

Minutes of the Dunkeld & Birnam Community Council Meeting
Monday 12th of June 2023

1. Attendance/

Community Councillors: Lachlan MacEwan (**LM**) (Late due to traffic problem following accident on A9), Alan Wylie (**AW**), Laura Graham (**LG**), John Wigzell (**JW**)

PKC Councillors: Claire McLaren (**CM**)

National Trust for Scotland: Cara Stewart (**CS**) Stuart Maxwell (**SM**)

Atholl Estates: Mark Richardson (**MR**) Eilidh Henderson (**EH**)

Scottish Gas Network: David Rae, (**DR**) Head of Major Projects; Blair Bingham, (**BB**) Project Manager, Major Projects; Anne Neilson (**AN**) Stakeholder & Community Manager; Denis Kerby (**DK**) Community Liaison Officer, Morrison Energy Services

Members of the public (MP): 10

Minutes: Jane Bremner (**JB**)

Apologies: Grant Laing (**GL**) (**PKC**)

Absent: Iain James (**PKC**)

Due to an accident on the A9 junction with the A822 LM was not present at the start of the meeting. AW deputised as Chair of the meeting in his absence.

2. Minutes:

The minutes from November 2022 (amended March 2023) and April 2023 were passed by the 4 members of the council. Proposed by **JW** and seconded by **LG**.

An **MP** complained that although being asked to submit and submitting suggestions for amendments for the November '22 minutes at the last meeting in April, none of these had been taken into consideration. He did not agree that the minutes should be approved. He submitted a letter of objection before this meeting. **AW** stated that amendments were made to both minutes as a result of input from members of the public, but the issue referred to was not deemed appropriate for inclusion. **AW** went on to say that the CC welcomed input from members of the public, but the final decision to adopt meeting minutes rested solely with members of the CC.

Another **MP** queried as to where the amended November minutes could be found as it was unclear as to the content of the minutes being approved.

3. Declaration of interest – none declared.

4. Meeting Etiquette

An **MP** suggested that the use of 'MOP' used in the previous minutes for 'Member of Public' should be changed. She also said that she was happy for her full name to be used. A number of other people in the meeting agreed with her. **JW** said that the rules had been changed 2 years ago but he was happy to include names in future meetings. **LG** pointed out that the changes had been made by PKC due to data protection policies.

5. Treasurer's Report and Micro-Grants Update

JW said that the bank balance was ok. Funds are due to be replenished later in the summer. Events have to be reduced due to costs. Zoom, which costs £200 - £300/year which is a third of the budget is not going to be used in the future. There was a suggestion that Microsoft Teams, which is free, could be used instead.

6. CC Membership Numbers

The proposed drop of CC numbers to 8 has now been approved in writing by the PKC. One complaint has been received by the CC.

An **MP** stated that there was more than one person in the community worried about this. **AW** stated that the CC had not received any other comment on the subject and if any further comments or complaints existed, these should be submitted by email. **AW** went on to say that the decision to reduce the numbers was done in accordance with PKC rules on the subject and had been fully endorsed by the PKC CC team. He refuted any suggestion that the action was unconstitutional.

AW, JW and LG asked that anybody interested in joining the CC should make themselves known to the council. A discussion was had as to how the profile of the CC could be shared and advertised more widely. It was agreed by those present that a wider diversity of people should be encouraged to apply. This should be a positive exercise to encourage people to take up the positions. **AW** agreed that the CC should promote younger members, but the same issue was true in virtually all CC bodies throughout the country. The undeniable fact remains that retired people have more free time on their hands to commit.

An **MP** commented that a number of people would like to join the CC but not in its present format. Members of the CC reminded those present that membership of the CC was entirely voluntary and personal negative feelings of others in the community had no place within the CC. All members worked for the good of the community in line with PKC guidelines.

There was some confusion as to how to access the CC Constitution and Complaint's Policy. **JW** stated that it was on the PKC and Scottish Government websites – but conceded that the websites were difficult to navigate and these documents were not as obvious as they should be. The format of the constitution is the one adopted by the PKC (see Appendix 1 in link below).

https://www.pkc.gov.uk/media/44741/Scheme-of-Establishment-of-Community-Council2019/pdf/FINAL_PK_Scheme_2019-2023.pdf?m=638203538058300000November-December Minutes

JW and **AW** agreed to provide the relevant information regarding these forms (attached to minutes). It was also agreed that descriptions of the roles be written in more detail and these could then be used to recruit people to the CC.

7. CC Member Roles

At present the roles of each of the Council members are as follows:

LM – Chair

AW – Secretary and Deputy Chair

JW – Treasurer, Micro Grant, Griffin Panel membership and Planning.

LG – Member of Community Council

If others joined, the structure of these posts could be rethought and the projects shared out.

8. Planning

Scottish Gas Network

BB outlined the project, that now has planning permission, to divert the present high-pressure gas pipe away from the River Tay. This will involve the pipe being redirected along Perth Street, across the A9 and on to Logierait where a new regulation station is to be built.

There has been a meeting with the residents of Torlee Road about the dispute regarding ownership of the verge. 8/12 of the residents were present and seemed happy with the new proposal regarding this problem. SGN are very confident that they will get the agreement of the other 4 and that this problem will be rectified. When approved, the details will be disclosed.

This is a complicated procedure and will cause major disruption to local traffic and the A9 for a significant length of time. It is planned to commence work in late July, after the Birnam Highland Games, and is proposed to finish at the end of 2023. For safety considerations, traffic control measurements will need to be put in place, including the use of temporary traffic lights and lane closures. It is hoped that the work crossing the A9 will be done during the night to avoid major hold-ups.

The full detail of this project is to be published in the next edition of 'The Bridge'. The local school are to be visited to explain what is happening and outline the safety aspects of the project. There will also be an office set up in the CIC and a site manager will be available to answer any questions from the public.

An **MP** pointed out that 3 trees will have to be felled near the GP Surgery and asked if any new tree planting proposed could be discussed with the Arboretum Group. It was also suggested that as there is at present no pavement to the surgery, the SGN could help by providing one after the pipe is laid.

JW queried as to why the project had received Planning Permission to place the pipe in a forecasted Flood Area even though the Erigmore proposal to place more holiday accommodation in the same area had been refused. It was pointed out by **CM** that this had already been considered by the Planning Department and that the area for the pipe was in part of the field that is not under a risk of flood. Planning permission has been given and she suggested that there was no point discussing this more and that it would be advantageous to stick to the agenda. **JW** disputed this and intimated that he would write to **CM** and **SGN** to explain.

Haughend New Housing Project (Atholl Estate)

MR and **EH** explained that he and others had been to several community meetings to explain their proposal. They have taken into consideration the comments made about scale and access problems. The proposal has now been reduced from 230 to 50 units which will consist of different types of dwellings which will be in line with the needs of the community. They are very happy to discuss this with the HAG and other community groups. They are hoping to set up an open public meeting in August/September.

There is no planning permission application imminent as much more local discussion is needed and technical aspects, such as drainage and access, need to be worked out.

An **MP** noted that a recent survey of the Oak Forest in the Haughend site has been classified as 'Dying' – this is due to the deer population. It was agreed that this needs to be addressed and the forest needs to be regenerated.

9. NTS Update

CS reported that:

- i) The fountain in Dunkeld had been fixed today. There was a problem with timing of the pump.
- ii) The establishment of the Nature Garden in Stanley Hill had been a success and the community were now using this regularly.
- iii) The roots of trees have been covered with wood chip to protect them from vehicle damage and the left-over wood chips had been donated to the local allotment group.
- iv) The Men's Shed are using the NTS sheds in order to store their equipment.
- v) There will be large vehicles at the bottom carpark of the Hermitage. There are repairs to the Viaduct being carried out by National Rail contractors.
- vi) The PKC Planning Department are yet to make a decision regarding the application for the placing of a burger van. **LG** questioned as to where the van was proposed to be placed. **CS** said that she would find out exactly and get back to her. There is a meeting regarding this on Wednesday 14th June.
- vii) 3 properties are about to come on the rental market (2 2-bedroom flats and 1 1-bedroom flat). The NTS are happy to consider local people for these properties before they are made more widely available.

10. Housing Group Update

JS reported that the group is still at the very early stages of the project to build community -owned affordable housing. A list of potential in-fill sites in Dunkeld & Birnam have been given to the Council. It was emphasized that nothing can or will take place unless it has the support of the community. The HAG need to be able to demonstrate that at least 50% of all inhabitants are aware of the project. She encouraged individuals to put in objections to PKC for current residential properties being made into short-term holiday lets.

11. Community Action Plan & Development Trust update:

JS reported that the Trust had run a very successful Community Volunteers Fair on Saturday 3rd June. This was organized by Beth Taylor, the Community Connector who is employed by the DBDCDT. 32 different volunteer groups in Dunkeld & Birnam had tables and a number of them reported an increase in the number of volunteers.

JB reported that the Trust had secured 2 important grants from which has allowed them to employ the Community Connector. They are in the process of applying for the next 3 years of funding.

JS and JB outlined the Big Place Conversation and how it was important for as many people as possible in the community to fill in the survey (see link below). This will be used by the PKC to develop the Local Place Plan which forms input to the Local Development Plan. The Local Development Plan (2023-2028) is the principal planning guide indicating which areas are for housing, industrial development etc.

It is now possible for small local groups to come under the umbrella of the Trust as long as they provide relevant information and have a constitution. This will allow them to use the Trust's bank account and be covered by their insurance policy.

Link for Big Place Conversation: <https://www.pkc.gov.uk/bigplaceconversation>

An **MP** expressed his appreciation of the Trust and the work it was doing. He stated that people in the community were appreciative of the positive way in which the work was carried out and how it was being publicised.

12. Roads, Traffic and Parking update:

It was agreed by all present that the absence of a pavement to the Craigvinean Surgery is a problem. SGN said it would look at the possibility to include a pavement in the plans for the redirection of the gas pipe.

There is equipment in place to collect traffic data on the Boat Road.

AW explained about the problem of speeding traffic in Amulree. He questioned the fact that the speed limits in some villages in Perthshire were 20mph. He cited the example of Grantully as one of many which, even though there is a structured pavement, has a 20mph speed limit whereas Amulree had no pavement and a 40mph speed limit and a high volume of walkers and cyclists during the summer months. Both of which have difficulty in traversing Amulree with speeding traffic passing them. He has written to **GL** to ask for an explanation. **CM** explained that there were many villages with the same concerns. At present PKC is working with the villages which already have temporary 20mph speed limits. This takes time. It would help if the Scottish Government could make the 20mph applicable in all villages. Positive talks were had with the transport minister at an A9 Junctions meeting on 5th June but he resigned the next day. Correspondence with the new minister needs to be established.

13. Police Update

LM said that there was nothing to report.

14. A.O.B.

Dunkeld and Birnam Station: This is a Grade A building which has been let to deteriorate to an unacceptable level. There are several volunteers who have given enormous time and energy to preserve the building.

The main problem is to get agreement between Scotrail and Network Rail as to who is responsible for the upkeep of the station. Until now the uncertainty of the development of the A9 has stopped the companies from discussing the possible options. It has now been decided that the station will stay where it is irrespective of what happens to the A9 so the discussion now needs to happen.

John Swinney SMP is very much behind this project and there is a meeting planned for 19th June. It is hoped that this will resolve the situation and plans can then be made for the restoration. **LM** will attend this meeting.

Litter: The amount of litter in the village has increased enormously since the retirement of the last barrowman. Initially it was said that there was to be no replacement for him. However, after the Community Council contacted **GL**, it has now been agreed that there will be a replacement.

Amulree Hotel: an **MP** outlined a serious problem in Amulree concerning the sharing of the water supply. He stated that the lack of communication between the Amulree Hall Committee as regards to renovations and the hotel has been very poor which has caused friction in the community. He went on to say that other residents were stealing his water as the Amulree Hotel was the original recipient of the water.

AW stated that to his knowledge the Hall Committee had invited all residents in Amulree, Trochry and Glen Quaich to view the hall plans and had invited comment on numerous occasions. He stated that the hall was a community site for the benefit of all. He disputed the claim that the Amulree Hotel was the sole beneficiary of the water supply, with his own property enjoying the supply for close to 213 years and with all other properties enjoying similar supply for at least 40 years or more. He also stated that many of the claims of the Amulree Hotel in respect of the hall project were factually incorrect.

It was agreed that all the relevant documents will be sent to members of the Community Council who will discuss it. **AW** will not be part of this as he lives in Amulree and will have a conflict of interest. The Council will then communicate with the Hall Committee and other residents concerned and facilitate a discussion between all parties.

CM encouraged that people filling in the various surveys should also consider other amenities such as more reasonably priced food outlets which are an important part of the community and would restrict the need for people to drive to Perth.

End of Main meeting.

Date of next meeting: After discussion the CC felt it was more appropriate to have bi-monthly meetings to accommodate various factors in line with many other CC bodies.

The next meeting will be on **Monday 14th August 2023. Venue TBC.**