



STRATHBLANE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF STRATHBLANE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING 7th January 2008 in the School

1 Members Present: - David Anderson, Fiona Murray, Willie Oswald, Margaret Vass, Marjorie Peddie, Elspeth Posnett, Alastair Smith, Robert Flashman, Finlay Fountain, John Gray. **Apologies:** Philip Graves
In attendance: - PC Barr, Srgt Swann, Cllr Berrill, Cllr Lambie, Pam Campbell (SC), 8 public.

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

2. **Welcome:** Willie Oswald (WO) welcomed all present.
3. **Minutes of last meeting:** Approved. Proposed: John Gray. Seconded: Elspeth Posnett.
4. **Matters arising:** WO said that he had two outstanding actions: to write a report of the recent public meeting regarding a wind farm at Ballindalloch Muir, and to contact the key holders for the locking pole at the road track entrance to the football field.
5. **Police matters:** PC Barr updated the meeting and he and Sergeant Swann answered questions.
 - a) **Crime report:** This had been a relatively quiet month.
 - There were nine crime files raised, seven of which had been detected including a broken window to a house in Dumbrock Road, an assault, and two unrelated thefts. One theft was of valuable rechargeable batteries from a remote weather station on the Stockiemuir Road, putting the apparatus out of commission and affecting traffic warnings.
 - There were five road traffic offences, and three traffic accidents with no personal injuries.
 - Unusually for this time of year there had been no house break-ins. This was most likely due to the recent high profile policing.
 - In the run up to Christmas officers had removed a large amount of alcohol from a group of youths, prior to a party in Killearn, thus deterring the usual social disorder.
 - A successful anti drink and drugs campaign was carried out during the festive season. Officers visited licensed premises to ensure compliance with the regulations and deter disorder. There were no offences in this area.
 - A winter road safety operation is being planned for next month to highlight the need to keep vehicles in good order. Officers will be actively stopping vehicles with faults, such as bad lighting, and for mobile phone offences.
 - b) **Dead deer - Q -** A dead deer had been lying at the side of the road by Dunglass View for about a week and the police had been informed. What is the procedure in such circumstances? **A -** When informed the police contact SC Environment Services who arrange for the removal of the carcass. PC Barr will follow this up.

c) **Killearn party** - Q - Had the police been informed in advance about the Christmas party in Killearn and if so how? A – Yes. Officers have good links with the CC and others in the community. This was the first time that there were no call outs for a party like this. All the kids had a good night.

d) **Underage drinking** - Q- How were the under age youths getting hold of alcohol, were they getting older friends to get it for them? A – This is often the case which makes it difficult to catch the offenders especially when they are from outside the area. Officers are working with licensees to monitor this.

6. Planning

a) **Edenmill Farm Development** - Mick Stewart (MS), SC Head of Planning, had accepted an invitation from the CC to the discuss the overall situation.

Update from MS

- Planners have asked the business agent for additional information regarding the overall plan and have held discussions with Mr Gibson's planning consultant. The applications for houses will be held in abeyance for the time being until the overall plan has been clarified. MS thought that the application for a play area should also be held in abeyance. He will come back to the CC once the overall plan has been received.
- A significant problem is that of the poor visibility at the access onto the Drymen Road due to vertical alignment which is not resolvable.
- One area of particular concern is the land lease which appears to run out in May 2009. This will be clarified first.
- Enforcement action regarding the caravan had been authorised but not pursued. MS understood that the caravan was required for security when Christmas trees were on sale, but members of the public said that it was occupied all year round even though it had twice been refused planning permission.

Questions, answers and general comment.

- MS was asked about the landscaping business still operating from the site without planning permission. He said that this was not a straightforward issue as planning permission is not required for growing trees. Storage of plant etc should be clarified in the overall plan..
- It was noted that the agricultural shed, supposedly required for storage for the farming business, was, in practise, being used to store equipment and materials for the landscape contractor business.
- It was also noted that Mr Gibson had attended a CC meeting in 2006 in order to explain his overall plan but had failed to disclose that he was about to submit another planning application.
- Reference was made to a successful appeal for permission for a house, under similar circumstances, at Auchineden Estate. MS explained that the application had been changed, at the time of appeal, from a new house to a replacement one and that justification is based on the use of the land and how many workers are needed. There are plans to extend the activities currently taking place on the estate.
- MS also noted that local housing is not always affordable but conditions can be placed on new houses to restrict occupancy to an agricultural holding in the area.

- Although improvements will be required to improve the access at Garvel bridge, MS did not think that it was realistic to upgrade the road from Auchineden to Edenmill due to cost.
- MS was asked about engineering and ground clearing works that had taken place at the Edenmill site prior to any planning permission being granted. He said that the response to these would depend on whether or not they were required for estate purposes.
- A member of the public raised a number of other points questioning both the viability of the businesses and justification for any houses.

b) Valhalla - MS agreed to address the issues of the Planning Panel's recent decision to grant outline permission for a house with a condition tying the house to business land and limiting the size of the house.

- Margaret Vass (MV) (CC planning correspondent) expressed disappointment at the way this stage of the planning process had been conducted: the CC had not been given new information in time for her to send in comments for Panel members to see before the meeting and she felt that the CC's good relationship with the planning officer and with MS had been compromised.
- Willie Oswald (WO), who had attended the Panel meeting, was angry that the CC's concerns had not been presented by the planning officer at the Panel meeting as promised and that the views of the three Councillors for this area had been disregarded, noting that Cllr Lambie had made an excellent strong statement at the Panel meeting - WO felt that this made a mockery of the consultation process. He also questioned the competence of the business case, pointing out that there was no reference to building costs and staff wages, and that the house plot had been separated from the farm land.
- Cllr Lambie said that the business case was not robust and that Valhalla was not the best site for a stud farm. He felt that the Panel had made up their minds before the meeting. He thought that the decision should have been deferred. He noted that there was no condition to include a contribution to improvements to Old Mugdock Rd because the site was beyond the 30mph limit. He suggested that the Section 75 condition could link the house to the stud farm business only, and the house then be demolished if the business folded.
- MS apologised for the standard of the planner's verbal report to the Panel and admitted that it was below standard, particularly in that it had failed to report the CC's views. He also apologised that the additional information had not been forwarded to the CC when it was first received by SC.
- Alastair Smith considered that, in the interests of democracy, if Planning Panel members were going to vote against the views of local communities they should be required to justify their decision.
- Cllr Berrill said that he had witnessed occasions when decisions were taken without evidence of sufficient scrutiny and attention to the arguments. He thought this to be a travesty of democracy and felt that all members should be required to give reasons for their decision before voting.
- Cllr Lambie said that for a proposal of this nature there should be a sound business plan. MS replied that there are instances where estates are run at a loss or are part funded by other means. However WO pointed out that this particular location was in a very sensitive area of Green Belt.
- MV asked that Valhalla be linked to the Section 75 relating to improvements on Old Mugdock Rd (OMRd). MS said that the OMRd policy will be considered later in the

month and the CC will have the opportunity to comment before it goes to committee. He will arrange for a copy to be sent to MV.

- Questioned about the caravan in the field north of Valhalla, MV said that it was allegedly only being used for storage in preparation for repairing the shed, but CC members were sure that it was being lived in. WO noted that a car had been seen parked in the lay-by and lights on in the caravan.

c) Other questions for MS

- Q - What are the rules regarding the formation of a new entrance onto a road? A - Consent is required for a classified road but not an unclassified one.
- Q - Where can information be found about SC's policy on wind farms? A – There are 3-4 pages in the most recent alteration of the Structure Plan.
 - i) Planners are currently waiting for a Consultant's report on the proposal for Fintry Glen. Recommendations will be put to the Council in March.
 - ii) In response to the concerns of SNH, planners had recommended refusal for a wind farm in Carron Valley, but the Planning Panel voted 5 to 2 to approve.
- Q – Can anything be done regarding enforcement against the caravan at Edenmill? A – The notice was not served because an application for houses came in and if there is a case for a house a caravan might be allowed on a temporary basis.

d) Scottish Executive planning seminars

Notice of two identical meetings had been circulated prior to the CC meeting. It was agreed that MV and WO would attend one meeting and Eric Strachan (Green Belt committee) the other.

7. Roads - Update from Robert Flashman (RF) Roads correspondent

a) Warning light - Replacement of the 30mph flashing light is imminent.

b) Damaged verge - The grass verge just beyond the 30mph limit on Campsie Road is badly churned up following utilities work. RF will ask SC about reinstatement and whether or not it could be upgraded to a proper pavement. The area was also badly littered although it had been cleared up recently by members of the public. Elspeth Posnett (EP) will follow this up.
(ACTION RF & EP)

8. Environmental issues - Update from Elspeth Posnett (EP) environment correspondent

a) Xmas tree – EP thanked Alastair Smith (AS), for instigating the installation of a tree and lights at the Village Club, and Fiona Murray for purchasing the lights. AS thanked all who had helped, particularly Gordon Posnett and Donald Peddie.

It was noted that visibility from Leddriegreen Rd onto the A81 was hampered by a garden hedge. This will be followed up informally.

b) Helicopters –

i) MV wished to update the CC on the issues raised at the November meeting about the helicopter landing at an address in Campsie Dene Rd and the alleged link to the death of a cow. It has not been possible to link the dates of flights and the death of the cow in order to claim from insurance, however to ensure that stock grazing in adjacent fields is not adversely affected by the helicopter a close and amicable working relationship has been established between all parties.

ii) It was agreed to ask Lothian helicopters, operating from Muirhouse quarry, to vary take-offs so as to alleviate the noise nuisance for residents of Moor Rd. Interested parties were encouraged to keep a log of flights. (ACTION JG)

c) **Deer cull** – Edward Pickard informed the meeting that Mugdock Country Park, in partnership with SNH and the Deer Commission, was to authorise a deer cull, mostly at night, and extending onto the moor, in order to encourage regeneration of woodland in the SSSI.

9. Correspondence – Update from David Anderson, secretary.

Notices of the Planning Panel meeting, the Council festive season waste collection service, and update of the licensing board, were the only items received. It was noted that not all members of the public had received leaflets about the waste collection arrangements.

10. Finance – Update from Alastair Smith, treasurer.

a) **Xmas tree** - £300 had been spent on the overall project: £60 was for the tree and the rest was for materials that can be used again.

b) **Other funds** – There is £5000 in savings. Some money will be needed for new flower tubs in the spring. There is a pressing need for a new CC notice board. John Gray agreed to research this. (ACTION JG)

11. Area Community Planning – The next meeting is on Monday 25th February.

12. A.O.B.

a) **Wind farm** – Findlay Fountain noted that Killlearn CC was holding a public meeting about the proposed wind farm near Balfron and suggested that Strathblane CC do the same in order to inform and engage public opinion, as this development would affect children from our community. It was agreed to invite a speaker from EVAG and also someone to represent the opposing argument. (ACTION WO)

b) **Future CC meetings** – May meeting to be changed from 5th to 12th and June meeting to change from 9th to 16th. DA to confirm.

13. Date of next meetings: - 4th February and 7th March at 7.30pm in the school.