

Three Towns Area Committee
29 October 1998

Saltcoats, 29 October 1998 - At a Meeting of the Three Towns Area Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 10.30 a.m.

Present

David Gallagher, Peter McNamara, David Munn, Margaret Munn and Alan Munro.

In Attendance

S. Burns, Area Services Manager (Social Work), J. Martin, Library and Information Services Manager, L. Griffin, Leisure Contracts Manager, S. McLaughlin, Area Community Development Officer, G. Clark, Country Parks Manager, H. Greenwood, Area Officer Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance (Community Services), E. MacLean, Adviser (Education), W. Nichol, Senior Accountant (Financial Services) and S. Bale, Administration Officer (Chief Executive).

Also In Attendance

J. Ledgerwood, (Three Towns Initiative), G. Hill (James Barr Chartered Surveyors), B. Baird, (GD Lodge and Partners Architects), Superintendent J Young (Strathclyde Police) and Assistant Divisional Officer J Milligan (Strathclyde Fire Brigade).

Chair

Mr Gallagher in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

S. Gooding and S. Taylor.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 September 1998, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Monitoring Reports

(a) Three Towns Initiative

(i) Presentation on Ardrossan Harbour Master Plan

The Chair welcomed Mr Graham Hill, James Barr Chartered Surveyors and Mr Bruce Baird, GD Lodge and Partners Architects to the meeting.

The Project Leader, Three Towns Initiative advised the meeting that the Master Plan for Ardrossan Harbour had been initiated as a result of the Three Towns Initiative's review of a number of sites in that area with a view to taking a more strategic approach to development. The Three Towns Initiative in consultation with Clydeport, Enterprise Ayrshire and the Council agreed that a public/private partnership approach was most appropriate and subsequently undertook a detailed process to select the most suitable Consultants, resulting in the appointment of James Barr. There has since been a public consultation on the Master Plan and an Implementation Team will now be set up to take it forward.

Mr Hill and Mr Baird then gave a full and informative presentation on the background to the drawing up of the Master Plan, and the marketing exercise undertaken to ascertain interest from developers in the area, which had achieved an excellent response. The key to the Plan is a strong

diversification of use, with the area being divided up into specific development sites covering industrial, commercial, housing, retail, visitor attraction, water sports, an expanded marina, upgrading of the Pandoro/Calmac area with a new terminal building to be provided, improved car parking, landscaping, lighting, signage etc. Additional accesses and improvements to the pedestrian approaches to the terminal and improvements to the railway station are also included in the Plan, as it is hoped to encourage the large number of passengers using the Arran ferry to spend some time in the Harbour Area by providing retail and other attractions.

The purpose of the Master Plan is to stimulate investment in the area, that it is only the first stage, no specific boundaries have been drawn and how the Plan will impact on other areas is being looked at. Members asked a number of questions on the Plan, to which the Consultants responded.

The Committee thanked the Consultants for their informative presentation.

(ii) Progress Report on Three Towns Initiative

Submitted report by the Project Leader on progress of the Three Towns Initiative.

The Steering Group on CCTV are preparing a full bid to the North Ayrshire Regeneration Partnership for funding for CCTV within the Three Towns and are also submitting an application to the Scottish Office. Local companies have given support for this initiative.

Boatfest 98 which was held on 9th -11th October was extremely successful, attracting an estimated 9,000 visitors over the weekend.

Noted.

(b) Community Services

(i) Sports Development

Submitted report by the Director of Community Services on the levels of activity within the Sports Development Services over the period of April to September 1998 compared with April to September 1997.

There has been a particular increase in football development due to the appointment of a Football Development Coach but a general decrease in other activities due to the extremely poor weather over the period.

Noted.

(ii) Leisure Management

Submitted report by the Director of Community Services on the levels of activity within the Leisure Management Service over the period April to September 1998 compared with April to September 1997.

There has been a reduction in the level of activity at the Auchendarvie Centre, largely due to lower swimming attendances, reflecting a national trend. Furthermore, the health suite attendances show a decrease due to health and safety restrictions which have been introduced on the number of sunbed sessions. Attendances at other activities are broadly comparable with the previous year. Attendances at sports pitches are significantly down on the previous year, due to two organisations which previously let the pavilions transferring to school premises.

Noted.

(iii) Country Parks

Submitted report by the Director of Community Services, reviewing the level of activity over the period April to September 1998 within the Country Parks and Ranger Service compared with April to September 1997.

The report confirmed that recorded attendances at Eglinton Country Park and at related special events show a decrease, largely as a result of the poor weather. Relevant statistical information was provided in the report.

Noted.

(iv) Library Issue Figures

Submitted report by the Director of Community Services on issue figures for libraries within the Three Towns area over the period April to September 1998 compared with April to September 1997.

The Library and Information Services Manager reported that the statistics shown in the report for the audio service at Ardrossan Library were incorrect and should indicate a variance of -16.8%. The figures for the three libraries of Ardrossan, Saltcoats and Stevenston show a general reduction in the issues of books and audio, mainly due to the budget cuts on the book fund for new stock. Existing stock is rotated round each library. The reduction in the Stevenston library issues reflects the initial increase in usage at the opening of the new library in 1997.

Noted.

(v) Litter Awareness

Submitted report by the Director of Community Services on service delivery in respect of litter awareness for September 1998.

Illegal dumping over the period has reduced considerably. One incident occurred in Saltcoats of 7 litter bins being set on fire. There is already liaison with the Fire Brigade on the uplift of hazardous materials. There were 4 calls to the litter hotline during September.

Noted.

(c) Legal Services: North Ayrshire Council Industrial Estate Factories

Submitted report by the Legal Services Manager on the letting/availability of factories on Council Industrial Estates.

Noted.

(d) Community Development Grants Scheme: Analysis of Grants Paid to 28 September 1998

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on the analysis of grants paid to 28 September 1998.

Noted.

(e) Education: Review of Services for Children Under Eight

Submitted report by the Director of Education on the Triennial Review of services for children under the age of eight years in North Ayrshire.

Under the Children Act 1989, all local authorities are required to register and inspect as appropriate, childminders, private nurseries, certain voluntary groups, out of school care services, playgroups, crèches and other supervised activities within their area. Each local authority must also publish, at intervals of three years, a Review of the pattern and range of education, daycare and related services for children under the age of eight.

The final document comprises two separate sections, namely the Service Review and a Service Directory, both detailing statistical information plus a list of available services by postcode area and information about the services themselves. A video has also been produced and will be made available to members and to libraries, pre-5 groups etc.

Noted.

3. Community Development Grants Scheme: Requests for Financial Assistance

Submitted report by the Director of Community Services on requests for financial assistance.

SNAP Women's Group

The Committee agreed to award £150.00.

Saltcoats Co-operative Women's Guild

The Committee agreed to award £92.00.

Stevenston Junior Savers

The Committee agreed to award £485.00.

Saltcoats Christmas Celebrations Committee

The Committee agreed to award £350.00.

Arising from the discussion on the application by Saltcoats Christmas Celebration Committee, the Committee agreed that reports be submitted to the next meeting on (i) the provision of Christmas lights in 1998 in each of the Three Towns; and (ii) whether the remit of the Saltcoats Christmas Celebration Committee can be expanded to include Ardrossan and Stevenston.

The Committee was advised that the former Ardrossan Academy Playgroup, which relocated to the Civic Centre and which received a grant from the Committee in 1997/98 for equipment, have indicated that they have now closed down. The equipment purchased therefore reverts to the Council. The Scottish Pre-School Playgroup Association have offered to undertake the redistribution of the equipment.

The Committee agreed to authorise the redistribution of the equipment by the SPPA, subject to the equipment remaining within Three Towns playgroups.

4. Stevenston: Beach Park

Submitted report by the Director of Community Services on progress regarding the management of Stevenston Beach Park.

On 28th August 1997, the Committee approved the proposals for the future management of Stevenston Beach Park.

The management plan has identified the area west of Stevenston Burn as a local nature reserve and Scottish Natural Heritage has been informed of the designation. Work on biological recording, together with mapping and fixed point photography has begun on site and the Ranger Service has been assisted in this connection by a local naturalist. Patrols by the Ranger Service have resulted in the reduction of use by motor cycles and off road vehicles at the Beach Park.

It is intended to hold an inaugural meeting in October with local residents and organisations who have an interest in conservation with a view to setting up a local management committee who will implement the management plan once the site has been formally designated in November. The creation of the local nature reserve and the setting up of the management committee will ensure that positive steps are taken to manage the area and protect the fragile coastal habitat.

Noted.

5. Stevenston Common Good: Application by Fiona Burns: Ardeer Karate Club

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on an application for funding from Stevenston Common Good by Fiona Burns of Ardeer Karate Club who will represent Scotland at the World Karate Championships in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in October 1998. Given the timescale of the World Championships, the Chair in consultation with the local members agreed to award Fiona Burns £250 from the Stevenston Common Good Fund, towards the cost of competing in this event.

The Committee agreed to homologate this award.

6. Community Safety

(a) Strathclyde Fire Brigade: Fire Statistics

Submitted report by Strathclyde Fire Brigade detailing fire statistics for Period 1 August to 30 September 1998.

The report detailed incidents within the Three Towns by station area and using specific Fire Brigade codes. It was noted that there was a high number of Other Code 3 incidents in Ardrossan over the period 1st to 30th September 1998, which relate to minor fires in litter bins etc. Talks had been given to schools on the problem of malicious false alarm calls and talks would also be undertaken on bonfire safety prior to 5th November 1998.

Regarding the recent flooding, there had been 9 calls for help on 22nd October and one call for help on 24th October.

The Chair thanked the Social Work Directorate and Strathclyde Police for their assistance with the Emergency Centre in Saltcoats Town Hall during the floods.

Noted.

(b) Strathclyde Police: Crime Statistics

Superintendent J Young, Strathclyde Police reported on crime statistics within the Three Towns area.

Crime figures over the 6 week period have shown an increase of 23%, with a particular increase in housebreakings. Over the year to date, there has been a 2% increase in crime locally, which is less than the Division as a whole. The detection rate is currently running at 40%. The Spotlight Initiative continues to be utilised and the current focus is on housebreaking and drugs. Over the 6 week period, there is a correlation shown between the two crimes, with 92% of those apprehended for housebreaking being involved in drug abuse.

Noted.

7. Urgent Items

The Chair agreed to consider the following item as a matter of urgency.

8. Focus Learning Centre, Saltcoats

Councillor D Munn raised the matter of the untidy environs of the Focus Learning Centre, Saltcoats.

The Committee agreed to remit to the Director of Community Services to take appropriate

action.

The meeting ended at 12.15 p.m.