

**MINUTES of MEETING of BUTE AND COWAL AREA COMMITTEE held via MICROSOFT TEAMS
on TUESDAY, 31 AUGUST 2021**

Present:

Mr Matheson read out the below question;

Kenny Matheson asked whether school teachers could take part in the School Hub consultation and whether DCC could have an update?

Response from Committee

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly confirmed that as discussed at the recent Community Services Committee, which she chairs, an exercise was undertaken in June 2021 which determined that due to covid pressures the educational change programme would not be taken forward at that point but that all agencies and partners would be embarking on a consultation exercise in due course, which would include discussions with trade unions and Head Teachers with a briefing paper due to be submitted to the Community Services Committee in December 2021.

Question from Kenny Matheson, Dunoon Community Council (DCC)

Kenny Matheson asked what support are Argyll and Bute Council giving to the people who lost their livelihood, through no fault of their own, due to the recent fire in Dunoon?

Response from Committee

The Chair stated that there would be a full debate on this subject later on the agenda but invited the Project Manager to respond where possible.

Response from Project Manager

The Project Manager confirmed it was not appropriate to comment on any individual employees' situation but understood the main concern was over the quality of any future provisions and stated that members of the public should see no noticeable difference in the new model as the gardens were not closing and would remain open, planted and staffed. Processes and figures would be determined after the procurement exercise which would be structured towards the quality of plants. He confirmed all nursery services would be taken into consideration during the procurement exercise, not just those at Arden Craig.

Confirmation was sought and received on the amount of donations received and what income was generated by Arden Craig Gardens, with the figures to be issued to Isobel Strong.

Question from Willie Lynch, Dunoon Community Council

In Mr Lynch's absence, the Committee Manager read out the below question:

The lack of communication from the Roads and Infrastructure department is nothing short of a scandal. You raise an issue on their email address and receive an automatic reply and nothing else! Road planners do not answer emails, we do not know any managers in Amenities. The operatives who pick up the rubbish in the town centre do a superb job and the rest of the town is neglected. Sandbank Road and the A815 are in dire need of resurfacing. Sandbank Road must be one of the top five busiest roads in Argyll and Bute. It has ruts and is uneven. Articulated lorries, low loaders, vehicles with trailers and skip lorries bounce down the road making much noise which is a nuisance for people living on those streets and affecting their mental health.

Response from Committee/Project Manager

Councillor Gordon Blair, Councillor Jim Anderson and Councillor Alan Reid agreed that anonymous emails, as well as Casebook responses from services were not helpful and that Officers were to be encouraged to add their names to all methods of communication.

lot of good work is being done or in the planning to improve our town and make it more attractive. Lets step up to the plate and add the pier to the action plan.

Response from Project Manager

The Project Manager confirmed that this was not for Officers to answer as allocation of funding was for Members to determine.

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee request that the Council pause, for a period of 18 months from August 2021, the implementation of the decision of the budget meeting of 25 February 2021, regarding the future of Arden Craig Gardens making a saving of £5000 for the council and ask that the relevant service, in the meantime, find that saving from existing budgets. This will enable the community and other interested parties time to develop a business plan to still achieve the savings for the council and allow the gardens to remain open and operate commercially on a basis to be agreed. This would allow an opportunity for a very strong community group to get the required business plan and income revenue in place to continue the running and advancement of the gardens at no cost to the council whilst achieving the savings identified in the budget. This may also provide an income for the council.

Amendment

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee:

- (i) notes that all Councillors present at the Budget vote on 25 February 2021 voted to save £10,000 by stopping the nursery growing service at Kilmory and Arden Craig;
- (ii) notes that this decision has no impact on the continued operation of Arden Craig Gardens;
- (iii) welcomes the formation of the Arden Craig Garden Interest Group (AGIG) and the engagement of officers from Roads and Infrastructure with that group;
- (iv) thanks AGIG for carrying out their visitor survey and for engaging with the Council over the future of Arden Craig gardens and nursery; and
- (v) requests that Council officers continue their dialogue with AGIG and submit a paper to the December meeting of the EDI Committee with their recommendations regarding AGIG's plans for the gardens and nursery.

Moved by Councillor Reid, seconded by Councillor McNeilly.

The Members voted by calling the roll and voted as follows:

Motion	Amendment
Councillor Moffat	Councillor Reid
Councillor Findlay	Councillor McNeilly
Councillor Anderson	Councillor McCabe
Councillor Blair	Councillor Good
Councillor Forrest	

Decision

With the Motion receiving 5 votes and Amendment receiving 4 votes, the Committee resolved accordingly.