

CRAMOND & BARNTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
Incorporating Cramond, Barnton, Cammo & Quality Street (West)

**Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 18th September 2014 in
Cramond Kirk Millennium Hall**

Present: Andrew Mather (Chair), Patricia Eason (Business Manager), Ian Williamson (Secretary), Peter Scott, Jean Morley, Ross Wilkinson, Percy Feketey, Mark Whittet and Bert Scott

A total of 32 residents were present, including members.

Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed those attending and noted apologies from Marion Mitchell, David Belfall, Isla Browning and Euan Pearson. He also noted apologies from the Councillors, other referendum issues representing more pressing call on their time.

Minutes of the previous meeting

Subject to the addition of Jean Morley's name to the list of those members attending the minutes of the meeting of 19 June 2014 were approved as representing an accurate account of the issues discussed.

Police report

A report covering crime in the community area over the period from 19 August to 18 September 2014 was provided by PC Walter Millar. A total of 73 crimes had been recorded 14 of which had been solved with the culprits referred to the Procurator Fiscal or Children's Reporter. The remainder were the subject of ongoing enquiries. Of particular note were the 23 incidents involving housebreaking or attempted housebreaking. Barnton, Silverknowes and Braehead were the areas most affected as a criminal team appeared to be working the area. Residents were warned to be particularly vigilant as to where they left their car keys in their houses as there was an increasing pattern of housebreakings also resulting in a car or cars being taken.

In response to a question from a member of the audience PC Millar did confirm that there were occasions where local community officers were being sucked into the city centre to help cope with the incidence of drink and drugs related incidents especially at weekends.

Another member voiced concerns that his burglar alarm system which was linked to the police through a security provider had gone off but had not elicited an urgent police response. PC Millar said that such alarms were meant to trigger a Grade 1 police response and he could not comment on why it had not done so. PC Millar was thanked for this report.

Presentation on the Future of the Weirs on the River Almond

The 2 speakers, Francis Hayes for the Water Environment Fund of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Brian Davidson of the Rivers and Fisheries Trusts of Scotland represented the partnership of the 2 organisations that had come together with the shared objective of improving the environment and water quality of the rivers of Scotland.

Many decades of industrial and agricultural development had often progressed with little regard to the environmental impact on river and flood plains. This had resulted in dwindling fish stocks to the extent to which that some species had all but been lost to many rivers. Mr Hayes explained that the European Union Water Framework sought to address these problems. The overall aim was to return 98% of rivers to a healthy ecological state and with that aim came targets for improved fish passage and funding via the Scottish Government. In practical terms the partnership that had been formed between SEPA and RAFTS was designed to drive the improvements by identifying and managing works where they were considered to be needed. .

Mr Davidson went on to describe the species which had been found commonly in the river Almond in the past. The European Eel had suffered a catastrophic decline in numbers. Numbers of Atlantic Salmon had also declined significantly although there remained some evidence of continuing breeding in the river in some years. The Brown trout was the resident fish in the river (with the Sea Trout being the species in its migratory form) and numbers remained in a good state in the river. The key issue was the requirement for fish to maintain access to upstream and downstream headwaters to sustain populations. The conditions of the many weirs on the river represented a significant cumulative barrier to optimal flow and migration. This was notwithstanding good water quality upstream helped by the continuing improvements to the water quality of the tributaries feeding into the Almond. The condition and impact of the various weirs differed greatly with some at times being effectively impassable.

Many issues and challenges required to be addressed in the planning of the works required to preserve the weirs and improve the environment for the fish. A number of the weirs were of historic value, the structural integrity of the weirs had to be assessed, the sediment volume and content around the weirs needed to be determined before any changes could be made and there needed to be clarity about flooding patterns. All of these issues were currently being examined by Mott Macdonald and the reports from their surveys were expected towards the end of 2014. Work on those areas considered to be the low hanging fruit was expected to be conducted over the next 6 months with the more complex work being undertaken in 2015/16 and into 2016/17.

In the q and a session which followed concerns were raised about the slow progress of the work to date. This was acknowledged; it was only more recently that Scottish Government had been persuaded to focus on supporting whole river projects. In response to a question about whether SEPA was sufficiently focussed on striving to support improvements in water quality (and not just improvements to structures) it was reported that they were working closely with Scottish Water in addressing the problem of water pollution. It was mooted that there was the possibility of consideration being given to the scope for developing hydro power from the river at Peggy's Mill. It was pointed out

that if that were to occur then the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the weir and ensuring the passage of fish would pass to the owners of the service.

In response to a plea from the Chair SRPA and RAFTS agreed to further engage with the Community Council when greater clarity had emerged around the options.

Planning Issues

Peter Scott reported on the key planning issues which had been exercising the Community Council over recent months. In doing so he referred to various documents which had issued within the papers for the meeting. These included a copy of the representations that had been made to the Council in response to the Cammo planning application. The annex to the Secretary's report summarised the points covered in the draft representations which had been prepared to issue in response to the (2nd) Local Development Plan. Copies of the full terms of the draft representation were on display in the meeting room along with the LDP and supporting documents. The import of these representations included fundamental objections to any planned development at Cammo augmented by recommendations designed to mitigate the impact on traffic, environment, the views, infrastructure etc in the event of the Council opting to proceed with a development.

Insofar as the planning application was concerned confirmation had been received that consideration of the application had been postponed from the planning committee meeting held on 17 September 2014. A commitment had been given by the Council that it would keep the CC informed of any rescheduled date (and any material changes to the application should any be made).

Responses to the LDP were due back by 3 October 2014. The timetable thereafter provided for the Council to submit the LDP to the Scottish Government by February 2015 where it would be passed to the Enquiry Reporters for their scrutiny. An approved LDP setting out the overarching planning structure including expected housing units is scheduled to be returned to the Council in February 2016.

Peter Scott also noted that the CC had been notified of a planning application which had been submitted in support of works to improve and extend the internal capacity of the Cramond Falls cafe. A leaflet drop had taken place to the houses in Caddells Row in order to ascertain whether the proposals were of concern to those living in the locality and who may be affected by, for example, increased parking pressures at the foot of School Brae. The CC was considering expressing concerns about three aspects of the application. Firstly the added pressure on public parking arising from the increased seating capacity of the cafe. Secondly, the proximity of the proposed new entrance/exit on the wall of the cafe to the "chicane" on the walkway that is designed to slow cyclists travelling between school brae and the harbour. Thirdly and finally the absence of any provision for cycle racks – in particular given the possible improvements to the walkway at the Salvesen Steps.

Peter concluded by confirming that he would be staying behind after the meeting to address any issues or questions people may have on any of the planning issues.

Secretary's Report

The Secretary ran through the written report which had been provided for those attending the meeting. The outcome to the promenade survey which had been conducted earlier in the year had been the agreement reached between the CC and the Neighbourhood Partnership to use the results to inform the development of an action plan in the form of a matrix which would cover the various actions agreed. Copies of the first iteration of the matrix had been left out for those attending. An opportunity for substantive discussion about the process and the details would be provided at the next meeting on 16 October and those interested in seeking to inform the process – or at least better understand it – were invited to attend.

Lecturers from the Edinburgh University School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture would be attending the next CC meeting to inform the community about the projects which some of their students would be carrying out in the area early in 2015.

An update was provided on various other issues including, the action to try to secure improvements to the bus routes serving Cramond, the planning developments and considerations, the Cramond Chain Ferry, the dementia response and the consultation of the Council's plans to introduce a 20 mph speed limit onto Edinburgh residential roads.

The discussion on the 20 mph speed limit comprised mixed views in many ways supporting the inclination of the CC to leave this as an issue for individuals to respond to if they were so inclined. While a number voiced their support for the move to see more roads with a 20 mph limit (and indeed some suggested other roads where the limit could be extended to) there was also opposition to the proposed extension to the speed limit into more streets. One of the members wished his position of opposition to the proposals to be noted in the event of any CC response. Similarly he wished it to be noted that he did not support the CC's general resistance to the various planned housing developments in the new LDP.

Approval of Accounts

The accounts were presented by Jane Neville and there were no dissenting voices to the call for them to be approved as representing a true and accurate statement of the finance of the CC.

Date of Next Meeting

The Chair confirmed that the next meeting of the CC would take place on Thursday 16 October 2014 where there would be a presentation on the proposed University Project, a presentation on the Council's latest proposal for change to refuse collection arrangements along with an update on the action matrix and an opportunity to engage in the process.

Ian Williamson
Secretary