

MINUTES OF BRIDGE OF ALLAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

HELD ON TUESDAY 15 AUGUST 2017

(held in the Allan Centre)

Present:

Mike Watson (MW) (Chair); Janie Meikle Bland (JMB); Michael Burt (MB); Siobhan Hencher (SH); Leslie Harkness (LH); Margaret Sprunt (MS); Nicos Yarrow (NY).

In attendance:

Alexander Stuart (MSP); Councillor Douglas Dodds, Councillor Graham Houston, Councillor Alastair Majury, Councillor Alasdair Tollemache.

Apologies:

Joanne Chisholm, Sandra Davidson, Marie Gardner, Iain McCusker. Victoria McDowell, Lucy McCormick, Andrew Davis (Stirling Council).

Abbreviations - Community Council (CC); Procurator Fiscal (PF)

B1424 Welcome, Apologies and Conflict of Interest

MW welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received, as indicated above, and the absence of any conflict of interest was noted.

B1425 Approval of Minutes, Matters Arising and Action Log

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th June 2017 were approved (Proposed: Janie Meikle Bland; Seconded: Michael Burt). There were no matters arising and LH indicated that two relevant Action Log items would be covered in his Secretary's Report.

B1426 Police Report

MW welcomed PC Dee Chalmers to her first Bridge of Allan CC meeting. PC Chalmers reported that PC Currie would be away from the local community team for a short period and that a replacement had yet to be appointed. She also indicated that the current area priorities would continue to be Anti-Social Behaviour, Violent Crime, Theft, Road Safety, and Community Engagement and Reassurance.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

On 9th August at Vale Grove, a car was vandalised by means of a corrosive substance. Enquiries are ongoing with regard to what is seen as an isolated incident; any person

with relevant information should contact 101 with the appropriate reference (Ref: CFO112230817).

DRUG MISUSE

There have been no recorded incidents of drug misuse.

VIOLENT CRIME

- On 30th June 2017 at Henderson Street, a male was seriously assaulted by another known male who was later apprehended by police officers and who appeared at Stirling Sheriff Court the following day.
- On 13th July 2017 at Pullar Avenue, a male was assaulted to his non injury by two males known to him; enquiries are ongoing and a report will be submitted to the PF.
- On 1st August 2017 at Castleview Drive, a male from outwith the area attempted to break into a house, was subsequently traced and arrested for this offence and for carrying a knife. The male appeared at Stirling Sheriff Court the following day.

HOUSEBREAKING/CRIMES OF DISHONESTY

- On 10th July 2017 at Garrick Sport Centre, money was stolen from an unattended backpack. Enquiries are ongoing and anyone with relevant information should contact 101 (Ref; CF0097840717).
- On 27th July 2017 at the Allan Centre, one of the containers was broken into although apparently nothing was taken. Enquiries are ongoing and anyone with relevant information should contact 101 (Ref: CF0106510717)
- On 4th August 2017 at Cawder Garden, a male delivery driver was subject to a robbery by a male who threatened the driver with a hammer.. The male was subsequently traced by police officers and has been remanded in custody.
- 5th August 2017 at Strathallan Park, a male was assaulted to his non injury by an unknown male. Enquiries are ongoing and anyone with information should contact 101 (Ref:CF0110070817).

In relation to the Cawder Garden incident, Councillor Dodds asked PC Chalmers for information which he required for his forthcoming meeting with the area commander, Chief Inspector Ratcliff.

ROAD SAFETY

- On 20th July 2017 on Airthrey Road, a male was arrested for being over the prescribed limit for drink driving. A report will be sent to the PF in due course.
- On 3rd August 2017, a male driver was stopped in Henderson Street; he had his

vehicle taken and was issued with a fixed penalty notice for having no insurance for the vehicle.

OTHER MATTERS OF NOTE

Bridge of Allan Highland Games took place over the weekend from 4th August, with PCs Chalmers and Currie both in attendance; there were no issues of note.

Given a few recent incidents in Dunblane of items stolen from insecure properties, residents are reminded of the importance of ensuring that all windows, doors and outbuildings are secured when not at home or on holiday.

A local resident, Sem Curley, raised with PC Chalmers the issue of Cornton Road cyclists using the pavement footpath rather than the identified cycle path and he underlined the potential dangers to life arising from this. Councillor Dodds noted that the same situation existed in Dunblane and he stressed that he had never observed the police stopping cyclists for this practice; he also related the problem in part to the current policing model in Dunblane and Bridge of Allan and he stated his intention to discuss the matter with Chief Inspector Lynn Ratcliff. MW emphasised the need to make cyclists fully aware of the fact that they can cycle in both directions on the cycle path. There was general agreement that appropriate signage was a significant requirement.

B1427 Parking Restrictions (MW)

MW initiated a wide-ranging discussion on the issues arising from the current restrictions by explaining that a number of local traders were seeking the support of the CC in terms of easing the parking restrictions, particularly in Henderson Street and Fountain Road, by increasing the limit from 30 minutes to one hour. He underlined his conviction that the local businesses were the life blood of the community and he reminded the meeting that the 30 minute limit had been determined some 6 years ago as a result of a consultation process involving the police, local businesses, Stirling Council's roads officials, local politicians and the CC.

The representative of one trader, supported by another trader present at the meeting, maintained that a timescale of 30 minutes was too restricted to allow potential customers to fully utilise the town's hospitality businesses and small independent shops. He also suggested that the most inimical impact of the restrictions would be felt by visitors who were unaware of the unrestricted parking available in the town and that, consequently, this could undermine the local economy. In response, Councillor Dodds wondered if there were not in fact ample parking spaces in the town as a whole and MW agreed that it was important to take into account all off street and alternative parking and that, in this context, the issue of signage was significant.

JMB recalled that the CC had in the past received complaints to the effect that the parking 'turnover' was insufficient. It was also noted that that some merchants would park for the whole of the working day (in at least one case, regardless of parking penalties). MW suggested that that any approach to the problem had to balance the

needs of two distinct groups, namely, on the one hand, those who parked for a very limited time to make a purchase and leave and, on the other, those who needed to park for a longer period. Councillor Houston pointed out that extending the waiting time to 60 minutes could limit the chances of finding a space and he also underlined the fact that the community has long resisted the introduction of parking meters. A trader representative drew attention to other potential options eg having diagonal bays on Henderson Street and having 15 minute slots.

NY emphasised that the views of the residents were of critical importance and he stressed that two major concerns of residents were traffic and parking; he also observed that the 700 plus signatures secured for a survey (organised by Simon Littlejohn) of those in favour of the 60 minute extension represented a substantial sampling of the community.

Given that the survey only covered 22 of the 50 plus businesses in the town, MW proposed that a more expansive and rigorous analysis of the needs and aspirations of the local traders should be undertaken. This proposal met with the agreement of the CC, and the representative of Simon Littlejohn agreed to undertake further consultation with those businesses not covered by the survey.

MW also proposed that a group similar to that established six years ago be reconvened; this broadly based group would again involve the police, Stirling Council's roads officials, CC members, local politicians, and local merchants. One trader present at the meeting indicated that he would be willing to help to revive a merchants group.

ACTION : MW and LH to provide Simon Littlejohn with the information required to initiate a wider survey of merchant opinion.

ACTION : MW and other CC colleagues to plan the way forward in bringing together a revived consultative group.

B1428 Active Community (JMB)

JMB provided a comprehensive update designed to bring together the range of strands falling under the umbrella of the CC's 'active community' focus. She reminded the CC that, in the broad context of the parking issues already discussed earlier, the CC had approached the issue of student parking in the town on an 'active community' basis by recognising the need to encourage students to cycle rather than using their cars.

Among the other threads JMB covered were the attention given by the CC to

- Stirling Council's low carbon transport policy;
- the bid to Sustrans for getting more students on bikes;
- the increased parking at Bridge of Allan Station arising from changes in the parking at Dunblane Station;
- the Stirling Cycle Hub project and the unsuccessful joint funding bid to

Cycling

Scotland whose grant fund had been oversubscribed.

JMB indicated that she would put some thoughts together for the next meeting to begin to shape a coherent strategy to approach all these issues, including the cycle path problems, in terms of the overall rationale of the 'Active Community' approach.

JMB also stressed that it was essential to establish a collective community view so that the CC could respond more representatively to major initiatives of this kind. In this regard, Councillor Houston suggested that it might be worth exploring the possibility of securing funding for a survey from Sustrans and MW noted that Dunblane had been particularly successful in securing Sustrans funding. Given the Dunblane experience, JMB felt it would be worthwhile contacting Bridget Clark of Cycling Scotland and Councillor Tollemache volunteered to get in touch with her.

In the discussion which followed it was agreed that any future strategy should avoid viewing the community as having two opposing camps of cyclists and motorists. The importance of encouraging walking was also emphasised.

JMB noted that Joanne Chisholm had indicated that she could arrange for a representative from the local NHS trust to come to a CC meeting to assist the CC with its 'Active Community' strategy. MW agreed that, given the demographic of the community, this would be worthwhile

ACTION : JMB to begin to plan for a survey of residents' opinions on the various strategies the CC has discussed in its 'Active Community' approach.

ACTION : JMB to liaise with Joanne Chisholm to invite a local NHS trust representative to come to a CC meeting.

B1429 Flood Group

Sem Curley reported that he and Brian Devlin had attended a Scottish Flood Forum meeting and, as a result, had acquired a broader Scottish and UK perspective on flood issues. He underlined the fact that, as the Chair of the Scottish Flood Forum is an engineer, his views carry a high degree of authority and he also drew attention to the fact that the risk timescale is now 10 to 15 years rather than 25 to 50 years. He is firmly of the view that there is no room for complacency and that Bridge of Allan remains vulnerable to flooding, particularly were the town to experience a combination of heavy rain/snow on the hills and tide water coming up the Forth.

Mr Curley also reported that Stirling Council has indicated that there is now no funding for what was promised for the burn and that the Flood Group should attempt to acquire some grant funding. He explained that Paul Laidlaw is of particular help in terms of pointing out potentially problematic issues and also has a series of relevant booklets, copies of which Mr Curley intends to distribute to local shops.

Mr Curley stressed that, since the workload for the Flood Group is likely to increase, an additional 2 or 3 members are needed and, to this end, he felt that an appeal notice on the CC website would be helpful. MW accepted that the whole matter is a genuinely real issue and MB asked Mr Curley to provide him with the wording he required for the website item.

ACTION : MB to liaise with Sem Curley on the website item appealing for new Flood Group members.

B1430 Memorial Park

Douglas Neilson of the Friends of Bridge of Allan confirmed that 24 diseased conifers were to be cut down, along with, as a preventive measure, 2 maple trees which were overhanging the road; the trees will be chipped on site and the chips spread over the flower beds. He indicated that the Friends have money set aside for replanting trees which would be from non-native species. It was agreed that this would clearly make a difference to the park but, on the positive side, it was noted that the replanted cherry trees were coming on.

Councillor Dodds reported that the contracted work would begin on 4th September 2017.

MW expressed the appreciation of CC for the outstanding contribution of the Friends towards the enhancement of the environment of the town, both in terms of the magnificent hanging baskets and of the attractive seating area outside Lloyds Pharmacy

ACTION : MB to post the relevant email, detailing the proposed operations, on the CC website.

B1431 Planning Update. (MW)

In the absence of Iain McCusker, MW reported that the CC had received no further planning application referrals from Stirling Council. He noted that the two most recent applications received by the CC had been rejected by Stirling Council.

B1432 Roads and Transport (NY)

NY reported that the work on Alexander Drive had been completed and that work on Blairforkie Drive would commence the next day. He also noted that there was as yet no indication of any allocation of resources for the repair of Inverallan Road.

ACTION : LH to raise again the issue of Inverallan Road with the relevant Stirling Council roads officer.

B1433 Chair's Report (MW)

MW indicated that he had nothing further to report beyond the matters already

covered in the meeting.

B1434 Secretary's Report (LH)

LH reported that, on behalf of the Forth Park resident and the Causewayhead representative who had both raised concerns about significant infestations of giant hogweed alongside the railway lines in their communities, he had written to Roy Sexton about their concerns. In his reply, Mr Sexton has confirmed that, with regard to Forth Park, he and his team have helped the Forth Park residents to set up their own spraying team, with the result that the area between the rear of the houses and the Allan has been sprayed so successfully that the riverbank footpath is open again. In relation to the Causewayhead infestation along the Alloa line, Mr Sexton's team have been shocked by the scale of the problem and, although Network Rail did not allow access, his team managed to cut those flower heads that could be reached. LH has written to the Scottish head office of Network Rail to ascertain if the organisation is contemplating any future remedial action in terms of spraying their own land and is awaiting a response.

ACTION : LH to invite Roy Sexton to update the CC at a future meeting.

LH has contacted Sergeant Matheson at the Dunblane police office to ask if he was aware of the issue, raised by a local resident, of heavy lorries allegedly parking overnight in Inverallan Road, in the vicinity of the Allanbridge Social Club. Sergeant Matheson is on holiday and has yet to reply but PC Chalmers has agreed to ask the night shift officers to look into the situation.

B1435 The Residents' Voice

- A resident, whose parent became breathless in Henderson Street, raised the issue of the absence of seating on one side of Henderson Street and recalled there used to be seating many years ago outside the Westerton Arms.
- MB reported that he had received an email from a resident asking about the legality of a commercial enterprise taking place on a regular basis at a residential property in the town. A resident, present at the meeting, also expressed some concerns about the matter. Councillor Dodds explained that he has contacted the relevant licensing staff of Stirling Council Services on this issue and is awaiting a reply. CC members felt that, in the interests of fairness, where a complaint has been discussed in the public forum of a CC meeting, the individual who is the subject of the complaint should be informed of the complaint by the CC.

ACTION : LH to write to the person who is the subject of the complaint.

- MB reported that a resident has also complained about the safety of the Henderson Street crossing at the Treehouse. Councillor Dodds was able to confirm that the crossing is being upgraded, both in terms of brighter lighting and repainting.

- In response to a query about disabled parking, NY explained that disabled parking was located outside Lloyds Pharmacy, outside the former Lloyds Pharmacy premises, outside WoodWinters and, newly established, in the North Car Park in Allanvale Road.

B1436 AOCB

There being no other business, MW declared the meeting closed at 8.55pm.

The date of the next meeting will be Tuesday, 19th September 2017 at 7.30pm.