

BLANE VALLEY BULLETIN

The Strathblane Community Council News Sheet Sept/Oct 2020 No 80

STRATHBLANE'S NEW COMMUNITY HUB LIBRARY!



This is the architect's design that will shortly be presented to the community of Strathblane, Blanefield and Mugdock, for an exciting new community hub library to replace our much-loved but aging facility. All being well, work will start next year to create this impressive building on the present site.

To be named the Thomas Graham Community Library Hub, the new building will be about 25% larger than the present facility. It will be owned by Strathblane Community Development Trust, on behalf of the community that it represents.

It has been designed by Croftamie-based architects Thomas Robinson. Their striking creation was felt to be the most attractive and practical of a range of designs considered by SCDT and Angus Graham, our founding donor. Work is now under way to secure further funding.

Amongst the building's advanced design features are:

- A full-length glass wall facing up to the Campsies, with a reading table and seats, enabling library users to sit at this window taking full advantage of this special location
- A children's library housed in its own zone, with soft seating for flopping down with a good book
- Ultra-fast broadband internet with WiFi
- A coffee area with casual seating
- A sophisticated energy management system with roof-mounted solar panels and a heat-pump, making the library a carbon-neutral facility
- Mobile furniture that can be stacked aside, opening up the library for other uses
- Two community rooms that can be booked out for personal or group use

Because modern libraries are about much more than books: they are learning spaces, research facilities, computing centres and above all a friendly space for folk to gather. Our present library and its wonderful staff had already built up a formidable range of activities, ranging

from Bookbugs and Storytime sessions for children to 'natter and knit' sessions; and from CAB consultations to computing code clubs.

Now the vision for this remarkable new facility – the first community-owned library to be developed in Stirlingshire – is that its welcoming, spacious environment will enable the creation of new activities, to be delivered by the community, for the community.

The library itself will be run by Stirling Council, as now, through agreement with SCDT, with the same staff and much the same opening hours as at present. But out with those times the community will be able to organise its own events and programmes, ensuring that maximum use can be made of this splendid building.

From the recent community consultation exercise you've told us that you'd like to see the provision of quiet areas for study, work and computing in the new library. Its design is intended to deliver this, through a combination of the private reading and working spaces throughout the library space and the separate community rooms.

Other activities that the community can now organise include remote learning from potential partnerships with universities including the online University of the Third Age and colleges. Research groups can study family history and genealogy. And, using the high-speed internet, coding classes can teach us all how to be smarter in getting the best out of those laptops.

Over the coming months SCDT will be working with Stirling Council to acquire the land around the present library, finalise a building management agreement, agree the internal layout and fitout, and seek planning approval. Meanwhile the architects and specialists such as civil engineers will be preparing detailed structural and technical drawings for the construction process. There's still an awful lot to do!

Strathblane Community Council September Update

From Chair Julie Hutchison

Although the BVB has not been published since March, the Community Councillors and the elected members have continued to meet by Zoom. Residents can still contact us via the website www.strathblanecc.org.uk or by email contact@strathblanecc.org.uk. The first two items discussed were the New Library project and the Flood Forum. There are reports on both elsewhere in the bulletin.

Broadband

Our MP and MSP are supportive of our issues regarding Broadband but the rules are complex. Shaun Marley, the Broadband advisor at SC, will send us details of a project called R100. He will join our next meeting in October.

Elected Member's report

Graeme Lambie has put the issues of the fence around the quarry on the agenda for the next MCP management meeting in September. Flooding at the park seems to be partly caused by draining of farmland and Graeme Lambie thinks this issue needs to be a co-ordinated effort by Stirling Council and East Dunbarton Council.

He will send us a sheet he has created regarding the new bin collections. The need to save money and low recycling rates are the reasons for the new system, although he thinks the low level of recycling is mainly confined to urban areas. The Q and A section on the SC website gives good information about the new system. John Gray asked if there was any information about when the special uplift service is likely to resume. Graeme Lambie will find out about this.

There is a case of COVID-19 in BHS. The school is still open but some pupils have been asked to isolate. Graeme Lambie will visit Station Road to look at the work done on traffic calming. Margaret Vass mentioned that the issue at Station Road is linked to the new link path. Alan Hutton is trying to find a solution with Sustrans.

The car parking plans for Finnich Glen will go to a full council meeting in October.

Graeme Lambie also reported that the Balfron bank would close in March.

Planning and Licensing

CC members have seen the outline plans for 11 houses on the site below Eaglesfield. There will be four 1 bed flats for Rural Stirling Housing association. John Gray has asked about a footpath to Old Mugdock Road from the development. Margaret Vass asked us to remind residents that anyone in need of housing should be on both SC and RSHA lists. John Gray will publicise the application on the website.

The application for a campsite at Ardoch House has been approved subject to suitable plans for waste disposal and refuse. John Gray will write to SC regarding enforcement of these conditions, given that the site has been running for several years.

The application to demolish the existing house and build two new houses at Corrieknowe, Campsie Dene Road has been approved with no conditions. Margaret Vass said that residents are concerned about safety, as it is a core path. Graeme Lambie will consult with Angela Simpson regarding core paths.

Other Business

There is still no guidance available from SC about when we can hold our AGM.

We have spoken to Angela McGibbon regarding the Participation Request for road safety on the A81. She has had 22 complaints about the new traffic calming measures. Lynne McKinley said that the current measures were the least favoured by the council officers and Julie Hutchison has asked her to forward the minutes to show what they did want. We need to pursue traffic calming measures in the village. Some possible solutions would be the responsibility of the police rather than SC, for example the possibility of a trial with average speed cameras. Graeme Lambie thought that would be a good idea. The hedge along the A81 needs to be cut back for safety as does the hedge opposite the Village Club.

The Community Council is now 4 members short and new members are desperately needed. If you feel that you can spare some time to join us we would be pleased to welcome you.

Our next meeting will be held via Zoom in October.

GET IN TOUCH

SCC Email at contact@strathblanecc.org.uk or via our website at www.strathblanecc.org.uk

Your Community Councillors

Julie Hutchison 770791 Andrew Thompson 07580 539492
Philip Graves 07826 424442 Grace Edmonds 770800 John Gray 771031
Kate Ramsden 07801 372588 Evelyn Macdougall 770757

Additional Sources — Community website: www.strathblane.online
Library; Noticeboards; Shops; Local weekly press; & the Facebook Strathblanefield Page.

STIRLING COUNCIL

Councillor's Surgeries are not taking place at present but the local councillors can still be contacted by email.

Report Faults at info@stirling.gov.uk or 01786 4040

Updates at www.stirling.gov.uk

Edenkiln Surgery Flu Vaccinations 2020

This year's Flu vaccination campaign will be different from past years.

Those people over 65 and those on the register with acute disease will be vaccinated first. This will be followed by people over 55. There will be no open days this year so ALL patients must phone to book an appointment.

Please note that the surgery will close at 12.00 on Monday 12th October. This is a Forth Valley public holiday. We can be contacted on **01360 770340**

Thank you A massive thanks to the local community for supporting our fundraiser in Blanefield last month. **Fizz, Fun, Fashion for Funds**, which had been planned for March 28th in The Village Club, was eventually held in Sue & Jim Rand's lovely garden in Kirkhouse Road. Sue, Connie Lynch and a group of volunteers organised the display of donated women's clothing and fashion accessories under the cover of gazebos and in a summer house, and slots were booked for no more than 6 people at a time. Donations were also raffled, a silent auction was held, and a total of £7827.50 was raised for The Beatson Cancer Charity and Strathcarron Hospice. We hugely appreciate all the generous donations of local businesses, and are sorry that we couldn't advertise this fully due to Covid. Jo Waterfield



The "Endrick Legacy Project" strives to eradicate Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) and to restore the riparian habitat along the banks of the River Endrick and its main tributary, the River Blane. The project so far has concentrated on INNS control, namely giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed and American mink. The next stage of this project is habitat restoration by clearing blockages in small burns and small-scale tree planting. This project is funded by Scottish Natural Heritage Biodiversity Challenge Fund.

Man-made obstacles such as culverts, old weirs and damaged fencing are examples of blockages in the system which prevent fish migration. These can be cleared or modified which can open or reclaim sections of potential spawning and nursery habitat for Atlantic salmon and trout. Other blockages include large fallen trees which can cause sediment to build-up, contribute to bank erosion, and ultimately limit fish passage. Woody debris in rivers is important but needs managed to maintain free movement of fish and sediment. In some cases, a simple chainsaw cut can make the difference between larger fish reaching or not reaching spawning habitat.

The lack of tree cover in spawning and nursery habitats is a concern which will be targeted in this project. From November tree planting will take place where canopy cover is low. Trees provide cover and shade for juvenile fish and leaf fall and nutrients to support aquatic life. It is vital to restore riparian habitats to combat the impact of climate change and make the river environment more resilient during high flooding events.

Currently Japanese knotweed control is still being implemented throughout the River Blane and along the River Endrick. Unfortunately, this highly destructive invasive plant is spreading throughout the system and has been intensified from recent flooding events. American mink trapping will also continue in hotspots as we continue to monitor mink activity. For more information about the project please follow our Facebook page, @ScottishNaturalHeritage or check out #BiodiversityChallengeFund

Strathblane Community Development Trust

Email: scdt@strathblane.online

Website: www.strathblane.online

We deliver projects with grant funding to enhance the village. Please consider joining if you aren't already a member.

Enquiries and Bookings Contacts

Edmonstone hall

David McLean on
01360770919 OR
mclean728@btinternet.com

The Village Club

Check schedule at
www.villageclub1911.orgemail
strathblanevc@gmail.com

Traffic Calming on Station Road

Following the completion of the path extension of the Gary Wright Way to the bridge at Station Road the traffic calming has become even more important. As local residents we have discussed this with the Paths Group and Councillor Lambie. We are requesting that Station Road become a 20 mile an hour zone and are looking to gauge local support for this.

It is a through road to and from the village. Traffic uses it at speeds which are inappropriate for the condition of the road. Traffic coming down Station Road needs to be slower at the bottom, to give time for them to be seen by incoming vehicles. Perhaps local feeling on this could be gauged by emailing Strathblane Community Council and Councillor Lambie, allowing this discussion to be progressed by the Community Council, the Paths Group and Elected Members.

Strathblane Library

Although we can't yet welcome you back to the building our "Select & Collect" service will continue to run through October. You can contact Strathblane Library to organise the collection of up to 5 books per library member. We are happy to say that we are now also able to offer a select and collect service of ADULT AND KIDS DVDS free of charge for the month of October. Please ring us to find out what films we have available.

Food waste bags, dog poo bags and hearing aid batteries can be collected by appointment. Contact us for further information and to book a pick up slot. strathblanelibrary@stirling.gov.uk

The hours for Select and Collect are:

Monday 10 until 1 and 2 until 5 Thursday 2 until 7 Friday 10 until 2 Saturday 10 until 12

If you are not yet a library member you can join to access the Select and Collect service and to make use of Stirling Libraries e-book and e-audio services. Details at: <https://stirling.gov/libraries-archives/>

Flood Study

Stirling Council have recently completed Stage 1 of their flood study into the Strathblane and Blanefield area. Commissioned in November 2019 following a number of serious flooding incidents, the study aims to pinpoint the areas at highest risk, while Stage 2 will see a consultation on what measures can be put in place to mitigate the effect that extreme weather events are having on the village and surrounding areas.

Stage 1 has produced a hydraulic model; however the council are aware that these systems can only provide an impression of what should be happening in the area following heavy rain. They are therefore appealing for help from the community to provide information about the flooding they have witnessed in the village, which will help to qualify or show gaps in their modelling.

From the initial review of data and model results, five areas were identified where information gathering and collaboration with local communities would be of most value:

- Kirkhouse Road / Kirkland Avenue / Craigenlay Avenue
- Edenkiln Place
- Southview Drive/ Southburn Road
- Kirkburn Road
- Station Road/ Blane Crescent

The information being requested is

- Specific location, date and time of observations
- Photographs giving location and direction
- Approximate depth and velocity of flow
- Observed flow paths (i.e. where is flood water coming from and going to?)
- Other observations (e.g. blocked culverts or debris build up in channels)

Information can be submitted directly through the Stirling Council Website dedicated to the flooding survey shown below, via email at flooding@stirling.gov.uk, or telephone their flooding line on 01787 640 4040. We also have several hard copy maps of the area that can be marked up with flooding issues and sent to the flooding team; please contact the community council if you would like a copy.

New History Book for Strathblane

In 1905 a ten-year-old boy called Alex Urquhart helped his family move into a flat in Dumbrock Road, Strathblane. Bedsteads and old furniture had been piled onto a flat cart behind an old dray horse and it seemed like a long journey from his then home in Maryhill. "The nag simply walked and in the country strayed to the grass verges. It was a long climb up the stone stairs to the landing and then up the stairs to the attics. Floor cloth was laid, beds erected and furniture put in place. Looking back on a very long life, I would say that this unpretentious home held my happiest memories."

By the 1970s Alex Urquhart was a retired GP living in Kilsyth, filling old-fashioned red school exercise books with handwritten memories of his youth to entertain his two teenage granddaughters. In late 2019 three of these notebooks, describing life in Strathblane before the First World War, came to light. They are a delight to read. Urquhart was an acute observer of not only the local countryside and wildlife but also local worthies, such as Cuthie the stationmaster and Wattie, the village bobby. Though his stories are full of wit and humour, there is also poignant nostalgia for a lost world in which young Alex and his pals guddled for trout in the Blane Burn, scored goals for Strathblane FC and climbed the Campsies in tackety boots. His two closest pals were both killed in the war, while Alex experienced the horror of the Western Front as a private in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

Local writer and historian Anne Balfour found a small army of willing helpers via the village Facebook page

to transcribe the notebooks. Then she used the Covid lockdown period to edit the notebooks into eight chapters, adding notes to explain the historical context of the people, places and events depicted. By a happy coincidence, during the same period that Urquhart describes, the Strathblane area became a popular destination for daytrippers and holidaymakers, resulting in a thriving industry in the sale of postcards of local views and landmarks. In the era before colour photography, many of these cards were beautifully hand-tinted. Strathblane Heritage Society holds a remarkable collection of them and a number have been used as illustrations in Anne's new book, *The Strathblane Notebooks*.

The project has attracted a Community Pride Grant from Stirling Council as well as contributions from Strathblane Heritage Society, Strathblane Community Development Trust and a number of private individuals. Gratis copies will go to Strathblane Library, local schools and Stirling Archives. Just 200 hardback copies are available for sale at a bargain price of £10, with surplus funds going towards the village library project.

The Strathblane Notebooks, Life in a Stirlingshire Village before the First World War by Alex Urquhart, edited by Anne Balfour, published by Blurb, £10 from Strathblane Library, The Wilsons Blanefield and Gavin's Mill Milngavie. Or contact anne@annebalfour.com

Have you considered Sponsoring an issue of the Bulletin? Businesses & Community Groups can include an advertising flyer which goes to every household (free of charge when you sponsor an issue). The Blane Valley Bulletin is published monthly (with the exceptions of July and December) by Strathblane Community Council and distributed to all households in our community council area. It is produced and distributed by a group of volunteers who are accountable to the Community Council. Contact us at contact@strathblanec.org.uk