

Crathes, Drumoak & Durriss Community Council (CDDCC)

Minutes of 2009 Annual General Meeting

1 December 2009 at Drumoak Church Hall from 19.30 hours

1. Sederunt

Community Councillors: David Morrish, Jean Downie, Jenny Watson, Nicola Chambury, Diana Robertson, John Baillie, Geoffrey Atkinson

Aberdeenshire Councillors (Ward 18): Graeme Clark, Peter Bellarby

Aberdeenshire Councillors (North Kincardine): Paul Melling

Members of the public: William Downie, Molly Atkinson, John Hopkins, M McNeil, B McNeil

Apologies: Doug Allstaff, Ann Ross

2. Chairman's Report.

The report was distributed to those present. David Morrish summarised the main points of his report, reproduced here:-

2009 Community Councillors

CC Office	Community Area Represented		
	Crathes	Drumoak	Durriss
Chairman	Tony Butcher		
Vice Chairman	Douglas Allstaff		
Vice Chairman	David Morrish		
Treasurer			John Hopkins*
Secretary			Jean Downie
Minute Secretary			John Hopkins*
Planning	David Morrish	Geoffrey Atkinson	Jean Downie
Planning		John Bailie	
Access		Molly Atkinson*	
Park Quarry Liaison		Donald Keith*	William Downie*
K&M CC Forum			John Hopkins*
Marr CC Forum	David Morrish		
Website			John Hopkins*
General	Nicola Chambury		
General	Anne Ross		
General		Jenny Watson	
General		Diana Robertson	
General			Sandy Wallace ⁺
Total no. councillors	5	4	2
11			

* non-members ⁺ Co-opted May09

Resignations: Jean Downie, Douglas Allstaff (notification received in December, prior to the AGM)

Deceased: Tony Butcher - Tony, the CDDCC 2009 Chairman, died at the Glen O'Dee Hospital in July following a long illness. Tony joined the Community Council in December 2004 and attended meetings regularly, representing the Crathes area. Despite his illness he put himself forward as chairman earlier this year. As his illness took hold, Tony showed immense strength not only in his continued attendance at CC meetings, but following his hospital confinement, where his positive outlook and smile never faded. It was a sad moment for the CC, saying farewell to one of its members in this way and we thank Tony for sharing his time with us and for his support to the community.

CC 2009 Priorities

- Road Safety
- Affordable Housing
- Youth Amenities
- Schools

- Strategic Plan and Local Development Plan
- Engagement of CDDCC with its Constituents

Road Safety

The community council continued bringing local issues to the attention of the Roads Dept, the Police and Councillors. The proposed 30 mph speed limits for all villages finally arrived in the form of a draft paper to the Area Committee Meetings, proposing lower speed limits on A and B roads within villages. As part of this, limits of 40 mph along the A957 and that part of the North Deeside Road within Crathes village and a reduction of the Drumoak limit to 30mph were agreed. The CC will continue to lobby the authorities and politicians for a quick implementation and a reduction to 30mph at Crathes as well as an extension to take account of the problematic Milton and Crathes Castle junctions. The Myrebird and Park/SDR junctions continued, rightly, to take up agenda time this year and although there is some frustration at the timeframe, plans are in place to address both.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing in the area is a long-standing issue with many new developments having either low percentages or no affordable housing. In his presentation at the April meeting, Sandy Wallace, chair of the Langstane Housing Policy and Development Sub Committee, recognised that while communities generally supported the principle of Affordable Housing, they also had understandable fears. "The aspiration was to help local people get started on the property ladder within their own communities. The fear was of the limited Affordable Housing being leapfrogged by people from out with the area with 'greater needs'." The question was how to create an effective priority for local people. Sandy Wallace said that the answer to this was shared-equity. He believed that the most stable communities had a mixture of housing ownership models and asked CC to discriminate in favour of developers offering the highest level of Affordable Housing.

The CC appreciated the presentation which helped further inform the view that members take of all development proposals and recognised that affordable housing is a key factor in every medium to large development.

Youth Amenity

In the CC April meeting it was noted that with the installation of the new bike ramps together with the construction of the Youth Shelter and the basic all-weather pitch as well as the engagement of Aberdeenshire Council in further work in Drumoak Park – "represented a very successful, if belated, outcome to the Drumoak Youth Project" This project is now considered closed.

Schools

The CC is committed to supporting the continuance of all current schooling in the area, although this year again the agenda has concentrated on keeping informed on and supporting the proposed new school at Drumoak. Earlier in the year the CC was informed that £1.4 million had been allocated in the Council's 2009/10 budget for the new Drumoak School. Total expenditure over the period 2009/10 to 2012/13 would be £6.8 million. The CC has recently written to the Council Head of Education in support of the case for the new Drumoak School to be physically at the centre of the community.

Access

The Deeside Way is clearly a terrific facility for our community and those to the East and West of us. It is therefore no surprise that it comes in for quite a bit of attention. In particular, it has become apparent this year that creating the path was one thing, but equally important is maintenance. It would appear that during the course of this year the path became overgrown and some stretches are already showing signs of deterioration to the surface. Members of the public have reported concerns which have been brought to the attention of Ward Councillors and thus to those responsible for paths upkeep. Other minor access issues remain for next year's agenda.

Strategic and Local Development Plan

This year the CC has made every effort to participate in the planning authority's consultation processes associated with the creation of the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan and subsequent Local Development Plans. The CC has also sought to engage with and inform the community at the key consultation milestones. Public meetings, newsletters and questionnaires have been used to gather and assess local opinion and this has enabled the CC to represent local views.

Following requests from the Aberdeenshire Council Planning Policy Unit for local views on development and development bids submitted by landowners/developers, a public meeting was held at Crathes on 28th January attended by planners, land owners, ward councillors and 70 members of the public. Drumoak Community Councillors also collated views from the Drumoak/Park area and a combined submission was made to Aberdeenshire Council on 4th February.

During March, 2009 the CC further distributed a commentary on development bids in the area and a questionnaire via the March issue of the Drumoak and Durris Newsletter. Questionnaire responses were collated and summarised. This material together with the data submitted to Aberdeenshire Council in February was distributed to Ward Councillors at their request and copied to Aberdeenshire Council prior to the Main Issues Report (MIR) meeting on 25th March.

Following the issue of the MIR in May 2009, CC members (together with some members of the public) attended planning meetings held by Aberdeenshire Council on Thursday 14th May in Stonehaven and Tuesday 9th June in Banchory. The purpose of CC members attending these meetings was to gain an understanding of how representations to date had been included in the MIR and to ensure compliance with the next stage of consultation. As part of the next stage, the CC made the requested representations on the MIR, which were underpinned by the comments made at two public meetings held to raise awareness of the consultation process and to raise views and opinions. These meetings, held at Drumoak and Crathes on the 16th and 17th June respectively, involved some 80 members of the community, ward councillors and some landowners/developer representatives.

Broadly speaking the CDDCC supports the vision proposed by the Structure Plan and understands that the LDP will carry forward the main tenets of that plan. Specifically, the concept of Strategic Growth Corridors is supported. It is important the LDP ensures, in allocating housing numbers, that the temptation to allocate on the basis of commercial demand is kept in check by the principle of avoiding disproportionate development. To ensure this, the CC would propose a more ramped application of the housing targets, with much less housing allocated in the period to 2016 and only allocating more when the overall strategy is seen to be working.

Although there are other noteworthy development proposals in the area, CHAP's Park Eco-Village, if approved, would have by far the largest impact on the area and its surroundings. This particular bid was 'rejected' by 91% of the respondents to the CC questionnaire, being by far the most unpopular of the proposed local development bids. It is also notable that not a single respondent voted for a "major increase in the number of houses in the area". The CC, in its representations to the 'planners' has therefore urged that the Park Eco-Village development bid is excluded from the Local Development Plan - and any related plans.

Planning consultation continues into 2010 with the important step of rolling all the above into the draft Local Development Plan. It is vital that the CC remains connected with this process in 2010.

Engagement of the CC with its Constituents

The Aberdeenshire planning process alone had demanded a high level of community engagement in 2009 (ref above) and we have continued to make good use of the Drumoak & Durris Newsletter, available widely across the community. Over and above this there has been no other initiative this year specifically aimed at community engagement.

One point to note though, is that the planning process is also placing demands on the developers to consult with communities. We have seen this in 2009, most notably, with the CHAP Eco-village PR campaign and public meetings. This is a separate and parallel consultation process owned entirely by the developers.

In 2010, the CC needs to develop its role carefully in this arena to ensure that the community is informed of the long term planning, that the CC is in a position to represent the community and to work with developers to minimise confusion and avoid consultation fatigue. This will be especially challenging during the 2010, the year of the Local Plan.

Policing

The police have issued monthly newsletters which as well as being discussed at CC meetings have also been posted at http://www.durris.net/html/police_newsletter.html) These raise current issues which is very helpful. Policing is managed for the CC area with Marr area providing for Crathes and K&M for Drumoak and Durris. Police members have continued to attend CC meetings when available. However, it has to be said, that in relative terms, we are fortunate to live in a low crime area. A bit of poaching and a few worried sheep, that's about it!

It remains for me to thank each and every member of the 2009 Community Council and our local councillors who have supported us this year.

I wish all the best to those in Crathes, Drumoak and Durris for Christmas and the New Year.

David Morrish
Acting Chairman – Crathes, Drumoak & Durris Community Council

John Baillie noted that a recent response from Aberdeenshire Council had indicated that they did not wish to construct the replacement Drumoak School on the site proposed by the Governors "because of the gas pipelines". He felt that there had been some misunderstanding, as the proposed site was on part of Keithmuir Park land, with a replacement for this lost land being to the west, where the pipelines were believed to be located.

John Hopkins pointed out that this debate had been going on for some years, with the general idea being accepted by the Council to the extent of their requiring a westwards move of the permitted site for the new Irvine Arms, to permit the creation of an access road for the new School, running between it and the existing houses at the west of Drumoak (north of the North Deeside Road).

3. Treasurer's Report

John Hopkins distributed copies of the draft 2009 accounts for CDDCC and for the Drumoak Youth Project (DYP), for which CDDCC continued to act as fundholder.

There were no questions on either set of accounts.

Both sets of accounts were formally adopted and signed by John Hopkins (Treasurer) and counter-signed by David Morrish, as Acting Chairman.

4. Drumoak Youth Project Completion Report

John Hopkins described the achievements of the Drumoak Youth Project (DYP). It:-

- was founded in 2003 by three local Drumoak teenagers, to provide much-needed facilities for young people in Drumoak
- conducted extensive consultation with young people, establishing that a youth shelter and an all weather multi-purpose sports court would meet most of their requirements
- consulted other residents of Drumoak, who supported these aims
- was assisted from an early date by Don Keith
- was "adopted" by CDDCC, chiefly so that banking facilities could be provided to the Project
- raised funds
- constructed a Youth Shelter in Keithmuir Park
- laid a concrete slab in Keithmuir Park, as the base for the all weather multi-purpose sports court, with the aspiration to add artificial turf, fencing and goals
- lost impetus, for the lack of volunteers, particularly to undertake the tasks of negotiating with contractors and supervision of work
- despite having funds, has been inactive for some years
- was taken up again by Caroline Cruickshank and two other ladies from Drumoak, who resurveyed local youth opinion and brokered a deal with Aberdeenshire Council for improved facilities in Keithmuir Park, part of which would be funded by money from DYP
- donated the sum of £4,300 to Aberdeenshire Council for this purpose

John Hopkins proposed that since the Drumoak Youth Project:-

- had broadly achieved (and in some respects exceeded) its aims
- had usefully spent the majority of its funds
- had lain largely fallow for the well over half its existence

it be declared complete and the remaining balance of its funds (circa £145) be donated to CDDCC. The proposal was seconded by Jenny Watson and carried by acclamation.

To transfer the remaining DYP funds to CDDCC and to record this in the minutes of the latter, once done
(Action: John Hopkins)

To ask Aberdeenshire Council to take on the ongoing maintenance of the Youth Shelter, which would otherwise remain with CDDCC
(Action: John Hopkins)

5. Appointment of Office-Bearers

The resignations of Jean Downie and Douglas Allstaff were noted with regret.

The following office-bearers and other posts were appointed, by acclamation:-

- Chairman – David Morrish
- Vice-Chairman – John Baillie
- Treasurer – John Hopkins #
- Secretary – Diana Robertson (agreed subsequent to meeting)
- Minute Secretary – John Hopkins #
- Planning (Crathes) – David Morrish
- Planning (Drumoak) – Geoffrey Atkinson
- Planning (Durriss) – Jean Downie #
- Access – Molly Atkinson #
- Park Quarry Liaison – William Downie
- Park Quarry Liaison – To ask Don Keith if he would also continue to serve (**Action: William Downie**)
- K&M Area Forum - John Hopkins #
- Marr Area Forum – David Morrish
- Website – John Hopkins #

Non-member

David Morrish noted that this meant that there were 3 to 4 vacancies for Durriss and 1 for Crathes. To follow-up the possibility of a volunteer for Durriss (**Action: Jean Downie**)

6. Priorities for 2010

These were confirmed as:-

- Road Safety
- Youth Amenity
- Schools
- Strategic Planning and Local Development Plan
- Engagement with Constituents

It was agreed that a close eye needed to be kept on the activities of the Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Forum (ACSEF), which appeared to have little or no democratic input.

7. Meeting Dates

Meetings would be on the first Tuesday of each month (no meeting in July), at 7.30 p.m. at the Irvine Arms. The January meeting was confirmed as being on 5 January.

The AGM was then declared closed.

Wine and cheese were then served.

JFH

3 December 2009

Distribution				
Email	Email	Email	Post	Other
CDDCC Councillors (excl. Jenny Watson)	Danny Law (Deeside Piper)	Insp. Andrew Todd	Jenny Watson	Website http://www.durris.net/ (also for previous minutes)
Cllrs. Linda Clark, Karen Clark, Jill Webster (Ward 16)	Leanna MacLarty (Press and Journal)	Insp. Jim Gordon	Drumoak Public Hall Notice Board (via Ian Pirie)	
Cllrs. Peter Bellarby, Graeme Clark, Mike Sullivan, Wendy Agnew (Ward 18)	Kirkton of Durris Hall Notice Board (via Sheila Watt)	PC Wayne Smart	Banchory Public Library	By Hand
Mr W Munro, Area Manager, Kincardine & Mearns	Rev. Jim Scott, Durris Manse, Durris	Crathes Hall Notice Board (via Nicola Chambury)	Drumoak Church Hall Notice Board (via Morag Keith)	Park Shop (via John Hopkins)
Mr L Allen, Area Manager, Marr	Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator – Alister Bisset	Local Newsletter Editor (Don Keith)		Drumoak Post Office (via John Hopkins)