

KILLEARN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2010

Present: I. Beaton; N. Kelly; A. May; B. Pell (*Chair*); E. Smith; D. Stuart; H. Wright; P. Wilks.

Apologies: J. Duncan; C. Macintosh; J. May; P. Rea.

In Attendance: Councillor A. Berrill; PC D. McNally; Pam Campbell; and 16 members of the public.

The Chair wished everyone a Happy New Year and welcomed *Tony Cain, Head of Housing, Stirling Council* and *Tony Teasdale, Rural Stirling Housing Association* to presentations on affordable housing.

CC28 *Affordable Housing*

Tony Cain introduced his talk by saying that he wanted to listen and respond to local opinions. He realised that the bid to the Scottish Government for funding to build houses on 'the turnip field' were controversial and apologised, during the question and answer session, that the very short time required to prepare the bid did not allow adequate consultation with the Community Council. However it did give him a chance to come and speak to the community. As the bid was not accepted, there were presently no plans to build on this site, but if the community wanted to have affordable housing and still retain the turnip field as parkland, it would have to help identify alternative sites. He realised that there had been an application to build 23 sheltered units in the past which had been rejected by local members. He stated that there were 150 persons on the waiting list for rented accommodation in Killearn, of which 14 were homeless and 27 were older applicants. Since 2004, Stirling Council had only been able to allocate 13 houses in the area, so there was an obvious crisis in social rented accommodation in the rural area. Since that time, approximately 500 homes had been built by Rural Stirling Housing Association but none in the immediate local area. There had been a significant fall by two-thirds in the housing stock owned by Stirling Council because of council house *right-to-buy*, although this had been suspended on all tenancies since 2002. It was now accepted that Killearn met the criteria for *Pressured Area Status*. He accepted that although Stirling Council had no chance of meeting the real needs in the near future, the Council had a statutory duty to survey housing needs for all. It had a modest amount of money from the Scottish Parliament and for the first time in many years was planning to build council houses, however the main source would continue to be *Rural Stirling Housing Association*. He stated it was important that Community Councils take an active role in the Local Plan consultation in identifying needs and sites.

Tony Teasdale started by giving a comprehensive history of Rural Stirling Housing Association. He said it was a *Registered Social Landlord*, and the *Association* aimed to be a good landlord, building high-quality housing with excellent space standards of varying sizes and types according to need, including disability. The accommodation was designed to be sustainable and to meet the *Secured-by-Design* standard. He stated that finding suitable sites was their biggest challenge. They liaised with Stirling Council to ensure a fair allocation policy, using needs-based objectives. Their rents were slightly higher than council rents, but affordable. Although there were other options such as shared-equity, the emphasis would continue to be rented housing.

CC29 *Question and Answer Session*

The Chair opened the discussion to the floor.

Questioned if Stirling Council owned land other than the turnip field, Tony Cain said he didn't have the facts to hand, but thought it unlikely that the Council owned any other suitable site. Asked why Stirling Council didn't take the opportunity offered by the former Leisure Centre, he said it had been looked at, but rejected as unsuitable because of the

narrow access. When part of the telephone exchange site was suggested, he said that BT had been approached in the past, and he would look at it again. Questioned about use of compulsory purchase, he said it was a possibility, but it was a long process and not all Council Members would support its use.

Questioned about the economics of building Council or Housing Association properties, Tony Teasdale said that land costs could be as high as 40% of the cost of building in the Killlearn area at a density of 10 – 12 per acre. Developers could be required to sell part of a development site at a lower than market cost to a housing association or council as a condition of planning consent.

When asked about the new trial project in which landowners would be given planning permission to build in the countryside in return for a 15-year lease for affordable rented use, Tony Teasdale said he knew of the project but did not know any example of its uptake in this area. Tony Cain felt that 15 years was too short, as many council tenants expected to have security for a much longer time, citing a block of flats where the tenancies had ended and Stirling Council was required to re-home 25 families.

Tony Cain said that he had concentrated on rented property as this was the best route for the provision of affordable housing. On questioned why developers did not build for local needs, he stated that this was a question for *planning* not *housing*. Another questioner asked why the cost of private housing had not been included in the discussion but the answer was that this was due to market forces and was not controlled by the local authority. The Chair regretted the recent pattern of developers buying up and then converting moderate sized, single storey houses into much larger properties before selling on. The result has been to leave the village with very few modest properties which could provide flexible housing to the elderly or those with mobility problems.

The chair thanked both speakers for informative and interesting presentations and for readily answering questions from the floor.

CC30 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2009 were adopted.

CC31 Matters Arising

Telephone Kiosk It was hoped that the Community Council would soon adopt the telephone kiosk at Dumgoyne for £1. It was planned to hand the box to the Archives Group of KCFC to be used as a tourist information centre close to the West Highland Way.

Bus Shelter at Blanesmithy As a result of the information provided by the Community Council, the shelter will be retained and refurbished.

CC32 Police Matters

PC McNally stated that it had been a relatively quiet month. There had been a break-in at an unoccupied furnished house in Napier Road, a theft of tractor parts from Atkinson's Garage and an incident of shoplifting at the Co-op. There had been no serious incidents on the roads due to the snow. PC McNally stated that he had spoken to the driver of the security van servicing the cash machine yet again parking dangerously on the bank corner.

CC33 Question Time.

The occupant of Lettre Cottage brought photographs and details of a succession of serious accidents involving cars leaving the road and ending up in his garden, and in two cases against the wall of the cottage. These could have very serious consequences for the occupants of the cottage, both in the garden and within the house. Despite pleas to Stirling Council to take action to make the corner safer or provide a barrier to prevent the vehicles entering the property, nothing has been done. It was agreed to write to Stirling Council expressing its concern and ask it to take action before there is a fatality.

CC34 Youth Matters

Iain Beaton stated that he was in correspondence with Pam Campbell on transport problems. Pam said that 500 questionnaires had been provided to Balfron High School on transportation which she hoped would be filled in and returned. He said that he was also hopeful that a mountain bike course could be up and running by spring.

Iain stated there had been a problem with buses on the last day of school as many took the opportunity to go into town, but due to snow found there were no buses back.

CC35 Treasurer's Report

Number 1 Account balance - £58.75, Number 2 Account balance £1605.56. This was no change on last month.

CC36 Planning

Planning Decisions by Appointed Officers of Stirling Council:

09/00775/FUL Erection of dwelling house (renewal of planning permission 04/00742/DET under Article 5) at Land At Blairessan Station Road.

Decision: Approve with Conditions

Valid Planning Applications Received:

10/00011/FUL Alterations and extension to form new sitting room, entrance hall and shower room at Dunkyan Lodge, Drumtian Road. It was decided to take no action.

CC37 Community Council Handbook

Aileen requested the draft handbook be returned as soon as possible with members' comments.

CC38 Correspondence

Correspondence received: Information on NHS Forum meeting on dial-a-bus and central shopping mobility; Stirling Focus (which contains the refuse collection calendar); invitation to Scottish National Rural Network meeting; notification from EVAG that *n-power* will not appeal SC refusal of planning for installation of wind turbines; request for information if KCC makes use of assistance from Stirling Council in Minuting meetings.

Forth Valley Orchard Regeneration Initiative asks for information on the location and variety of fruit trees. It was agreed to pass the request to the local community via the notice board and the website.

CC39 Other Matters – Future Issues

Village Hall KCFC's Village Hall Development Group had produced a plan for a major refurbishment of Killlearn Village Hall. KCC will host an invitation-only meeting for stakeholders, local councillors, MP and MSPs on 2 February 2010. Public meetings will be held on 28/29 March 2010 to present the plan.

Eco Matters It was planned to hold a meeting primarily devoted to the environment in May. Community Councillors and interested members of the public were asked to bring to the next meeting issues that they wished discussed.

CC40 Any Other Business

Road Signs Signs at the foot of Station Road were dirty and difficult to read. It was agreed to write to Stirling Council about this.

Link to the West Highland Way The Paths Group of KCFC were investigating possible routes to the West Highland Way. A letter had been written to the Gordon Trust asking for permission to reinstitute a possible path, but the group had received no reply. The group ask the Community Council to write to the Trust supporting them.

Path between Herons Court and Fintry Crossroads. The footpath from Herons Court to the Fintry Crossroads was in a very bad state, soft underfoot, tree roots etc. The main problem was the lack of a kerb which means that cars can (and do) drive onto the footpath. It was agreed to write to the Stirling Council to ask that the kerb be reinstated and the surface improved.

Maps of Stirling Council Assets It was reported by the Paths Group of KCFC that Strathblane CC had asked Stirling Council for indicative maps of all land, roads and paths owned by Stirling Council. It was felt that this would be a useful asset for the community and would like KCC to make a similar request. It was agreed to do so.

CC41 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place in Killearn Primary School at 8.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 24 February 2010. Note that this is the fourth Wednesday of the month due to the school closing for mid-term holidays.