



## MINUTES OF BRIDGE OF ALLAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

HELD ON TUESDAY 20 March 2018

(in the Allan Centre)

**Present:** Mike Watson ( Chair ); Michael Burt (MB); Joanne Chisholm (JC ); Sandra Davidson ( SD ); Leslie Harkness ( LH ); Iain McCusker ( IM ); Victoria McDowell (VM); Nicos Yarrow (NY)

**In attendance:** Councillor Douglas Dodds; Councillor Alastair Majury; Councillor Jerry McDonald; Councillor Alasdair Tollemache; Tom Fox ( SPS); Morag Stirling (SPS); Steven Cameron ( Cameron Planning ); Sergeant Alasdair Matheson

**Apologies:** Janie Meikle Bland; Marie Gardner; Siobhan Hencher; Margaret Sprunt; Andrew Davis (Stirling Council ); Councillor Graham Houston and Alexander Stewart MSP.

*(Abbreviations - Community Council (CC); Stirling Council (SC))*

### **B1508 Welcome, Apologies and Conflict of Interest**

MW welcomed everyone and started the meeting at 7.30pm. On behalf of the CC, LH welcomed MW back to the Chair. Apologies as indicated above were noted, and there was no conflict of interest to record.

### **B1509 Approval of Minutes, Matters Arising and Action Log**

The February 2018 minutes were proposed (MB) and seconded (VM).

**Matters arising:** LH confirmed that there were three matters arising.

In terms of **Item B1495**, on the bank closures, LH reported that he had now received a response to his letter to the CEO of Bank of Scotland. The reply was essentially the same as that received from RBS and, while courteous and detailed, indicated that the closure would not be reversed, particularly given that the numbers using the branch are declining annually ( a 14% decline last year ) and given that only 15 personal and business customers had been using the branch on a regular weekly basis. The response also mentioned the options of the Port Street branch in Stirling and the Post Office in Bridge of Allan and underlined the fact that the bank had received a Notice of Termination indicating that the landlord would be terminating the lease of the branch when it would expire on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2018. The response also included a link to the Bridge of Allan Branch Review document. Councillor Tollemache confirmed that the relevant RBS staff still wish to meet with the CC. **Councillor Tollemache** will take forward the facilitation of the requested meeting with the CC and will seek clarification on whether the RBS personnel would be seeking a closed meeting.



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In terms of **Item B1502**, the Planning update, IM reported that he had received an email from the SFRS Local Senior Officer in which he explained that the Bridge of Allan fire station has been identified as one which would benefit from the introduction of one of the Rapid Response Units ( RRUs ) being introduced across Scotland; these are smaller, lighter, more manoeuvrable and less polluting than conventional fire engines and they also incorporate new, cutting-edge technology in the form of Ultra High Pressure Lances which can allow a standard fire to be tackled with a smaller crew in the initial stages. It was noted that the Senior Officer would welcome an opportunity to attend a CC meeting to discuss the proposed changes. Michael Burt reported that a local resident had raised a concern about the change and had stressed the importance of having appropriate consultation with the community.

**Action:** Once its date has been determined, **LH** will invite the Local Senior Officer to a future CC open meeting and **MB** will invite the concerned resident to also attend the meeting.

In terms of **Item B1505**, the Secretary's Report, LH indicated that Councillor Majury had confirmed very recently that the various street lighting issues have now been resolved,

**Action Log:** In terms of the Police Report item, LH confirmed he had written to Sergeant Matheson about the October 2017 incident at Blue Banks, involving a car with a quantity of hypodermic needles which had plunged into the river. Sergeant Matheson, who was present at the meeting, stated that he did not think that this had been an incident about which the community should be unduly concerned but ,nevertheless, he confirmed he would look into the matter again.

## **B1510 Police Report**

In the absence of his two community constables, the report was delivered by Sergeant Matheson.

The officer indicated that the last month had been a very busy one.

The key elements of sergeant Matheson's report were as follows :

- on the 26<sup>th</sup> February, an aggressive male in possession of two knives and Class C drugs was apprehended and appeared in court on the following day;
- an area of concern was the theft of two bicycles;
- an attempted housebreaking had taken place in Westerton Drive but the security measures in place had proved effective;
- a bicycle had been stolen from a garage in Mayne Avenue;
- on the 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> March, residential premises in Inverallan Road had been entered;
- a speeding incident had occurred in Glen road;
- a number of handheld radar speed traps had been mounted;
- on five occasions, the police have undertaken liaison visits to Henderson Street business premises, with an emphasis on the cafes, given that the town can expect more visitors with the lighter nights ;
- 85 calls have been recorded since the previous report and 8 of these were welfare related, including residents demonstrating concerns about their neighbours during the adverse weather;
- a male Greenock resident had been found in a disoriented state outside Dunblane Police station;
- two domestic incidents had been recorded.

Councillor Dodds reported that he had met with the Police Divisional Commander and, among other issues, had raised the concerns about speeding along Henderson Street. He indicated that the response was not especially encouraging as very few 101 calls have been received on this issue to allow it to be

identified as a serious problem . In view of this response, Councillor Dodds is raising the option of having road speed strips at certain points along Henderson Street; he pointed out that it would be of benefit to know how many cars are using Henderson street at present since the last time that SC collected this data was in 2015. Sergeant Matheson felt that the use of the speed strips would be helpful. Sergeant Matheson also confirmed that handheld speeding cameras had been used in recent weeks in a number of streets In the town including Cornton Road, Perth Road and Blairlogie Road. MW noted that the difficulty with making a 101 call about speeding is that the perpetrator has left the scene. A Keir Street resident, present at the meeting, emphasised that residents are often reluctant to waste police time and she also emphasised that Westerton Drive also faced a speeding problem. Sergeant Matheson indicated that he would add streets such as Westerton Drive to the patrol schedule add he stressed firmly that it was very helpful when residents reported speeding incidents since it allowed the police to maintain an informative log.

### **B1511 Cornton Vale Development**

The Chair introduced Tom Fox ( Communications ) Morag Stirling ( Women’s Strategy Team ), both from the Scottish Prison Service, and Steven Cameron ( Cameron Planning ) and also highlighted the excellent display boards, including an artist’s impressions of the new facility, brought by the SPS team and located in the vestibule .

Tom Fox delivered a highly informative presentation on the proposed changes at Cornton Vale. With regard to the broad context, he explained how it had been decided to create a new national women’s facility on the existing site, with 80 places and with an assessment facility for a further 25 women, representing, in total, a 50% reduction in capacity. Already, one of the existing accommodation blocks has been demolished and, later this week, a planning application will be lodged with SC and will appear online within the following seven days. The intention is that the facility will open in 2020 and will be finally completed in 2022. The present independent living quarters will be removed and the new single storey facility will be built on the existing site.

Councillor Dodds stressed that he believed that the new facility was an outstanding development. Both Tom Fox and MW underlined the importance of the excellent relationship which had developed between the prison and the local community. Tom Fox indicated that the female prisoners will continue to access the local community, for example in terms of work placements, and he emphasised that it was it was hoped that the new facility would replicate and enhance what there is in the existing complex.

Steven Cameron indicated that a new vehicular access entrance would replace the present staff car park entrance and he explained that it was the intention to reduce substantially the traffic in and out of the facility; the planning application will be supported by a range of technical documents. He also indicated that a new and more up-to- date family centre, designed to encourage effective family contact, would be provided

LH asked if the demographic profile of the prison population would be changing and, in response, Tom Fox explained that the emphasis would be on women with particularly acute needs. A Forth Park resident stressed that his community had no concerns about the changes. Morag Stirling pointed out that all the buildings adjacent to Forth Park will be single storey, with the administration block being the only double storey unit. MB asked if SEPA had been consulted and Steven Cameron explained that, since the site has a significant layer of topsoil, the buildings will be elevated to address the issue of any flood risk identified by SC. Councillor Dodds reminded the team about the underground piping while Sem Curley voiced a note of concern with regard to the culvert which is part of the site; in response, Steven Cameron stated that two existing flood risk assessments were being used by the planners, one from 2009 and the other from 2014 and that the planners were making use of the hydro-brake

optimum vortex flow control system.

MW thanked the team for their instructive presentation and Tom Fox stressed that he and his colleagues would be happy to return at any time in the future.

### **B1512 Active and Thriving Community**

In the absence of Janie Meikle Bland, LH provided a summary of an update report which she had provided. Her update had three key sections.

#### ***School Travel Planning***

The CC will be part of Bridge of Allan Primary School's Travel Plan development group with JMB as its representative. JMB has invited the school's pupil led Road Safety team to a future CC meeting to discuss the significant issue of establishing safer routes to school.

#### ***Stirling Cycle Hub - Active Travel Survey Update***

Chris James has provided an interim summary of the Survey's findings. The Cycle Hub was delighted to be able to reach an entirely new audience through this community liaison exercise.

The top 5 concerns were Traffic ( amount & speed ); lack of dedicated traffic-free facilities; safety (walking and cycling ); weather (when it is an impediment to walking and cycling ); time/distance imposed limitations.

The top 3 most helpful activities for encouraging cycling and walking were greater knowledge of routes; free bike check-ups; bike maintenance sessions.

Infrastructure concerns relate to 3 areas : Airthrey Road ( including signage ); Keir Street; Cornton Road Cycle Path.

#### ***Action for our community***

The interim recommended actions for the BofA CC are :

- an Active and Thriving Community Plan;
- lobbying SC for planning and policy development;
- returning to the idea of a Cycle Friendly Community Award;
- supporting schools in their active travel plan aspirations.

### **B1513 Year of Young People 2018**

In the absence of Janie Meikle Bland, MW provided a brief summary of a short report which she had provided.

Bridge of Allan CC is now a supporter of Scotland's YoYP, 2018 and, in line with our Active and Thriving Community aspirations, it will engage with the youth in the community and focus on initiatives which matter to them. , aiming to get them actively involved and influencing policies and decisions that affect them. The CC will invite the YoYP ambassadors to the April or May meeting to talk about the issues they

are championing this year; residents who know of a young person in their family or neighbourhood who would like to explain their ideas to the CC are encouraged to bring the young person along to the April/May meeting. The CC is keen to obtain their perspective and hear their views, and it believes, if the community is to thrive, that it is important for the CC to embrace the ideas and energy of local young people.

### **B1514 Parking Update**

JC provided a short update on the Parking initiative. She reminded the CC that the survey was still open until March 30<sup>th</sup> and she reported that, to date, there had been 485 online responses, of which 270 were from residents. JC underlined the fact that she would soon require support from CC colleagues to key the information into the online survey, given that there were 57 pages of responses and she indicated that an article on the initiative would appear in next day's Stirling Observer. MB reported that the website had some additional responses and MW noted that there were a number in the Library

The Chair acknowledged the enormous amount of time and energy which JC had invested in the initiative.

### **B1515 Christmas Lights Review**

SD reported that everything had gone well, particularly in terms of putting up the lights, and she highlighted the contribution of Ailsa McLeod in this regard. The Committee, chaired by herself, is up and running and has a Secretary and a Treasurer. It is the intention of the Committee, fairly soon, to host an evening for the local businesses to keep them fully informed. She confirmed that the lights were still stored with Gordon Electrical; MW raised the possible option, in terms of the ownership of the lights, of an informal leasing arrangement while IM raised the issue of a transfer of assets.

The Chair thanked SD and her committee for their achievement.

### **B1516 Keir Street Lighting**

MB provided a full and detailed outline of the current situation

He reminded the CC that, two weeks previously, a Keir Street resident had expressed concern about the number and, in particular, the style of the street lighting being installed along the street; he also reminded the CC that Keir Street falls within the confines of a conservation Area ( 1 of 24 across the Stirling area ). On being informed of this development, the CC had expressed concerns on two fronts, namely the lack of any consultation by SC and the fact that the style of the columns is not in sympathy with the character of the street.. In response to these, MB had contacted Stuart McNiven ( Street Lighting Electrical Supervisor ) of Stirling Council and asked whether it was the intention of SC to paint the shiny surface of the columns, whether prior public consultation was a requisite condition for street lighting upgrades and whether SC's Planning department had been consulted about the fact that the installation was taking place in a conservation area ; simultaneously, LH had contacted Councillor Dodds about the issue and he, in turn, had contacted SC's Planning department on the matter.

MB had received a reply from Craig Gardner of SC who stressed the legal obligation of the Council to provide street lighting and he indicated that the subcontractor, Lightways, had informed the residents of the work, although MB pointed out that his understanding was that the notification was fairly standard and gave no detail of the type of columns to be used; the response made no reference to

consultation with the Planning department or to the conservation area dimension. The response did explain what SC views as the benefits of the lights and maintains that the style of column/lantern is based on low weight, strength, resistance to corrosion, appearance and efficiency and it notes that the use of aluminium means that the columns are resistant to corrosion and do not require painting. SC also maintains that the new white LED lighting upgrade provides an improvement in illumination levels and offers a uniformity of light along the carriageway and footways; further advantages include a more accurate colour rendering and a reduced energy consumption leading to a reduction in costs in the context of diminishing budgets. After receiving this response, MB, on behalf of the CC, suggested to SC that, in terms of conservation status, consideration should have been given to the installation of the type of traditional lighting recently fitted in Kings Park in Stirling; the Council's reply stated that the lighting used in Kings Park was a reflection of its Heritage area status and to install similar lighting in Bridge of Allan would involve an additional cost of £340,000 to £350,000, a cost which could not be justified for purely aesthetic reasons.

MB emphasised that the CC has been fully cognisant of the budgetary pressures on SC but the CC also appreciates how residents in a conservation area might feel aggrieved by the choices exercised without consultation when they may be faced with costly stipulations imposed on them whenever they wish to alter their own property. He also underlined the fact that the very nature of designating a conservation area is to assist in avoiding the erosion of the inherent charm and irreplaceable character of the area. He reported that a further email to SC to ask for details of the total cost of the upgrade and for clarification on how a Heritage area and a Conservation area differ had met with only a very limited response. MB indicated that IM has now contacted SC's Planning department to seek clarification on the nature of any authorisation required from the department prior to embarking on such an installation.

MB's outline generated a broad discussion. One resident suggested that the form of lighting being installed would not necessarily guarantee the specified improvement in uniformity and it was pointed out that the lamps tend to focus the light downwards; Cornton Road and Churchill Drive were mentioned in this context. A Keir Street resident conceded that the street was gloomy after dark. NY pointed out that, given the criteria used to justify the LED lights, the new light fittings could simply have been attached to the existing posts. LH felt that it was surprising that the new lights had not as yet precipitated more than a single expression of concern to the CC and he stressed that, while he felt that the columns were inappropriate for the conservation streets in Bridge of Allan, it would be unwise for the CC to pursue the matter in the absence of overall community concern, particularly in terms of the residents living within the Conservation area; it was agreed that the CC requires local feedback on this issue. LH maintained that, even were the Council to be acting fully within the scope of their legal powers, it could be argued that they were ignoring the spirit of conservation requirements. MW indicated that it would be helpful to have some indication of the timescale of the whole installation process and, in response, Councillor Dodds informed the meeting that the next phase will run from May to July. It was suggested by a resident that the CC invite someone at a relatively senior level in the Planning department to a CC meeting.

**Action:** MB will provide Councillor Dodds with a series of key questions about the installation and Councillor Dodds will put these to the Planning department.

### **B1517 Review of Establishment of Community Councils Scheme**

MW explained that the issue essentially was whether the University of Stirling should remain within the ambit of the BofA CC or move to be within the scope of Causewayhead CC. He underlined the fact that the BofA CC has strong working relationships with the University through the work of Janie Meikle Bland and we also share a concern about parking provision in the town. A resident pointed out that

there was University accommodation in Cornton Road It was agreed that we wished to maintain the status quo on this, although MB stressed that , even were the change to take place, the existing links would not be broken Councillor Dodds pointed out that, in any case, the whole matter was going back out to consultation and he explained that the logic behind any change was that the University is no longer within Ward 3.

### **B1518 Allanbrae Mid Wood Steps**

MW explained that there was a possibility that the steps would be closed for safety reasons; the fact that the path is now rarely used was duly noted. Councillor Tollemache reported that, in a week's time, an SC Roads team would be inspecting the path.

### **B1519 Roads Update**

NY indicated there was nothing to report.

### **B1520 Planning Update**

IM reported on the response from Christina Cox, Head of SC's Planning Service, to his recent letter relating to the Council's handling of a planning application for a property in Alexander Drive. In response to the CC's concerns as itemised in the original letter, Christina Cox explained that the Council's Roads Service will consider whether, in terms of the gates opening on to Sunnyslaw Road at the newly formed fence, the sightlines are such as to ensure a safe means of access/egress; that she is unable to find any reference to a letter of support from the applicant; that Sunnyslaw Road does not form a classified road and that there is no change to public rights of access, although it is accepted that the Report for Handling has been unhelpfully ambiguous on this point and it should have been clearer that these matters were subject to planning control. Christina Cox confirmed that planning permission has not been given for the change of use of public ground to garden ground and that it is accepted that again the description of development was ambiguous and unhelpful; she also emphasised that planning permission has only been granted for domestic purposes associated with the dwelling house and that any use of the container for commercial purposes would be a breach of planning permission. In terms of the CC's concern that enforcement action may not always be pursued, Christina Cox pointed out that the pursuance of enforcement action will rarely lead to substantial legal costs and that, consequently, this was not a factor involved in not pursuing action; she did, however, stress that planning enforcement was discretionary and that the Council is required to act proportionately. Christina Cox did, however, report that she intends to undertake a thorough review of SC's planning enforcement processes later this year and she invited the CC to forward details of any cases where there are concerns about non- enforcement. In conclusion, while she does not uphold the complaint, she does accept that the communication involved in the handling of the application could have been clearer. In the short discussion which followed, LH suggested that the discretionary power and the proportionate requirement could militate against some cases being enforced.

With regard to the Park of Keir planning application, Councillor Tollemache confirmed that he and Councillor Dodds had put up a Section16 motion to the effect that SC resolves that the negotiations set by the Minister are open and transparent and that an appropriate committee/panel of the Council is given the opportunity to scrutinise any agreement prior to it going to the Minister; this was agreed by all the elected members of SC . It was also noted that the 3 month period has now been extended to 6 months.

### **B1521 Flood Protection**

In terms of the flood alleviation scheme for BofA, VM emphasised that this could represent an expanded level of action on the part of the Council; she also stressed the importance of now establishing what will happen after the detailed planning stage and she felt that it would be helpful to have specialist advice in the form of a presentation for the CC from the relevant professional officers of the Council. It was noted that a local resident was concerned in case some of the work carried out on the burn could fall by the wayside and this could presumably be clarified at such a meeting. Councillor Dodds indicated that he would contact Maria Lucey ( Team Leader ) of SC. MB suggested that, if we had a hydrological or a SEPA contact, it would be helpful if he/she could have a preliminary look at the Optioneering Report.

### **B1522 Chair's Report**

MW thanked the Secretary for having stood in as Chair at the previous two meetings. He highlighted the matter of the Mitigation project and the path being developed around the reservoir. In relation to the Darn Walk development, he explained that feedback was expected from the contractor. In conclusion, he asked that the minutes record a vote of thanks from the Community Council to Sem Curley for his outstanding contribution to the Flood Group and for his unstinting efforts on behalf of the community.

### **B1523 Treasurer's Report**

In the absence of MG, the Chair gave a summary of a report which she had provided. In the report the Treasurer confirms that the CC is still comfortably in credit. The financial transactions since the previous month were the £6 March monthly website fee to Nettl collected by direct debit, the £30 accrued as normal for this month's minutes and the £66 for the remaining Dsign invoice. It was noted that the previous monthly Nettl fees ( from December to February ) are as yet uncollected despite the fact that the Treasurer as contacted Nettl about this. MG would welcome an indication from SD on whether the Dsign invoice is the final one. MG will start to prepare the CC's annual statements after 31March and, in regard to this, she is now placing an early call out for someone be the independent verifier; in addition, MG will require an invoice from JC for parking consultation and, from MW, a receipt for the memorial wreath expenses to allow closure of this item. . In relation to the Connect Fund, MG will ensure that the excess funds ( approximately £370 ) are returned for year end purposes.

In conclusion, MG indicated she requires approval from the CC for the phone box insurance ( £11.10 for the sum insured of £500 - the value aligned to the Dunblane CC valuation of their adopted telephone box ).

### **B1524 Secretary's Report**

LH reported having received an email from Councillor Dodds indicating that he had asked the Council's waste collection service to give particular attention to the litter and debris in the Fountain Road car park; Councillor Dodds confirmed that the lower car park has since been cleared.

Councillor Dodds had also emailed to intimate that he and Stephen Kerr had organised a PR publicising event in Station Road two Saturdays ago to highlight the problematic parking situation which has caused difficulties for local residents; unfortunately, the seriously adverse weather had interfered with

the event; Further to this, he informed us that he has had a meeting with Scotrail who have indicated that, while the yard at Bridge of Allan Station is leased by Scotrail from Network Rail until 2022 when the lease runs out, Scotrail will investigate the possibility of taking over the land. Councillor Dodds also underlined the fact that Scotrail was astonished at the number of cars using the station car park and he reported that that the car park is at the top of the list for realignment

Gavin Drummond has emailed us about his ongoing interest in the Darn Walk bridge project to say that, since he had heard nothing from the consultants for some time, he had emailed them for an update.

#### **B1425 Residents' Voice**

Councillor Dodds and Councillor Tollemache raised the issue of the Common Good Fund. This led to a discussion on whether the CC would wish to spend only the interest or would wish to eat into the capital of £400,000. Councillor Tollemache pointed out that there is not a wide awareness of the fact that it is an open fund. MW noted that, when interest rates were high, the funds available were substantial. Gavin Drummond emphasised the unique nature of the Fund in terms of it being all cash; he also stated that he had no recollection of anyone having been turned down.

#### **B1426 AOCB**

It was noted that the CC now requires a new minute taker.

There being no other business, MW declared the meeting closed at 9.13pm.

**The date of the next meeting will be Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 at 7.30pm.**

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