

Comrie Community Council Meeting Minutes,

Thursday 14th July 2022

In attendance: Gillian Brock (Chair), Scott Broadley (Vice-chair), John Greer (Treasurer), Andrew Scobie (Secretary)

Cllr Rhona Brock, Lindsay Brown, Cllr Stewart Donaldson, Kirsty McKinlay-Stewart, Lorna Ramsay

Members of the public in Attendance: June McCartney

Apologies: Terri Bacon, Cllr Noah Khogali, Sandra McRitchie

Minutes of the last meeting:

- Minutes proposed by Scott Broadley and seconded by Lorna Ramsay

Matters Arising:

- Gill has spoken to the Comrie Fortnight Committee to enquire if the road to the Dam will be open.
- Stewart has confirmed the AGMS protocol.
- Andrew has updated the community on the architect's work for the former RBS.
- Lindsay has followed up with the Strathearn Herald.
- Gill has spoken to Kenny Howat about the Hayride.

Police Report

- No update
- Nothing has been sent to the secretary's account either.

Relevant planning applications

- There are just a few small issues regarding minor developments.
- PKC has formally granted planning permission for the takeaway in the old RBS building.

Treasurer's Report

- John has circulated the accounts before the meeting.
- We will need to pay invoices for the new equipment purchased.
- Monies for the new flag will go to Neil Aitken.

Road matters

- Potholes are still causing a problem on the Langside.
- The Post Office pavement has now been repaired.
- Parts of the South Crieff Road need improvement. The rest of the CC verified that South Crieff Road is precarious, primarily since wide cars and lorries use it regularly.
- Kirsty is also concerned about cyclists using that road without helmets.
- Scott is still concerned about the Burrell Street corner. The road has started to subside.
- Sunday was awful with motorcyclists. Air ambulance out in very close proximity.
- Traffic police do not seem to operate on the busiest days at the weekends. Gill is going to speak to Police Scotland.
- Puffin crossing on Dalginross will take longer as it is not a priority relative to schools.
- Speed cushions will be placed on Strowan Road in due course.
- The entrance to Tay Avenue has been fixed.
- Gill still needs to have meetings with BEAR Scotland and PKC.

Secretary's relevant correspondence and updates:

- Andrew has received further correspondence regarding the prospective planting of trees at the Fire Station. The gentleman in question has been patient, and Andrew would like to give him an answer. Sandra had replied to correspondence shared with the CC, stating that whilst trees/bushes would be lovely, it is uncertain who would be looking after them.
- Lindsay added that Cultybraggan has asked for some. They are talking to the Fire Service.
- Andrew and Lindsay will liaise with the new CDT estate manager.

Twinning

- On 30th August, it will be the anniversary of the twinning. They are planning a commemorative event.
- Canada is still struggling with Covid cases and is slower in its vaccination roll out.

- Lindsay has had further correspondence with Peter McNaughton to say that we have looked at several options to house his materials and that Cultybraggan is the best option. Peter is happy with this.
- Peter collated and self-published a book of local poetry. Scott has copied. He offered to share them with the school and the library.
- Andrew suggested that if anyone in Carlton Place with relatives interred in Comrie wants to approach the Friends of Comrie Cemeteries Group, please feel free to share his details.

Legion Park

- Gill provided an update on Terri's behalf.
- Flood work is aiming to start this month.
- Group has met with a play equipment company and has shared some ideas. They are awaiting the return of costs.
- She has enough items for the kids' tombola at the Comrie Fortnight.
- Some donations have been kept aside for raffle prizes at the Hayride.
- Lorna suggested that we do an outdoor book bug group in Legion Park.

Affordable Housing:

- Lindsay and Andrew attended a meeting run by the Community Housing Trust a few weeks ago. There is a desire to do something, and the ability, still, any change, depends on the willingness of the village to get behind them.
- Three main things – local development plan up for renewal; as a CC, we need to be able to feed into this. Place plan – this can be done beforehand and is about deciding what we need as a community. Local housing needs survey; this would help any planning for new affordable housing. Once this starts moving, a funded post will be available to manage this. The CDT is a good candidate as they already have the experience.
- A house in Tay Avenue went for over £400,000 the other day, which is more than double what they used to go for, given that they were supposed to be affordable housing when constructed.
- Sheree noted that 80 houses are under construction in Crieff and are all for sale. This decision was justified because (allegedly) there was enough social housing in Crieff. Sheree believes the council have got its priorities wrong and should consider letting some of these out. Gill added that there is a desperate lack of social housing in Comrie.
- John raised the fact that 40 properties in the village are second homes. He noted that down south, the UK Government are increasing higher taxation on second homes. Kirsty added that they are also doing this in Edinburgh.

- Andrew added that those who rent from private landlords would be required to shift to social housing due to the cost of living crisis.
- Both Stewart and Rhona are on the housing committee. The ward councillors are meeting with Kinross-shire and Strathallan colleagues to discuss this issue. The housing committee are next meeting in early September.
- Stewart noted that there are 120 in Comrie on the waiting list for housing. Only nine new properties have gone up in Comrie in the last decade. The possibility that developers could build new properties at Cowden exists; however, no decision is imminent. In the past, this has caused unease amongst residents of Cowden and Polinard.
- Stewart maintained that the construction of new council and housing association properties is essential to tackle the crisis.
- Scott queried if PKC could use the seized properties at Abruchill to house Ukrainian refugees.
- Stewart will approach his colleague Steven Carr who is a councillor in Strathallan. He is knowledgeable in this area.
- Lindsay concurred that the current approach is not working as local and national government bodies are not talking to each other.
- Rhona queried if there is a reason why developers are hesitant to build here. She thinks that it is to do with the flooding. Once the Flood Prevention Scheme is complete, developers will be more interested. Lorna concurred, noting that locals had warned developers not to build on the flood plain. Still, they constructed Tay Avenue, which flooded severely in November 2012.
- Lorna queried the sources of funding for affordable houses. Lindsay replied that it comes from many sources, including government and self-funding (through the development trusts).

Cemeteries:

- Andrew inspected South Crieff Road on Sunday. Things are looking fine. He visited Trinity Gask cemetery earlier today and noted some red flags next to some headstones, which he believes are unstable. Nothing in Comrie Cemetery.
- Andrew will meet with Robert Ross from PKC Greenspace to discuss the next steps for Friends of Comrie Cemeteries. Andrew will wait until after the Comrie Fortnight.
- Some have approached Andrew to say they are unsure how to reach Tullichettle. Andrew plans to incorporate raising awareness into the campaign.
- Lindsay offered to share details of the path of the website. Scott offered some aerial photography. Andrew thanked them for their help.

Flood Prevention Scheme:

- Work has visibly started now. Gill is pleased to see them. Lorna concurred that they have been very approachable.
- Lindsay suggested that we invite a representative to a CC meeting; Gill will speak to Gavin Bissett. Stewart indicated that either Gavin Bissett or Martine Blake. Rhona concurred but stated that they would be setting up independent meetings too.

Mental Health Awareness:

- Kirsty has managed to complete her document with Sheree's help. Lindsay is going to share it on the website.
- It contains local support groups and organisations, including CAB, ward councillors and Perthshire Women's Aid.
- It will need checking regularly.
- Kirsty is seeking further clarity on Police Scotland's approach to community engagement.
- Stakeholders must recognise the part the CC plays.
- PKC runs courses on mental health first aid that CC members can participate in should they wish.
- Scott suggested engaging St. Johnstone FC to run some groups in the village. Clubs in the west of Scotland have run this with some success.
- Sheree proposed that they could use a room at the White Church once a month. John stated that this would be possible but should go by the White Church Committee first.
- The CC Admin Grant would be available for the room rental fees.
- One group could focus on women's problems, another on men's. The groups could also incorporate speakers.
- Sheree asked if the Silver Circle was still running. June replied, stating that the singing group was still going, but the general group had stopped. We could consider a group for the elderly too.
- Scott added that Shelia's Shed runs on a Wednesday.
- Lorna stressed that what the group is named is very important.
- Andrew suggested that one of his CAB colleagues comes as a speaker to one of the groups to talk about financial wellbeing.
- Groups can offer taster sessions in specific 'therapies' in these groups.
- Sheree will speak to a local CPN and some health visitors who have expressed an interest in setting up groups like this.
- Sheree asked if the group could offer courses like childhood autism. Course participation invitations could also be expanded to the broader Strathearn area. Gill agreed that it was a good idea.

- Gill congratulated Kirsty and Sheree on getting this off the ground.
- Andrew proposed that a speaker from ADHD Plus in Perth or Perth Autism Support could also provide group training.

Library

- Lorna has met with Elaine Wallace.
- The librarian has shared the details of events happening in the library in the Herald.
- Culture PKC wants to do a 'pop-in' music group in the library for people with dementia. Lorna is concerned that this format will not work for dementia patients.
- Lorna is adamant that the library remains a hub for various activities and interests.
- Sheree asked if the library had reached out to the school. Lorna's focus is on adults at the moment.
- Gill agreed that involving the school is an effective strategy to encourage library use. Lorna agreed but maintained that this was the school's role, not hers.
- We must increase footfall at the library.
- Lorna is going to write an awareness-raising article for the Herald.
- Scott reminded the team that the PKC libraries offer a talking e-book service, which is very beneficial but not well advertised.

Website

- No update on this occasion.

Hayride and Comrie Fortnight

- Gill thanked everyone for the donations to the bottle stall so far.
- Gill confirmed that the stall would be on 23rd July. Gill and June will be labelling the bottles the night before.
- This year will be the last time the street market takes place on the Boulevard.
- Andrew still has to contribute and will do so.
- Hayride – things are going to plan so far. Advertising will take place nearer the time. We still have to confirm the date, but it will be in September.

Councillors Reports

- Lindsay Brown: No update
- John Greer: No update
- Sheree Cunningham: No update

- Kirsty McKinlay-Stewart: No update
- Scott Broadley: No update
- Gillian Brock: The Laggan Park is supposed to have an AGM. She will discuss this with the group. Gill would like to thank the Pipe Band for playing on Canada Day. She also thanked June for her rendition of *Highland Cathedral*. Bill Gardiner's new bench is in place now. Gill also congratulated Rhona on being appointed a Baillie to the Lord Provost. She thanked Neil Aitken for providing a new flag for Canada Day. This CC is Kirsty's last meeting; the CC wished her luck. Gill congratulated Scott on his recent engagement to partner Keira.
- Lorna Ramsay: Lorna is concerned about the state of the new property at Cultybraggan; it is looking relatively neglected. Scott will talk to the estate manager about it.
- Andrew Scobie: On Sunday, when walking, Andrew noted that a tree was blocking the path between Mill of Fortune and Tanish's Farm on South Crieff Road. The tree has likely been down since Storm Arwen in November last year. Gill will look into this. Andrew is concerned about the state of 2 Bridgend across from the war memorial. There is a massive pile of unopened mail on the porch, the front door is beginning to come away, and weeds are growing out of the doorstep. Gill will approach the next-door neighbours to check who owns the property. Finally, Andrew highlighted the sad news that Roberta McPhee had passed away. He would like it minuted that many of his peers were taught piano by her. She was a very colourful, kind and cheerful person who will be sadly missed but fondly remembered.
- Cllr Rhona Brock: No update
- Cllr Stewart Donaldson: No update

AOBD:

- None

DONM: Thursday 11th August 2022

Action Points:

1. Gill to speak with Police Scotland about weekend speed checks in Comrie.
2. Andrew and Lindsay to discuss tree allocation with CDT
3. Stewart to approach Strathallan Councillor Steven Carr and ask about housing for Ukrainian refugees.
4. Gill to speak to Gavin Bissett and Martine Blake about flood prevention and invite them to a CC meeting.

5. Sheree to approach the White Church and ask about room bookings for groups.
6. Scott to approach Cultybraggan, Estate Manager, about the state of the new build.
7. Neil Aitken is to be reimbursed for the Canadian flag.
8. Gill to enquire about the fallen tree on the Mill of Fortune path.
9. Gill to find out who currently owns 2 Bridgend.
10. Sheree to approach local CPN and health visitors about getting groups set up.

ADOPTED