



*Responding to community needs*

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## **CRATHES, DRUMOAK & DURRIS COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2015**

This has been a very busy and purposeful year for the Community Council, on many levels. Communication has played a great part in our community involvement. Effective use of online social media and a range of community events have stimulated a good level of community engagement. Several interventions fed into that, which will be explained in this report.

#### **Overview of 2015**

During this period the Community Council took some time out to consider its role and its purpose in the community. With new councillors coming on board and with long-standing councillors stepping down, this created an opportunity to reflect on the past and look to the future. With all three areas in some form or another of new residential developments, with the issues facing the Oil & Gas Industry and with an ageing population; we are faced with many challenges as a community and also some interesting opportunities. The decision to conduct an Away Day in February was to take that time to consider the following key aspects:

1. The role and responsibility of the Community Council
2. The role and responsibilities of the Community Councillors
3. The needs and priorities of the three communities
4. How best to bring all three communities together

Whilst a list of things to do came out of the Away Day session, it was agreed to break this down and focus on priority areas. Priorities agreed:



Whilst it is clear that focus on direct engagement within the communities is a priority within the Community Council. Other priorities remain, which fall within the role and responsibilities of the Community Council.

Despite previous criticism on the level of engagement on planning matters, the Community Council find themselves being repeatedly positioned as the best placed intervention to review and consider a range of planning matters. Within this period, there has been involvement in the following:

1. **Crathes Crematorium** – some delays have been experienced in the communication process for obtaining updates on this approved development.
2. **Crathes Residential Development (Garden of Crathes)** – a range of concerns remain from residents of Crathes with this development. A residents group has been formed to attend to these concerns, and regular updates provided to the Community Council, where necessary, the Community Council will liaise with any third party relevant to the issues raised.
3. **Durris Speed Limit** – this remains an on-going issue between the Community Council and the Road Department in Aberdeenshire Council.
4. **CHAPS Group proposed property development - Kincluny Village** – in response to a public exhibition in June from the CHAPS Group where they presented a proposal for this development. The Community Council responded by conducting a public meeting to enable residents to be given the opportunity to respond and to present any concerns or matters for clarity. The Community Council Report on the meeting is available on the website: [www.crathesdrumoakdurriscc.org](http://www.crathesdrumoakdurriscc.org) under the 'minutes and document repository' section. The report will also be presented at the Community Council AGM on the 4<sup>th</sup> November.
5. **Woodlands of Durris development (20 houses)** – the Community Council has representation with several conditions applied to this development.
6. **Various planning applications** – a regular flow of planning applications are received from all three areas. Recent planning applications are presented on the website, within the area concerned. Residents are welcome to attend any community council meeting to present any issues/concerns/information on pending planning applications.

Other matters under the Community Councils attention during this period:

<b>Social media platforms</b>	Launch of the new Community Council website in June – <a href="http://www.crathesdrumoakdurriscc.org">www.crathesdrumoakdurriscc.org</a>
	Launch of the new Facebook page: Crathes Drumoak and Durris Community Council
	Launch of the new Twitter # @CDDCC2014
<b>Community Surveys</b>	Road Safety Survey – June to September an online survey received just under 80 responses from local residents. The report on the survey will be presented at the AGM 4 <sup>th</sup> November.
	Other community surveys will be conducted periodically in response to needs and issues raised by local residents.
<b>Christmas Lights for Drumoak</b>	This is a community project initiated by the Drumoak & Durris Community Group (DDCG) as a result of the Family Christmas event in December 2014. The Community Council, on request from the DDCG, took this project forward and successfully negotiated funding from Aberdeenshire Council, with the balance raised by the DDCG through a range of community fundraising events, to provide the necessary installations for permanent site.

<b>Super Fast Broadband</b>	With the good fortune of help from local Drumoak resident, Jim Singer, Jim pursued a campaign with BT to address the delayed roll-out of super-fast broadband in the area. Successful roll-out in some areas was achieved.
<b>Windfarm Funding</b>	The Community Council is one of four areas to benefit from the Mill Hill Wind Farm Ltd community fund. The total fund available to-date has been just under £10,000 to support selected community projects. The Community Council has a call for this funding on their website, and other social media outlets for local community groups/projects to come forward and apply for this funding. Mark Ansells is the point of contact for this fund within the Community Council. Meikle Carewe Wind Farm also covers the Community Council area for Drumoak & Durris and is activity promoted to local community groups.
<b>Kincardineshire Development Partnership (KDP)</b>	The Community Council provided a significant support role to the KDP through representation from one of its members taking a leading role in the establishment of the KDP and implementation of its organisational structure and processes. As an Area Partnership, the role of the KDP is critical to all residential settlements within the Kincardine & Mearns Area and its support to community organisations, including Community Councils.

To emphasise the key outputs of the Community Council, in this period:

<b>Milestone 1</b>	<b>Milestone 2</b>	<b>Milestone 3</b>	<b>Milestone 4</b>	<b>Milestone 5</b>
<b>Internal Development</b>	<b>Communication &amp; Branding</b>	<b>Recruitment of Community Councillors</b>	<b>Planning challenges</b>	<b>Bringing Communities together</b>
The first Away Day for Community Councillors, where key priorities for the area was identified. Recruitment of new Community Councillors – which remain on-going Training for Community Councillors	Introduced a new website, Facebook Page and Twitter bringing the Community Council up-to-date with current communication trends and increasing communication links externally Plus the new CC logo	With the initial influx of new Community Councillors, numbers continues to be a difficult challenge for the CC. We have three new members and continue to recruit for another 7 to secure the future of the CC	CDDCC has taken the lead on a range of significant planning challenges over recent years. Sunnyside Farm residential development in Drumoak, The Crematorium in Crathes, Residential development in Crathes and the more recent Kincluny Village name just a few	The first initiative of this strategy was the Road Safety Survey where just under 80 residents participated in an online survey, providing a comprehensive range of concerns and information Leading role in the formation of the Kincardineshire Development Partnership
				

### **Policing – Police Scotland**

Regular reports are provided to the Community Council, providing an overview on current crime trends/issues, as well as useful updates on the work of the Police. When possible (workload permitting) representatives from Police Scotland attend the monthly Community Council meeting to report on latest issues and updates on the area. With the recent announcement of the shared local policing belief and vision between Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Divisions, bringing the two North East Divisions together to strengthen policing throughout the North East. The new A Division due to be implemented from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 will, no doubt, be of interest to monitor its effectiveness to the Community Council area.

### **Community Councillors**

Community Council Membership has experienced some changes during this period. Most of the long-standing members have stepped down to allow new residents to come forward and play a role in Community Council matters. With the number of new housing developments in all three villages, there is scope for residents from all areas, across all ages and with diverse backgrounds and experience to come forward and be part of the change they may wish to see in their neighbourhood.

Special thanks of gratitude is extended to the Community Councillors who have provided their time to support and add value. New members: Marion McNeil, and Ronnie Wilson, and it is hoped they will enjoy their term on the Community Council. The new Minute Secretary (contracted) – Rhona Garry and to Chloé Bouchet, a volunteer, a final year student at Gray's School of Art (RGU) studying Communication Design with a specialty in Graphics

However, yet again, this remains a Community Council which does not meet its membership requirements in all sub-divisions. This places a significant strain on existing members and also hinders the extent of progress that can be achieved for the area in the distribution of projects and tasks to respond to the needs of the community.

<b>Current vacancies</b>		
<b>Crathes - 2</b>	<b>Drumoak - 3</b>	<b>Durris - 2</b>

<b>2015 Community Councillors</b>			
<b>CC Office</b>	<b>Community Council Area Represented</b>		
	<b>Crathes</b>	<b>Drumoak</b>	<b>Durris</b>
Chairman	David Morrish		
Vice Chairperson		Maxine Smith	
Treasurer	Peter Renwick		
Secretary		Angela Bichan	
Minute Secretary		John Hopkins* Rotation role** Rhona Garry***	
Planning	David Morrish Howard Scholey	Marion McNeil – co-opted	Mark Ansell
Kincardineshire Area Partnership Representative		Maxine Smith	
MARR Area Partnership Representative			

K&M CC Forum			
Marr CC Forum	Howard Scholey		
Website		Maxine Smith	
Press Officer	Ann Ross	Maxine Smith	
Windfarm Representative			Mark Ansell
General			Ronnie Mitchell – co-opted
General			Robert Harper – co-opted

\* John Hopkins – non-member role – resigned March 2015

\*\* Minute taker role rotated within the CC from April to August 2015

\*\*\* Rhona Garry – non-member role as Minute Secretary from September 2015

Resignations – Community Councillors		
Crathes	Ann Ross	February 2015
	David Morrish	April 2015
Drumoak	Angela Bichan	November 2015
	Geoffrey Atkinson	
Durris	Robert Harper	March 2015

### Comment from the Vice-Chair

The Community Council is transitioning through a period of change, with movement in its members and increasing demands from within communities. This year is the start of many new challenges about to cascade throughout Aberdeenshire and in turn, impact on communities.

- The announcement earlier in the year on the £50 million budget cuts to hit Aberdeenshire Council.
- The on-going Oil & Gas Industry cuts and job redundancies
- The increasing challenges in recruiting new members (volunteers) from within the community
- Increased shortage of affordable housing – impacting on key contributors in any community

All present a ‘domino’ impact on communities, which will in turn require some form of response and solution finding from the Community Council and local community groups.

Whilst the achievements within the Community Council during this period are commendable, they have been possible with fewer members with increased workloads. This is not a sustainable model for the Community Council to operate within. Recently the last two monthly meetings have not managed to quorate, which is an indication of a Community Council in difficulty. Various calls to local residents has been made via door-to-door mail drops, social media, newsletter and word of mouth, unfortunately, with a low response. Of the current 7 vacancies, it is envisaged recruitment of approx. 2 new members may be achieved at the

forthcoming AGM. Without volunteers coming forward, the Community Council will be forced to disband. This will have a detrimental impact on the communities of Crathes, Drumoak & Durris and also within the Aberdeenshire Council and other relevant stakeholders.

This comes at a time when a range of new community initiatives is evolving within the Community Council area. Some of these projects are extremely dynamic and directly meet the key components of the Aberdeenshire Council's Community Planning philosophy for developing communities, some will provide local employment in the longer term, some will provide support to the infirmed, aged and isolated within communities. This is not the time for the Community Council to struggle to operate, this is the time and the opportunity for more residents to come forward to share their skills and knowledge. Whatever the age from 18years upward, whatever the background as diversity and equality is welcomed within the Community Council.

The Community Council is moving itself forward to thinking of new fundraising interventions to raise funds to enable continued efforts in engaging with and responding to the community. Things like mail drops, surveys, public meetings, all cost money and the funding provided by Aberdeenshire Council to sustain Community Councils is nominal and will not cover the work ahead. Resources from within the community become a critical factor, by this we mean human resources as well as financial and by community, we mean everyone in it – businesses, residents, groups, all stakeholders.

2016 will be an interesting year for the Community Council and with a healthy response of participation from other residents; it will be a dynamic year for all concerned. The new logo carries the strapline of "responding to community needs", this can only be achieved if it is a 'unified community effort'.

End