

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

At an Assembly Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held in the Council Chambers, Municipal Buildings, Dumbarton Road, Clydebank on Wednesday 9 April 2003 at 7.00 p.m.

- Present:** Provost Alistair Macdonald and Councillors James Bollan, Mary Campbell, Mary Collins, Anthony Devine, James Flynn, Daniel McCafferty, James McCallum, Linda McColl, Ronnie McColl, John McCutcheon, Duncan McDonald, Ian McDonald, James McElhill, Margaret McGregor, Connie O'Sullivan, and Andrew White.
- Attending:** Tim Huntingford, Chief Executive; Irving Hodgson, Head of Planning and Development; Stephen B. Brown, Head of Legal and Administrative Services; and Dave Low, Administrative Assistant.
- Apologies:** Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Geoffrey Calvert, Craig McLaughlin, Iain Robertson and John Syme.

Provost Alistair Macdonald in the Chair

MOTIONS

- (a) A motion was submitted by Councillor McCafferty in the following terms:-
- Council is encouraged by the success of the Staff/Member Group in taking forward Council policy in regard to Prisoners of Conscience.
 - Council welcomes the close relationship which has been established with Amnesty International as a consequence.
 - Council agrees to organise, promote and support a joint West Dunbartonshire Council; West Dunbartonshire Arts Council; Amnesty Concert event, to raise the plight of Khamtanh Phousy, our current adopted prisoner of conscience. This concert will be financially underwritten by the Council, but it is expected to be organised on a break-even basis. Any surplus will be donated to the local branch of Amnesty.
 - Council further agrees to organise, promote and support, within the financial year 2003/2004, a Local Authority/Amnesty International Conference in order to develop West Dunbartonshire's experience across Scotland. This should be a delegate conference paid through

Conference fees and sponsorship and arranged in partnership with Amnesty International to ensure success. This Conference will be financially underwritten by the Council, but is expected to be run on a break-even basis.

Councillor McCafferty moved and was heard in support of his motion.

Thereafter, the Council heard Councillor McGregor (1) provide an update on the plight of Khamtahn Phousy and the fact that he had been released from prison and (2) advise that the staff Amnesty Group had suggested that Amina Lawal, a Nigerian woman sentenced to death by stoning for conceiving a child out of wedlock, be adopted as the Council's new prisoner of conscience.

The Council agreed unanimously to support the motion subject to Amina Lawal's name being substituted for that of Khamtanh Phousy where this appears in the third recommendation.

(b) A motion was submitted by Councillor McCafferty in the following terms:-

- Council notes the agreement in force regarding Overtoun House as a Christian Centre for Hope and Healing.
- Council appreciates the work done and progress to date by Pastor Bob Hill and the Board, overseeing the work at Overtoun.
- Council agrees to set up a (Standing) Officer/Member Liaison Group with immediate effect in order to assist with the developments taking place at Overtoun.
- The remit of the Liaison Group will be to meet with the Christian Centre Board or representatives as and when necessary, with a view to maximising co-operation between the Council and the Board.
- The Council will receive regular progress reports and recommendations from the Liaison Group.

Councillor McCafferty moved and was heard in support of his motion which the Council agreed unanimously to support.

(c) A motion was submitted by Councillor Bollan in the following terms:-

- Council notes the petition submitted by the members of the public.
- Council agrees that the safety of mobile phone masts is inconclusive.
- Council agrees to organise and hold a seminar, open to the general public, bringing together expertise on the issue. This seminar will present and discuss available information and evidence.

- A report of the findings and views expressed at the seminar will be brought to Council.
- In the interim Council agrees to a moratorium on mobile phone masts and antenna being placed on Council buildings or land.

Councillor Bollan moved and was heard in support of his motion.

Councillor Devine seconded the motion subject to Councillor Bollan agreeing to accept the undernoted as an addendum thereto:-

- Council agrees that the report referred to in the fourth recommendation will give detailed information on the number and location of all existing telecommunication masts in West Dunbartonshire.
- Council agrees that a letter be sent to the Scottish Executive's Enquiry Reporters Unit requesting information on the number of occasions where decisions taken by Planning Authorities, with the support of local citizens, to refuse planning consent were upheld at appeal.

Councillor Bollan agreed to accept this as an addendum to his motion, which the Council agreed unanimously to support.

(d) A motion was submitted by Councillor Bollan in the following terms:-

This Council fully supports the demand from local people that the Burnbrae Post Office in Alexandria, which serves many elderly and people with disabilities, is kept open by the Post Office.

We further agree to write to the Post Office urgently insisting this vital service remains open for the local Community.

We also agree to write urgently to Jackie Baillie MSP & John McFall MP advising them of the situation and calling on them to raise this important matter with the Labour Scottish Executive and the Westminster Government. We also call on them to raise this matter in the respective parliaments as a matter of extreme urgency.

The Council agreed unanimously to support the motion.

TWIN TOWERS – VISIT OF BEREAVED CHILDREN

A letter was submitted from Alexandria Parish Church seeking financial assistance toward the costs of a visit from a party of New Yorkers, mostly children, who were bereaved as a result of the Twin Towers terrorist attack on 11 September 2001.

The Council agreed unanimously that the sum of £500 be given toward the costs of the visit.

The meeting concluded at 7.15 p.m.