



# BALFRON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## Minutes of meeting 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023

**Present:** Stuart Freckingham (Chair), Craig Potter (Vice Chair), Alison Limbert (Secretary), Alasdair Street, Sue Bell (Treasurer), Fiona Shaw

**Apologies:** Claudia Duncan, Laura Shaw (Minutes)

**In Attendance:** Cllr Paul Henke

### 2) Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes from the meeting on 1 August were proposed by Fiona Shaw and seconded by Alasdair Street.

### 3) Matters Arising

Strathendrick Care Home – There has been no update from Stirling Council since 6<sup>th</sup> March. Cllr Henke to follow up on previous action. Stuart to seek update. **Action: SF**  
Cycle Training for School Age Children – Member of the community pursuing having Stirling Bike Club deliver skills training at Donaldson Park. Contact details passed to him for Donaldson Trust.

Equipment owned by Balfroon CC – the staging owned by Balfroon CC was recently used at the Balfroon Bash. This is no longer required by the CC. Suggestion is to gift the staging to Balfroon Rovers for their events. Ladders owned by Balfroon CC to be returned and a location sought to store them at. **Action: SF**

Big Conversation – There was a consultation event held at Balfroon Library on 5 September. The Big Conversation is to inform how the Council can achieve £13m of savings from its budget. Next local event is at Strathblane Library on 18 September between 3-5pm. Details at <https://www.stirling.gov.uk/council-and-committees/budget/big-conversation/>. Cllr Henke to follow up how the community is consulted on these savings: **Action: Cllr Henke**

### 4) Declarations of Interest

Sue Bell declared an interest in the matter of the invoice for the storage container (item 8). Paul Henke declared an interest in the matter of the path at Lane (item 5a)

### 5) Projects

#### a. Balfroon Active Places

Yellow lines still to be placed outside of hairdressers (opposite Cotton St). As we were discussing the issue someone made a complaint about the new parking arrangement outside the post office/hairdresser and the new V shaped pavement. Craig B said he would look at it with his team to see if any improvement could be made.

Craig B agreed that a small 'No Parking' sign will be placed on the wall next to the entrance of the Tontine Corner.

Bin still to be moved and Millenium Benches to be placed at Tontine Corner in the next few weeks. They will be in touch with Peter Craig directly to move the benches. Christmas tree hole and electrical connection still be completed.

Marco could not explain why trees at back of Tontine Corner (conifer and cherry tree had not been removed). Marco will contact contractor to find out and then complete the work in due course. Equally he is unclear why birch tree at corner of spinner street was not trimmed. He will get back to us.

Line marking outside the coop to be improved. Zig Zag lines to be extended outside Coop to prevent parking and improve safety. Middle zig zag to be removed to indicate only one lane traffic at Pedestrian crossing point.

Balfron Community Council sign wobbly and to be redone.

Ramp to Buchanan Street leading to Greek Thompson Road to be looked at to prevent damage to cars and roadway. Marco or Craig B to contact Fire Station to discuss the issue.

Bin outside library to be moved from centre of the area. To be moved toward lower planter ensuring continued use by schoolchildren.

Sustrans still to make decision on Donaldson Lane path. Marco to push for a decision before contractors leave. Craig B has some concern on permission to complete path at top end. I said I would liaise with Colin Cameron/Tim Edwards to find out what legal arrangements are in place for this area.

Work looks now as if it will be completed by mid-October (final work will be the resurfacing and remedial work at the Clachan).

Bollards at the lower entrance to the village have now been reinstated. Orange temporary barriers have been removed.

b. War memorial

No update

c. Phone box

No update

d. Community orchard

See update appended to the minutes.

## **6) Police Report**

An update on various anti-social behaviour primarily involving young persons, road safety violations and the welcome news of no reported thefts this month in the Balfron area.

## **7) Elected Councillor's report**

Speeding – Cllr Henke suggested the implementation of Community Speed Watch (<https://www.communityspeedwatch.org/>) to reduce the speed of cars travelling through the village. The scheme requires volunteers to purchase and be trained on

the use of a speed camera. Anyone interested to investigate the feasibility of a scheme for Balfron, email [hello@balfroncc.org.uk](mailto:hello@balfroncc.org.uk)

### **8) Treasurer report**

It was agreed to continue this year with the storage container service that holds Balfron CC and community groups' equipment.

Balfron CC to seek funding to pay for refreshments for the Christmas tree light switch on event.

### **9) Planning report**

a. Shearers Garage, Buchanan Street – There have been four comments received on the application (including BCC's). Two objections focus on disturbance, increased usage and potential effects on nearby housing.

b. New Veterinary Practice (Balfron Business Hub), Dunkeld Court – There have been two comments received on the application. One was from the Transport Development Team in relation to the potential impact of increased traffic use; they are satisfied that the increased traffic use can be accommodated. Scottish Wildlife Trust submitted a comment in relation to Bats, but it is not relevant given the structure of the building.

Planning Applications can be found at <https://www.stirling.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning/view-and-comment-on-planning-applications/>.

### **10) Chair's report**

No update

### **11) Defibrillators**

There are 5 defibrillators in Balfron (inc Balfron Station). They are located at Balfron High School, phone box in Balfron Station, Coach House pub, Balfron Bus Station, Balfron Bowling Club. There is no ownership of those at Balfron Station and Coach House Pub. Balfron CC to seek funding to cover the cost of replacement pads for these two defibrillators. **Action: SF and AL**

### **12) AOB**

A mini-festival is taking place next month to celebrate Balfron's 720th anniversary. Details of the events can be found at <https://balfronheritage.org.uk/720-years-of-balfron/>

**13) Next meeting 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 7:30pm in Balfron High School.**

## Balfron Orchard – update September 2023

### What we've been up to

A group of Balfron volunteers have been looking after the Balfron Orchard for the last couple of years, with the objective to keep the 65 fruit trees in good order and share any produce with the local community.

The orchard is located on Weaver's Winnel behind the old bank building. The volunteer group is a small informal team, and we tackle tree pruning, weeding, mulching and, of course, harvesting. The volunteers work on the trees when they are able, keeping on top of things throughout the year. **We are always looking for extra hands to help** – please get in touch (via the Community Council) if you would like to support and we can add you to the WhatsApp group.

We have been very lucky to receive donations of mulch this year in February and in August – our thanks go to those who contributed as mulching has improved the health of many of the trees. **We are always on the lookout for more**, so if you are cutting down trees / hedges / etc and have some spare chippings for mulch, please let us know! It needs to be disease free of course.

Stirling Council have continued to support our work and have recently agreed to minimise the mowing under the trees so that we can create a microenvironment that will encourage more pollinators. The Council will continue to mow the grass in the main area of the green but have handed responsibility for the orchard over to us as part of a formal agreement with Balfron Community Council.

### 2023 Harvest

When the harvest is ready, we will gather and put the fruit into the phone box, as we did last year, and actively encourage those who live in Balfron to come and pick their own fruit from the orchard. We are just about to start our first round of harvesting.

If you are picking your own fruit, please remember:

- Only pick the fruit if it is coming away easily from the tree – if it does not, it means it is not yet ripe
- Don't bend the branches to reach fruit – they are very likely to snap and cause long term damage. We will pick the harder to reach fruit using ladders.

### Health of the trees

The health of the trees and their fruit production has been monitored over the last couple of years, to determine what actions should be taken to improve the health of individual trees or to remove / replace where appropriate.

There are currently 65 trees in the orchard made up of 25 apple trees, 12 plum trees, 14 cherry trees and 14 pear trees. There have been some issues, namely:

- Our pear trees have been infected with a blight – we have had to remove one completely and are managing the others via regular pruning.
- Our cherry trees are not successful – they rarely produce fruit and are not looking healthy. We will look to use a different pruning approach to see if that has an impact, and if not, we may consider removing them.
- The plum trees have not been so successful this year, in particular tree number 56 which kept the whole village in plums last year. Apparently, it is normal that a tree has a rest after a very productive previous year.

Although the plums are not producing the volume of fruit compared to last year when we had a bumper crop, the apples are doing very well and should provide a reasonable supply for the village.

**We look forward to your continued support.**

Balfron Orchard Volunteer Group  
September 2023