



**Minutes of special meeting
Monday 31st July 2017
In the Village Club.
Draft for Approval**

Members Present - Margaret Vass, Alan Hutton, John Gray, Avril Keen, Julie Hutchison, Willie Oswald, Evelyn MacDougall, Sue Rand, Marian Lever, Richard Arnold

In attendance: Cllrs. Graham Lambie and Rob Davies + 40 members of the public.

*(SC = Stirling Council. CC = Community Council. CDT= Community Development Trust * Denotes an action)*

1. Welcome from the Chair and any apologies

Apologies – Grace Edmonds

MV opened the meeting and welcomed those present. She went on to read a prepared opening statement before start of proceedings:

"We are so grateful to the huge numbers of residents that have taken time to help us establish the views of our community.

Before proceeding this evening I need to be very sure that my community wishes me to continue to lead what is now clearly the strongest possible objection to the planning application we are discussing tonight.

The following is a comment from the survey:

"I'm concerned about the conflict of interest that Margaret Vass has between her roles with the community council and the housing association. The Community showed that it is vehemently against this development so the community council leadership should oppose it and not look for more ways to get more housing association homes built. This survey should be about this application, not housing needs."

I need to be very clear about the role of the community council which is to ascertain the views of the WHOLE community. We must demonstrate that we are impartial in seeking views even although we have previously objected at the pre application stage and even more so if there is likely to be an appeal.

We also have a leadership role to persuade the community that some change is required to ensure that the community plays a small part in the wider Stirling area. We have done this as part of each development plan consultation with 2 small sites for housing being agreed; Braidgate being the first.

Past experience of previous objections at planning permission in principle stage means that we know that we MUST be prepared for the scenario that we are unsuccessful. This is to ensure that strong conditions are put in place at approval stage or the community will lose control. To be as professional as possible we need an evidence base for our conditions.

I do not have a conflict of interest as my role in this community is to lead what our community wishes and follow our code of conduct.

However I fully understand that some people may perceive that there is conflict. For that reason I am more than happy to leave the community council if that is the community's wish. I wouldn't want to do anything to prejudice the wishes of this wonderful community or the opposition to this planning application.”

There was no dissent from the floor and unanimous support for MV from fellow Community Councillors

2. Declaration of interests – none apart from MV's connection with Rural Stirling Housing Association.

3. 17/00434/PPP Proposed residential development and cemetery with associated engineering works and landscaping Land 160 metres south of Broadgate House, Campsie Road, Strathblane.

John Gray aided by Avril Keen introduced the process findings of the consultation using a power point report which is produced in full at the end of this minute in Appendix I.

The presentation to those present at the meeting dealt with the application under the following headings.

Outline of what the planning process is.

Details of the community consultation to date

The results of the Survey Monkey survey

A proposed outline response to the planning application based on these results:

Why the application should be refused.

In the event that SC or the Scottish Government decree that the development should be allowed we must ask for conditions to be attached. These must be presented now as we are unable to do so further into the process.

Where a development proposes more than 10 houses, this has to be treated as a major application and JG gave an overview of the requirements of this. Answering questions from the floor as he progressed, he expected no decisions on the matter until, possibly, October this year.

A comment was made to the requirement of the landowner to obtain a return on his investment – farming could provide this as would selling it for a cemetery. The landowner has indicated unwillingness to sell for this, so a compulsory purchase order would be necessary, although this could take a long time.

Comments about the survey results were debated at length and some points are summarized as follows:

Increase in **car traffic** in all directions from the village deemed undesirable. East Dunbarton were also unhappy about the development for the same reasons. They are already facing a massive increase in car journeys as a result of around 1000 housing units being built in the Bearsden/Milngavie area.

Unrealistically low (by a large factor) car movement figures had been presented in their submission by Gladman.

The proposed site is outwith the 400 meter **walking radius** to a bus stop deemed desirable by Stirling Council.

There were concerns about the **size** of the development and the fact that if the application were successful the number of houses could in fact increase. As it is understood the landowner owns many more fields in the area, success with this application could open the floodgates to more. The application would adversely affect the village character and represent a 10/20% increase in the number of households. "This is a village not a suburb of Glasgow".

Sewerage was discussed at length, it being thought that capacity at the sewage works is limited. A response obtained by WO from Scottish Water suggested that maximum capacity availability at this time is 48 units – well below the number on this site. A further possible development at the Devil's Elbow could consume some of this capacity.

Comment and discussion later indicated the view that if development were allowed, the developer should be obliged to contribute commensurately to the sewage works enlargement.

Community gain in respect of school enlargement and a suggestion that the affordable housing element be increased to 50% (as per the previous development at Broadgate). We are in a pressured housing area, where the mix of housing is unsustainable, in part due to historic council house sales.

The problem with this is that to afford an infrastructure contribution, large houses need to be built. Low visual impact housing such as bungalows are less profitable to developers.

One resident made the comment that if it was not for John Lawrence developing the village in the 1960's many of us would not be here today, but agreed that if this development went ahead more community gain should be sought.

A further issue raised was the **flood plain** areas at the lower end of the site where photos of past serious flooding are available.

There were concerns about the development from Sepa and Historic Environments Scotland which would have to be addressed by the developer.

A similar planning application in the East Dunbarton Council area at Tower Farm in Torrance is ongoing, where residents are advocating that the council should adhere to their LDP. We as a community should follow their lead.

Another site in Milton of Campsie was mentioned that had lost its battle against developers. This would be looked into to see if any lessons for us.

Following the presentation and question and answer discussion of the many issues raised by the proposed development, the main outcome of the business of

the meeting was to agreement on how to present the CC findings to support objection process to Stirling Council by 7th August .

90% of those who responded were against the development and a fair number of letters had been sent direct to SC planning department. WO stressed the need for more such letters to add weight to the case.

MV asked the meeting for their approval to the CC proposals regarding objection to the application.

It was also particularly important to consider the **fallback position** as pointed out earlier in the meeting and to put forward reasonable conditions which the reporter might attach to a planning application, if in the end our objections were overruled. The planning group would be entrusted with following due process to prepare this response. An important part of this would be that while this proposal is unacceptable for reasons of size, location with despoilment of the village character and inadequate infrastructure, there was a palpable need for different types of housing in different locations within the village. Local housing needs must be considered with both SC and the CC having input in this. (Smaller affordable-to-buy/ to rent housing, shared equity housing, smaller housing units for downsizing, old peoples' bungalows etc)

The size of the application required that it be automatically referred to the planning panel.

MV thanked everyone for their attendance at the meeting and the meeting showed its appreciation of the work on their behalf carried out by the CC, especially by JG and AK.

4. Date of next meeting **Monday 4th September in the Village Club at 7.30pm.**

Contact us at contact@strathblanecc.org.uk.

Also on our website www.strathblanecc.org.uk . Telephone numbers for Community Councillors are on the notice boards and in the Blane Valley Bulletin.