

Minutes 16/02/22

CGCC Community Consultation – Argyll Rally 2022

Open Meeting with the Argyll Rally Organisers

CGCC Present: Charles Dixon-Spain (Chair), Cathleen Russell, Danuta Steedman, David Munro, Philip Potter

Apologies: Paul Bulmer, Clare Banner, Kate McEwan

1. Welcome and introduction

CDS opens the meeting welcoming community members, Rally organisers, and community councillors.

Housekeeping details for the meeting are expressed.

It is agreed the meeting will be recorded.

Introductions:

- Chris Woodcock – overall in charge of the Rally organisation
- Kenny Wilson – Dunoon resident, on the Rally organisation committee, and Stage Commander at the Rally.
- Sam Spencer – assistant rally organiser
- Iain McCuig – Dunoon resident, Rally organisation committee
- Hugh O'Neill – Network and Standards Manager, Roads and Infrastructure Services, Argyll and Bute Council
- Gillian Gall – Police Scotland, Sergeant in Operational Planning (involved in planning resources of the event).

2. Update from Rally Organisers: *Provided by Chris Woodcock*

- Planning for the 2022 rally started with a debrief of the 2021 event.
- 2021 event was run under more difficult times (COVID), which posed a number of challenges.
- The team went through the whole 2021 event and took a fairly detailed view of things that worked / didn't work / lessons to be learned for future events, and feedback from those who enjoyed the event, and those who didn't.
- Overwhelming indication was the Rally was a success, which is why a proposal for Argyll Rally 2022 was produced.
- All Rally organisers are volunteers.
- Reason behind the Rally: Dunoon Presents asked the team to put on a motor event around the Scottish Championships in the town of Dunoon.
- Forest Rally's have been run in the past, but become increasingly more difficult to run.
- Scottish Government passed legislation to allow the closure of public roads for motorsports use in 2019 following consultation. (More info available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/sdsi/2019/9780111041314?view=plain>)
- The organisers have to go through a fairly detailed process of admin to put a proposal for an event forward.
- The 2022 Argyll Rally plan: 2 stages in Dunoon, Old Shore Road stage in Colintrave, Regroup in Strachur (meet/greet), Strathlachlan/Otterferry stage, West Road in Glendaruel stage.
- The West Road in Glendaruel will only be used once this year.

- Event will start an hour later in Dunoon this year to allow more time for businesses to trade.
- B8000 Strathlachlan Caravan Park and Inver had challenges last year with visitors trying to reach their accommodation on the Friday – this stage has been moved for more suitable arrival times.
- There will be controlled reccy's for each stage planned this year – approx. 2-3 hour sessions, controlling the number of vehicles, drivers will only be allowed to go through twice per road. Dates/times will be agreed with community and competing crews in advance. This should limit the impact. All will be driving road cars, and travelling considerately.

3. Feedback from Hugh O'Neill (ABC Infrastructure & Roads)

- From a Roads Authority perspective, we look at the Rally under the Motorsports regulations, looking at requirements for a temporary TRO to make sure appropriate engagement has been put in place such as contacting local businesses etc.
- Appreciate there were some issues last year. Some of that was done to COVID, some teething issues. But on behalf of organisers they have tried to do the best they can, and this year there's been a huge improvement in consultation.
- Have just received the TTRO request, which will take a number of weeks to go through and make sure everything is there.
- Local traffic and development engineer will review the route.
- Debrief from last year was excellent.
- Working very well together, open lines of communication.

Question: Some of the roads proposing to be used need a lot of work e.g. potholes. The West Road is only just being fixed (Feb 2022) from the June 2021 Rally. Do ABC feel these roads are suitable for a rally?

HO'N Response: Routes will be checked by both ABC and the Rally organisers. On review of the route, if anywhere is identified as unsafe, it will be fixed as quickly as possible.

Question: Does ABC have the discretion to refute an application?

HON Response: Yes but there must be justified reason. If the organisers meet the criteria, ABC will look at it on the merits of the application, the same as any other event. ABC are obliged to look at all applications with a pragmatic view.

Question: With the Argyll Rally organizers saying they have out pressure on ABC to ensure roads are in good condition, is this not an admission that the roads are not fit for purpose?

HON Response – no, to try and benefit the local community as well as the rally, pressure has been put on to try and better the roads for all users and help enhance the area.

Community Comment: There was also large sections on the west glen improved after the rally last year. Several hundred tones of tar lay.

Community Comment: Not the entire road though, just some of it. The people that use the road for the rest of the year are left with problems.

Question: How will the road be repaired AFTER the rally, and not just made fit for purpose before the rally?

HON Response: Road condition index throughout all roads in Argyll, each area will get a budget. £10mil last year £5mil this year, significantly lower. ABC Roads Dept work through the road condition index, which highlights electronically what roads need done, and in what priority. Will always try and fix within the confines we have.

Question: Safety concerns regarding B866 Allt Glackavoil Bridge. Today the Bridge Inspector did his monthly inspection. Seems to be slight settlement of carriageway on downstream side. If this is not safe for everyday driving how is it safe for a rally? The bridge has a weight restriction.

Question: If it is known the rally is going to take place, does that impact the Roads Dept decision on what roads go into the Road Improvement Programme?

HON Response: No, not necessarily. The road will just be considered as any other road.

Question: If we have a damaged road as residents because of the rally, but the initial survey before the rally doesn't inspect that, what triggers the insurance? What's the threshold for damage?

HON Response: Inspector will check after rally, no threshold for it as such, if ABC think damage has been caused by the rally ABC will bill the rally.

Community Comment: A lot of the rally damage has not been fixed e.g. crash-site on the West Road Glendaruel. There's still the smell of diesel – side of the road has been overlooked.

CW Response: Surprised if diesel spill, as all run on petrol, so maybe from another source. We do try to repair any damage that has been caused, please speak to us.

Question: Did the Rally pay for anything last year, repair wise? Or was it laid at the door of ABC. Is the obligation to repair roads to make them fit for the Rally, or fix it afterwards for everyday use?

HON Response: No one has said ABC will only fix roads to make them fit for the rally. The Rally spent a considerable amount last year following the event.

4. Feedback from Police Scotland. Provided by Gillian Gall.

- Police Scotland has already identified the resources that will attend the event, an increase on last year.
- Normal policing will continue, and will be supplemented by specific forces for the Rally.
- If there are any problematic areas identified, Police Scotland will certainly look at putting in additional resources. This mainly focuses on areas of anti-social behaviour / spectators under the influence of alcohol and trying to access closed roads.

- Dedicated roads policing will be there. Their main focus will be between rally staged, making sure all vehicles are driving appropriately (Rally and Public).
- Feedback from 2021 event from policing point of view was that it ran well with no major issues flagged.

5. Summary of views from community members not present. *Provided by Charles Dixon-Spain, Rally Liaison on behalf of CGCC.*

- From discussions with local residents, generally circa 65-70% are in favour of the rally.
- West Road, Glendaruel is very 50/50 in views.
- Concerns over the condition and safety of the roads pre, during, and particularly post rally is the main concern.
- Further issues identified are the disruption to daily life, disruption to businesses, and environmental issues.
- Kenny Wilson comments that the Rally cars will not travel through the Clachan of Glendaruel this year, and instead use the entrance on the left hand side as you come off the West Road.
- Chris Woodcock comments that the organisers want to take the views of everyone affected into consideration. Obviously there are some constraints from a legal and a practicality point of view, and from other areas. That is why they are having these meetings with communities to try and fit the rally in with everyone as best as possible.

6. Feedback from community members, councillors and businesses who are present

Supporting the Rally

- “The Argyll Rally was great last year, brought something new and different to the area. It should be built up and supported by the communities.”
- “Yes there were teething problems, but there always are, especially during COVID times, but this COULD be something special for the community to benefit from.
- “For 2022 the community could take advantage with food/beverage outlets, create a party atmosphere around it.”
- “Having never seen motorsport before, I am now hooked.”
- “Invited friends and family to come and stay this year to enjoy it with us.”
- “As years progress, the event could grow and grow and provide great benefit to the area.”
- “For years groups have tried to bring things to the area – it should be welcomed”
- “It takes place over one weekend. One weekend of disruption only.’
- “Last year spectators were only given permission to attend the event 48hours before (COVID restrictions) – this didn’t leave time to organise anything.

Opposing the Rally

- Far more disturbance than people expected, especially with the marshalling.
- Huge difference between the roads of Dunoon and the back roads of ColGlen. Not an appropriate event for the roads of ColGlen.
- Not fulfilling promises post-Rally – with the West Road still damaged from last years event.
- Marshalls were shambolic and untrained last year.
- Traditionally rally's were in forests and well policed – to have it in residential areas and public roads is dangerous.
- Frightened of the fear of accident.
- The event causes disruption to businesses e.g. unable to fulfill changeover days. Home Farm Cottages have regular visitors not coming back this year due to the Rally.

Open Q&A

Question: Regarding the Colintraive stage, there are concerns with the Rally effecting travelling to/from the ferry. Where will the rally cars wait? Will the Rally delay those travelling to/from ferry throughout the day?

CW Answer: The cars will be managed at the large passing place.

Question: "Rally Drivers will be gathering in Dunoon and Strachur out with the stages for locals to meet. Could this happen in ColGlen?"

CW Response: The visit to Strachur was a direct request from the Strachur Community – we would be happy to discuss arranging this for ColGlen too. We would like to connect with residents and businesses to capitalise for the rally – e.g. parking/food/retail, and take benefit from the number of visitors the Rally attracts.

Question: Regarding the driving speeds of drivers during recce, is there an agreed speed limit and will it be policed?

CW Response: Yes, it will be monitored. There is a speed limit of 30mp for the competing teams during reccys. They will also be in road cars and not rally cars.

Question: How do you plan to control vehicle access out with the set times, and what are the consequences for competitors who do not adhere to this?

CW Response:

Drivers will be told when the agreed recce times are, and will have to register for the sessions they wish to take.

If there is evidence any of them do their own recces out-with these times, they will be excluded from the competition and reported to Motorsport UK, which will likely result in a penalty of a minimum of 5 year ban on competing.

Drivers have been excluded from events before.

Question: Where were the toilet facilities for the rally participants and marshalls last year? There are a number of reports of people urinating in full public view

CW Response: Working on getting more toilets in appropriate areas for 2022. There are toilets at the beginning and end of every stage. It is beyond

unacceptable for public urination; please do report this to the Organisers if witnessed at future events.

Question: Is there an alternative walkway signposted for the Loch Lomond and Cowal Way during the event?

CW Reponses: Yes. There will be signage regarding the Rally regarding the Cowal Way, as there was last year, identifying alternate routes. The alternate route is along the A886 – not ideal, but will be risk assessed and offers an option.

Final Comments from the Community:

- Resident lives on the A886, which was not a rally stage but was a main road used by the rally travelling from stage to stage. There was no correspondence from the Rally last year, and had no idea it was happening.
- Increased communication is key.
- We need to make sure as a community we have community benefit – not trying to be negative, just trying to get as much info as possible and try to mitigate potential issues.
- Last years rally raised several hundred pounds for charity from parking.

Closing Comments from the Rally organizers:

- We are very open to helping communities capitalize on the Rally.
- We can help advertise accommodation/services/events on our social media pages.
- Contact us and we can discuss working together.
- There is a significant amount of health and safety detail surrounding the event, including Rally rescue and emergency teams (not just for competing cars, but all). There have been many incidents where people have required medical attention during rally's, both related and unrelated to the actual competition itself.
- Very interested to hear about concerns people have from last year – would like to discuss directly (e.g. shambolic marshalling)
- We will identify and promote the spectator areas as soon as possible so communities and visitors can plan. We must have the route confirmed before we can release spectator plans.

7. Summary of meeting at its conclusion including action points and next steps

- Following this constructive discussion, the CGCC will create a response covering details discussed.
- Community members and businesses are welcome to contact either/or/both the Community Council and Argyll Rally organisers to discuss any points further.

8. Further information provided

- At the meeting, Cllr Alan Reid shares the legislation that states:

(3) The roads authority may make the motor sport order if satisfied that—

(a)adequate arrangements have been made to allow the views of the local community to be taken into account,

(b)adequate arrangements have been made to involve local residents, the police and other emergency services in the planning and implementation of the event,

(c)adequate public safety arrangements have been or will be made for the event, and

(d)adequate traffic management arrangements have been or will be made for the event.

- Post meeting, Hugh O'Neill from A&B Council shares the following update regarding concerns raised during the meeting

Good morning, in regards to the point raised at the meeting on Wednesday I raised the concerns with our bridge inspection team as promised. They responded confirming the bridge was inspected as part of our regular inspection procedures and is also checked pre and post rally.

They also confirmed that they spoke with a local resident and informed them the following is carried out:

- *24 monthly General Inspections to Argyll and Bute Bridges,*
- *Special Inspections are carried out for minor defects which do not require any action to ensure they are not worsening (in this case, minor carriageway deformation which had not worsened since his last inspection),*
- *Any additional inspections required, such as in advance of and immediately after the upcoming Dunoon Rally (as was the case here).*

I am told the Bridge Inspector didn't mention any specific concern about B866 bridges other than confirming we are responsible proactive bridge owners who undertake all necessary inspections.

Thanks Hugh

End of minute.