

Minutes of the Dunkeld & Birnam Community Council Meeting
Monday 10th of April 2023

1. Attendance:

Community Councillors: Lachlan MacEwan (**LM**), Alan Wylie (**AW**), Laura Graham (**LG**), John Wigzell (**JW**), Chris Claydon (**CC**)

PKC Councillors: Grant Laing (**GL**)

Members of the public (MOP): 8

Minutes: Jane Bremner

Apologies: Claire McLaren (PKC), Cara Stewart (NTS), Mark Richardson (Atholl Estates)

2. March minutes:

The minutes of the March meeting were proposed by **LM** and approved by **LG**.

3. Declaration of interest – none declared.

4. Zoom Meeting Etiquette

AW outlined how that during a Zoom meeting:

- All attendees should be identified with audio and/or visual.
- Anybody from the Press should declare their presence.
- Messaging on Chat should be minimal.
- Anybody wanting to comment should raise their hands and then they will be allowed to speak.
- Nothing should be published by the audience.

MOP asked what the process was for asking that the minutes be amended. **AW** informed her that once the draft minutes had been published in 'The Bridge' / Facebook page, a comment could be made which would then be considered before the next meeting.

5. Treasurer's Report and Micro-Grants Update

JW explained that there had been major issues with RBS and releasing funds. This has meant payments had not been made. The micro-funding for the Art Festival, the Dunkeld & Birnam Trad Youth Group and the First Responders had been affected. Compensation has been given to the DBCC by the RBS for this problem. It is hoped that this issue will be rectified in the near future.

There is a worry that this could cause a backlog of payments to applicants, and it is important to be careful that the money is sufficient to cover all costs.

6. CC Member Numbers

LM explained that this has been an on-going issue. At the moment the maximum number of councillors allowed is 10. **LM** proposed a drop to 8 which had been suggested by the PKC. This number can be increased again if there is an influx of applicants for the Community Council. This proposal was agreed by all present.

He explained that this was not unique to D&B and lack of numbers was affecting a number of Community Councils.

The outcomes of this drop in numbers are:

- 4 councillors (50%) must be present to make decisions and carry on business.
- A quorum of 3 councillors must be present for any meeting to occur.

The elections of the Councillors occurred in November 2022; it is therefore not possible to take on new councillors until May 4th – 6 months after the election. After this date, people can be co-opted onto the council. Co-opting is a simpler and quicker process than byelections.

AW asked that anybody interested should make themselves known to the council. Meetings between the Council and the potential applicants will be arranged to discuss the role of community councillors.

MOP made the point that there is little diversity in the Community Council at the minute and inclusion and diversity should be encouraged. It was acknowledged that this was not necessarily an easy thing to do due to the lack of numbers.

She also asked if the process for application could be made available to the community.

7. November-December Minutes

AW & CC explained that the council had considered the previous disagreement about these minutes at length (see minutes from March). Amendments had been made for both months and sent to relevant recipients, one of whom was unable to attend the meeting. Alan explained that the minutes were on the agenda to be adopted but that the MOP present could comment if he wished.

MOP agreed that there had been substantial changes for the December and they were now acceptable. He still had a problem with the November minutes which largely concerned one planning application. He felt that the balance between the comments were still biased towards the opinions of the councillors over those of the community.

CC explained that this was the way it had always been done and that the councillors had other factors to consider, out-with the points covered during the meeting. These include, but are not limited to, Heritage and Conservation issues. Usually, the planning applications to be considered in such detail by the council were for much larger projects.

There was a lengthy discussion about how the feelings of the community should be accurately depicted in the minutes. **MOP** asked that people giving opinions should not be classified as 'Supporters' or 'Opposers' as this mis-represented their comments. **CC** said that she felt it was important to differentiate between support expressed by members of the public and by supporters of the applicant in order that those not present at the meeting could have an understanding of why the discussion went the way it did and what influence that would have on the Community Council's decision making. She also added that a number of people had made informal objections about the planning application in question. **GL** pointed out that if that was the case then these people needed to put in written objections so that it could be used as evidence. **CC** said that objectors were sometimes reluctant to object given the ill feeling that it can cause.

Although the Community Council's amendments to the minutes were proposed they were not seconded and it was agreed that the **MOP** should send Alan his suggestions by the 11th of April and that the Community Council would consider them. The minutes will be put forward for acceptance at the next meeting.

CC announced that she was stepping down from the council. **LM** stated that it was difficult for people outside the council to understand the amount of work that everybody does. All the councillors have the community at heart and try their best to be balanced.

MOP noted that she was sorry to see how stressful this situation had become and was worried about the level of anxiety. She acknowledged how much work had been done by **CC** and hoped that the situation would be resolved.

AW stated that he hoped that the emotion can be taken out of these cases in the future. He proposed that a document outlining the wider procedures of the council will be an Agenda item at the next meeting. This will hopefully add clarity and understanding to how the different processes work.

8. Obstructed pavements and missing bin

LG reported that 2 street bins had gone missing from outside the Scottish Deli and the Fish and Chip shop. She wondered if it had been a PKC action to reduce the number of bins in the village – or whether they had been stolen. **GL** said that he was not aware of any policy change in the PKC – but would check on it. It is not in the remit of the Community Council to get involved with this situation.

LG brought up the problem of A-boards and benches outside various shops in Atholl Street. All businesses had been sent a letter outlining the rules last year. **GL** asked her to email any infringements that were observed, and the PKC would react.

MOP put the case of how difficult it was for wheelchair users and mobility scooters. Another **MOP** also pointed out that shop owners had to apply for a separate license if they wanted to put benches on the street.

9. Litter Picking

AW reported on the excellent work carried out by the Strathbraan group. In 4 months, they collected 38 large bags of rubbish and assorted bits of cars.

Worryingly, they also found a number of road signs and reflectors. **GL** was asked whether there was anybody in the Roads Department that was looking into this. He said that there was nobody specific doing this.

The Strathbraan group also reported that there was a real problem with speeding vehicles which made it potentially dangerous for the litter pickers, even though they were wearing appropriate protective clothing. Many of the roads are not suitable for a 60mph limit.

10. NTS CCTV and new signage.

CC to request further information about their intentions to erect CCTV cameras. The NTS have confirmed that there are to be 2 CCTV cameras erected – one at the front of the Ranger's office and the other on the gable end of the building facing Stanley Hill. They said this was to protect their staff and visitors and to reduce crime, amongst other things. **CC** raised concerns that she felt this was an extreme response and, potentially, a breach of people's privacy given the public spaces in which there were to be erected, **GL** had also expressed similar concerns and was looking into the regulations surrounding CCTV. **CC** was also disappointed to hear that the signs and cameras were to be affixed to such an important listed building. She raised concerns about the newly erected signs at the Hermitage and in Stanley Hill regarding dog mess

which were detrimental to the setting of the buildings and the historic environment – she was sorry that there was not an opportunity to discuss this at the meeting with the NTS. She had posted on their Facebook page but had received no response.

11.NTS Update – Cara Stewart

Apologies received from Cara Stewart who was unable to make this meeting.

No report has been forwarded and it was questioned that there had not been an NTS representative at any of the council meetings for at least 6 months despite their intentions to improve relations with the community. **JW** said he will send them an email. **LM** pointed out that they were actually building a good relationship with the NTS and they had contributed to several community ventures including the Paths Project and Santa Day. **CC** said that she thought the last meeting that the NTS attended was the November 2021 meeting.

12.Haughend Update

More details were to be given at this meeting, but Mark Richardson had sent his apologies and was not at the meeting. He stated that more technical details will be given at a further meeting with the Housing Group and the wider community.

MOP explained that the Housing group had told Atholl Estates that it would be better to go straight to the wider community with the next report. The Housing Group should not be used as a focus group for the community.

JW claimed that several people had approached him to complain that the housing group were very secretive and described them as a ‘Cabal’. He stated that there were a number of developers, including the chairman, and a local architect within the group. He questioned their presence in the group. He asked for the Minutes to be circulated. **MOP** said that he will report this view back to the HAG committee but did point out that the word ‘secretive’ was a wrong perception. All the meetings were open and everybody was welcome. Another **MOP** was worried about the terminology **JW** had used. **JW** stated that he was fully supportive of affordable housing in the community.

13.Community Action Plan & Development Trust update:

LM explained that the bank account for the trust was in the process of being opened. Membership forms were available and being circulated. They can be returned to the Co-working Space. Information regarding the Trust has been published in ‘The Bridge’. The new Action Plan should be out by June.

14.Roads, Traffic and Parking update:

AW said that there was nothing very much to report. Once the report from the Walking Meeting from 23rd February is made available the Community Council will look to engage with other groups within the community and hopefully approach the PKC with a view to action the points raised as a matter of urgency.

LM informed everyone that cameras had been put up at the Dunkeld A9 junction with pressure strips to collect data about the traffic. A request for information about the data collected is to be sent to the relevant department of the PKC.

15.Planning:

23/00222/FLL | Change of use and alterations to shop to form tearoom, and part change of use of dwellinghouse to form additional tearoom area, and installation of a canopy | Three Churches Charity Shop High Street Dunkeld PH8 0AJ

No major objection was voiced. **LG** did wonder if a canopy was out of character. Comments to be made by 12th May.

MOP: talked about a planning application that had been submitted in the Birnam area. She queried the description of the area as a 'Brown-field site'. A long discussion was had regarding the SGN pipeline affecting Torlee Road which is a legal issue regarding ownership of the verge. **CC** suggested that a meeting be held for all interested parties. So far, the only people to respond are the neighbours. **JW** and **AW** will make another attempt to reach out and resolve the current stalemate.

JW reported that **PKC** has offered **Verdant** the opportunity to withdraw their application on the basis that the flood risk calculations were incorrect and should have quantified future flooding due to global warming. **SEPA** intimated that they would have objected to the application regardless for the same reason.

16.Police Update

CC said that there was nothing to report.

LM reported that the MUGA was damaged by a group of youths on Saturday. CCTV footage is available and will be given to the police to investigate.

17.A.O.B.

CC formally announced her resignation from the Council. This was greeted with sadness from the group present. **LM** and **AW** expressed their thanks for her dedication to the council and the amazing hard work that she has done over the last four years. Both **LG** and **LM** stated that they would never have joined the council if it had not been for **CC's** encouragement and enthusiasm. **GL** also expressed his thanks for her hard work, persistence, and spirit.

CC thanked everybody for their kind words and said she had been very lucky to have had such great colleagues.

End of Main meeting

Date of next meeting: Monday 12th June 2023

