of the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park. The Regional Park is administered by a Joint Management Committee under a Joint Management Agreement between North Ayrshire, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire Councils but park assets, including Blairpark Farm, are in the ownership of the respective Councils.

The Committee at its meeting in April 1998 agreed to declare surplus to requirements Routdaneburn and Birkhead Farms and in doing so established criteria for future requests which included (a) consideration of wildlife interests; (b) landscape value; (c) recreation/access issues; and (d) operational requirements.

Blairpark Farm currently generates a rental income of £7,000 per annum for the Regional Park. If the Council was to dispose of the Farm it would require to fund the Park's income shortfall. The sale of the Farm which is in a highly visible area could compromise the wildlife habitat for a variety of plant and bird species; could have an adverse impact on the quality of the landscape, and affect the proposed development of pathways within the Park being undertaken in conjunction with Enterprise Ayrshire.

The Committee agreed (i) to refuse the request to declare Blairpark Farm surplus to requirements; and (b) to refer to the matter to the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Joint Committee.

9. Working Group on the Future of Community Education

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on (a) the findings of the Ministerial Working Group established in February 1998 to provide advice on the long-term future of Community Education; and (b) the potential implications for North Ayrshire Council.

The Ministerial Working Group has now issued its findings entitled "Communities: Change Through Learning" which, together with the COSLA Discussion Paper on the future of Community Education and the production of the HMI Report on Community Education in North Ayrshire, represents important guidance on the future of Community Education in North Ayrshire and in Scotland as a whole.

The Working Group found that government policies for life-long

learning and social inclusion, together with the growing consensus on the need to promote active citizenship required a major contribution from Community Education and made recommendations which included:-

- the publication of a new Scottish Office Circular promoting Community Education in the manner outlined in the Working Group's Report;
 - the formulation of Community Learning Plans;
 - the adoption by all Community Education providers of procedures to seek the maximum involvement of service users in decisions about how services are planned and delivered.
- A report on the further guidance from the Scottish Office on the national implementation of the recommendations will be submitted in due course and a series of seminars for Chief Officials and Elected Members will be arranged by the Scottish Office.

Noted.

10. Childcare Strategy: Support to Voluntary Sector Care Providers

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) regarding the disbursement of £7,000 to support the creation of additional childcare places within the voluntary sector for out of school care. The disbursement of funds was as undernoted:-

<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Award £</u>
West Kilbride Out of School Care	450
Hayocks Schools Out Club, Stevenston	440
One Plus, Glasgow	800
Pupils Out of School Care Club, Largs	750
Lanfine Out of School Care, Irvine	300
Springside Out of School Care Project	500
East Irvine Nursery and Afterschool Care Limited	1,700
Total	<u>4,940</u>

It is anticipated that the total allocation will have been committed by the end of the current financial year.

Noted.

11. Declaration of Land Surplus to Requirements

Submitted reports by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on requests to declare land at (a) South Isle Road, Ardrossan; (b) Eglinton Street, Irvine; and (c) East Road, Irvine as surplus to requirements.

The Committee agreed (i) to approve the requests; and (ii) to remit the matters to the Support Services Committee for its consideration.

12. Urgent Items

The Chair agreed the undernoted item be considered as a matter of urgency.

13. Irvine: Fatality at The Magnum Leisure Centre

Councillor Clements made reference to the recent fatality at the Magnum Leisure Centre, Irvine, and advised that he would raise the issue at the forthcoming meeting of the Corporate Strategy Committee, requesting that in future Elected Members be advised of such incidents.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 2.50 p.m.