



## STRATHBLANE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF STRATHBLANE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

**Monday, 31 July 2006 in Strathblane Village Club.  
(Willie Oswald in the chair, Minutes taken by John Gray)**

#### **Members Present:**

Willie Oswald (WO), Philip Graves (PG), Margaret Vass (MV), Elspeth Posnett (EP), Robert Flashman (RF), John Cushley (JC), Alastair Smith (AS) and John Gray (JG).

#### **Others Present:**

Cllr Alistair Berrill; Pam Campbell (Stirling Council); PC Paul Barr and 5 members of the public.

#### **1. Welcome and remarks by Chair**

A minute's silence was observed in memory of Maclean Currie, who had tragically been taken from his family and the community, at a very young age. Maclean was well known and loved in the village for many activities, and had served on the Community Council in the years 1998-2000.

The Chairman then noted that Stirling Council had adopted a new structure, abolishing the traditional committees. It would have to be seen how the new structures work, and how this would impact on the CC's relations with SC and its officers.

#### **2. Apologies.**

David Anderson (DA) was unexpectedly unable to attend due to a family emergency. Some of the items planned for discussion under Correspondence might have to be deferred.

#### **3. Minutes of Previous Meetings**

A Second Draft had been circulated just before the meeting and this was approved without further changes (RF, PG).

#### **4. Matters arising**

**Polling places** – WO had been authorised to respond, following limited discussion at the last meeting. WO's submission had suggested consideration be given to portable building with ramp access, e.g. in school playground, if school disruption could be reduced in this way. Other venues such as Edmonstone Hall and Village Club had access problems making it difficult to see how they could be put to use. He had further requested that the previous restrictions on election posters be retained for future elections.

## 5. Police Matters.

PC Barr reported another relatively quiet period in village; Drymen beat had been much busier with holiday visitors. 10 crime files raised for July, of which 5 were self-generated for minor traffic offences. Detection rate for more serious crimes was good at 75%. Items of concern included two car breakings at Mugdock car parks, where the thief had apparently observed the targeted drivers hiding valuables before leaving their cars. While this may or may not indicate a new trend, warnings had been posted on the police community web pages and a press release would be going to *M&B Herald*. Other valuable tools such as *Stihl* saws were being stolen from builders vehicles. Keepers of such equipment should make sure it is secure or remove it from the vehicle overnight.

On 17 July 2006, nightshift, PC Barr and a colleague had questioned the occupant of a car at Khyber car park and found a large quantity of controlled drugs. There was no suspicion that the drugs seized had been destined for the local area.

MV asked about enforcement of the alcohol ban. She has seen groups at War Memorial. PC Barr says members of the public should always report this when they see it. Police really need to see actual drinking before they can take action

PG mentioned an accident witnessed on Stockiemuir Road, resulting in breach of a wall above a gorge. General problem with slippery roads now that hot spell has broken. Road safety message to be reinforced. PG *via* RF would pass on concern about the safety of the broken wall to Brian Roberts at SC.  
as firm proposal at this stage.

## 6. Environmental Issues

### a) Paths Project (and Greenheart Update)

AS passed on information from Patsy Fischbacher of Greenheart, concerning its activities to improve **Paths, School Playing Field and Play Park**. [*Patsy's written report is reproduced in an Annex to these Minutes.*]

An application for £20,000 has been made through the Community Council to Stirling Council's Local Community Development Fund, toward funding of the new multi-sports court in the school playing field. Greenheart has provided background information and helped draw up the application.

Arising from the above, JG asked Pam Campbell for some factual background to explain why so many other communities, within SC boundaries as well as in neighbouring authorities, are showing new and better play facilities for children, while our community has waited years even for repair of the basic facilities previously in the park. Examples were offered. PC was not certain of each case, but would enquire and report back. From memory, she was aware that some schemes were funded by planning gain; others mainly community raised; 'area of need' status applied in some cases, and WO was aware of one funded out of housing budgets. Even though SC has no budget for investment in play facilities, SC provides design services & support in fundraising etc. by community officers such as PC herself. Members felt that Council Tax is high in our community, yet amenities provided by SC were low. PC was in discussions with Greenheart and also Childrens' services. Mentioned to PC Barr that police input about youth facilities would be useful to

Greenheart. Cllr Berrill noted that play services was an area which had been cut in SC's recent budget round, rather than increased.

## **b) General**

EP asked PC to investigate with Streetscape officers what is happening in **cutbacks on grass cutting**. One example was between Southview Drive gardens and the burn. WO had seen a copy of email on grass cutting – this implied that the targeted interval was about 10 days, but teething problems experienced in new regime.

JC noted that the usual workers were not turning up to cut the grass in the village, possibly because of contract, with the result that workers have lost local knowledge where to cut. WO believes the in-house team won tendering, but the individuals may have changed. One piece of grass on right of way from Dumbrock Rd to farm used to be maintained by SC, but suddenly this year has been neglected. WO recommends JC to get on to SC to pass on specific local knowledge like this and complain.

In the same area, at the foot of right of way, JC reported the end of the good weather had brought muck down glen into road. Neighbours have complained phoning in; men have come to clear some of it but fine silt carries on all into car park at end of Dumbrock Road. Grass cutters are now cutting grass growing on the silt. WO asked JC please to write a detailed report to [info@stirling.gov.uk](mailto:info@stirling.gov.uk). Ask to arrange to meet a supervisor.

EP and JC reported that Streetscape vehicles/motorised equipment are still going down **Library path** and causing damage, in spite of putting plants there as a deterrent. Could the problem be the new bollard on the proper route (from Park Place)? Police and Village Officer have keys. WO and all should complain about abuse of library path.

Issues to do with trees being cut down in **Kirkburn Drive** had been raised by residents in communication with SC officers. Trees re-planted are unsuitable and apparently now to be taken away. WO disappointed about lack of consultation. JG as one local resident deplored the chopping and changing over these trees, without any communication of what the council is trying to achieve for a decent environment. Officer David Creighton had told AB there was nothing to happen until October.

WO also finding difficulty starting dialogue with Nicole Paterson re Village Club grounds.

**Dog waste bin** not shifted yet but not urgent.

WO had emailed members with a proposal to plant willow along the Blane at Park Place to stabilise banks where gabions are failing. Proposal was to bring expert from Fife to view site and see what was feasible.

WO had sighted a section of fence had been cut, with danger of horses getting loose. This was also brought to his attention by a trustee of Duntreath Estates Trust Ltd. WO wished to bring this to the CC attention – members agreed that such vandalism is to be deprecated.

PG reported that meetings on **Milngavie Reservoir conservation plan** may have reached a conclusion after some discussion. Good progress on commissioning and rehabilitation of reservoirs. Craigmaddie reservoir was being drained and visitors may be able to see drowned cottages before long.

## 7. Planning.

### General

MV reported on the following cases:

**Opposition to Wildings, Moor Rd** – Copy of original approval had been obtained. Neighbours remained upset and various emails have been exchanged, but there is not much more that CC can do. The applicant is not admitting that the application is retrospective, in view of an earlier (2005) approval. Objections now arising are not necessarily planning objections.

**18a Campsie Dene Road** – MV expects this to go to next Planning Panel, with recommendation to refuse. MV finds it difficult to find copies of officers' reports to panel – has requested copy of this one.

Various minor extensions, not discussed.

**Old Mugdock Road** - Application for development on ground next to Browns. Can't say much until see plans. Not proposed to object, but can raise concerns about parking and particularly access and manoeuvring of larger vehicles, access to PO and shop for deliveries. Comparison drawn with Balfron where sorting office has moved and PB says vans are causing problems.

**Edenmill Farm caravan** – Mark Gibson advised that his latest planning application has gone in. SCC will comment when it appears in the Schedule.

### Structure Plan

MV had emailed some comments following interesting evening at workshop. Planners clear that Stirling should plan for growth so as not be overtaken but other areas. Questions were asked – MV has circulated possible replies. SCC approved filing of comments saying: Planned expansion should be linked to local needs, not needs of property developers. Rural centres should have good transport links and become hubs for services beyond. Noted a clear statement in structure plan that green belt between Strathblane and Glasgow should remain. Mixed tenure affordable housing wanted. Particular attention to elderly would allow elderly to downsize. Stirling has reasonable approach to economic development. WO wanting to add general comments re schools, sewerage, etc. needing to grow with growing population. MV to include.

After submitting these comments, planners write up and then formal plan comes out September for consultation.

Some members were concerned about younger adults being in need of local, affordable housing too.

National Park wanting to ban all tourist-related development within its boundaries, so that it must happen out in surrounding areas.

WO notes that Stirling looking for 'brand image' which may bring pressure to ramp up growth. Can see more papers on website.

**Consultation: Planning Advice Note PAN *Planning with the People*.** Legislators at Holyrood want comments by middle October. MV to organise planning group meeting to review, with a view to agreeing a response at October meeting.

## 8. Roads.

### (a) A81 Speed and Traffic Management

RF reported that Andrew Fergus (SC) will speak to Brian Roberts to see what budget is. RF will go to meeting with them to progress it.

Vehicle activated sign statistics were expected next week.

**Safer Routes to School** – RF understood Kirkhouse Inn owners were still waiting for final word from their Insurers about proposed use of their car park, but have emailed to say go ahead unless we hear further. However, he confirmed that Roads Dept were looking at providing egress from the car park at the bus stop, rather than through the woods to the existing zebra.

Poles were now up for 40mph signs, although not completed exactly when expected.

### (b) General

PC Barr confirmed he had been speaking to council about line markings to confirm these are backed up by legislation, which seems to be mainly the case.

A Mugdock resident said that some Mugdock residents were concerned about safety if they could not park at the school. The members felt there was safer parking nearby that would be safer for all, and it was pointed out that SC provides a free taxi service to school for Mugdock children.

PC Barr felt that many car journeys were unnecessary. While regulations & policing can't control car use it is reasonable to control stopping places.

Q: Does obstruction of signs by trees make parking restrictions ineffective? PC Barr: No.

## 9. Correspondence

A list of correspondence had been circulated by the Secretary, although discussion of certain ones would be difficult as the DA was unable to attend. Specific items discussed were:

- Stirling Council – Consultation: Proposed Amendment of Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in the Stirling Council Area **Comments were wanted by 7<sup>th</sup> September 2006.** WO had attended a meeting on this with other communities and proposed the following answers to the questions raised:

Q1 Yes CC and Council ward boundaries should be coterminous.

Q2 Subdivision of CC area into wards wanted? WO explains Wards introduced to counter accidental conglomeration of members from one ward. Agreed to support present subdivisions.

Q3 Yes CCs should be able to choose to have corporate body status. (Areas with 'Community Futures' companies have found divergence of direction between CFTs and CCs. Some consider ability for CC to adopt corporate body status would avoid need for need to set up parallel bodies. )

Q4 Code of Conduct for CCs and CC members would be a good thing.

Q5 Yes Area Community Planning boundaries should be altered to match 1 & 2.

WO to reply for CC and individuals can reply also.

- Stirling Council – **Draft Core Paths Plan Consultation Dates.** We are scheduled for consultation on **Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2006.** CC will need to conclude its review by end October because of date of CC election means there is no CC in November.
- **SEPA View** – July/August 2006 issue. WO said this was interesting and can be viewed on internet
- **Central Scotland Police** – Chief Constable's Annual Report. WO commended Central Police for producing this brief report circulated to households.

## 10. Finance.

No significant change. £3000 or so in current account and more in savings account. This includes the £1000 windfall.

AS said CC needed to establish a rate for him to pay members for mileage on CC business CC. A range of values was permitted, and AS proposed 45p/mile. Approved unanimously.

## 11. Consideration of proposals for £1000 Windfall Payment

Decision needed this month. Obvious priority was a replacement noticeboard. EP has up to date price list from Glasdon. WO recalls other suppliers more . PC could enquire with Streetscape about installation. PC also has other suppliers' information & will forward to EP. A resident in Netherblane had written to suggest that the grant be used for something worthwhile like Village Club.

WO proposed to split £500 toward noticeboard and £500 toward VC interior refurbishment. Agreed AS to give Village Club Treasurer £500 and EP to progress noticeboards.

Welcome boards are for maintenance separately.

## 12. Consideration of spending proposals for additional £29,800.

5 packages were outlined, to be chosen by voting at a Cluster meeting on 7 August 2006. Packages included a mix of more speed-activated signs or sign heads, a 'youth work' programme, fire cadets, community facilities. After discussion a vote was taken with preference narrowly in favour of putting all the money into speed signs. AS was nominated to vote for SCC in favour of 'Option 5'

A draft CC constitution was to be discussed between the members before the next Cluster meeting.

**13. Land Reform Act, Part 2, Community Right to Register Interest in Land**

Time was pressing and review of WO's discussion paper was deferred to the next meeting.

**14. AOCB.**

**Stirling Assembly 17 June 2006** - JG reported on this meeting which had considered the impact of **the new PR electoral system coming for council elections from 2007** (Stirling in our case). It was clear that a higher burden fell on councillors to represent wider views in their community, compared with party block tactics that had served them up to now. Councillors in multi-member wards would need to find ways of working effectively with the CC's in their areas. Different models were possible. JG could foresee some chaotic period while the elected and the electorate adapt mentally to the new system, but was persuaded that local democracy would be strengthened, and people's votes would be more effective than often at present.

**SCC Web Presence within [www.strathblanefield.org.uk](http://www.strathblanefield.org.uk).** JG reported that consultation among members indicated strongly that we should proceed, and the web page was ready to go live. JG authorised to give the go-ahead after consulting DA on a final point of communication lines.

**15. Dates of future meetings**

Next meetings are 4 Sep 2006 (WO absent, PG in chair), 2 Oct 2006, 30 Oct 2006 (November meeting brought forward prior to elections)

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**These Minutes were approved by the council at its 4 September 2006 meeting**

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## **Annex - Greenheart Update**

Kindly Provided by Patsy Fischbacher

### **Paths**

The project manager is Neil Donaldson of Donaldson Environmental Consultancy Ltd. Simon Jones [Greenheart Chair] and I tried to arrange a meeting with Edward Pickard and Scottish Water both together, but holidays did not permit. Simon and I then met up with Edward Pickard and he asked that the path should be altered slightly where it links to the old railway line to allow for future changes to the field boundary. This may add to the costs. Simon and I then met Neil on site to clarify details. Simon has since had contact with SW by e-mail and Neil will meet a SW rep to discuss the details once the plans are drawn up.

Dougie Flynn obtained public utility service maps for us and these have been passed to Neil Donaldson who will shortly be putting out the work to tender. If there is a small shortfall we can probably get a top up grant from SNH. The start date will depend on the availability of the chosen contractor but it is not expected to be until late summer or early autumn.

### **School Playing Field**

The School Board is heading up a proposal for an all weather multi-purpose sports pitch on the far corner of the school field at a cost of £60,000. This follows an initiative from the Scottish Football Association (SFA) who have offered £10,000 towards the project provided that the community can find the rest of the money. Stirling Council will also contribute £10,000 and will manage the project. The rest of the money needs to be in place soon as the money from the SFA must be spent by autumn 2007. The plans were displayed at the school fair in June and a large number of people signed up in support of the proposal. An application for £20,000 has been made through the Community Council to Stirling Council's Local Community Development Fund. Greenheart has provided background information and helped draw up the application.

Other applications are still to be made. (We have asked that the fencing should be painted green, rather than blue and yellow which are the SFA colours. Mrs Cunningham has said the same.)

### **Play Park**

Following advice from BTCV and SC we are now planning to set up a Local Community Development Trust: this would have charitable status and enable us to apply directly to the Lottery and other funding bodies.

Stirling Council Children's Play Services is drawing up a new design for the play park, which will include some of the adjacent woodland, at a budget of around £50,000, which is about half of the original costs. The design will include landscape features based on the character of the site, as well as more traditional` play equipment. The Council will also provide the project management and then insure, inspect and maintain the new equipment.

We are working with the school on the last two of these projects and have agreed not to make any grant applications for the play park until all the money is in place for the multicourt otherwise it will appear to prospective funders that we are in competition - anyway it will take a while to set up a development trust.