



# BALFRON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2016 IN BALFRON HIGH SCHOOL DRAFT MINUTES

**Present:** Colin Cameron (Chair), David Dougans, Laura Elder, Alison Lamont Chalmers, David McGowan, Bill Noblett, Christine Wilson, Carsten Mandt (minutes)

**In Attendance:** Fraser Allan, Bill Astley-Jones, David Brown (Stirling Council), Jim Burns (First Bus), Alison Crowe (Stirling Council), Ian Denvir (Stirling Council), Gladys Farquharson, Cllr Ian Muirhead, PC Raymond Murphy, Jim Thomson, Pat Thomson, Rae Wilson

### 1. **Welcome and Apologies**

Apologies were received from John Nicholson.

### 2. **Minutes of Previous meeting 4 August 2016**

Bill Noblett proposed the minutes as an accurate record, seconded by Laura Elder.

### 3. **Matters Arising**

- 3.1. Christine said that Incredible Edibles had concerns over placing a temporary Christmas tree in the vegetable bed at the Tontine Corner. It was decided to not pursue a temporary tree there and to put it in the same location as previously. Laura will explore options for a tree. A permanent tree still needs to be sourced.
- 3.2. The self-closing gates have now been installed in Donaldson Park.
- 3.3. Stirling Council confirmed that the damaged car park sign will be repaired. Timescales are not yet clear.
- 3.4. No response as yet about the speed bumps in Spoker's Loan.
- 3.5. Jim Burns highlighted issues with overgrown vegetation in Spoker's Loan damaging paint and windscreens on buses travelling on that route. BCC will raise this with local residents.

### 4. **Police Report**

PC Murphy highlighted a number of incidents of antisocial behaviour and speed checks being carried out in response to complaints of speeding at entrances to the village. Parking at double yellow lines is also being monitored and a number of penalty notices have been issued.

The untaxed vehicle in Donaldson Way that was discussed previously has been followed up. He advised that this should be raised with the Housing Association as the vehicle is parked on private land. Jim Burns advised that he has raised speeding with the hauliers travelling to and from the new Roman Road housing development. Colin noted that a number of concerns had also been raised by parents using the Dunmore St / Roman Rd route to Primary School, which is currently very dangerous as motorists frequently fail to slow down around pedestrians that are having to make their way past the building site without pavements.

## **5. Councillor's Report**

Cllr Muirhead highlighted a number of developments:

- 5.1. Stirling Council is in advanced discussions about compensation to the Council over the High School closure at the end of the last school term.
- 5.2. The new bin regime is due to come into force shortly. Delivery of the new bins commences on 5 September and will take 6 weeks to complete. Bins will be issued along with an information pack and collection calendar.
- 5.3. Community Test Pilot – Cllr Muirhead noted the establishment of a rural care hub steering group with a view to identifying future use of the Strathendrick Care Home. He also pointed out that Stirling Council are keen to pursue a more joined-up approach on developing roads, paths and shared space (funding for consultation work on shared space is available to BCC). Stirling Council's City Development bid for Stirling may also create opportunities for civic space improvements in Balfron. A Q&A session about the bid will be held in Buchlyvie from 7-8pm on 15 September.
- 5.4. Balfron has one fibreoptic broadband cabinet in operation and one more is going live in October. Two others were previously scheduled but are no longer in the plans. Cllr Muirhead will enquire about who is leading on the broadband rollout for the area and advise BCC.
- 5.5. Colin asked for an update about the future of Balfron library. Cllr Muirhead advised that no communication had gone out yet to elected members about plans for the library.

## **6. Transport Consultation**

- 6.1. David Brown, from Stirling Council's Public Transport Unit, gave an overview of the current situation for the bus industry, which is very challenging both locally and nationally: "the biggest crisis in bus operations in 30 years". Commercial bus operators are increasingly cutting back on their own services due to falling passenger numbers (across Scotland, except Edinburgh City). This is especially evident in the over-60s (despite the demographic trends of an ageing population). Car use is still rising and is now continuing into later life. Falling public transport patronage is also a reflection of the increase in internet shopping and supermarket deliveries. For Stirling Council in particular the challenge is heightened by a lack of smaller operators in the area that could step in to take on routes that larger commercial operators like First Bus cannot continue to operate. There is also a lack of Council resource to subsidise routes to the extent that is required to counteract the shortfall in commercial provision.
- 6.2. Jim Burns highlighted that the commercial bus service in Balfron solely survives on the back of the school transport contract.
- 6.3. The importance of maintaining a balance between a viable commercial operation and the need to support a well-connected rural community was discussed. It was noted that since the deregulation of the bus market and the legal primacy of commercial bus operation, local authorities have had no powers to direct bus provision, either at UK, Scottish or local government level. In particular, the lack of overall oversight and control of the network in an area like Stirling / central Scotland is an issue.
- 6.4. Other options including demand responsive transport (DRT) were discussed. David Brown pointed out that DRT is not permitted to compete with commercial bus services hence no DRT service covers the Balfron – Stirling route.

- 6.5. Practical issues arising from poor timetabling and lack of Sunday services were raised. The importance of community engagement in planning for transport was emphasised. It was recognised that this will require a degree of prioritisation of some services over others in light of the ongoing challenges in maintaining the passenger numbers required for a viable commercial services and the scarce resource available to subsidise public transport.
- 6.6. David can be contacted on 01786 237535 or at [brownd@stirling.gov.uk](mailto:brownd@stirling.gov.uk)

## **7. Local Development Plan**

Stirling Council are currently consulting on the new local development plan (LDP) and the new local transport strategy. In particular in light of the previous discussion around the challenges with local bus services it was agreed that it was important to feed back concerns to the Council during the consultation. Colin fed back from a consultation meeting held in Killlearn that he and Carsten had attended. He highlighted that the LDP includes two main development areas: the Balfroon works depot site and the site in Spinner Street (behind the bus garage), but that neither were likely to be developed in the near future.

## **8. Balfroon Bash**

Colin thanked all the stall holders and helpers who contributed to the 2016 Balfroon Bash. The event was well attended by the community despite the adverse weather conditions.

## **9. Dog Fouling Campaign**

Balfroon Primary School has produced a range of posters to raise awareness of the problems arising from dog fouling in the village. The idea of a prize for either the best design(s) or the school as a whole was discussed. Bill Astley-Jones said he would discuss options with Strathendrick Rotary. While work is ongoing to develop a full campaign it was agreed to distribute laminated copies of the various poster designs in Balfroon, focussing on the area around the Fire Station and Dunmore Street. A suggestion was made to display public notices on how many fines have been issued to make enforcement more visible to the community.

## **10. Play Equipment**

Bill Noblett has been liaising with three major suppliers who are carrying out surveys of the play park at the moment. Community feedback was received at the Bash on possible options. Existing play equipment is likely to be moved. Additional funding beyond Cala's Section 75 contribution will be required to carry out all the works required.

## **11. Strathendrick Care Hub**

Bill updated the group on recent discussions about the Strathendrick Care Hub. No responses have been received yet on local MECS champions following the recent leaflet campaign. He flagged up the Scottish Government Neighbourhoods of Care campaign. Alison Crowe from Cherry Tree Care Home gave an update on developments. More detailed plans for local health and social care provision in the area are being developed and BCC will have an opportunity to input into that.

## **12. Broadband Update**

As mentioned by Cllr Muirhead (see agenda item 5) some provision of faster broadband is now live in the village. Some providers are now offering faster broadband packages to their customers. There is however still no clarity on the exact limitations and timescales of planned upgrades in the area and which households are likely to be excluded from the current roll out.

## **13. Treasurer's Report**

Bill reported that:

- The balance in the BCC Account as of today is £4,159.29. Of this, approx. £240 is committed to Balfron 2014's donation for Christmas decorations, £462 for this year's Connect Fund, and approx £1,080 to Balfron in Bloom. We await the remittance of this year's Administration Grant of £347.
- With regard to this year's Connect Fund Grant, this is now overspent by £124
- Bill is in discussion with JFJ Events, supplier of activities for the Bash, with regard to a possible partial refund of the amount paid to them.
- With regard to the Bash, BCC noted their appreciation to Stirling Rural Housing Association for their kind donation of £250 towards the event.

## **14. Planning and Correspondence**

Nigel Mottram has written to BCC to report that a grant of £96,000 has been awarded through the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund for the Balfron Church roof repairs, and thanked us for our support.

## **15. Business from the Floor**

- Rae Wilson highlighted the new Meals At Home service which will provide meals and support for up to 5 people in the village. The service is still looking for volunteers to staff a rota.
- Rae also mentioned that the Snowdrop Garden appeal in Donaldson Park has raised approximately £400. Any further donations should be sent to Rae.
- The Fairtrade Village status of Balfron is due for renewal. Rae made a request for new volunteers for the Fairtrade committee.

## **16. Any Other Business**

None.

## **17. Date of next meeting**

Thursday 6 October 2016, 7.30pm, Balfron Campus