

Minutes of the Public Meeting held in Carradale Village Hall on 4th July 2018 at 7 pm

Introduction by Ian Brodie, EKCC Convenor.

Ian welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the meeting had been arranged with two purposes in mind; firstly to ascertain support for the Seneval composting scheme and secondly again to ascertain support for a scheme to enable the village shop to continue to operate, possibly by way of a community buyout. Ian introduced David Prag who would deliver a short presentation about Seneval and Jenn Lee who would be speaking about the shop. Ian explained that in order to record the level of community support for both schemes everyone will be asked to sign a register and give their basic contact details. This is an important part showing evidence or support to funding bodies.

Seneval – presentation by David Prag from the Carradale Community Trust

David began by recapping on how the project came into being. The need for a local composting facility to enable residents to dispose of their garden waste in an environmentally friendly way had been identified some years ago and a piece of land close to Well Park was identified by Forestry Enterprise Scotland as a potential site. At the start the project was taken forward by Network Carradale Ltd (NCL) in conjunction with the East Kintyre Community Council and an application for change of use of the land was made to Argyll & Bute Council. In the meantime NCL converted to Carradale Community Trust which then continued with the project by opening discussions with Scottish Land Fund on providing monies for a purchase and obtaining the necessary permissions from the Scottish Environment Agency for the use of the land for composting.

The land now needs to be valued and funds for this (around £2,000) have been sought.

Whilst this was proceeding, Forestry Enterprise identified other land adjoining the composting site which might be available for community purchase and David referred the meeting to a map pinned up in the hall which showed a wooded area between Well Park and Broomfield on which was marked a potential footpath through the wood. The Community Trust would like to purchase this land with a view to developing a footpath through it which connected with other paths around the village. Also, and partly in order to meet Government initiatives aimed at fitness and promoting exercise, we might install outdoor exercise equipment along the path. Pictures of such equipment are also shown.

This is now the extent of the Seneval Project. Once we have a valuation for the land then the next step is to prepare a business plan to show how the composting venture will be operated. Demonstrating community need is not a problem but it is essential, firstly, to show that we have broad community support, hence this meeting, and secondly that we have identified individuals who have volunteered to man the site when needed and do whatever is required to process the waste material on site. David asked for volunteers to approach him at the conclusion of the presentation.

Paterson's shop – presentation by Jenn Lee

Jenn began by stating that the purpose behind calling the Public Meeting was to show that there was support for a community buyout of the shop and also to inform everyone interested on what can be done and what is being done to save the shop.

Jenn explained that the shop lease to Heather and Johnny will expire on 7th August 2018 so if nothing happened then it would close at that point. Jenn has been taking advice from the Plunkett Foundation, a long-established charity set up to assist community groups all over the country overcome challenges they face and particularly this involves assisting community led businesses and especially those in rural areas like ours. The Plunkett Foundation do not provide funding so monies for any community purchase of the shop would have to come from elsewhere.

Jenn explained that at an earlier EKCC meeting she had outlined the need for action regarding the shop and had explained how efforts should be split between purchasing the premises and running the business itself. In order to decide how to run the shop we need a feasibility study and a small group of volunteers to take this forward. Jenn warned that this might be a long process requiring considerable commitment from those involved.

At an earlier meeting last Thursday with members of the Carradale Community Trust and the EKCC there was discussion on how the Trust might become involved in purchasing the shop premises as a community asset. It would be necessary to show support from at least 10% of the local resident community (ideally much more) and those present were asked to sign a register of support at the conclusion of the presentation.

Jenn explained that with the support from the community the next step would be to take further advice from the Plunkett Foundation and that she was looking for names of volunteers who could form a working group to progress the feasibility study.

Jenn then opened the meeting to questions from those present.

Q. Why are Heather and Johnny giving up?

A. As it stands at the moment they are paying rent for the shop and the business simply cannot support this as well as providing a livelihood for them and their family. This is why a community purchase of the premises makes sense because once this has happened then the shop would be available to whoever runs the business without the additional overhead.

Q. What happens after 7th August?

A. We don't know. This is why we need people to step forward to plan how the business can be continued whilst efforts to purchase the premises continue.

Q. How much money might be involved?

A. Alan Walker (Chair of the Carradale Community Trust) explained to the meeting that there is a scheme operated by the Scottish Land Fund whereby monies are available for this type of project. An independent valuation would be required and as before we will have to show that the community supports the project. Another possibility is to register an interest in the property at the Scottish Records Office so that we are notified in the event of another sale taking place. This might give us the time we need to organise the community purchase.

Q. How long will it take and will the present owner, Angela Paterson, wait?

A. According to the Plunkett Foundation an average time for similar community buyout projects is around 18 months. An approach has been made to Angela who wants to sell the shop and wants to see the shop continue to trade in some form or other.

B. Are the ovens still working in the bakery?

A. Yes. And part of the feasibility plan would be to look at whether the bakery can be an important part of the operation of the shop going forward.

Jenn summed up by stating that funding would be needed for the shop to be kept open as well as people who are willing to decide how it can be kept going. Heather and Johnny are supportive although they cannot continue to run it. Going forward now we must take one step at a time and the support of the Plunkett Foundation will be crucial.

Notes of this meeting will be published online and at the shop together with a suggestions box for ideas and signup sheets where those not present today can add their names and show their support.

Notice of further meetings will also be publicised.