



MINUTES
Virtual meeting Monday 12th April 2021
Draft

Members Present: - Grace Edmonds; Julie Hutchison; Kate Ramsden; Evelyn Macdougall; Philip Graves; Andy Thompson; John Gray; Eleanor Balfour; Craig Melville

Apologies: There were no apologies

In attendance: Cllr Alistair Berrill; M Vass, SCDT, Fergus McFarlane, Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust + 1 resident

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

1. Welcome from the Chair and declarations of Interest

JH welcomed everybody to the meeting, particularly Fergus McFarlane from Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust. JH, MV and AT declared an interest in discussion regarding the library and JG declared an interest regarding the Wee Kirk.

2. Minutes of March meeting and matters arising

AT asked that his recommendations regarding the Wee Kirk should be minuted. He had mentioned that a better exhaust system with possibly a new chimney and moving the kiosk closer to the road might ease the problems for the neighbours.

JG had said that the CC would support the planning application for the new library.

With these revisions the minutes were adopted, Proposed by PG and seconded by JG.

Matters arising: JG confirmed that he has filed our comments on the Aros House planning application.

JH said that the CC shed at the library has been cleaned up. She said that we need a system of recording when an item has been borrowed and returned.

3. Co-option of new member.

The necessary paperwork has come through from SC and JH proposed that Craig Melville should be formally co-opted on to the CC. This was agreed by all CC members and JH welcomed Craig to the CC. She noted that we still have two vacancies.

4. Police Report

PC Steven Graham sent the police report for March.

Anti-social behaviour

There was a report of a breach of Covid regulations in a premises. Police attended but no breach of guidelines was found.

There was a report of youths causing annoyance near Board's Farm. There was no trace of them when Police arrived.

A road rage type incident occurred near the village hall. One male driver was issued with a formal Police warning.

A deer fence was cut on the A809 near where model planes are flown. Enquiries are ongoing and anyone with any information is asked to contact the Police.

Emergency services attended the Devil's Pulpit where a male had fallen from a ledge. He sustained serious injuries.

There was a report of dirt bikes causing a disturbance around Carbeth. The area was searched but there was no trace of the bikes.

Road Traffic

A minor RTC occurred on the A81 in Blanefield. One of the vehicles failed to stop and enquiries are ongoing to trace the vehicle.

Police spent time on the A81 at the distillery in an effort to discourage inconsiderate parking. This will be continued when possible. Fixed penalty tickets were issued to vehicles parked on the double yellow lines at the Devil's Pulpit.

Theft

There was a theft of sheep reported from the field opposite the junction from Ballewan Crescent. Enquiries are ongoing and anyone with any information should contact the Police.

An episode of shoplifting was reported at the Co-op. Enquiries are ongoing.

There was a report of a suspicious vehicle in the area of Wood Place, No VRM was given. Police take suspicious persons reports seriously so residents should report any suspicious activity.

5. Loch Lomond Fisheries – Fergus McFarlane.

Loch Lomond Fisheries have been given a grant from the Nature Scot Biodiversity Challenge Fund to undertake control measures for invasive species in the Blane Valley. Their focus is on Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed and American Skunk Cabbage. They are engaged in a programme of spraying herbicide Giant Hogweed over 14 kms of burn side within the Endrick area. Stem injection is being used on Japanese Knotweed and American Skunk Cabbage. Continual management of these species is required.

The group is also carrying out tree planting to combat erosion on the banks of the upper Endrick and removing debris to allow fish to access the river system. They are also carrying out mink trapping.

Fergus asked any residents who see anything in the area that looks unusual to report to the group. JH had left the meeting so KR thanked Fergus for his interesting presentation.

JG asked about the connection between fly tipping and the spread of invasive species. Fergus said that any contaminated soil being tipped can spread contamination. AT noted that this is concerning as we believe that the decision by SC to charge for removing garden waste will increase the instances of fly tipping. It would be helpful to monitor this over time to see if problems increase after April 2021. Fergus was asked if the Blane is the source of the problems and he replied that the Blane is currently the worst affected area in Central Scotland. PG asked if Himalayan Balsam could be more of a priority in our area and Fergus said that this is something they will concentrate on this year. He needs volunteers as it is a huge job. PG asked if they are looking for people who have qualifications in treating invasive plants to join them and Fergus said this would be welcome.

EB asked if walkers and people exercising their dogs along the Blane would help to spread invasive plants. Fergus replied that in our area it will not make a difference as we mainly have Balsam.

KR thanked Fergus again and asked him to keep us informed about their activities.

6. Report from the South West Forum – Kate Ramsden

KR reported that the forum was mainly to introduce Elaine Nichol and to let people know that she wants to help people chase up roads issues. She also talks about the need for greater communication between the council and communities regarding road closures.

SC also want suggestions for topics for future meetings. PG asked if the contact point is still info@stirling. KR was not sure but will find out.

MV mentioned the Participation request which was about greater communication and which has never been completed.

7. Date for the AGM

JH had asked the members of the CC to think about the date for the AGM this year, as the last one was postponed to December due to Covid.

It was agreed that we should delay the AGM this year until September to allow time for the books to be looked at. The date for the AGM was agreed as September 6th 2021.

8. Elected Member's Report – Councillor Alastair Berrill

At the Council meeting on March 4th some of the councillors made a last effort to stop the charges for garden waste collection. This failed by one vote, so the charges will start in mid-April.

On March 11th the Council met to consider the budget for next year. In line with all the other councils in Scotland it was decided to freeze Council Tax bills this year.

AB has raised the issue of the road works on Mugdock road with council officers and they have contacted officers at EDC to ensure that the road remains open at night.

The by-election for Graham Lambie's seat will take place alongside the Parliamentary election on May 6th.

AT asked AB if something can be done to alert council officers to the likelihood of increased fly tipping when the garden waste charge comes in. AB will ensure that officers are aware that this could potentially lead to increased spreading of invasive species.

The Covid infections in Stirling and Clackmannan have been falling recently. Currently 59.1% of residents in our area have been offered their first vaccination and 9.9% have been offered the second one.

9. Planning and Licensing

The planning application for the new library was submitted a couple of months ago and the CC support this. JG noted a letter from the Parent Council at the school who are asking for fencing to screen the playground in the interest of safeguarding. This letter and the reply from the architects have been circulated to CC members.

AT said that there will be large windows overlooking the playground and that the SCDT has agreed to do what they can to minimise this. They are considering having an opaque panel along the window and planting small trees and shrubs in front of the outside reading area, which will partially shield the view. The Parent Council wants a six-foot high fence around this area and hedges in front of the building. Police guidance is not to have solid fencing adjacent to schools. The fence and hedges would disrupt the ethos of an open building and outside reading area.

MV pointed out that library staff would see if anybody was regularly watching the playground. EB said that there are better places to watch the playground than from the library. As a prospective parent she does not see what the problem is. JG said that this is the only contentious issue with the plans. CM asked if we could meet with the Parent Council to discuss their concerns. AT has corresponded with the group and they are happy to meet but this has not yet happened. MV said that they are happy to leave the decision to the planners. JG said that he is inclined to say that the CC support the open aspect of the design and rely on the planners to consider safeguarding. This was agreed.

JG, EM, JH and GE met with the management and owner of the Kirkhouse regarding the Wee Kirk. They outlined their future plans for the property, including retaining the Wee Kirk to provide food for the Public Bar. The view of the CC representatives is that parking issues and some noise are not important and are part of the function of the hotel. The real issue is the smell, which adversely affects neighbours. EM said that she tried to get the management to give a time frame for addressing the smell issue but they would not do this. Then owner was happy to provide funding for an improved ventilation system to dissipate the smell but the management seemed disinclined to do anything they do not have to.

AT is concerned that the management do not seem to care about the neighbours. They should move the cooking inside when they are able to and build a proper chimney.

JG reported that there is still no movement on the Gladman appeal. He has not seen a final decision for the Devil's Elbow site. JG asked about planning training for CC members, which was cancelled due to the pandemic. AB said he will follow this up.

10. Finance

Current Account - £2809.34

Instant Saver account - £1342.01

Next month we will pay £40 for Data protection fee. EM said that we pay a subscription to Pathways and she receives literature from them. She thought that this should go to PG.

11. Correspondence

JH heard from Philip Taylor at Cult Farm, who has submitted a Freedom of Information request to Scottish Water regarding the work beside the railway path. This has been going on for years. JH suggested asking someone from SW to attend a CC meeting to update us on what is happening. This was agreed. EM has a representative from SW on her property at present and asked him about the works in the village. He did not know but said that he would find out and reply to her query.

JH had an email from Bryan Grieve from Doune who was very impressed with the traffic calming on the A81. JH will reply to him.

JG said that Angela McGibbon's meeting with the resident beside the VC who complained about the traffic calming causing cars to queue outside his gate has resulted in the Keep Clear sign on the road.

JH tried again to get a response from Council officers regarding the hedge trimming on the A81 and the minutes of our last meeting with them. Pam Campbell said that she would chase these up but JH has still heard nothing.

10. AOCB

A resident inquired about gathering a petition to SC regarding a Village Officer. She was told that there is a process for sending a petition. It was agreed that JH will speak to Colin McKay from Land Services about the process.

A member of the Lunch Club contacted JH to say that they are unlikely to reopen after restrictions are lifted. It is possible that the Church might be interested in taking over the running of the Lunch Club and JH will contact them to let them know that it will not continue.

PG mentioned the traffic situation at the St Mocha drive-thru. The car park is often full and traffic queues on the main road. This is a very dangerous situation. AB will notify the council.

11. Date of next meeting May 10th 2021, 7.30 on Zoom.

Copy date for BVB May 14th 2021



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, in the library and in the Blane Valley Bulletin