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This story appeared in the **Monday, 10th September, 2007**

**Sale of public land 'a major injustice'**

by **Eric Baxter**

INVERCLYDE people have suffered a 'major injustice' over the sale of public land, it is claimed.

Now the council might spend around £100,000 looking into the alleged 'misappropriation' of Common Good lands dating back to the early 1900s.

SNP councillor Ken Ferguson wants the land register to be changed to say Inverclyde Council owns the land and harbours on Greenock's waterfront between Westburn Street and Dellingburn Street. He said: "These assets, important and valuable as they are, represent only a small portion of Inverclyde's Common Good. They should be brought back under the control of the council."

He claimed: "I believe there has been a major injustice and public land has been misappropriated over the years."

The Inverclyde south west councillor raised the long-running row at Inverclyde's regeneration committee, where he said: "I have been trying to get something done about the Common Good lands for 18 years, but it gets kicked into the long grass."

Head of legal and administration, Elaine Paterson, said: "It is in order for local authorities to dispose of Common Good land."

Council leader Stephen McCabe, said: "We should have a report from officers. We must know what is involved."

Councillor Ferguson said Common Good land included golf courses to cemeteries and that it could cost £100,000 to produce an assessment of the assets. His SNP colleague, Chris Osborne said: "This has huge implications for the council."

Liberal Democrat leader, Alan Blair, pointed out there was a legal transfer of land in 1987, and that Common Good land was "a very complicated situation".

It was agreed Ms Paterson will organise a seminar on the subject for councillors — and then they will consider if officers should compile a report into the feasibility of doing a comprehensive assessment of Common Good land.



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