**MEETING OF BRIDGE OF ALLAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**HELD ON TUESDAY 17th JANUARY 2017**

**Present**

Douglas Dodds (DD) (Chair), Sandra Davidson (SD), Leslie Harkness (LH), Siobhan Hencher (SH), Nicos Yarrow (NY), Victoria McDowell (VMcD), Ian McCusker (IMc), Michael Burt (MB), Janie Meikle Bland (JMB), Margaret Sprunt (MS)

**In attendance**

Cllr Graham Houston, PC Gordon Currie (Police Scotland), Alexander Stuart (MSP), Deborah Wood (notes)

**Apologies and Substitutions**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of:

Douglas Neilson (Friends of Bridge of Allan), Mike Watson (MW), Marie Gardner (MG, Treasurer)

Substitutions: Leslie Harkness standing in as Secretary; Sandra Davidson (SD) took over from Douglas Dodds (DD) as chair.

**DD announced a change to order of agenda to bring Chair’s report forward.**

**BA1356 Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2016 were agreed as a correct record of proceedings. (Proposed: Vicky McDowell; Seconded: Sandra Davidson)

**BA1357 Police Report**

(DD presented the report and PC Currie was available later on for questions)

**INTRODUCTION AND SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS MONTH**

PC 917 Scott McMaster is currently on a 4 month, dog handling training course. If successful, he will be leaving his current role.

Following reports of indiscriminate parking in Kenilworth road and Wellgate Drive, patrols have been carried out and a number of parking tickets have been issued.

Meeting with local residents, Stirling council, Community Council representatives and University of Stirling with regards to the parking issues at Henderson Street near to memorial Park. It has been agreed by Stirling Council that double yellow lines and a small number of parking bays will be introduced in due course.

Bridge of Allan Primary School: it has been identified that there are continued problems with parents parking on the yellow zig zags directly outside the school and on the no waiting single yellow lines.

**CURRENT PRIORITIES**

Current priorities in the Bridge of Allan area continue to be Anti-Social Behaviour, Violent Crime, theft, road safety and Community Engagement and Reassurance. Activity this month has been focused towards these priorities.

**ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

23/12/2016 – The front number plate of motor car was bent and damaged at the Cottrell car park, University of Stirling. All lines of enquiry have been completed with no suspects identified.

24/12/16 – Abusive messages have been posted on an anonymous social media platform regarding a member of staff at University of Stirling. Enquires are on-going to identify the suspect.

**DRUG MISUSE**

25/11/2016 – A Student was found to be in possession of a personal amount of herbal cannabis within his accommodation at University of Stirling.

6/12/2016 – A male was stopped in Keir Street and searched by police. He was found to be in possession of cannabis and he was charged accordingly.

**VIOLENT CRIME**

There have been no reports of any violent crime.

**HOUSEBREAKINGS/CRIMES OF DISHONESTY**

18/11/2016 - At Stirling Court Hotel, Stirling University: money was stolen from a purse which was within a rucksack. There are no suspects and no further lines of enquiry.

26/11/2016 – Property was stolen overnight from within an insecure vehicle at Mine Road, Bridge of Allan. There are no suspects and all lines of enquiry have been carried out.

2/12/2016 – a child’s bike was stolen from a secured close at Avenue Park. There are no suspects and all lines of enquiry have been completed.

**ROAD SAFETY**

27/11/2016 – A male was traced driving at excess speed in the 30 MPH speed limit at Cornton Road. He will be reported to the Procurator Fiscal.

30/11/2016 – A minor collision took place in Henderson Street when a male driver attempted to parallel park. Unfortunately, the offending driver decided to drive off without stopping and providing his details. This male was subsequently traced and charged accordingly.

**OTHER INCIDENTS OF NOTE**

8/12/2016 – A male has been charged with reckless discharge of a firearm. This follows a report that a male in Carse of Lecropt fired a shotgun in the air at geese, however the buck shot landed close to other members of the public causing them alarm. This male will be reported to the Procurator Fiscal.

**BA1358 Chair’s Report (DD)**

Ailsa McLeod stood down as Secretary at the end of December 2016. DD confirmed that Leslie Harkness had agreed to stand in as Secretary until the AGM in May 2017 when the position will be up for election. DD expressed his appreciation for the work Ailsa had done for the CC.

DD announced that he was stepping aside as Chair and from the CC with immediate effect. He is standing as a candidate for the Scottish Conservatives & Unionist Party, Bridge of Allan and Dunblane, in forthcoming local elections (May 2017) and is not permitted to hold both posts. However, if he is unsuccessful in the elections, DD expressed that he would like to return to the CC and hopes to stand again for Chair. DD thanked everyone for their input and handed over to Vice Chair, Sandra Davidson, as acting Chair going forward.

SD wished DD every success in his endeavours.

**B1359 Friends of Bridge of Allan**

The Friends of Bridge of Allan AGM will be Monday, 6 February 2017.

**BA1360 Cornton Level Crossing Planning update (IMc)**

IMc talked through a discussion paper he had prepared to outline key issues under consideration.

**Location of Road Bridge**

The location of the bridge has had to tie in with Stirling Council’s future transport plans. Network Rail had to take this into consideration when planning where the bridge should be located. There is an issue here that the location isolates Forth Park.

**Visual Impact**

The road bridge is a considerable structure and must be of sufficient height to clear the electrified railway line. There is now a proposal for a footbridge, not present on the original proposal, added in as requested by a number of residents. The footbridge is also of substantial dimensions and will require a ramp access. It will impinge further on the Green Belt and the current proposal will not be visually sympathetic to the area.

**Safety**

There is debate as to the safety of the level crossing. Network Rail have stated that it is the highest risk crossing in Scotland and this is their reason for prioritising it for closure. This claim is under dispute. However, on a national level, it should be acknowledged that there is always risk at a level crossing and the safest option is to remove all pedestrian and road traffic from the railway.

**Barrier Replacement**

Network Rail have stated, the minimum that they will be required to do is to replace the barrier system at the crossing to meet current regulations. The change would be a full barrier system connected to the signal system. Network Rail has also stated that this would increase barrier down time to between 20 and 30 minutes in each hour and upwards if current plans to increase the number trains in the future are implemented. This is likely to cause substantial traffic congestion along Cornton Road.

**Impact on Green Belt and Wider Implications**

The proposed road, link road, bridge and footbridge will have considerable impact on the Green Belt and floodplain between Bridge of Allan and Causewayhead. The proposed road runs through the existing fields and farmland and will cut extensively into the fields. There is the potential to set a precedent for future development in that area which includes Airthrey Kerse.

**Forth Park Sense of Place**

The residents of Forth Park are part of Bridge of Allan community, identifying with the community and its amenities. The proposal would effectively create a “dead end estate”, isolating the community here from any surrounding neighbourhoods. Travelling time and distance for cyclists, pedestrians and motorists to reach these amenities, would likely be increased and public transport links may diminish or be removed entirely.

Should the footbridge go ahead, it may be moved at any time in the future. A discussion was had as to the relocation of Bridge of Allan railway station - if this is moved to the area of the present crossing in the future the footbridge may be relocated to access it.

IMc then opened this topic to discussion.

IMc confirmed that he was unaware of any planned future public meetings.

Bill Glencross raised the issue of the footbridge design. Concerns are that the fencing and barriers lining it, whilst being there for safety, have the potential to provide a place which could encourage anti-social behavior. It is also of industrial design and not aesthetically in keeping with the surrounding area.

A suggestion also came from a resident that Network Rail, despite their safety statement on the crossing, may also be facilitating a cost saving by removing the crossing as this may remove any upkeep and maintenance costs.

A resident commented that the EU mainland have solid barrier crossings and it may be a good idea to research these. Is there a way to install a different barrier that does not need to close for lengthy periods? IMc stated that barrier system must be linked to signals and therefore enough time must be available to allow for trains to stop should there be any issues on the line. Cllr Houston confirmed that Network Rail stated there would be potential for 6 passenger trains and 2 x freight trains per hour.

Other issues, observations and questions:

* There will be a potential for more traffic on Henderson Street which is already heavily polluted.
* Safety issues with the underpass and pedestrian bridge.
* ~1 mile detour if no bridge in place.
* Potential loss of buses/bus routes.
* Although there is a paucity of recorded, serious incidents concerning the barrier over the last 30 years, the risk it brings with it still exists.
* What speed will the electrified trains reach on the BofA to Stirling section of the line?
* Flooding implications due to new infrastructure: DD confirmed that SEPA cannot comment until 3 Feb 2017.

SD confirmed that comments should be sent to IMc (within next 48 hours). IMc would compile a point by point response to Network Rail’s planning application. The application is due to be submitted by the 24th January 2017. IMc confirmed that he was available to do this and did not need additional support at this point.

 **Action: All and IMc**

**B1361 Parking Restrictions and Low Carbon Transport Strategy (JMB)**

**Safe Routes - Henderson Street and Memorial Park area:** JMB attended a meeting with the University of Stirling, Police Scotland, SC traffic officer, Community Council members and residents: yellow lines will be introduced in line with the proposal in the area of Memorial Hall (a couple of parking bays will be made available outside the Museum hall). These actions aim to minimise cars parking on the street, reducing the risk of collision and provide safe access for school routes. Residents were in agreement with these actions.

**Haws Park:** Issues with parking when football matches are being held are now being managed by the football team. Yellow lines are not needed at present. The football team would like to explore parking within the Hawes Park. This will require planning permission.

**LCT Hub:** Michael, Nick and Janie attended a Stirling Council consultation meeting regarding proposals for set up of transport hubs around the city periphery (similar to park & ride). Online consultation and research was carried out over a very short timescale.

Concerns were raised at the meeting by Liam Spillane, Commercial Director at the University of Stirling that students and staff had not been consulted on the LCTT proposals. As potentially one of the biggest client groups likely to use such a service - 12,500 students and staff on campus -, and with the impact on the community of Bridge of Allan in relation to traffic, parking and raid safety the University and the CC agreed to meet to shape a joint approach . A meeting will be held on 24 January 2017 with the University, to discuss the proposals. Stirling Council are keen to work with CC and the University of Stirling to investigate the impact on and service needs of the Bridge of Allan area.

A resident, who works at the University of Stirling commented on the car parking facilities at the University. Due to building works and a loss of part of the parking area, new car parks were built. The University must, however, lose these temporary car parking spaces once building work is complete. This will have a further impact on the parking in the surrounding areas. The resident offered to engage a student in a related transport survey/study and gave her details to CC.

A resident asked why the cycle routes in neighbouring Clackmannanshire are superior and safer than within the Stirling Council area. JMB confirmed that this was fed back at the LCT meeting.

**B1362 Bridge of Allan Times**

DD – the Editor of Bridge of Allan Times will stand down at the end of January 2017. He is willing to stay on for a short time until a replacement(s) is found. CC cannot take this role on, however, will help to facilitate filling the post and help advertise for a new editor. MB suggested that a better idea of what the role involves would be helpful: there are 3 x issues a year, needs desk top publishing expertise, the role could be shared and there is the option to change the format (Sandi Grieve of BofA Times). MB recommended that the BofA Times use their next issue to recruit new committee members to keep the publication going. The information will also be shared/advertised on the CC website (MB).

**B1363 Museum Hall Plaque (LH)**

Project viability for the plaque needs resident and land lord support. LH received only 1 x positive response and a number of emails enquiring what the plaque would look like and cost etc. Another email was sent out by Graham and Sibbald to residents and landlords. If there is no increase in response numbers, then it may be wise to stop the project. LH will keep CC up to date going forward.

**B1364 Residents Voice**

* New refuse collection system: A resident raised concerns as to the delays experienced with bin and box collections and spillages. The spillages appear to have happened due to the temporary collection vehicles loading system. The spillages were not cleaned up by the operatives. Cllr Houston acknowledged this and will take it forward.
* Bus shelter at the fire station. When is this being moved? **Action: LH**
* Lines on the road (white) – partially removed, leaving confusing “ghost” lines e.g. Allanvale Road. A resident has contacted Stirling Council. MB confirmed this was raised by CC in September 2016.
* Is there a Park of Keir update? Report went to Scottish Ministers before Christmas. It is likely to be spring before any update is given.

**B1365 AOCB**

PC Currie confirmed he will keep a presence at Bridge of Allan PS and Well Road to ensure continued parking awareness and road safety.

Cllr Houston highlighted that 20 March 2017 marks the launch of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE). PC Currie confirmed that a team of approx. 15 to 20 Prevention and Enforcement Officers will be employed. A resident suggested issuing cards to highlight this to the public. The enforcement team will have other responsibilities including fly tipping and dog fouling. MB suggested that it would be good to have a presence at CC meeting so that all their responsibilities can be highlighted to the community. PC Currie and Cllr Houston will liaise with the new enforcement officers.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Community Council will take place at the Allan Centre on Tuesday, 21 February at 7.30pm.

**The meeting closed at approximately 21:07.**