

ASCC – ANNUAL REPORT [2].

## AUCHTERMUCHTY & STRATHMIGLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

### ANNUAL REPORT 2008/09

The JUNE Meeting of the Community Council marks the passing of another busy year in our commitment to representing our communities as fully as we are able. The Meeting in the Gateside Memorial Hall on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2009 will be testimony to that continuing commitment, when we have the opportunity to meet the Case Officer for SEPA in discussion on the thorny issue of the Binn Farm Waste to Energy Plant and Incinerator.

Two Community Councillors have unfortunately resigned since my Report in June 2008. I am grateful to both Bob Smeaton [Auchtermuchty] and Bill Gudgeon [Dunshalt] for their help. The Community Council however, at this half-way point in its life, is now three persons short of its established number. This has to be a matter of concern. The power however lies with the Council to co-opt two members from Dunshalt, and one from Auchtermuchty – should members of the public put their names forward.

The Office Bearers of the Council remain the same as last year – with myself as Chair, Andy Heer as Vice-Chair, Alan Muirhead as Secretary and Bill Torrance as Treasurer and Minute Secretary. I am grateful to all Community Councillors, as well as to the Office Bearers, for their hard work over the year.

Our relationship with the new local authority 'multi-member' Ward arrangements has settled down; and I have to thank Councillors Donald Lothian and David MacDiarmid for their assistance and attendance at our Meetings; as also Colin Gilbert of Fife Council, and PC Ian Laing of Fife Constabulary.

The Minutes of our Meetings and other relevant Documents continue to be displayed on our website; and our position on a number of major issues has been well covered in the local press – particularly the 'Courier'.

1.0. PLANNING has [as last year] occupied most of the Community Council's time and the energies of its Office Bearers! During the year the Scottish Parliament has continued to unfold the latest stages of the Planning Act [Scotland]. However it is perhaps our old friends the 'Fife Council 20 Year Structure Plan' and the 'St.Andrews & East Fife Local Plan' that have attracted most interest:

- THE STRUCTURE PLAN was eventually approved this Spring by the Scottish Government, but despite all the comments made in Fife East Area, making no concessions whatsoever on the issues of Housing

Numbers, the Cupar Bye-Pass and the St.Andrews Green-belt. The question of the new Landscape Designation areas was left to be fine tuned in the Local Plan.

- THE ST.ANDREWS & EAST FIFE LOCAL PLAN was laid before the NE Fife Area Committee at its Meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2009, and will progress to the FC Planning Committee on the 30<sup>th</sup>. In terms of this Community Council's previous submissions to FC Development Services there is little encouragement to be found. The northern boundary of the new Lomond Hills Landscape Designation area remains at the River Eden rather than being extended to include the whole width of the Eden Valley. Similarly there appears to be no proposals for the protection of the landscape settings of Auchtermuchty/Dunshalt or Strathmiglo. There is also an unexpected Housing Proposal in the Low Road, Auchtermuchty. This occupies the important site to the east of the Low Road Garage, which we have previously advocated to Fife Council as a vital landscape link between town and countryside, with important views to the Lomond Hills. I am grateful to Councillor Lothian in that he was at least able to persuade Development Services that this last minute proposal should be modified. However, in due course the Community Council will have to both consult, and take a view as to what our position on this should be. This Final Draft Local Plan which we are informed now will be published for Public Consultation in October this year. It is not expected to become the 'approved' Plan for St.Andrews & East Fife until 2011.
- CITY REGION [TAY VALLEY] PLAN: The preparatory stages of this Plan appear now to have been completed, with the Planning Team in place. As we anticipated, the whole of the Fife East Area will be contained within it.
- PLANNING APPLICATIONS: We have continued to monitor Planning Applications within our area, and consulting as appropriate. Particularly we lodged 'objection' to two Applications during the year, both involving new Housing Developments in the countryside. They are located at Bellfield to the south of Strathmiglo, and at Wester Nether Urquhart to the south of Gateside. In both cases the proposals were rejected by Fife Council, and have now become the subject of Planning 'Appeals' by the applicants. Bellfield will be decided on the basis of written submissions, whilst we have been informed that Wester Nether Urquhart will be a Public Local Hearing, although details are not yet to hand.
- BINN FARM WASTE TO ENERGY PLANT AND INCINERATOR: The Developer has now made application to SEPA for an operating licence for the Plant. Community Council has made Objection to the granting of this licence. Community Councillors have already agreed the grounds for objection. The issue will of course form a major part of

the same Meeting at which this Annual Report is tabled. It should be noted however that although I have listed this item under 'Planning', that Perth & Kinross Council and the Scottish Government actually granted Planning Approval [against our fierce Objection] more than two years ago.

## 2.0. OTHER ISSUES:

- **FLOODING:** Little progress has been made on this since my last Annual Report. It has proved impossible to either gain official access to the Consultants Report, or to secure the attendance of an appropriate Fife Council official at a Meeting of Community Council to speak to the issue, and hopefully to answer questions. This is all now being pursued through formal channels via the Chief Executive.
- **JOINT MANAGEMENT OF SMALL SCHOOLS:** The adoption of this policy by Fife Council also proved to be a very apt commentary on the scant regard given to Consultation with Community Councils by some Services of the Council. Community Councillors will recall that the Proposal was brought to, and passed by, the Children's Services Committee whilst the Document was still out to Community Councils for observation. We have been given some assurance however that in due course a separate Report of Community Council views will be put to the Committee.
- **TRAFFIC SPEED:** Excessive Traffic Speed in all of our communities has continued to be a leading item on our Agendas. We are however grateful to both the Police locally, and the Fife Camera Partnership for their efforts, particularly on the A91 at Gateside. Issues still remain elsewhere however, and require our constant vigilance.
- **COMMUNITY POLICING:** The presence of PC Ian Laing at virtually all our Meetings has meant that we have been able to enjoy a meaningful conversation on the issues of Community Policing, particularly youth disorder. The Secretary has also been able to establish with Fife Council that we will hopefully be able to consider the issue of bye-laws to address the drinking of alcohol in public places, in the autumn of this year.
- **ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION MATTERS:** Last year I included a heading called the 'aggravation factor' which referred to those areas of the public service which seemed sometimes to be difficult to hold to account – particularly Roads and Lighting matters. This year however we have been pleased to learn that major road resurfacing works will take place both in this financial year and the next, in Strathmiglo and Gateside. Notwithstanding, the general deterioration of roads throughout the community council area remains an issue.

- THE CORE PATH NETWORK: Not as much progress as would have been hoped, but several Community Councillors recently attended Fife Council's Access Seminar. There appear to be grounds for optimism with regard to the first phase of the Eden Valley Path.
- SCOTTISH WATER: Although a Meeting was held on site at the River Eden in Strathmiglo in the winter, there is as yet apparently no action to effectively secure the exposed section of sewer on the south bank of the River.

DAVID COWLING  
Chair.

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Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2009.