



WHY DOES HIGHLAND COUNCIL'S TOP OFFICIAL CONDONE F.I.A. OFFICER'S RELUCTANCE TO COMPLY WITH U.K. LEGISLATION?

It's a difficult question to answer I tell myself. There can be so many reasons. Could it be that there is a hidden agenda at work? Or could it be that the F. I. A. official Mr Miles Watters has a personal dislike toward your editor? Or could it be some restraint from interested politicians or Party? Or do Highland Council Officials believe that in some strange way the positions they may hold gives them some Godlike divine right to bestow information under the F.I. A. as they please? Of course there is always the possibility of discrimination against me, Euilleam Ross, personally.

Lets not forget that just a few months the same Authority made your editor bankrupt, for his refusal to pay Council Tax! (His ongoing refusal is a personal protest against the U. K. Government's treatment of some 12.5 million Old Age Pensioners, and is possibly a futile attempt to shame the same Government with the information that about **28,000 OAPs** will die over the coming winter due to their fear of not being able to pay for food and heat, and in some cases their funeral expenses!) Causing severe Hypothermia and Malnutrition amongst we elderly British Citizens. The organisations allegedly having OAP's interests at heart are mostly run by 'young people' and are largely funded by the Government, so their hands are tied and their directives dictated. However I digress from the matter in hand.

If this was the first time that the Highland Council's F. I. A. Official, Mr Miles Watters apparently denying me **honest answers**, then readers could perhaps accept one or more of the reasons your editor has illustrated, but unfortunately it is not the case.

Despite the Government's, (per the Scottish Information Commissioner's booklet,) '*Your Right to Know*' Highland Council Officials choose to

ignore its very concise directive and content. Such is my concern over Highland Council Officials and what appears to be either their lack of knowledge, or even plain 'bitchiness' towards me that not only have I been in touch with the Commissioners Office but also with the Local MSP Rob Gibson and our MP in Westminster, John Thurso. Mr Thurso has been most helpful but to date Mr Gibson has failed to acknowledge my letters.

There again does the failure of the Highland Council's Official's, particularly Mr Watters and the Chief Executive Alastair Dodds' ability to provide a member of the public (albeit that he is a bankrupt) with information that he, or any member of the General Public is entitled to, construe a dereliction of their public duty, or perhaps their inability? Apparently Mr Watters holds down two important positions within the council, that may well contribute to his inability or evasion in responding to a straightforward request with a straightforward answer.

Its not for your bankrupt OAP Editor to question the Chief Executive's remuneration nor pension, but I do question whether he is worthy of that privilege?

Hopefully being a fair-minded old bastard, I have forwarded a copy of the 'Highlanders' front page to the Highland Council's C.E. for comment before publication. More dialogue on this matter later in the publication.

The National press claims that OAPs are in a 'heat or eat' trap with nearly 200,000 Scots, who live alone, struggling to heat their homes due to the relentless rise in energy bills. I would add that this scenario is being aggravated by the minimal annual increase in the National Old Age Pensions, by succeeding Governments.

According to the Scottish Government's 'forecast

LOCAL ELECTIONS

Previous Chairman of Kilmuir and Logie Easter C. C. Mr John Boocock, welcomes Highland Council's new Community Council Scheme and is eagerly looking forward to the continuation and an extension of the good work of the previous Community Council. Mr Boocock, who was elected top of the poll, spoke to the Independent Highlander:

"Although we welcome the majority of changes brought about by the new scheme we still have reservations about parts of it and look forward to further consultations with Highland Council to iron these out," said Mr Boocock.

"We are particularly pleased to see new members elected to the council and the hard work of previous members being recognised by their high standing in the poll" he continued.

"Kilmuir and Logie Easter Community Council now has a clear mandate from local electors and as such

should be listened to seriously by public bodies when we are representing the local community's views on any issue. Something which, sadly, has not always been the case in the past!"

It is surprising that Invergordon Community Council's former treasurer, Bob Wittenham was not re-elected. A well respected member of the Community Council, Mr Wittenham had previously worked hard in the background managing Invergordon Community Council's finances and his input will be greatly missed.

New officers will be elected for all Community Councils at their inaugural meetings. It will be very interesting to see if there are any new faces at the top table in both Invergordon and Kilmuir and Logie Easter.

For information about Kilmuir and Logie Easter Community Council see <http://www.kalecc.org.uk>



John Boocock

LOCAL ISSUES

Whilst Health and Safety issues can prevent Fire Crews from saving a woman's life as she lay trapped in a disused mineshaft, and I personally describe that as a Bloody Awful lack of guts, nearer home we can see numerous Health and Safety issues which Highland Council totally ignores. See one illustrated.

Now that we have a new elected Community Council with a brand new Constitution perhaps these elected members will advise the H & S Executive in Inverness of the danger that the collapsed steel piles and wire pose towards members of the public.

Behind the broken down fencing there is about a four foot drop. Not as deep as a mine shaft but enough to cause serious injury to elderly people who may be walking on the pavement and either slip or trip or even collapse against it.

Now that it is on public record should an accident happen Highland Council would have great difficulty denying responsibility.

Perhaps B.I.G. (the Barbaraville Improvement Group) is dazzled with the flower display, the Independent Highlander is not.



Readers click on the following links for more information.

<http://www.pies-and-pies.com>

<http://www.free-photos-images.com>

ALBYN PARKING FIASCO?

Not having first hand knowledge of the situation but being assured by one High Street trader, that employees from the Albyn Housing Offices, are amongst the worst offenders for parking their private cars on the Invergordon High Street 'all day long' and thus preventing easy parking/access for would be customers, I was inclined to 'keep my eyes open' trying to identify the alleged culprits.

Well as readers can see from the photograph, whether or not Albyn Housing Office staff, or management park on the High Street, Albyn management does nothing to discourage illegal parking on the pavement. It is not my intension to establish whether or not the blue car in the photo belongs to an Albyn Housing employee, but being an established part of the Invergordon Town structure, (Just look at the 'Murial' that adorns their office walls) Albyn management should have a responsibility towards pedestrians, and if all else fails contact the Northern Constabulary when cars are an obstruction.



However one must not condemn only (according to hearsay) the Albyn Housing Office staff for taking up valuable parking space on the town's High Street, there are several others who appear to love their cars so much that they must have them (the cars) under constant scrutiny.

In the past motorists who were apparently in breach of parking regulations were subjected to monetary fines.

Unbelievably over the decades, and I go back to my days of driving a lorry for a living, right up to modern times, Invergordon did not have a Traffic Order in place.

So most, if not all of the money gathered by the courts was done illegally. Despite enquiries by your editor no information could be gleaned on whether or not any fines were refunded by the Crown. Apparently 'records were not kept.'

And the band played 'Believe it if you like.'

IFAB....ULOUS!

Unquestionably competition is the 'Spice of Life' and the good news broadcast in the Highlands is that the Port Services Group has purchased additional premises in the Cromarty Firth Port Authority's compound. **Now that is wonderful news.**

Its not healthy to have any individual controlling a locality to such an extent that that individual could become dictatorial in both employment and even social wellbeing. Far better to have competition.

More rather surprising news is that **British Alcan** has put the Invergordon Industrial Site up for sale. All tenants on the industrial site have been advised of the proposed sale. It has not been established whether or not Invergordon Community Council



This information has put a new and a much more positive complexion on the possibility of an Incinerator being installed on the Invergordon Industrial Park. Personally I believe that the establishment of incinerators throughout Scotland is inevitable.

Latest information via the National Press relating to waste from Scotland, claims that a huge percentage of Scotland's waste is transported by road to the South of England. So much for the 'GREEN' drive.

The continued expansion of the Wind Farm technology and the blind belief that this is the way forward towards a greener environment belies description. However a 30 year payback with only a 25 year lifespan, says it all. When the blind leads the blind

LETTERS

FORECAST

Dear Chief Executive, 25/11/2011

If you will and you wish to comment on the attached extract from the Independent Highlander could you please do so by return as the News-sheet is ready to be printed and published on the Internet.

Remembering of course any comments you make may be published.

Many thanks.

Unfortunately Mr Dodds has failed to correspond as invited 26/11/2011.

This is the simple request made by me under the FIA dated the 14th October via email.

Dear Mr Watters,

Under the FOI please provide me with the following information.

A complete copy of all the signatories on the anti-incinerator petition tendered by I-CARE to Highland Council.

Many thanks.

Extract from Highland Council's totally ambiguous and unhelpful response from Malcolm Macleod, Head of Planning and Building Standards. Dated 4/11/2011.

Dear Mr Ross

FOI Request – Petition Signatories

Thank you for your email of 14 October 2011 regarding the above request.

The Committee Report of 18 August 2009 made no mention of the Petition. However, Ken McCorquodale reports in the Minute that after the Report was filed that a petition was received with 57 signatories and a youth petition with 121 signatories. Then on the day of the Committee meeting a further petition was received with 2052 signatories.

The Committee refused against recommendation. It has now been submitted to Scottish Ministers and the appeal is ongoing.

The information pertaining to this application can be found in the relevant planning case file in the planning registers which form part of the Council's publication scheme. Information in the Council's publication scheme is exempt from Section 1 requests under Section 25 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. The files would be available for inspection at any time between the hours of 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday at the Highland Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX.
would be helpful if you could please telephone beforehar

As readers will see Mr Macleod does not say whether the asked for petition is on view and if it is, why a member of the public can not purchase a copy? Highland Council staff have to 'come clean' they are supposed to be there as public servants, not would be tin pot dictators.

The news that British Alcan is set to sell the Invergordon Industrial Park comes as no real surprise to your editor, for has he not forecast over many months, and issues of the 'Highlander', that the Park provides the most logical solution to the Scottish Government's intention to find a suitable place to build an incinerator in the Highlands of Scotland?

When one takes into account the wailings of the objectors (the I-CARE Group in particular) and that of the past Invergordon Community Council and their utter failure to capitalise on a golden opportunity for Planning Gain for the town I am afraid that one can only shake a head in sorrow. Surely there must have been a few folk in the town of Invergordon with knowledge of how politicians and Governments work?

Perhaps if they reconsidered the fiasco of the Public Inquiry into the updating of sewerage treatment plant at Roskeen they would have gleaned the first planning application was what is known in political circles as 'a stalking horse'. There is no space here for education I am afraid. The sewerage plant is built and operating almost invisibly on the east side of Belle Point Pier and without harm.

Perhaps the 'parties' I will mention forthwith will excuse my presumptions?

The I.I.P. could be of interest to but a very few companies.

Global Energy?...perhaps but it would not appear to be advantageous at this time. Port Services Group?. Likewise. So that leaves us with the logical choice, the CFPA. And no doubt there will be serious public funding available for the purchase of such a choice 'Park'.

Plus planning restrictions limited. The establishment of a Bonded Warehousing Facility...guaranteed. Income from the numerous companies renting space, the possibilities of greater development in the area and let us not forget the potential increase in the CFPA. Director's salaries due to greater responsibilities.

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