



Crathes Drumoak & Durris Community Council Monthly Meeting

Wednesday 14th June 2023

APPROVED JUNE AGM and MEETING MINUTES

1. INTRODUCTIONS & APOLOGIES

Present:

Community and Aberdeenshire Councillors:

Jules Wood (JW) – Drumoak rep.
David Edgar (DE) – Chair and Durris rep.
Mark Ansell (MA) – Treasurer and Durris rep.
Lynn Coull (LC) – Drumoak rep.
Shaun Falcus (SF) – Durris rep
David Morrish (DM) – Crathes rep
Anne Shearer (AS) - Drumoak rep
Les Oliver (LO)

Councillors:

Cllr Sarah Dickinson (not present)
Cllr Wendy Agnew (in person)
Cllr Ann Ross (on-line)
Cllr Dawn Black (in person)
Cllr Yi-Pei Turvey (in person)
Cllr Alan Turner (in person)
Cllr Eileen Durno (not present)

Not present:

Joanna Prystupa – local resident – apology in London

Minutes:-

Sharon Hauxwell (SH)

The meeting was declared quorate (minimum, at current CC membership is 3).

2. ANNUAL REPORT - CHAIRMAN

Chairperson's Report 2022-2023

Over the last year, we have continued to meet monthly, generally in person rotating our meetings between Drumoak Bowling Club and Durris Kirkton Hall. We have had the option for virtual attendance where more physical attendance is not possible, and this has worked



well. Many of our priority issues remain to be an ongoing focus for the Community Council and we will comment on these below.

Park Bridge – regular work and communication continues between the CC, PBAG and Aberdeenshire Council. We are pleased that the tender for the independent structural assessments of the bridge have been issued and await receiving a copy of these in the immediate future for review. Aberdeenshire Council had previously allocated £750,000 towards Park Bridge and we await to see how this fund has been impacted by recent budgetary restrictions. We do hope to be able to speak to the organisations carrying out the independent structural assessments to highlight our point of view. **No comments.**

Park Quarry - Conversations with JKR have continued over the last year, with a couple of site visits where noise surveys have been carried out. We are in the process of setting up our next site visit to understand how reinstatement is progressing, but sadly our visit earlier this year was hampered due to bad weather and the conditions on site. **No comments**

Nether Park Quarry – We opened discussions with Joss at Nether Park Quarry due to comments from residents south of the river and are in the process of planning a site visit to better understand operations. We believe at this stage; the quarry has been depleted and a reinstatement plan is being drawn up before being submitted for approval due to some changes over the original reinstatement plan. **No comments**

LDP 2027 – the LDP 2022 has been renamed as the LDP 2023 and launched in April of this year. It will run for 5 years. The LDP 2023 identifies; an opportunity in Drumoak for a further 11 homes and an opportunity in Woodlands of Durris for a further 27 homes. No opportunities were identified in Crathes or Kirkton of Durris at this time. The LDP 2027 has been launched and Aberdeenshire Council are currently carrying out a Brownfield survey to identify opportunities. We have received confirmation that Local Place Plans will shortly be launched but the structure of these is still being finalised. We look forward to engaging with Aberdeenshire Council and surrounding Community Councils on the future Local Place Plans. **No comments**

Drainage Issues Woodlands and Kirkton of Durris – We have worked with residents and Aberdeenshire Council to raise concerns around Drainage in Kirkton of Durris and water run-off issues in Woodlands of Durris. The issue in the Kirkton of Durris has been monitored for some time and we await an update from Aberdeenshire Council on the action that will be taken. The issues in Woodlands of Durris remain and could be exacerbated where more houses are planned. A complaint has been lodged with the Ombudsman on one issue and we await the outcome of that. ***Have since had the outcome – our complaint has not been upheld. Need to plan next action.*** To continue discussion and try to lessen any future impact new builds will have, we have held an initial meeting with Paul Macari, Head of Planning & Economy to seek support with regards to infrastructure and will continue **No comments**

The Glebe – A subgroup was formed this year, to focus on The Glebe and the ongoing issues that we experience in this area. Following a successful meeting with Aberdeenshire Council Outdoor Access Officers and Rangers, we are working on a number of solutions,



which include the installation of enhanced signage, metal BBQ stands and ash bins and increased Ranger visits. Members of the public are being encouraged to report any issues they identify to Police Scotland so they can be acted upon appropriately. Whilst we have not yet been successful in implementing a By-Law, this is something that is still under investigation and would be desirable on the basis it could be policed appropriately.

Cllr Y Pei – advised slightly less budget for rangers this year. Working to get better signage with QR code that provides full details of what wild camping is and what is and isn't permitted.

Road Safety – Our subgroup continued to campaign with the council to achieve some action on the back of the successful online survey. This work led to us meeting quarterly with the Area Manager for Kincardine and Mearns, along with a team of officers from the council. At each meeting we discussed each of the issues and requests made for each community and tried to design solutions.

The meetings are ongoing, and we are pleased to report that several items on our list have already been actioned by the council. As well as regular speed monitoring of traffic within Drumoak, enhanced gateway signage is being put in place and we are working on improving the ability for pedestrians to cross the A93 more safely. In Woodlands of Durris, we are working on improving Road Safety with the movement of the 30mph speed limit to reduce traffic speeds before areas near the school, in the Kirkton of Durris, we have successfully had agreement from Aberdeenshire Council to reduce the speed limit from 50mph to 40mph. In Crathes we continue to work on road safety along the A93. We would like to encourage residents to keep reporting incidents to Police Scotland, so a bigger picture of issues within our community can be build and appropriate policing put in place. **No comments**

Police Reports – Regular police reports for both areas continue to be received with useful updates on local crime. **No comments**

Community Path Networks – Our work to link our communities together by creating path networks continue. After a successful site visit to look at the Core Path previously proposed by Aberdeenshire Council that would link Woodlands of Durris and Kirkton of Durris, progress has been paused whilst recruitment of a new point of contact within the Council is carried out. We are continuing conversations where we can with local landowners to progress matters and keep the project alive.

In the future, plans to further link Durris and Crathes and ideally Durris and Drumoak are still very much something we'd like to discuss and identify funding opportunities for.

We hope to be in a place to begin 'recruiting' a local volunteer community group to assist us in working with landowners and establishing some forgotten paths in the coming year. In Crathes, discussion continue with landowners following the recent felling of trees and on access from the Milton Football pitch.

A key initiative that we will begin investigating is the issue with regards to Dog Fouling in all of our communities on Community Paths. **No comments – discussed later in meeting**



Planning Applications - Issues with applications have been extremely limited in the last year. As a consultee on the Banchory Retail Park, we engaged where we could with surrounding Community Councils and residents to gather opinion before submitting our feedback.

We are aware of and working to gather opinion on the two consultations that are current, one being the Proposed Wind Farm on the Hill of Fare and the second being the Proposed Overhead Line by SSEN.

The CC continues to try and assist the Durris School in pursuing Developer Obligations affecting the adjacent green space – not yet finalised, another year down the line, now over 4 years. **No comments**

Proposed Hill of Fare Wind Farm – The proposed Windfarm on the Hill of Fare, is a key topic at each of our meetings. As a CC we have representatives who are meeting regularly with other Community Councils and organisations to discuss the proposal and impacts / benefits it may have. As a Community Council we will represent the opinion of our community when the time is right, and a planning application is submitted. We have compiled a large number of responses both from across our communities but also from a wider pool as part of our collaboration with other communities. The initial proposal has been updated and as such we will now begin gathering feedback from the public on the revised proposals. We believe that RES will be holding a public consultation this summer and await dates of this to publicise. **No comments**

AED's – The CC have been successful in raising funds to purchase additional AED Units (Defibrillator units) across several locations. These units were funded by both the Meikle Carewe Wind Farm Fund and Aberdeenshire Council Kincardine & Mearns Local Budget. We are extremely grateful to have the installations of these units sponsored by Ener-G Services. The locations for the new AED's are – Crossroads Nursery - Durris, Durris Primary School - Woodlands of Durris, Sunnyside Construction - Park and The Hair Hut - Drumoak. **No comments**

Proposed 400kv Overhead Line SSEN – Concerns have been flagged to the Community Council over the proposals to install a new Overhead Line through the heart of our communities. We are actively engaging with SSEN to understand the proposals fully and are encouraging members of the public to provide feedback to SSEN in the meantime. We have reached out to our local councillors and MSP for support on the matter and are aiming to host a public meeting with SSEN. **No comments – session later on this evening.**

Drumoak Bowling Club - The Bowling Club in Drumoak has been playing a key part to our community this year, as well as providing a Warm Space for people every Friday, it is also hosting regular Quiz Nights and various Food Vans to bring a different offering to the community. We thank the management team and supporting community groups who make this possible. **No comments**

Post Office – We continue to look for an opportunity for a more permanent Post Office facility within the community and would welcome discussions with appropriate parties. **No comments**



Finance. We continue to maintain a healthy bank balance, with most transactions being awards from the Mid Hill Wind Farm Community Fund; a total of just £20,003 being awarded in the last financial year, and further information of our 2023 Funding Applications awarded will be promoted publicly. **No comments**

Personnel changes - I am sad to report this year the passing of Peter Renwick who played a huge part in our Community Council. We have passed on our thanks for his hard work and contributions over the year to his family. We welcomed Joanne Prystupa and Les Oliver as Co-Opted members for Durris and Crathes as well as Sharon Hauxwell who joined us as Secretary. We continue to search for members of the Community to join us to represent Crathes and Drumoak.

Finally, a note of thanks, firstly to our Local Aberdeenshire Councillors who have supported and helped with many of the issues and projects the CC has worked on over the last year. However, without our Community Councillors who all volunteer their time, none of the above would be possible, so an extremely big thank you from me to our team has to be noted, their dedication, support and input over the last year has been incredible, the success of the difference we are making our communities is down to them and that is something I am very proud of.

David Edgar
Chair
30th May 2023

3) FINANCIAL REPORT - TREASURER

Accounts were circulated in advance of the meeting and will be available published on website.

A Large proportion of funds have been received from wind farm

4) NOMINATIONS FOR COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS

Joanna and Les Oliver – glitch in system so cannot fully appoint them this evening.

5) APPOINTMENT OF OFFICE BEARERS

DM nominated DE as Chair. NO other nominations. DE remains Chair.

DM nominated MA as treasurer, SF seconded. MA remains as Treasurer

6) AOB - None

Annual Report

Proposed David – Agreed Anne

Treasurer's Report

Proposed Lynn – approved Les



WOODLANDS OF DURRIS

1 Core Paths Network Update/Volunteer Group

DE reported that we have been working with Aberdeenshire Council to create a core path between Woodland and Durris. Ultimately this could then be connected to Drumoak and Crathes but that could be a long way off being achieved. DE put out a plea to those present at the meeting for volunteers to help create this group – people to put names down at the end of the meeting. We have already been working on this project for 9 months. Ultimately it will require the need for agreement from landowners but if this is achieved, we need community group to help build this.

3 Q & A with Forbes Homes (FH)

Q *Electric fences across paths*

The well-used established paths from the Land & Forestry Woodlands Wood, around the Football pitch; and from the Upper Balfour road have been closed off with electric fencing for sheep grazing. When first erected, no warning signs were positioned. Will they be re-opened up for access in the near future?

A FH advised that he had been advised by a historical Environmental Rep to allow sheep grazing in this area in order to keep growth under control and has therefore under her recommendation given this land to a farmer from Auchinblae to put his sheep on the keep the grass shorter.

He advised that he has put on the gates to stop the threat of diesel being stolen as well as stopping locals from fly tipping here

Q *Cedar Avenue Paths*

Similarly, on the Woodlands Estate, the established historical path from Cedar Avenue to the east and past the 3 new houses, has been closed-off; will this be re-opened shortly?

A FH advised that this area has just been sprayed again today. They have also cut a ditch in this area to allow water to run off the land. He advised that the fences would come down but before this the land needs to be ploughed and bird seed to go down. Could not give a timeframe.

FH also went onto say that people using this land need to understand the code of practice for the countryside. Dog mess can cause sheep to abort and absolutely no dogs should chase sheep

A member of the public asked for better signage, commenting that the same signage has been up for some time – FH agreed that this could be better.

Q *Access to Established paths*

Can the community be assured that the 'right to roam' on these tracks, accessed for decades, both to the west and east of Upper Balfour, will continue?

A FH agreed to look at changing fence around the football pitch.

Q *Sheep Grazing*

Will the grazing of sheep on this land close to the Woodlands community become a regular occurrence?

A FH confirmed that the Banchory side, yes will become a regular thing rather than the gorse.



Q Historic Cairns

Are Historic Environment Scotland aware of the gorse and scrub clearing around the Designated Historic Cairns, Historic Environment Scotland Scheduled Monument- Upper Balfour Cairns, House and Field System?

A FH - Yes – that is why the recommended to use the sheep.

Are the Designated Historic Cairns in this area safe from development encroachment? Are there any plans to cultivate this area?

FH said you cannot cultivate this area.

Q Aberdeenshire Path Network

The Community Council has been working with Aberdeenshire Council Core Paths Project, to re-establish the link path between Woodlands Wood, Kirkton Wood and eventually Crathes. This section would form a key part of the National Core Path Network and has been closed for several years; can the community work with you to reopen the path alongside the dyke? (see accompanying illustration file – yellow section on map)

This path would then link with the proposed footpath extension westwards from the school, currently being discussed by CDDCC with Dunecht Estates.

A FH does not believe this is his land – no-one certain whose land it is. He said that he would check to be sure

DE mentioned that Fiona Chapman (local land access officer) is due to have planned conversation with some landowners and with some senior officers. She will be helping to look at the core path.

Q House Developments Upper Balfour

All 9 Outline Planning Applications for the Upper Balfour area have been approved; these applications comprise a total of 21 new houses. This number of new houses combined with the Aberdeenshire Council Local Development Plan with 27 new houses adjacent to the Kirkwood Homes houses, will require significant improvement to local infrastructure and services.

Can you outline your plans for the Upper Balfour area regarding access roads to the new properties, existing road improvements, footpath provision, water supply and sewage/waste water disposal; and most important, surface water drainage and flood measures?

A FH confirmed road going to be an adopted road. There will be verges either side of the road. Roads department will keep them compliant.

Drainage will be private. They have already dug a ditch to deal with drainage.

Paul McCarry – has confirmed that there will be no further organic growth now (what current planning applications have fallen under)

FH confirmed that they have a plan for all of the houses which he will forward to us to allow us to show community

Q Land Owned by Forbes

Can you update us on future plans for land that you own, to the north and west of Upper Balfour, towards Kirkton, and land to the east and north of the current building works?



FH confirmed that they have offered an area of land to create a village square – could have a town hall here.

Liaison with Woodlands Community

- Q** *Would you consider having a nominated contact person(s) for Woodlands (and Kirkton of Durris), to keep the community updated on plans for the area, and similarly provide you with feedback from the community on any issues?*

FH agreed that he will try and keep communications going with the CDD CC so local community can be kept better updated.

SSEN

1 Project Overview

New overhead lines to be input from Tilling to Kintore.

Environment and People/Engineering and Cost are all the constraints they need to consider and they use these on maps to try and establish the best routes.

Landscape and Visual/ Residential and Visual amenity/ Cultural heritage habitat and species are also constraints they consider

Work came through with national grid – they work on how to deliver this.

From their assessments – the central belt corridor has proven to be one with least constraints.

Route options that will impact people here. Section E is the most preferred as follows existing lines.

4 key stages – enabling work – clearance works

Foundations

Tower assembly

Stringing – fly lines in

Project was established late last year. At the stage of gaining feedback from local communities. Will take suggested routes from communities and also for a sub-station but will need to use constraints grading/mapping in order to help make decisions.

Underground lines not being ruled out but come with a whole host of problems too. Do not work as effectively. May need substations compound every 10 – 15km. Significant infrastructure problems with them.

Feedback to be received by 23rd June.

Spring 2026 will be aiming to start work.

2 Q & A

- Q** Member of the public asked about preferred routes and how these were chosen –

A The route chosen scored the best from their assessments as detailed in the introduction.



- Q** Member of the public asked why has there been not been contact with residents
- A** They confirmed that they knew all the post codes of those properties that may be affected and had given info to Royal Mail to send out. They could not answer why these have not been received.
- Q** Member of the public asked where was our chance to be consulted on National Grids decision between offshore and on-shore.
- A** SSEN explained that the balance between what is on-shore or offshore is very complex. The National Grid have to design a network that provides enough power. SSEN will check if this is a public consultation or not when those decisions were being made?
- Q** Member of the public asked if the whole project of creating a line from Tilling to Kintore is a requirement regardless of this consultation?
- A** Yes, just location of it could be affected.
- Q** A member of the public asked what SSEN's position is with regards to the proposed wind farm.
- A** SSEN confirmed that they provide the infrastructure, they are not involved in windfarms as such, they are somewhat reactive to what industry is doing. Once wind farm approved then they must provide infrastructure for them. Higher level strategic planning is done by National Grid
- Q** Can it be expandable?
- A** This can be possible, but this route would not be suitable.
- Q** DE suggested should we as a community council be reaching out to National Grid to give them our thoughts/suggestions/objections.
- A** Yes
- Q** A member public asked would you be willing to buy a property or send school with Pylon close to it?
- A** No but then backed up answer with there are rules about how closed they can build a pylon to a property/building. 170 meters.
- Q** Member of public asked can you not extend the deadline?
- A** No. They already have a large volume of feedback, completed a lot of consultations and are here tonight providing information. They can accept feedback after the deadline date.

AOB

- 1. Actions from discussions**
Booklets from consultations to hand out
Appointing a Vice Chair – have a think about this for July
- 2. Additional June Meeting – 19th via Teams**
All agreed this would not be required.



3. July Meeting – Wed 5th

All agreed to this.

Woodland of Durris – any immediate questions?

MA - Need to follow up with Derek and Cameron – who is point of contact? Can they send plan of all of houses together. Can start getting them in contact with volunteers for the path network. **MA**

SSEN - Submit feedback as residents and from a CC perspective by 23rd June

Request visuals of what substations look like if lines went underground.

By Saturday put in feedback together as a Community Council. Including any personal perspectives.

Deeside against Pylons – have asked us to share their info on FB group. All agreed ok to put this on here as long as it explained this is not our own opinion.

Contact National Grid – should we contact them.

Andrew Bowie – try and set one up with him and Sarah Cormak. **DE**

4. Urgent matters/updates

Tue 20th June – Res exhibition – will be sharing table with Banchory.

Meeting concluded 22.30hrs