

Blackford Community Council Minutes of Meeting held Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2016 in the Church Session Room, Blackford.

Present:

Janet Law	Chair
Katharine Huggett	Vice chair
Irene McLaughlan	Treasurer
Alison Dawson	Minute Secretary*
Ann Gaunt	Perth and Kinross Council
Neil Gaunt	Representing Council on Strathearn Community Rail Partnership
Members of the public (3)	

- Subject to completion of processes for co-opting to Council

1. Apologies:

Bet Illand, Andrew Sinclair.

## **2. Minutes of the meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2015**

Council members discussed draft minutes and a number of minor errors or omissions were identified before minutes were agreed.

Noted that Council preferred the use of 'Chair' and 'Vice chair'

JL asked AD to send corrected copy of the minutes to JL and to AS (for website)

**Actions: AD to complete amendments and forward minutes as requested.**

## **3. Matters arising**

a) Co-option onto the Community Council

JL noted that Perth and Kinross Council ('P&KC') had pointed out that the constitution says that co-option is not possible until 6 months after elected Council has been constituted. JL indicated that the Council hoped in due course to co-opt Alison Dawson and others onto the Council. Further members would be welcome. Prospective Community Councillors need to be on the electoral register for Blackford Community Council ('BCC') area.

b) Signed copies of the constitution for return to Perth and Kinross Council

P&KC required all Community Councillors to sign and return a copy of the Community Council's constitution. This was not signed at the EGM in November, although copies were circulated. KH noted that P&KC had previously contacted elected members about such things by mail, but now seemed to be routinely using email.

**Action: JL and other members present signed a copy of the BCC constitution.**

c) Acknowledgement of work of BCC Councillors

JL thanked; IM for work on trying to restore postal services to Blackford; KH for work on traffic signs; AS for work on the funding bid for traffic signs.

d) Noticeboards

IM noted that the original noticeboard is filthy and broken and would need to be cleaned and mended. It was noted that the new noticeboard uses magnets to hold items. BCC is now in possession of a key for the new board. AG noted that she had asked for the fence to be moved. JL

suggested now that it was accessible consideration would need to be given to what information it should contain. IM noted that there was a list of recent awards from the Blackford Community Funds Panel. She would check with the Fund's chair, but perhaps this could be displayed in the new noticeboard?

**Actions: IM to check with Community Fund if list of awards can be publicly displayed.**

e) Moray Institute update

KH noted that the hall would not now be available until March / April. It was noted that this information should be passed on to the contacts of all community groups who used the hall.

f) Salting depot

It was noted that there was currently no power supply to the salting depot. KH suggested that Gordon Banks had previously been helpful in regard to getting action in relation to the depot area.

**Action: KH to send JL previous correspondence with Gordon Banks.**

#### **4. Correspondence**

##### **a) Regarding Post Office services**

JL had said at the EGM that she would write to P&KC Councillors regarding the ongoing problem of lack of Post Office services in Blackford. She had done so. She noted a response from the Scottish Government to correspondence in this matter indicating that provision of Post Office services was a matter reserved to Westminster.

Members discussed what further action could be taken; e.g. a letter could be sent to Roseanna Cunningham. It was noted that several other possible sites for locating Post Office service were being considered (Highland Spring, Tullibardine Distillery).

JL suggested that perhaps the village had not appreciated the arrangements which previous owners the Doaks had entered into in order to allow the Post Office to operate in the shop. KH noted that the Post Office offers only its standard contracts, and is not flexible in allowing part-time or short hours operation of services. She noted that Auchterarder Post Office may also be moving.

JL said that it was important to consider what BCC can actually do in this case. It was noted that an email had been sent to invite the head of Post Office services to a BCC meeting. JL indicated a preference for action in Blackford to be part of a wider campaign to save and extend rural Post Offices, but was not aware of any such campaign and that she did not have the time or energy to lead a national campaign. It was suggested that perhaps local MPs / MSPs could take the matter up. JL indicated that she was aware of correspondence with Roseanna Cunningham and Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh's offices regarding this matter and would like to see it pursued at a higher level. KH noted that she had been told that Blackford should be getting two visits per week from the van rather than one (Weds 4-5.15pm) as at present.

A member of the public noted that mail collection was also still an issue, with the post box outside the shop receiving only morning uplifts and the box at the top of the village being collected from both mid-morning and later in the day. Member of the public contacted JL to say that the posting of larger items was also an issue. IM expressed concern that reductions in the use of postboxes might lead to their closure.

IM noted that whilst official responses seemed to be received in relation to letters and emails to the Post Office, the organisation did not appear to officially respond to telephone calls.

**Actions:**

**IM to take up the matter of inconsistency of postbox collections.**

**AG agreed to start a press campaign, copying local MPs / MSPs offices into the press releases.**

**b) Police communications and the weekly Commander's bulletin.**

JL noted that BBC had been informed that due to staff changes there would no longer be a briefing on local police matters before meetings, but as of the date of today's meeting JL would receive a weekly 'Commander's Bulletin' with details of crimes across the P&K area. The Chair will scan this document for anything relating to Blackford and only pass on where relevant information is included in the Bulletin.

**c) Review of policing priorities**

The Scottish Government was consulting on strategic policing priorities. Further information, including a discussion paper and introductory letter can be found on the Scottish Government website: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Justice/policies/police-fire-rescue/police-scotland/StrategicPolicePriorities> . Responses were invited by Fri 12 February 2016. JL did not see this as a BCC priority.

**d) Nominations for attendees at the annual Royal Garden Party in Holyrood in June**

JL noted that BCC had been asked for nominations. She indicated that attendees could be suggested but that the nomination process would be discussed by BCC Councillors privately.

**e) NHS consultation on changes to the boundary of the 'Red Practice', Crieff Medical Centre**

BCC had been invited to comment on this, but Councillors were not aware of people in Blackford being signed up to this practice.

**f) Perth & Kinross Association of Voluntary Service (PKAVS) Health and Social Care ongoing consultation**

JL questioned the need for BCC to be on correspondence and mailing lists for PKAVS. IM noted that much of PKAVS activity takes place in Crieff. There seemed to be an issue with the same information being forwarded to BCC from multiple sources. This was the case not only with PKAVS information but also other groups.

**g) Strathearn Community Campus**

JL noted that she had asked for BCC to be removed from the mailing list for this initiative, but that had not proven an easy thing to do.

**5. Office bearers' reports**

**a) Chair's report**

JL noted that she wanted to come to the next meeting of BCC with ideas about how to get information out to people and organisations in Blackford. KH noted that many community organisations already got many of the same emails that were received by BCC.

Action: JL to prepare ideas on information sharing for next meeting.

**b) Treasurer's report**

BCC no longer holds money on behalf of Blackford Playpark. Accordingly the account balances are

as follows:

Treasurers account: £834.44, C.I.R. £1188.18

We had hoped to be meeting in the Moray Institute by now but this has been delayed by several months. IM suggested writing a cheque to the Kirk to cover the cost of using the Session House up to the end of 2015.

### c) Planning

KH has taken primary responsibility for this, trawling the P&K Planning website for relevant items.

JL noted that she had received:

- Information on P&K Development Plan consultation events, 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 3pm-8pm, Aytoun Hall, Auchterarder.
- P&K Developer Contribution Supplementary Guidance, a consultation about developer contributions running from 23 December to 19 February. JL is still absorbing this information. AG noted that this had been discussed in P&KC. KH noted that there had been few opportunities for 'planning gain' arising from developments in Blackford and where there had been BCC were not consulted on this.
- JL had asked P&KC for a summary of relevant developer contributions: Reply had been received from Andrew Ballantyne. This had once been included in plans not taken forward to develop housing in Blackford.

JL noted that the format of weekly planning lists received from P&HC had now changed to PDF / RTF formats. KH noted that she monitored by looking for 'Blackford' in the P&KC website.

JL noted that a weekly list was useful to give BCC time to respond to applications.

AG pointed out that BCC can put in a 'holding comment' and P&KC planning will take notice of this.

There was a discussion of the volume of work involved in monitoring planning applications, the inability of BCC to respond to all applications and the formats in which information was received (unhelpful from a BCC perspective).

Specific planning matters discussed:

- *The replacement footbridge*

JL had agreed to contact EDF (Sarah Dooley) regarding this after the November meeting. She had sought clarification from P&KC first – they saw no reason from EDF not to just go ahead and build the bridge. EDF still appeared reluctant. Emails had been exchanged but JL had not met up with EDF rep yet. KH noted that there might be possible funding for the maintenance of footpaths. AG thought that this might involve SusTrans.

KH noted that over time there had been different responses from P&KC, e.g. previous concerns that footbridge would need to be accessible to and suitable for horses. JL noted that P&KC (Dave Stubbs?) saw no reason for EDF not to proceed, build bridge and maintain it for 10 years, after which responsibility would pass to P&KC.

### **Actions:**

**JL to inform EDF that P&KC had indicated that there was no reason not to go ahead.**

**KH will find further information on possible funding for footpath maintenance.**

- *Kirkton Farm development application*

BCC had alerted P&KC (Dave Stubbs) about the need to maintain Rights of Way. He had noted that if gates were built, they could not be locked. KH noted that there had been ongoing footpath issues on Kirkton Farm land. JL suggested indicating to Dave Stubbs that BCC anticipate that P&KC will deal with this issue.

KH noted 'back history' of the site, including removal of the core path markers, broken signposts, etc. JL indicated that she would keep on the case.

- *Greenknowes windfarm extension application*

AG noted that any BCC comment in respect of this or other applications should be placed on the P&KC Planning system. JL noted that the issue was not around the application as such but around planning gain. JL felt that BCC should comment on this and KH had drafted a response. KH noted that there was no information in the application about what the developers would do for the community.

AG said that BCC could make the point that they would like to see details of benefit to the community. BCC should bring this up: it was not the responsibility of the Council Officer to do so. P&K can advise developers on how to do this, but directing them to do so would be seen as a conflict of interest. KH explained the distribution of funds linked to the Burnfoot development. Ideally, funds from any new development would come to Blackford Community Fund.

Actions: JL will speak to Ian McLaughlin, Council Officer, and try to put something in writing.

- *Highland Spring Rail freight terminal application*

Mentioned briefly in passing. NG suggested that he believed that HS had attended to main points of objection in their revisions to application and had indicated that they wanted to come to BCC meeting and give a presentation.

**d) Funding application for speed awareness sign.**

An application to T in the Park for funding for this had been unsuccessful. However, AS (not present) had spoken to Highland Spring about this and HS might be interested in helping out with funding for the sign.

**e) Blackford Community Council Website**

AS was still very willing to help with the website. BCC needed to make a decision with regard to hosting the website. Councillors agreed to move away from the current domain hosts, Weebly. The website will be discussed in more detail in the next BCC meeting.

**f) Community Rail Partnership**

NG delivered a report and update on progress (written report provided). Key events as follows:

- 15 December 2015 – Partnership approved by Scottish Parliament and launched at Gleneagles railway station
- 19 January 2016 – Information meeting by Steering Group held at Aytoun Hall, Auchterarder (NG noted low attendance)
- 9 February 2016 – Information meeting by Steering Group, Honeyman Hall, Bridge of Allan
- 22 February 2016 – formal appointment of Board and Office Bearers and adoption of Partnership Constitution

There was discussion at the BCC meeting of the lack of direct services from Gleneagles to Edinburgh at weekends and poor 'commuter-friendly' time services weekdays. Reasons for this were discussed. NG noted that the CRP was not intended to be a lobbying organisation, but could make suggestions.

JL asked if information was available on levels of use of Gleneagles station. NG noted that commuting was possible but required careful planning to make best use of buses to/from station at peak times.

**6. AOCB**

- **T in the Park**

JL noted that report was now out. IM had read briefly. JL interested in seeing whether all concerns covered. It was noted that the report was critical and that the organisers seemed concerned to

address issues. AG noted traffic plan had failed in 2015.

Action: JL and IM to discuss

JL noted that a T in the Park meeting was coming up with BCC invited to send up to two Councillors. JL said she would be interested in going – KH / IM not available for that night.

- **Auchterarder Network meeting**

IM noted a Health and Social Work integration meeting and a series of intergenerational events, including quiz night and boat-building sessions. Noted the start-up of 'Auchterarder 'Archway' Café in the Community Church Centre, supported by the Network (See <http://www.pkavscarershub.org.uk/Auchterarder-Archway--Community-Cafe-event> ), Mondays 13.30-15.00. Organisers were looking at potential for organising community transport to this.

- **Action on Hearing Loss 'Hear to Inform' information session**

10am-2.30pm, 17 February Auchterarder Community Church Centre  
(<http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/news-and-events/scotland/news/hear-to-inform-sessions-for-auchterarder-residents-who-have-hearing-loss.aspx> ).

- **Surface water issues – East end of Blackford to Petrol station**

KH noted serious surface water issues on this stretch of road. Safety concern.

Action:

KH to contact Alan Campbell (BEAR Scotland) to alert, JL to be copied in.

- **'Visitor centre' sign now removed**

Sign now removed following KH contact with Alan Campbell (BEAR Scotland) in Sept 2015.

- **Continued inaction over repairs to Lychgate at the Cemetery**

Raised by member of the public, who noted repairs required – Lychgate is historically significant and one of very few in Scotland. AG noted that it was a 'listed' site. Discussion of whose responsibility to maintain: P&KC Bereavement Services or Heritage Trust? AG noted that she had had discussions with Council Officers in the past. Issue is money – Council does not have any. IM suggested speaking to Bill Reeve to get an idea of what needs doing.

Actions:

AG agreed to speak to David Strachan, P&K Heritage Trust, JL to be copied in to correspondence. AG to go up to cemetery, survey what needs doing, tell P&K and request action.

- **Blackford Historical Society 'Burning of Blackford'**

JL congratulated Society on a successful event. All did very well. KH noted that she had taken video of the event; also that further information on the Burning of Blackford and the Huntingtower link would be discussed at the Women's Institute meeting in April.

- **'Live active' classes for Blackford?**

IM noted at Auchterarder Network meeting posters for exercise classes in Aytoun Hall, Auchterarder. Spoke to Colin Melville about the potential for classes to be run in Blackford, and was told that if there was demand then they could be run (but not sure who would lead them). Cost would be around £2.50 per hour.

Actions:

**IM to wait until the Moray Institute is available once more and then explore the level of demand for discussion at a future BCC meeting.**