



## STRATHBLANE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF MEETING 6<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2007 IN THE VILLAGE CLUB

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

In attendance: - Cllr Berrill, PC Barr, Pam Campbell (SC), 13 public

( SC = Stirling Council. CC = Community Council )

**2. Welcome** – Willie Oswald, chairman, welcomed the members of the public and, in view of the large public attendance, introduced the community councillors individually.

**3. Minutes of last meeting** - Agreed. Proposed – Philip Graves. Seconded – Elspeth Posnett.

#### **4. Police Matters**

PC Barr updated the meeting of events since the last CC meeting (11 June) and answered questions. He noted that this is always a difficult time of year as there are fewer police around because of the holidays. It had been fairly busy.

##### **a) Crime report**

20 crime files were recorded, some serious, but only 6 detected so far. There are a number of positive lines of inquiry and the detection rate should improve considerably.

- In the early hours of 6 July there was a robbery from a local hotel; suspects from the Strathclyde area have been traced and 4 arrests made.
- On 29<sup>th</sup> July, overnight, a house was broken into whilst the resident was sleeping and a car was stolen. This was unusual in that the car was not an expensive one.
- Also on 29<sup>th</sup> July there was an attempted break-in to a house in Milndavie Rd when the residents were on holiday. It is expected that forensic evidence will be positive. There were a number of cars in the driveway which were not stolen.
- During 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> July there were several incidents at Auchengillan Scout Camp: the office was broken into, cash and radios were stolen, and later on vehicles were broken into.
- On 29<sup>th</sup> June a local resident was intimidated by youths as he walked home after a bus journey from Glasgow. The youths had also been rowdy on the bus. The police were on the scene fairly quickly. The man was unharmed but shaken up.
- On the night of 5<sup>th</sup> August a male from the Strathclyde area was arrested for driving under the influence of drugs.

##### **b) Mugdock Country Park**

- Police were present and had also helped to direct traffic at the music festival in mid June. There were no serious incidents but one person was arrested for being drunk in charge of a child.
- There was an incident last week when 12 dogs got loose from a dog walker and surrounded another man's dog. There was an altercation between the two men leading

to a breach of the peace. The police are confident that this will be detected. There have been a number of similar incidents at MCP recently.

Philip Graves (who lives on the edge of the park) referred to an occasion when dogs were out of control and had rampaged through his garden. He thought that the problem was caused by professional dog walkers. It was noted that no qualifications are required for this work but it is an offence to fail to keep dogs under control.

**c) Road traffic collisions**

There were 5 collisions; one moderately serious when a motor cyclist lost control and broke his collar bone; the others were fairly minor.

**d) Police duties** – PC Barr should no longer be doing regular night duty; this should enable him to attend CC meetings and be out and about in the village more.

**5. Planning** - (Update from Margaret Vass (MV) planning correspondent.)

**a) Report on Planning Panel hearing**

After the June CC meeting MV received notice that the three applications in Moor Rd and the one for Valhalla stables in Old Mugdock Rd (OMRd), were to be considered by the Planning Panel. The CC had vigorously opposed the proposal for a house at Valhalla but had only expressed concern about the risk to road safety on OMRd in respect of the applications for Moor Rd. SC were recommending that all four applications be deferred until the Council had issued its policy on Old Mugdock Rd which was expected in the new year. MV had given a presentation to the Panel, supported by Blair Armstrong from the Green Belt committee. The overall request was to support SC's recommendation and the Panel upheld this for all four applications.

MV noted that the CC would have dealt with the proposal for Tamarac separately as the application had been made before the Council's decision to draw up a specific policy for OMRd, however the planners wanted it addressed along with the other Moor Rd applications. The main issue concerning Valhalla was the viability of the business and the CC had raised sufficient doubts about this. Mick Stewart, head of planning, had also offered several alternative options to the building of a house. The hearing had been quite difficult especially as the agent for Valhalla been aggressive towards the CC. Philip Graves thanked MV for all her hard work and MV thanked Eric Strachan, Green Belt committee, for his very valuable input.

- It was noted that the policy for OMRd should be out for consultation by the end of September. (The CC need to be active on this.) The findings will then be considered by the Planning Panel in December and then all four applications will be reconsidered in January 2008.
- Cllr Berrill explained that he had not supported the applications as had been suggested by the press. He was aware of the CC's concerns about the safety of OMRd and supported the request for a policy to limit further development in this area, however he also felt that the applicants, especially those for Tamarac who had submitted their proposal in December, should not have their applications continually deferred. He had been careful not to show support or opposition before any decision was made but only to encourage the Planning Panel to come to as prompt a decision as they could.
- Mr Pickard, noted that his application for Aros cottage had been first raised with the Council in August 2005, at the same time as the request for a change of use of ground at the Firs.
- A member of the public suggested that permission for a house at Valhalla, should be conditional on the house being removed if the business folded. There was some

discussion about the history of this site and justification in general for building in the Green Belt.

**b) Proposal for a new/replacement house by Ardunnan Lodge** – This was recommended for refusal by SC and then withdrawn by the applicant.

**c) Outline proposal for house in grounds of 62 Glasgow Rd** – Approved by SC.

**d) Retrospective application for a caravan at Edenmill Farm** – Refused by SC for the second time following enforcement procedures. MV has informed the neighbours.

**e) Proposal for house at West Arlhaven** – This is for a small bungalow to replace the existing house which was severely fire damaged. After looking at the plans the CC agreed neither to approve or oppose in principle, but to comment favourably on the design.

(ACTION MV)

**f) Caravan beside dilapidated shed in field on OMRd.** – MV had informed SC about this unauthorised caravan and SC had responded very quickly. Planning officers have made a visit and explained to the owner that he needs planning permission for the caravan and to repair the shed, if it is repairable. It was noted that the field is rented by the owners of Valhalla and any alternative plans could affect the viability of their business.

- Willie Oswald (WO) said that the building had been a problem for years and the previous councillor had tried to get it removed. Following his suggestion the CC agreed to press for the shed to be removed as it was an eyesore, might be dangerous, and was probably irreparable.

(ACTION MV)

- A member of the public wanted to know who would be responsible to repair the damaged dry stone wall. MV said that she had alerted the SC about this illegal access.

**g) Old Mugdock Road (OMRd)** – Responsibility for the deer fence on OMRd is still unresolved. The Roads Department has no concerns about the new access at Moor House as OMRd is unclassified, the access is only used occasionally by machines for servicing purposes and the sight lines are satisfactory.

**h) Landscaping at Valhalla** – John Gray expressed concerns about the planting of non-native trees (leylandi) along the boundary of the field with the A81. MV noted that SC had been made aware of this but it is not a planning issue as it is not related to a planning application. WO agreed to raise this with Council bio-diversity officer. (ACTION WO)

**i) Proposal for change of use from green space to garden ground at 53 Dumbrock Rd.**

There was some concern that approval here could create a precedent leading to loss of valuable public green space elsewhere. It was also noted that a larger garden at this site might lead to an application for another house. WO proposed a site visit. MV will ask for additional time to respond.

(ACTION MV & WO)

**j) Edenmill farm shop** – Following a question from Philip Graves MV clarified that the shop can only sell local produce but that this also includes food that has been processed on site. PC Barr confirmed that the straw bales on the roadside that were being used to advertise the shop were still there, but were being taken in at night.

**k) Helicopter flights** – A member of the public referred to the ongoing nuisance caused by regular weekend flights from Muirhouse Farm and questioned the right to operate from this site without planning permission. Following discussion it was agreed that a) Pam Campbell (SC) would clarify if it was more than 28 flights, or more than 28 days, that defined the need for planning permission; b) John Gray (JG) would draft a letter from the CC to the business operators; c) WO would write to MSP.

(ACTION JG & WO)

- It was noted that Lothian Helicopters was advertised on the web as a commercial business and that the number of flights was increased by the need to re-fuel.
- David Anderson thought that the civil aviation authorities would have strict regulations on heights and that the risk of frightening livestock was a relevant issue.

- PC Barr suggested that flights would be logged with air traffic control and the numbers could be obtained.
- Members of the public were encouraged to keep a note of the number of flights and to write to SC to complain.

**6. Roads** – (Up-date from Robert Flashman (RF) roads correspondent)

**a) Additional spending proposals** - Proposals for £ ½ mill spend, obtained from the disposal of property, is out for consultation. and will be discussed at a meeting between Council officials and CC representatives on 4<sup>th</sup> Sept. The money is being split 2:1 to rural and urban areas and the spending allocated on a formula developed by senior Council Roads officials throughout Scotland over the last couple of years. RF will compare those roads recommended for repair with roads in our area, as none of the latter are included in the proposals. It would need a lot of pressure to get priorities changed at this stage as a great deal of time has already been spent on this and not all roads with the same scores are being recommended for work to be done. Findings to be discussed at CC Sept. meeting.

(ACTION RF)

**b) Traffic management** - Feedback from SC following concerns raised by RF

- The hatched lines around the traffic island outside the Kirkhouse Inn have been completed and the 20mph roundels should be painted around the school before the new term starts.
- Legal issues regarding the use of the Kirkhouse Inn car park should be resolved shortly.
- Brian Roberts (SC) will investigate the complaints about the zebra crossing and look again at awareness and visibility, but he stresses that drivers **MUST** give way to pedestrians.
- The bus stop flag at the entrance to Blanefield will be removed as it is obscuring the newly installed flashing 30mph warning light.
- An access protection marking will be installed on Dumbrock Road, at the entrance to the private garages, at the same time as the 20mph roundels are painted.
- Funding has been secured for this year for the next section of the traffic management scheme, but we don't know how much yet. Officers have considered the community's priorities and requests and will send their comments before the next steering group meeting. Unfortunately the A81/A82 junction cannot be improved at this stage. Brian Roberts would be pleased to attend the steering group meeting to discuss these issues.

(ACTION RF)

**c) Roads maintenance** – A SC officer has inspected the lay-by beside the parish church and has agreed to make temporary repairs.

**d) Safety concerns** – Finlay Fountain raised concerns about the potential for an accident caused by a car passing a stationary bus and colliding with a child crossing at the pedestrian island by the Kirkhouse Inn. As this matter has already been raised with the Council, it was agreed that, rather than write again, it should be discussed when the steering group meets with Brian Roberts.

**e) Speeding** – Cllr Berrill referred to the speed watch scheme where residents are trained by police to monitor traffic speed and take down registration numbers to pass to the police who then contact persistent offenders and high speed offenders, although they cannot be charged. The scheme has been piloted in Milton of Campsie and in areas of Strathclyde.

**f) Parking problems at Mugdock Country Park** – Philip Graves (PG) reported that he was still waiting for a response from Brian Roberts about parking on Mugdock Road during special events, which is even problematical when the weather is bad. Ian Arnott, park

manager, has told PG that big events are not run by the park management. Pam Campbell (SC) reported that if a public licence is required then the event must be notified to the Police and Council Roads Dept. She offered to try to get a copy of the Roads dept. report for the music festival. The CC agreed to keep the pressure on SC to take this problem seriously.

**g) Contacting the Council** – Elspeth Posnett reported that she had e-mailed SC contact centre about the pot holes on the Cuilt road and the road had been resurfaced apart from the stretch by the ‘Dolls House’ which has been patched. WO encouraged individuals to send complaints and comments to the contact centre and these would be forwarded to the relevant officer and a response given within 15 days. Pam Campbell said that it was often quicker to go through the contact centre than directly to the council officer.

e-mail - info @stirling.gov.uk or phone 0845 277 7000

## **7. Environmental issues** – (Up-date from Elspeth Posnett (EP) environment correspondent)

**a) Criminal Justice Service (CJS)** – EP and Patsy Fischbacher have taken Norrie Gilmour (CJS) on a tour of the village to identify suitable tasks for offenders, and the following projects have been agreed: paint the wooden handrails at Danny’s Brae and at the steps leading from Kirkburn Drive to main road; cut back the vegetation to by-pass the damaged track beside the burn behind the gardens in Southview Drive; and cut back vegetation and strim weeds on the path that links Kirkhouse Rd and Leddriegreen Lane, for which EP obtained permissions from all the neighbours

- The graffiti on the football pavilion could have been painted over but the club are already planning to have the graffiti removed.
- It was noted that the CJS will do work that will benefit the community but cannot undertake tasks that are the responsibility of the Council. They will also do indoor work such as painting community halls.

**b) Bowling Club hedge** – EP had been surprised to learn that SC had written to the Bowling Club, supposedly following a complaint from the CC, asking them to cut back the hedge as it was affecting visibility for vehicles exiting onto the main road. EP assured the club that no official complaint had been made. On inquiring she was told that the chairman had made the complaint. WO said that he had also complained about other hedges but that he sometimes writes letters in his own name. The Bowling Club hedge has now been cut back.

**c) Japanese Knotweed** – PG reported that he had seen knotweed growing at Valhalla. EP confirmed that information re the location of knotweed should be sent to Audrey Morrison.

**d) Flower tubs** – EP has tidied these up.

**e) Village Officer** – Following some supervision from SC, the village officer has been scraping weeds from the sides of the pavements and litter picking has improved.

**f) Xmas Tree** – It was agreed that action should be taken now to make sure that arrangements are in place for a Christmas tree and lights to go up somewhere in the village this year. Money is in hand. Alistair Smith (AS) and WO agreed to head this up.

(ACTION WO & AS)

**g) Scottish Water (SW) forum** – PG reported as follows: it had been agreed to start the work of narrowing the access road to the new treatment works as per the condition of planning approval, starting this month, ( he thought that the traffic lights would be removed as well); water was already flowing from the new works; there would be an official opening next summer; Gleeson contractors were working well and to the time scale, but the company had recently been taken over; the temporary works were due to be removed by February next year. Members of the forum have been asked to take it in turns to nominate a charity to which the contractor will donate an agreed amount if the prior period has seen no accidents. SCC’s turn could be up soon, PG had suggested Water Aid.

- A question was raised about whether or not the reservoir was to become a tourist attraction. PG explained that whilst now defined as a tourist attraction under EDC's Local Plan, the Conservation Plan had aimed to maintain the status quo, but according to new Scottish Access legislation, there is nothing to stop anyone taking a boat out on the water, and this is something that SW must address. The present bye-laws prohibiting boating will only stay in force until the project is completed.

**h) Village Welcome Boards** – These need to be replaced. Alastair Smith offered to investigate possible alternatives and inquire about the ones in Killearn. Pam Campbell noted that there were some changes in legislation in relation to street furniture and advised RF to make inquiries to Brian Roberts. (ACTION AS & RF)

**8. Correspondence** – (The correspondence list was not circulated to members due to a technical problem. David Anderson (DA), secretary, referred to the following items.)

**a) Community Council Workshops** – A questionnaire had been sent out following the workshops and responses are due by the end of the month.

**b) Area Community Planning Forum** – proposed alignment with Council wards.

**c) Association of Scottish Community Councils Survey** – DA will circulate to members.

1. WO noted that the CC had worked with ASCC in the past particularly in relation to the request for third party right to appeal Council planning decisions. The ASCC is now asking that all CC elections should be held at the same time in order to raise the profile of CCs. (ACTION DA)

**d) No Cold Calling communities.** – Pam Campbell passed round invitations to a play on Oct 4<sup>th</sup> 2007 in Stirling, which highlights the problems of doorstep sales and bogus workmen. SC want to know if communities wish to become 'no cold calling zones', as is the case in Balfron and Killearn, since when there has been 100% reduction in door to door sales. Information will be handed out at the play. Decisions must be made in partnership with the CC and local businesses and the CC will choose locations for signs, though not at village gateways.

**e) Gardening catalogue** - The CC opted to use local businesses for buying plants.

**f) Post Watch Scotland** – WO referred to the Post Office network change programme which will be out for consultation from August to October. The main access criteria is that everyone should be within 6 miles of a post office. Post Watch will inform the CC of any information relevant to our community.

**g) Central Scotland Police** – Chief Constables annual report 2006/2007. Copy to be placed in the library. (ACTION DA)

**9. Finance** - (Up-date from Alastair Smith, treasurer.)

There is £5,600 in the account. £500 is allocated towards a new notice board and £850 towards the installation of a permanent holding for a Xmas tree and electricity supply. £2051 is being held for Greenheart.

**10. Area Community Planning** – The next roads meeting is on Tuesday September 4<sup>th</sup>

**11. A.O.B.**

**Councillors surgeries.** – Cllr Berrill provided a notice of Cllrs surgeries for the CC notice board. He said that the Councillors would work together to cover attendance at CC meetings.

**12. Dates of next meetings** – 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 1<sup>st</sup> October, 7.30pm in the school.