



STRATHBLANE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF STRATHBLANE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

**Monday 8 January 2007 in Strathblane Primary School.
(Willie Oswald in the chair, Minutes taken by John Gray)**

Members Present:

Willie Oswald (WO), David Anderson (DA), Margaret Vass (MV), Elspeth Posnett (EP), Robert Flashman (RF), Alastair Smith (AS), John Gray (JG), Marjorie Peddie (MP), Finlay Fountain (FF).

Others Present:

PC Paul Barr and around 8 members of the public.

1. Welcome and remarks by Chair

2. Apologies.

Philip Graves (PG), Pam Campbell (Stirling Council), Councillor Alistair Berrill

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Draft minutes had been circulated and comments received prior to the meeting. Further clarification was agreed, including in particular to confirm that the council was glad to accept Patsy Fischbacher's offer to act as volunteer minute secretary. Minutes approved with these changes (MV, EP).

4. Matters Arising

There was some question whether PF's offer still stood. JG would contact her to clarify matters before the next meeting. Other matters arising would be dealt with under headings below.

5. Police Matters.

PC Barr reported there had been one house breaking in the period. A repeat attempt at burglary at Brown's shop had been thwarted by the new glass window. Witnesses saw a vehicle involved, but there was no firm lead to solve the crime so far. The offender was believed to be from outside the area.

One incident of vandalism in the village was apparently linked to others in Killearn and Buchlyvie – use of an airgun from a car. A drugs offence had been detected at Queens View car park. 5 road traffic offences had been detected, including lighting faults, non-use of seat belts.

The police's winter drink-driving campaign had yielded a disappointing increase in statistics: 43 offences compared with 26 the previous year. There was one drunk-in-charge and theft of a vehicle detected within the Blanefield beat. 11 had been in the Stirling area, and one in Balfron.

PC Barr noted that new penalties would apply soon to drivers using mobile phones, which he hoped would serve as a stronger deterrent to this dangerous practice.

Police had been very busy with weather-related incidents in recent weeks, with many trees down, roads flooded, rescue of householders and livestock across floods.

6. Planning.

MV reported there were a number of issues to discuss this month.

On **Edenmill Farm**, we are still waiting to find out when recommendation on the caravan is going to Panel. A proposal for a new shed has appeared in schedule for approval with original location. Planners have formed a view that the proposed shed would not interfere with views of neighbours.

The outline application for a new house in grounds of **26 Campsie Dene Road** is in the Schedule for approval, with detailed conditions concerning landscaping. MV will pass these to PG for review/comment.

Current application for comment is **agricultural shed up on Gowk Stane road**. There is known to be one objector (Green Belt committee). The applicant, Edward Pickard, was present and explained that the shed was for storage of agricultural equipment currently stored outside his house and on site of his proposed new house, both at the end of Moor Road. Also for animal feed. How will it fit into landscape? The location is to North of Gowkstane road behind trees, just west of the walled water works enclosure. Mr Pickard believes the choice is discreet: the shed might be visible from the last of the Dickie houses, but not from village. He envisages it will be olive green with a discreet coloured roof. Will there be illumination? Not considered yet.

MV explained that the period for comment had been extended to allow discussion at this meeting. In the tea-break, the meeting and applicant had an opportunity to view letter from Green Belt committee. MV then proposed the council neither support nor oppose that application. AS seconded. Agreed.

WO said he wished to make an apology following the previous meeting, at which it had been agreed to submit certain comments on the application to add a house in the grounds of **Tamarac, Moor Road**. WO had forgotten to raise at the meeting his long-standing concern about adding of properties with access from Old Mugdock Road. Subsequent to the meeting, WO & MV had included this in the council's submission to the planners, and

hence strengthened comments beyond what was agreed at meeting. The apology was noted, but no members had any objection to their actions.

A letter to SC Planning about **alleged planning contraventions in Moor Road** had been circulated to council members. WO had invited the writer (Dr Higgins) to meet him, but this had not been arranged yet. Eric Strachan (present) said he had written a similar letter, not copied to CC. Dr Higgins was also present, and explained his initial objection was to house in ground of Tamarac, due to proximity to his mother's house (Mornish). Second issue was drainage changes allegedly made to prepare plot for neighbouring house. Dr Higgins believed altered drainage was to the detriment of trees, and had contributed to 12 trees falling in the storm on Hogmanay. Third issue is that the Tamarac application is misleading – part of site that was green belt allegedly does not belong to applicants, and removes access to Moor from Mornish. Particular planning contravention was to do with a wall separating Mornish from the Pickards' property. Dr Higgins explained that such planning contraventions, however, minor in themselves, are seen by neighbours as cumulative indication of incremental steps toward big developments. There is also a dispute over the ownership of land on which the wall is built.

RF asked if planners had replied to WO's questions forwarding Higgins letter? No. WO recommended CC form its own view on facts and breaches. Dr Higgins said he had been told by SC they have confirmed breach exists and an enforcement visit was imminent.

Edward Pickard referred to a previous discussion that had become heated, and believed it is important to separate issues. Mr Pickard regretted that certain neighbours gather together and fire off letters, without giving him the opportunity to answer their concerns, or explain his actions and plans. Dumbrook Moor is in fact a farm & is being managed with conservation in mind, and with active support of SNH. Course for Moor is set – it will be grazed, with sheep near Mrs Higgins' house, cattle at other parts. The wall issue is with lawyers.

Members were clear that the CC should not get embroiled in neighbour disputes, but needed to know more, to separate what are mere neighbour disagreements from the planning and other issues, which are of legitimate interest. Discussion in the open meeting would not be an efficient way to clarify the issues, particularly for members not familiar with all the background. It was proposed to arrange a site visit for the whole CC. Ideally this would be done in one joint meeting with all parties, but could alternatively be in two parts; one with the Pickards and one with the Higgins. WO would contact the parties to organise a weekend visit to the area.

MV EP MP JG would attend SC's planning training day on 20 Jan 2007.

7. Roads.

a) A81 and Speed/Traffic Management

RF said he is still waiting for a reply to his letter requesting update on SC's views on the existing plan, before we prioritise.

RF is also trying to find out who will deal with the steep steps at the head of Campsie View Road.

FF said clearly a high priority is to reduce speed into village, particularly from north, which was agreed. MV asked when will electric service for speed-activated sign be in place, for northern approach to the village? MV receiving pleas from concerned residents. RF notes this and hopes to know more from Area 5 cluster meeting later in January.

MV: further to talk of puddles just west of shops opposite War Memorial, now there seems to be a real stream/spring crossing the main road from white house beside Blane Valley Inn. Some suggested this is the old St Kessog's well. MBV believes this will be dangerous if it freezes. RF will pass this on to Roads.

EP reported that one side had been cleared of puddles.

b) General

Letter from Stephen Todd about **subsidence at Doll's House** (beyond Carbeth House) – Roads are monitoring.

Old Mugdock Road edges showed severe scouring – council appear to be doing work now, but there was a gap over holiday. RF has written to raise this.

FF asked, how does one discover if potholes have been reported? There are many more than 2" deep e.g. at top of Kirkhouse Road. MP says can report faults online at www.stirling.gov.uk. WO unaware of this facility but in habit of emailing info@stirling.gov.uk. WO recalls suggestions about us keeping a register of reports. One option would be a Freedom of Information enquiry. Someone noted that potholes on Cult Brae had been patched quickly enough.

8. Environmental issues.

EP raised question again about **Christmas Tree** – why are we only village without Christmas Tree? We have money for permanent installation. WO will write a piece to The Blane seeking suggestions for location and contractors to install a permanent base and electric.

EP had enquired about the **stalled roadworks on Kirkhouse Rd and Southburn Road**. Apparently electricity company never told the contractor they'd finished with holes. These will be removed

EP had taken a walk around the park. **Gabions** were being worked on with big rocks and willow – now finished. Still more work required on other side, but this should stabilise road.

Dog waste bin at Park Place had now been re-sited, as requested.

New paths seem to have survived rain. Needs new ash. WO understands some money was retained for such remedial work.

It was asked who owned the tree which had fallen at the side of the park. Not known.

The metal fence up the **Ash Track** had not yet been removed for the promised six month trial. (This is to provide alternative route for horses.)

The 'creepy path' (**Wester Leddriegreen Rd to Kirkhouse Road**) was badly flooded in recent storms, but we had heard nothing new from Pam Campbell about SC accepting responsibility for maintenance.

Duct at Kirkhouse Rd & Southburn Rd needing attention, where grille discussed are previous meetings. This was blocked and needs clearing. Neighbours disagree with proposal to remove grille, but are getting tired of clearing it out.

Trees at Kirkburn Drive. JG reported discussion with Billy Connelly of SC, who said current guidelines prevent him planting trees within 3m of private property boundaries. JG had responded with notes of very recent planting of small cherry trees in Kirkland Avenue, for example. Reply awaited.

A member of the public asked about the **removal of trees up Old Mugdock Road (Edenkiln)**. It was recalled we had been told this was not council activity, and was assumed to be the land owner.

Pavements opposite Netherblane were covered with leaves and a fallen cable. EP had spoken with village officer, will pass on to PC as well. EP to ask PC whether we should liaise directly with Village Officer on such matters, or communicate through Stirling.

Blockage under football field. AS said he had not seen any development. Edward Pickard believed the nature of the works required was very clear, but not clear was who's going to pay for it. Hopefully there would be contributions from SC's Sports budget, and some other budget. The problem was urgent, and now challenging the new riding ring. AS would to press his contacts to progress the matter.

9. Correspondence

DA said there was very little not dealt with elsewhere.

Schedule for by-elections was advertised: nominations are to be in by 9 February. We may therefore have new members for March meeting. In this connection, FF had earlier asked if we could have an induction meeting for the benefit of the new members. After discussion it was agreed we should not delay until further members might be on board, and WO would organise a private meeting of the CC members as soon as possible.

Planning training: see above.

Licensing: Just regular renewals for Bowling Club & Blane Valley Inn.

10. Finance.

All bills received have been paid. Total funds are almost £5k.

11. Community Planning, the next Cluster Meeting

Members recalled there was a meeting in late January (29th). WO to check with Pam Campbell re dates and organise attendance.

12. AOCB.

MV said she was unclear if we should be doing anything in response to the major **landslip** seen after heavy rain (above Cantyweehery). MV to contact Stirling, WO to contact with SEPA.

Induction meeting for new members (FF, MP) to get familiar with CC business & operation
WO to organise (see above).

13. Confirmation of Date of next meeting.

DA had prepared a schedule showing proposed dates. This was discussed and adjusted, yielding the following tentative schedule:

5 February, 5 March, 2 April (Village Club), 14 May, 11 June, 6 August (Village Club), 3 September, 1 October, 5 November, 3 December 2007

These draft minutes were approved at the 5 February 2007 meeting.
