



STRATHBLANE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF STRATHBLANE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING 3rd September 2007 in the School

1. Members Present: - David Anderson, Fiona Murray, Willie Oswald, Marjorie Peddie, Elspeth Posnett, Alastair Smith, Robert Flashman, John Gray, Philip Graves.

In attendance: - PC Barr, 9 public

Apologies: - Margaret Vass

(*SC = Stirling Council. CC = Community Council*)

2. Welcome - Willie Oswald (WO), chairman, welcomed all present.

3. Minutes of last meeting - Agreed with two amendments. (Now incorporated into the final minutes.) Proposed – John Gray. Seconded – Philip Graves.

4. Matters arising - WO reported that he had been invited, as the chairman, to attend a citizenship ceremony held by SC welcoming a former Australian citizen, now living in Dumbrook Road, on becoming a British citizen.

5. Police matters - PC Barr updated the meeting and answered questions

a) Crime report

The past month had been relatively quiet. There were some sporadic instances of housebreaking and crimes of dishonesty.

- Sometime between the 7th and 12th of August an unoccupied hut at Carbeth was broken into. Police are currently seeking to re-establish links with the hutters. The landowner is hopeful that the working relationship between the estate management and hut owners will be restored soon and this should assist the police. Crime in this area is generally down, helped by the recent installation of gates at the access.
- In the early hours of 22nd August, a house in Campsie Rd was broken into, car keys removed and a vehicle subsequently stolen. The vehicle has not been recovered.
- On 23rd August there was a break-in to the phone kiosk in Dumbrock Rd which activated the alarm. It appears to have been the work of fairly professional travelling criminals who stole a quantity of cash. It is hoped that forensic evidence will provide a lead.
- On 24th August, early evening, the wooden gate in the school grounds was damaged. The act was almost caught on CCTV and it is hoped that the youths will be identified. The school janitor has reported a reduction in the incidents of broken glass in the playground since the installation of CCTV.

CCTV at Killearn school has led to the detection of a youth who started a fire at the school which was tackled by the teachers. It resulted in some smoke damage.

b) Safety at the school - PC Barr had monitored parking and driving behaviour around the school during the first three days of this term. He witnessed one case of indiscriminate parking but no speeding.

c) Wildlife crime – In April a swan was shot on Craiggallion loch. The culprit was a male from this area and he has been referred to the Procurator-fiscal. In mid March a swan was shot at Doune ponds; the inquiry is ongoing.

d) Police personnel – Andrew Barker has been promoted to superintendent commander and Gary Laurie has replaced him as superintendent for the Stirling area.

e) Noise nuisance – A member of the public referred to an email sent to PC Barr reporting antisocial behaviour in the school grounds and requesting that it be checked with the CCTV to see if anyone could be identified. PC Barr said that he intended to do this.

6. Correspondence - (David Anderson (DA), secretary, had circulated a list of correspondence to the members prior to the meeting. He referred to the following items.)

a) SC Planning Panel – (Received today and not on the list). Notice of reconsideration for 3 applications to build houses in Moor Rd. John Gray (JG) agreed to make inquiries as the CC had expected these decisions to be deferred until a policy on Old Mugdock Rd had been agreed. (ACTION WO)

b) SC Local licensing forum – Offer to any CC member to join the forum. No response.

c) Association of Scottish Community Councils – Nominations are being sought from the Stirling area. Anyone interested should speak to DA who has the details.

d) Fallin Community Enterprises – Details of scheme to repair and recondition cycles. It was noted that an article about this has been included in the September issue of the Blane.

e) SC community council events / features. – Following a question from WO , DA explained that this was a request for articles for the Stirling Focus magazine.

7. Environmental Issues

Core Paths

- The CC had received a copy of a draft letter on behalf of Duntreath Estate in response to the current core paths consultation. The concerns of the landowner were: (a) core paths will be marked on maps and included in SC advertising material and that this is likely to lead to more people using the paths, both walkers, cyclists and horse riders, which will in turn increase the incidence of worrying of livestock in its various forms (b) as there are three proposed core paths running through the estate, as well as a short spur, this has the potential to impact quite severely on the farming, game birds and forestry businesses, leading to financial losses as well as additional costs to implement preventative measures (c) issues of residents' privacy. The estate management recommend that out of the three paths only the West Highland Way should become a core path.
- During discussion the following points were raised by members of the CC and public: Increased visitors to the village could also exacerbate the current problem of visitor parking, severely restricting the parking for the Blane Valley Inn and shops near the war memorial in particular. Another with first-hand knowledge of Auchineden Estate attested to the difficulties managing a very popular route like the Whangie. Some visitors certainly behave irresponsibly.

Some felt that the estate was over-reacting, bearing in mind the limited purpose of the Core Paths project.

The Core Paths designation is of very limited effect, and does not imply any obligation to improve or sign a path; it does not make any difference to rights of access. Some paths designated as Core Paths are already well-used and advertised. If a wider range of paths are documented and advertised, mightn't the burden on the most popular ones decrease?

It is regrettable that Core Path designation does not bring with it any financial backing for upgrading the infrastructure, including parking for example as well as the path surface, stiles and gates. (Currently only £30,000 is available for the whole of the SC area.) On the other hand, it was always explained that the purpose of the Core Paths project was merely to identify, classify and record the locations of core paths and minor paths across the whole country. It is to be expected that designation as Core Path will be a basis for prioritising investment if such resources should become available in future. Consultation meetings had been well attended in the village and elsewhere.

- Following discussion the CC agreed to bring these concerns to the attention of SC. RF will draft a letter and circulate it to the members. WO agreed to circulate the draft response from Duntreath Estates. (ACTION RF & WO)

b) Up-date from Elspeth Posnett (EP), environment correspondent.

- Following a request from EP, SC has trimmed the shrubs at the side of the footpath beside the school (only done lightly because some are still flowering), and will cut back the hedge on the A81 pavement, parallel to Campsie View Drive, in Nov. (The normal time is February but urgent jobs are brought forward.)
- Copies of maintenance agreements for the paths network which runs from the library to the top of the ash track and top of Danny's Brae, have been sent to SC, and arrangements are now formalised.
- Jenny Elliott, Streetscape officer, had inspected the damage to the ground beside the library path made by horses and is now in talks with the access officer about erecting a sign asking riders to avoid this path.
- The Criminal Justice Service has scraped the weeds from the 'creepy' path (Kirkhouse Rd to Leddriegreen Lane) and has cut back vegetation beside the damaged part of the burn-side path on ground behind the gardens of Southview Drive.

The wooden handrails on Danny's Brae and the steps from Kirkburn Drive to the A81 are still to be painted. EP has bought the paint.

- McAlpine contractors have reinstated the grass verges in Kirkhouse Rd.
- At the recent Community Development Trust meeting EP had raised the need for an upgrade of the 'creepy path' as a possible project for the Trust.

c) Community Action Day – The meeting was reminded about the event planned for Sunday 16th Sept to work on the old railway. Posters will be put up around the village but JG suggested that cc members also e-mail friends and contacts. (ACTION ALL)

8. Finance

Alastair Smith, treasurer, reported that the annual admin grant of £371 had been approved.

9. Planning – (Up-date from John Gray, deputising for Margaret Vass, planning correspondent.)

a) Appeal against refusal for an estate managers house at Auchineden - JG had obtained and circulated the Statement filed in support of the appeal. JG and WO had further had telephone discussions with the planning officer, Peter McKechnie. The gist of the appeal was to provide much more substantial evidence in the form of expert reports to provide justification for the new house, which would also include significant accommodation for guests. The evidence was contained in appendices so bulky that SC had declined to copy and send them; similarly, although Eric Strachan and JG had independently made some detailed study of the Statement, there was simply not time in one week to analyse and consult among members to prepare considered observations for the Reporter. WO had therefore made a brief submission confirming the CC's opposition to the original application and to support the SC planners in their consideration and conclusions on the appeal

b) Proposal to convert two flats into a two storey house at 8 Milngavie Rd. - There was no official response but WO reflected that this would lead to the loss of an 'affordable' home.

c) Alteration and extension to Ganavan, Bankend. - No comment.

d) Planning Panel 11 Sept – See 6a.

e) Draft policy on Restriction of Further Development served off Old Mugdock Road. - It was reported that the policy had been drawn up and would be out for consultation to the CC and others for four weeks from the time of receipt of the detailed policy. The responses and the finalised policy would then be reported to SC Executive Committee on the 23rd October. The CC did not consider this to be sufficient time for proper consultation but agreed to put a copy of the policy into the library and discuss the response at the October CC meeting.

f) Proposal for extension at Drumgelloch, Moor Rd. - After looking at the plans the CC agreed neither to oppose nor support. (ACTION JG)

g) Balfroon Wind Farm – Philip Graves (PG) expressed concerns about the visual impact this development would have if it went ahead; it would affect the local community as it would be seen from the Campsies and other surrounding areas which include areas of outstanding natural beauty. The turbines proposed would be 125 metres high and on an elevated site causing noise nuisance as well as visual intrusion. PG was also concerned about the possibility of similar proposals for the SC area.

There was some discussion as to whether or not this was an appropriate issue for the CC to address. DA moved that the discussion be discontinued as it was not relevant to the local community but WO wished to carry on the debate. After referring to the standing orders the motion was proposed by DA, seconded by RF and carried by majority vote.

10. Roads – (Up-date from Robert Flashman, (RF) roads correspondent.)

a) SC additional spending proposals – RF and WO will attend the consultation meeting the following day, Sept. 4th.

b) Traffic management – The order for 20mph roundels to be painted on the road surfaces around the school is with the contractor and should be carried out within 2-3 weeks. The speed activated sign in Blane field was removed because it was faulty. It will be replaced shortly and the adjacent bus stop flag will be adjusted so as not to obscure the flashing light.

c) Street lighting – It was noted that recent road works on the A81, and painted circles on the road surface, are preparatory to upgrading the street lights.

11. Area Community Planning –. JG, AS, and WO hope to attend the meeting on 24th Sept. The agenda was not yet available.

12. AOCB

a) SC housing issue - DA had heard that tenants of a Council house in Cuilt Place were only resident at occasional weekends and then only for parties. Local residents had complained but the practise had continued for over a year. It was agreed that DA should speak to MV (currently on holiday) who has professional expertise in these matters. (ACTION DA)

b) Xmas tree – Following a question from EP, WO explained that he had initiated inquiries into the provision of a permanent holding for a xmas tree and electricity supply for lights, and would be discussing this further with AS. (ACTION WO & AS)

c) Electronic message board – AS inquired as to whether any further consideration had been given to establishing a system for circulating information among cc members. JG agreed to follow this up.

d) Local Community Development Trust (CDT) – RF informed the CC of the recent general CDT meeting; members had been updated of progress, and the steering group, of which RF was a member, had been elected as the interim board of directors. The CC would soon be invited to put forward a CC member as a representative on the Board, and this would then be considered by the board members. RF offered to fulfil this role. WO suggested that the CC invite the chair of the CDT to address a future CC meeting.

e) Parking at the war memorial.- JG referred to the parking facilities behind the Catholic Church that are also made available to the general public at certain times. He suggested that the CC offer to make a contribution to upgrading the car park sign so that it was more prominent.

f) Edenmill farm – Mark Gibson, land owner, informed the CC that was working with SC to find a solution regarding the caravan and road signs, and that he was bringing the signs in at night.

g) Illegal caravan — Following a question about the caravan on land between Old Mugdock Road and A81, it was noted that enforcement procedures were reported in the planning schedule.

13. Dates of next two meetings – 1st October and 5th November at 7.30pm in the school.