



STRATHBLANE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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

1. Members Present: - David Anderson, Fiona Murray, Willie Oswald, Margaret Vass, Marjorie Peddie, Elspeth Posnett, Alastair Smith, Robert Flashman, , Philip Graves, John Gray.
In attendance: - PC Barr, Cllr Lambie, 12 public.
Apologies: Finlay Fountain, Pam Campbell (SC).

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

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

3. Minutes of last meeting: - Agreed with a minor amendment now incorporated into the final minutes. Proposed: John Gray. Seconded: Margaret Vass.

4. Matters arising: - None

5. Police Matters: PC Barr updated the meeting and answered questions.

a) Crime report: The past month had been relatively quiet without the traditional rise in crime normally associated with this time of year. Police had been leafleting unlit houses, targeting road traffic offences such as broken car lights and working with Customs Services to check for illicit use of red diesel; these actions may have disrupted travelling criminals. 12 crime files had been raised including:

- 2 break-ins to vehicles at car parks at Mugdock Country Park
- 2 acts of vandalism, one of which was to a motor cycle parked at the rear of the hairdressers in Blanefield.
- 1 vehicle detected with faulty lighting.
- 1 speeding offence by a vehicle overtaking on Glasgow Rd.
- 3 road traffic accidents with vehicle damage only.

b) Deer accident – The dumping of a dead deer on ground at the entrance to Muirhouse quarry had been reported to the police by several people and the carcass had been removed. Police continue to liaise with the Deer Commission.

c) Carbeth fire – It was confirmed that the recent fire at a holiday hut causing the death of the occupant, was a tragic accident.

d) Special constables – The police force is still looking for additional members. There had been one in our area but she was now training to join the police force.

e) Red diesel – This is a cheaper form of diesel used in agricultural vehicles and there have been instances of people trying to steal the fuel directly from farms. WO noted that the fuel contains chemicals that can damage diesel car engines.

6. Correspondence. David Anderson (DA), secretary, had circulated a list of correspondence to all members prior to the meeting. The following item was highlighted.

Stirling Public Partnership Forum – Notice of meeting on 5/11/07 re New Acute Hospital, Larbert & Community Hospitals throughout NHS Forth Valley.

7. Environmental issues.

Permanent fixture for Xmas tree and lights – WO reported that an electrician had inspected the proposed site at the Village Club and requested a test digging be carried out. This had revealed that the ground was heavily concreted close to the power source.

8. Area Community Planning

WO, Alastair Smith and Elspeth Posnett had attended the most recent meeting at which discussion groups had reviewed the priorities. There was nothing new to report. Dates of future meetings in 2008 are: Mondays 25 Feb, 9 June, 22 Sept and 24 Nov. It was noted that the June meeting conflicts with the CC AGM.

9. Finance. - Report from the treasurer Alastair Smith (AS).

a) Up-date - The only bill was for the photocopier. A financial statement will be circulated to members. (ACTION AS)

b) Future expenditure - It was unanimously agreed to make a contribution to the Blane newsletter of £60 per issue, and to follow up an earlier commitment to make a biannual contribution to the community website. (ACTION AS)

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

a) Old Mugdock Road policy – Awaiting response from SC.

b) Traffic management – The vehicle activated sign at Blanefield is still awaiting repair and the bus stop flag will be re-aligned when the sign is re-erected. Painting 20mph roundels on the roads around the school is with the contractors. RF to follow up. (ACTION RF)

c) Bus shelter – It was reported that some of the roof tiles at the Kirkhouse Inn bus shelter were loose. RF will inform SC. (ACTION RF)

d) Report from Cllr Lambie – Councillors have been asking that the A811 be designated a trunk road. (WO noted that CCs in the area had previously argued that all access roads to the National Park should have trunk road status and that the A811 was the only one without it.) There is broad support within the Council for an increase of £½ million per annum towards the roads budget and this should receive Scottish Executive support. It will be difficult to add to the winter maintenance programme unless the particular road is on a bus route.

e) Pot holes – SC should be informed of any bad pot holes and it is more effective if more than one person makes a complaint.

11. Planning. Update from Margaret Vass (MV) planning correspondent.

Edenmill Farm - Request for change of use to form play area adjacent to farm shop.

The background to the application was outlined and there was a lengthy discussion also involving the applicant and members of the public. The main issues were as follows:

- The application was retrospective: the play area was already installed and was operative until the Council closed it down.
- The overall enterprise is currently being widely advertised as providing free parking; a play area for kids; free tea/coffee; toilets; picnic area; indoor cover and an area for several walks. However whilst there is permission for a farm shop to operate all year round, the sale of xmas trees and other services can only operate for the month of December. There is no permission for a café, but café facilities are in place and the applicant has expressed his intention to submit an application.
- There has been a series of planning applications at the site, several of which were made retrospectively. An occupied static caravan remains on site even though it has twice been refused planning permission. A landscape contractor business continues to operate from the site without planning permission.
- The applicant had been asked to submit an overall proposal for the site but had not done so.
- Many of the objections to the various developments would be resolved if the alternative access onto the Drymen Road at Garvel bridge became the official public access to the site, as was the case when the site was used as a riding centre. Reference was made to Laignparks Nursery where the developer had been required to fund the creation of a roundabout in order to get planning permission for a coffee shop.

MV expressed the CC's support in principle for rural businesses, and JG expressed the CC's disappointment that the applicant continued to disregard official planning procedure and the Council's advice, and had shown no consideration towards neighbours. The CC voted not to oppose the application at present, but to ask that someone from the planning department attend the next CC meeting to discuss the situation before the CC agreed its formal response.

(ACTION MV)

12. AOCB

a) CC business - DA suggested that the CC hold a private meeting in the next few weeks to discuss matters of procedure. He will make the arrangements. (ACTION DA)

b) Locking pole –The padlock from the pole at the entrance to the KGV playing field has been missing for some time. A member of the public had organised replacement padlocks in the past and passed on the names of the key holders. WO will follow this up. (ACTION WO)

c) Prospective wind farm at Balindalloch Moor

i) WO reported on the recent public meeting held by Endrick Valley Action Group (EVAG). There were about 300 people present and ten speakers, five of whom were philosophically opposed to wind farms and five who were not. Talks from two of the latter group were particularly meaningful. The first was from a farmer who had to leave the family home and now travels to and from the farm for work. The house is virtually un-sellable because of the noise nuisance from the nearby wind turbine. The other talk was from a professor of acoustics who had investigated the procedure for simulating turbine noise levels and concluded that these could not be predicted and that therefore N-Power's claims about noise levels were false. There were concerns about the risks to birds, particularly as Ballindalloch Muir is on the migratory route for geese and swans and possibly for osprey. N-Power had declined an invitation to the meeting.

ii) During general discussion the following points were raised:

- The application has still to be submitted. The environmental impact assessment is completed but not yet public. SC will have four months from receipt of the application before making a decision. Extra time will be given to compensate for any time lost due to public holidays. The timetable may be extended due to the size and nature of the proposal.
- The turbines will be visible from a wide area.
- The engineering works required to build the wind farm could cause pollution of land and waterways, and drying out of the blanket bog leads to a release of CO2.
- There are other applications in the pipeline: one at Loaning Head only 600 metres from a house; others are being considered near Buchlyvie and Kippen.
- There is an amount of anecdotal evidence regarding medical problems and noise nuisance, but there is only one known instance of compensation; £15,000 damages towards the reduction in the value of a house. (This was a private prosecution against the vendor who failed to notify the buyer of plans for a windfarm nearby; there was no compensation from the builders or operators of the wind farm.) There are obvious implications for children at Balfron schools as well as for local residents.

iii) Outcome of the discussion:-

- WO will write a brief summary of the EVAG meeting and will ask EVAG to keep the CC up to date. (ACTION WO)
- PG agreed to head up the CC official response as MV is busy with the Edenmill applications.
- Copies of EVAG discussion papers and photomontages will be placed in the library.
- Cllr Lambie said that other CCs in the surrounding area were prepared to object. He will, of course, represent the concerns of the community but must also maintain an objective stance as he may be required to sit on the planning panel which determines the proposal.

13. Dates of next meetings – 7rd January and 4th February at 7.30pm in the school.