



STRATHBLANE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF STRATHBLANE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

11 June 2007 in the school

Annual General Meeting

1. Members Present :- David Anderson (DA), Finlay Fountain (FF), Robert Flashman (RF), Philip Graves (PG), Fiona Murray (FM), Willie Oswald (WO), Marjorie Peddie (MP), Elspeth Posnett (EP), Margaret Vass (MV).

In attendance: - PC Barr, Pam Campbell (Stirling Council) (2nd half), 12 public.

Apologies: - Alastair Smith, John Gray, Cllr Berrill.

2. Welcome and remarks by chairman - Willie Oswald welcomed all present and announced that David Payne of Forth Environment Link was unable to attend the ordinary meeting to give a presentation on community composting but would be replaced by Chris Ward.

3. Minutes of last AGM - Minutes of the 5 June 2006 AGM had been circulated prior to the meeting and were accepted. Proposed, PG. Seconded, EP.

4. Reports of Office Bearers

a) Chairman Willie Oswald - Although there had been elections in November 2006, WO reported on the activities of the Community Council (CC) from the previous June for the sake of continuity. He commented on the CC's specific activities in the areas of traffic and speed management; planning; the environment; and area community planning; and he acknowledged the input from the community councillors with particular responsibility in these areas. He referred to the CC's links with other community groups, namely Greenheart, The Blane newsletter, the community website and the community development trust which is currently being set up. Finally he thanked Councillor Alistair Berrill, and PC Barr for their interest and support and thanked the members of the public who came along to the CC meetings. (A copy of the full report will be placed in the library.) (ACTION WO)

b) Secretary David Anderson - DA noted that as the secretarial responsibilities were being shared by other members, the secretary's role was now relatively simple. There was nothing of significance to report.

c) Treasurer Alastair Smith - A written report had been handed out to members at the May meeting and was passed to others at this meeting and duly accepted.

5. Election of office bearers - WO agreed to continue in the chair for one year only. Office bearers were all re-elected unopposed and were proposed and seconded as follows:

Chairman - Willie Oswald. (FF, DA).

Vice chairman - Philip Graves. (MV, EP)

Secretary - David Anderson. (PG, MP).

Treasurer - Alastair Smith. (MV, DA).

Planning correspondent - Margaret Vass. (EP, MP).

Minute secretary - Patsy Fischbacher (volunteer member of public). (PG, EP).

David Anderson agreed to continue as CC representative on the management committee of the Village Club, and Elspeth Posnett agreed to become a signatory for the CC bank account, others being Alastair Smith, Willie Oswald, and David Anderson. (The regular monthly meeting followed the AGM.)

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of 11th June 2007

1. Members Present :- David Anderson, Finlay Fountain, Robert Flashman, Philip Graves, John Gray, (2nd half), Fiona Murray, Willie Oswald, Marjorie Peddie, Elspeth Posnett, Margaret Vass.
In attendance: - PC Barr, Pam Campbell (Stirling Council), Chris Ward (Forth Environment Link).
12 public.
Apologies: - Alastair Smith, , Cllr Berrill.

(SC = Stirling Council. CC = Community Council)

2. Minutes of May meeting – Agreed. Proposed: Philip Graves. Seconded: David Anderson.

3. Police Matters - PC Barr updated the meeting and answered questions

a) Crime report – There had been 11 various crime files raised; 4 detected and 3 traffic incidents with positive lines of inquiry. On the evening of 19 May a shop worker at Premier Store was deliberately distracted and confused so that money could be stolen during transaction. One hour later there was a break-in to rooms at the Kirkhouse Inn, reflecting a recent trend at hotels. (There have been 3 recent thefts of car keys from hotels in the Drymen area.). There was a theft from a house in Milndavie Rd for which there is a positive line of inquiry. There were 2 cases of drug possession: one at Queens View car park where two males from Glasgow had small amounts of cannabis; the other at the Edmonstone Hall when a large number of uninvited guests gate crashed a party - two males ran off, one was identified, and a bag of cannabis was found, (street value £186), from which forensic evidence should lead to detection. There were also 2 assaults at licensed premises; 2 minor road traffic offences; a theft of a purse from Mugdock Plantaria; and criminal activity at Oakwood Garden Centre.

b) Traffic accidents – There were 3 accidents on the A809: one serious caused by skidding on wet surface leading to collision and spillage of fuel; one slight injury; and one no injury.

c) Feedback from May meeting – One call was received at 11.49pm on 12 May regarding the disturbance at the tennis court, and police had attended the scene within 20 minutes.

d) Mugdock Country Park – Following a question about arrangements for the music festival next weekend, PC Barr confirmed that a request had been made for police assistance with traffic management should it prove necessary, and that, as a general rule, this service is provided free of charge unless it is for a profit making event.

e) Vandalism – A member of the public reported that the Strathblane sign on Campsie Road had recently been torched. PC Barr agreed to refer this to SC.

4. Presentation on Community Composting.

WO introduced Chris Ward of Forth Environmental Link, who was standing in at the last minute for his colleague David Payne. Mr Ward outlined the aims and objectives of the organisation and the advantages it could bring to communities, and then answered questions. WO thanked him for his time, and Mr Ward accepted an offer to stay for the tea break to provide opportunity for informal discussion. A detailed note of the presentation is attached as an appendix to these minutes.

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

a) Outline proposal for a house in the grounds of 62 Glasgow Rd. – The CC agreed neither to support or oppose. (ACTION MV)

b) Proposal for a house on land S.E. of Ardunnan lodge. – The CC agreed to oppose this vigorously as the reasons given were not adequate to justify building in the Green Belt; namely that the lodge was substandard, too close to the road, and inadequate to meet the family's needs. A detailed draft response by John Gray had been circulated around the members, and it was agreed that MV should respond formally along these lines. It was noted that two CC members had met with the applicant, on his request, but they had not commented on the plans.

(ACTION MV)

c) Outline proposal for a house in grounds of 41 – 53 Glasgow Rd - The CC agreed to oppose this and to express serious concerns about the safety of the access onto A81 and of potential conflict with parking for shops. (ACTION MV)

d) Planning policy – A member of the public expressed concern about the recent trend towards development in garden ground, leading to the loss of garden space and rural character, and which appeared to be contrary to planning policy regarding direct road frontage. MV explained that the CC had been advised that the policy had recently changed, but the CC agreed to express their concern to SC about the recent rise in this kind of development.

(ACTION MV)

e) Structure plan third alteration – SC had written to say that because of internal difficulties the time-scale for progressing the consultative process was in doubt and there may be time for more comments. MV suggested that the CC write in support of regional park status for the Campsies, which had also been requested by the Green Belt Committee.

(ACTION MV)

MV then referred to an article in the local paper about concerns of East Dunbartonshire Council regarding supposed plans to build 1500 houses in western rural villages such as Strathblane and Killlearn. She explained that it was still to be decided whether new development should be, a) around the city, b) at identified growth points such as Doune, Balfron or Callander, or c) spread across the whole Stirling area. She was disappointed that SC had not explained this more fully to the media.

f) Community council conference - WO noted that this was scheduled for Sat 16 June. He planned to attend and asked others to let him know if they wanted to go.

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

a) Actions outstanding –

Safer routes to school - The legal issue regarding the project at the Kirkhouse Inn is not yet resolved. The hatching around the newly installed pedestrian traffic island has been painted, but the 20mph roundels are still to be painted on the roads around the school. RF to follow up.

(ACTION RF)

Boulders on Old Mugdock Road - These have already been moved further back from the road. RF will still speak to the proprietor. (ACTION RF)

Helicopter flights - SC are checking the arrangements re the Helipad at Muirhouse Farm. They are not aware of any legal restriction on the number of helicopter movements over a given period of time, but they are looking into it.

b) Pedestrian crossing – RF continues to get regular calls about the lack of awareness on the part of drivers regarding appropriate behaviour at the zebra crossing. RF has spoken to the Police Accident Prevention Unit (APU) and SC Traffic Management, and Jim Allen (APU) has looked at the crossing. During CC discussion it was reported that there is a sign beside a zebra crossing in Wick saying 'Drivers must give way to pedestrians'. It was also noted that the local zebra crossing was chosen in preference to a pedestrian island because it could be operated by one school crossing patrol officer only, and that the newly installed pedestrian island provides an alternative crossing point for the public and for children outside of school crossing times. The CC considered that the painting at the zebra crossing needed to be refreshed and that this would make the installation more prominent to drivers. (ACTION RF)

c) Speed activated sign – MV reported that the sign at the Blanefield end of the village was still not installed. It was thought that the power had been supplied but that SC were waiting for the unit to be delivered.

d) Access problems – RF agreed to make inquiries with SC about the problems caused by drivers parking cars in Dumbrock Road across the entrance leading to the scout hall and private garages.

(ACTION RF)

e) Bus stop – RF reported that a hard standing had been provided at the relocated bus stop opposite the Kirkhouse Inn car park.

f) Parking problems at Mugdock Country Park – Philip Graves (PG) had sent an e-mail to SC Traffic Management and had been promised a reply by mid April but was still waiting. Pam Campbell

(SC) reported that the Council was having problems with its e-mail system which was being overloaded. PG was encouraged to chase this up. (ACTION PG)

7. Environmental Issues. – (Update from Elspeth Posnett (EP) environment correspondent.)

a) Flower tubs – EP would tidy these up now that she was back from holiday; however some had already been tidied and sub-planted by nearby residents.

b) Community service by offenders – EP will contact the criminal justice service to arrange for suitable projects in the village. The CC agreed to fund up to £100 for materials. EP to contact the CC if more is required. (ACTION EP)

c) Street cleaning – A member of the public complained about the lack of litter clearance since the appointment of a new village officer. EP replied that SC were already aware of the problem but it would be helpful if members of the public informed the Council directly of their concerns as this provided evidence that would enable the officers concerned to address the problem more satisfactorily.

d) Mugdock Country Park (MCP) - PG had reviewed the references to the work of the management committee as outlined in the countryside matters section of recent SC planning schedules. The committee was clearly trying to extend commercial activities but this was leading to traffic problems. PG noted that there was no local representation on the committee, other than from the Mugdock Trust, and it was agreed that he should make inquiries as to the possibility of allowing a CC representative to attend the management meetings as well as raising the suggestion that a representative from the Park should address a CC meeting once a year to explain plans and give opportunity for discussion. (ACTION PG)

e) Dumbrock Moor – PG suggested that the opportunity to discuss issues relating to MCP at a CC meeting (see above) could be extended to include a representative from SNH who could also address issues concerning changes on the moor which continued to provoke a lot of comment from members of the public. Edward Pickard, landowner of the moor, did not consider this to be appropriate as, in his opinion, there was nothing in common between MCP and Dumbrock moor. He was not aware of any particular controversy regarding the moor, although he would be happy to answer any questions directly. He said that he had shown four members of the Green Belt committee around his land and, to date, had received no feedback from the visit. He was sure that SNH would be happy to answer any questions addressed directly to them. He did not think that these issues should be rolled together with that of commercial activity at MCP. He referred to related problems of littering at MCP and wondered who was responsible for dealing with this. PG understood that park officers generally dealt with this but, as a licence was needed for any commercial activity, both Councils, SC and EDC, would be aware of these issues. WO then referred to a complaint about activities on the moor, sent by e-mail from a member of the public to a member of the CC, and subsequently circulated to the other members. He suggested that it should be forwarded to Mr Pickard. EP thought that this should not be done without the permission of the complainant. Pam Campbell (SC) strongly advised against forwarding the e-mail and considered that it might be contrary to data protection. She also said that members of the public should be able to bring their concerns to the CC and that it was the CC's job to address these. A member of the public felt that questions and concerns were too readily interpreted as complaints. She considered that people generally did not want to get into personal conflict and so chose to pass their concerns to the CC to take up on their behalf.

8. Correspondence.

a) CC conference on Sat, 16 June. – WO and JG agreed to attend. (ACTION WO & JG)

b) Letter from local resident – MV had received a letter from a neighbour about a roads issue and passed this to RF, roads correspondent, to address. (ACTION RF)

9. Dates of next meetings. - 6th August in the Village Club. 3rd September in the school.

Community Composting Presentation by Chris Ward of Forth Environmental Link.

Background

Forth Environmental Link (FEL) is an independent charity supported and funded by Stirling Council, Scottish Natural Heritage and others. The main aim is to promote sustainability in Forth Valley.

FEL works with schools to support the Eco school programme, and also offers grants to develop school grounds as areas for learning as well as play.

FEL works to encourage waste minimisation by promoting the use of real nappies and by encouraging communities to run their own garden composting scheme. They worked with the communities of Kippen and Killin to establish community composting until Stirling Council took over the supporting role. However the subsequent lack of community input and a change in the focus of Stirling Council's waste management policy meant the sites closed.

Benefits of community composting

FEL has funding to run for another year and after that there will be support available from the Scottish Executive. The main driving force is the need to reduce the amount of waste going into landfill sites and so to also reduce the amount of methane gas produced. Community composting avoids transport costs for removing waste and purchasing compost.

Community composting provides social benefits, promotes bio-diversity and can become a centre for community activities. FEL can provide practical support, and work with schools to get pupils involved. David Payne is trained to deal with Councils and planning issues, and small amounts of funds are available.

Questions and answers.

Q. – What is involved? How does it work?

A. – You need to get enough material in place to make it efficient. The temperature in the compost rises and kills off the pathogens and weeds and you get a superior quality of compost than you would from your own garden compost.

Q. – How does the system work in relation to the Councils compost scheme?

A. – It works alongside the Council scheme, although in the long term it could replace the Council's service.

Q. – What are the advantages for someone with a big garden and good composting facilities?

A. – It's different from home composting as it only uses garden waste. However there is the provision of a large shredder that can also be used to break down woodier materials.

Q. – How do people get involved if they don't drive?

A. – You look for a social benefit by arranging volunteers from the community to collect material from homes. FEL could assist with this.

Q. – Who man's the shredder?

A. – There are reception bays for shredding and someone would come in to do the job.

Q. – Is there a restriction on the location of the site in relation to a water course?

A. – It depends on the amount and type of material being composted, but the distance is not significant.

Q. – Is a 1 metre cube sufficient for a community group?

A. – It's flexible and depends on the desire of the community. 1 metre size can be turned over by hand but any bigger than this requires mechanical help.

Q. – What is the area required?

A. – Depends on what your needs are. Kippen had ½ acre.

Q. – What happens to the product?

A. – It is made available to the community. Arrangements depend on the community wishes but residents usually drop off their waste material and pick up a bag of compost at the same time. It is not a commercial venture.

Q. – If FEL only has funding for one more year what support would there be after that?

A. – The Council should provide support and there should also be funds available from the Scottish Executive.

Q. – Does the site need to be fenced?

A. – No. There was a gate at Kippen with a padlock, and keys available from a local shop. There would need to be control over vehicular access.