



MINUTES
Meeting Monday 4th March 2024 in the Village Club
Draft

Members Present: - Julie Hutchison; Kate Ramsden; Grace Edmonds; Rob Davies; John Gray; Ian Boardley; Pamela Lee; Andrew Thompson; Eleanor Balfour

In attendance: Councillor Gerry McGarvie SC; Margaret Vass SCDT; + 8 residents

Apologies: Graeme Kemsley.

*(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.
There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of January meeting and matters arising.

The minutes had been circulated to all CC members and were accepted. Proposed by KR, seconded by JG.

Matters arising: JH reported that we have had no update from DR McLean about the district nurses. Dr McLean is on sick leave at present so JH will contact Dr Irvine.

3. Police Report

January 2024

Theft

A house was broken into via a first floor window using a ladder. The suspect removed the window beading and then the window and entered the building. Cash and jewellery were taken. Enquiries are ongoing.

Anti-Social Behaviour

A person has been arrested and charged with a stalking offence after contacting the victim by telephone multiple times and making unwanted sexual comments.

Vandalism has been recorded after a vehicle was damaged and tyres punctured at Mugdock Country park. Enquiries are ongoing.

Road Safety

A person has been charged with being drunk and in charge of a vehicle. The person had planned to sleep in the vehicle after consuming a quantity of alcohol but was found in the front seat with the engine running.

A road traffic collision occurred on the A809 near Eden Mill, when a vehicle drove into the back of another. Only minor injuries occurred.

There was another minor collision involving two vehicles near to Queen's View car park due to icy conditions. Only minor injuries were sustained.

February 2024

Assault

A person has been charged with punching and kicking a police officer who had been called to a disturbance within a house. A report has been submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

Other incident of note

A dog owner has been referred to the dog warden after their dog lunged at a child. GE will contact the police regarding a beagle which has bitten several residents.

4. Local Place Plan update.

GMcG suggested that we look at Drymen's plan for ideas. JH said that we are using a previous survey as a starting point.

We have had two meetings of the sub-group who are working on a questionnaire. JG has put information on the web site and we will put an article in the BVB to encourage residents to complete this.

AT spoke about the questionnaire. We have tried to update the previous one. It is quite long but simple to complete. One thing we are looking at is travel patterns and we are also trying to understand which aspects of our area are important to residents. We need to discover what people feel about affordable homes and properties for downsizing. We are asking about local facilities also. The last section gives us an insight to the demographic of those responding.

GMcG said we might think about asking about how many people the individual completing the questionnaire is answering for. Is it themselves or a whole family for example? This could be useful for analysis. AT proposes to make the survey available via a QR code. There will also be paper copies available.

RD asked how our survey compares with other communities. GMcG said that he thinks it is very good and covers all the necessary data.

We hope to have the survey finished and a QR code available for inclusion in the next BVB.

The sub-group will decide on a date for their next meeting via email.

5. Report from meeting with the Resilience Officer

JH and GE met with Cheryl Plane, the Resilience Officer from SC, and her colleague, following a lengthy power cut in the area when mobile phones stopped working and there was no internet connectivity. This meant that residents were left isolated and with no way to contact emergency services if necessary. Land line phones were still working but these are scheduled to be made digital in the next few years which means they would no longer work either. The Resilience team at SC are about to purchase a Starlink device which they can bring to villages if necessary. Up to 100 devices can be plugged into this and it also allows access to the internet. We could also purchase our own Starlink.

A resident wrote to our MP about the risks of power cuts but received an unsatisfactory response. JG said that we need to escalate this issue up to people who can deal with it. GMcG said that he would raise this with SC.

6. Roads/Paths update

A resident contacted JH about the A81 outside Netherblane where the surface has crumbled. It was repaired last week, but JH said that we need to contact SC about water running down that part of the road from Campsie Dene Road and eroding the surface.

SC is currently making a path along the Cuilt Road linking parts of the West Highland Way. This has been done with no consultation with the CC or SCDT. WE are concerned that cars will park on the pathway and walkers will have to walk in the middle of the road, making it more dangerous than it is at present. SC says it will monitor the situation and deal with it if cars do park on the path.

The SCDT paths group met with Roads last year to discuss possible routes for a safer path for walkers, but no further consultation took place before the decision was made. A resident said that SC has learned nothing from the situation at the Devil's Pulpit where parking caused a lot of problems. He believes that this path will make the route more dangerous for walkers.

GMcG will speak to SC officers about this and arrange a site visit once the resident has written to him.

7. Elected member's Report – Councillor Gerry McGarvie

The budget is the main issue for SC at the moment. They have tried to limit the impact of budget decisions on the most vulnerable residents and to ensure that cuts do not prevent residents from getting out of poverty.

Buses and libraries were what people lobbied for and these have been left alone. The most contentious cut for many residents is the withdrawing of P5 swimming lessons. GMcG said that the response to the cuts has been understanding in the main.

RD asked about the Roads budget. GMcG said that a lot of the budget was used for the Cycling event last year and he is angry about the roads in West Stirlingshire.

JH thanked GMcG for his report.

8. Planning and Licensing.

JG reported that there is a suite of applications relating to the listed building Dineiddwg House in Mugdock: Two storey extension to main house including the erection of a flue Dineiddwg House Bankend Mugdock G62 8LQ Ref. No: 24/00111/LWP | Received: Thu 15 Feb 2024 | Validated: Mon 19 Feb 2024 | Status: Awaiting decision

Erection of dwellinghouse in grounds, including new hardstanding areas and access arrangements Dineiddwg House Bankend Mugdock G62 8LQ Ref. No: 24/00063/FUL | Received: Thu 01 Feb 2024 | Validated: Thu 15 Feb 2024 | Status: Awaiting decision

Demolition of existing extension and replacement with a new glass fronted extension, also restoration measures for the whole house Dineiddwg House Bankend Mugdock G62 8LQ Ref. No: 24/00064/LBC | Received: Thu 01 Feb 2024 | Validated: Thu 15 Feb 2024 | Status: Awaiting decision

The middle one is said to be justified by the need to raise funds to enable maintenance and restoration of the listed building. Apart from fact it is in the Green Belt, it would probably be permitted as an 'infill'/'cluster'.

The main wrinkle is that permission was already granted many years ago for a house on this site ('tennis court site') to enable restoration of the main house, but then that permission was somehow transferred to a different owner and a different location (the 'former sunken garden' site). That permission involved revocation of permission for the

The former sunken garden permission has now lapsed (Proposed dwelling house and detached garage Ref. No: 19/00029/FUL). JG's recommendation is that, if the new proposal is allowed based on the 'enablement' of repairs to the listed building, the previous permission for the sunken garden site must be considered permanently lapsed, and not serve as precedent for a new application. The CC members present agreed with JG's proposal.

(2) as previously reported, the officers refused the house in the Green Belt opposite Moor Road entrance. This is good BUT the Report of Handling (attached) dismissed the idea that allowing it would have created a precedent for further beaches of the policy.

JG proposed that we write to Stirling Planning department criticising this complacent and (in our eyes) inaccurate statement. Draft wording is:

On behalf of Strathblane Community Council I am instructed to comment on certain remarks in the report of handling the case 23/00692/FUL. Specifically, you commented that the risk of creating a precedent was not a material consideration.

b) If approved, the proposal will set a precedent for more large domestic dwellings in the Green Belt and for further development in this area.

Response: Each application is assessed on its own merits in accordance with the Development Plan in place at that time. A decision on this development will not set any precedents.

Officers and authorities may *wish* to handle each case only on its individual merits, but, in our observation, that is not how the system works in the end.

When it comes to appeals by well-funded development companies, DPEA reporters, courts and ministers, it is very clear to us that the slightest lapse or lax treatment by an authority will be pounced on and used as a wedge to open the door for other, less meritorious, developments. We saw the applicant recite a list of precedents in this case '692. Clearly the applicants at least think it is precedent is a very real consideration.

Whether an applicant succeeds in using that wedge effectively depends on all sorts of factors, and frankly a lot of luck. The process does not end with the officer's determination, but only begins there. Whether the officer's refusal holds up depends on both authorities or volunteers being able and willing to resist the onslaught of appeals, QCs etc etc. with the accompanying expense of lawyers and human resources required. In a world without third party right of appeal, this burden falls entirely on cash-strapped local authorities such as Stirling and volunteers such as community councillors.

If the applicant with all these resources can persuade a judge that the authority has been inconsistent in application of the policy, as far as we are aware the policy might as well have been torn up and thrown away.

In conclusion, the community council is alarmed by the complacent approach implied by the report of handling. We are pleased that the proposal was correctly refused, but we will continue to warn against creating precedents, and will urge Stirling to keep these risks seriously in mind.

The CC members present were happy to agree this letter.

GMcG said that the new Head of Planning is Sharon Markle and suggested that JG should contact her.

9. Finance

We have £3420.28 in our account.

10. Correspondence

JH and GE had a letter from Fergus McFarlane from Loch Lomond Fisheries to tell us that he is moving on and to give JH a new contact.

Sylvia Armstrong emailed regarding a grant of £2000 she received several years ago to make the community more dementia friendly. There is £70 left in the account, and she would like some ideas on how this could be spent. The CC will think about this and contact Sylvia.

11. AOCB

A resident has contacted JH regarding a bench on Garry Wright Way. They were asked to move from the bench by a horse rider who wanted to use the bench to mount her horse. We are concerned that the bench will be damaged by people climbing on it and the horses are churning up the ground around the bench making it hard for residents to use.

We have been offered electric bikes for hire but there are issues around where these can be stored and who would administer this.

There will be an art sale in May with local artists donating half of their profits to Strathcarron Hospice. This will be publicised in the next BVB.

12. Date of next meeting

April 8th, 2024

Copy date for the BVB 15th March 2024



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