

AUCHTERMUCHTY & STRATHMIGLO
COMMUNITY COUNCIL

CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11

The following is a summary of the principal activities of the COMMUNITY COUNCIL during the period June 2010 to September 2011.

The period covers the latter part of the previous Community Council and the first year of the new. The first Meeting of the new Council was on 25th October, 2010 when Council co-opted Gordon Simpson [Dunshalt], and Jane Kerr [Strathmiglo]. Council membership otherwise remained the same.

The Office Bearers appointed were:

David COWLING – Chair
Andy HEER – Vice Chair
Alan MUIRHEAD – Secretary
Bill TORRANCE – Treasurer & Minute Secretary.

As Chair, I wish to thank our local Fife Councillors, Donald LOTHIAN, David MacDIARMID and Andrew ARBUCKLE for their continuing help, and in particular Donald and David for their regular attendance at our meetings.

The MINUTES of our Meetings continue to be displayed on our website, along with other relevant documents. Our position on several issues has been covered in the local Press, particularly the 'Dundee Courier' and for which I am grateful.

PLANNING issues have as normal occupied most of the Council's action and activity. In summary the following:

- 1.0. The ST ANDREWS & EAST FIFE LOCAL PLAN after years of stagnation is now beginning to move towards [we hope] a conclusion, with Scottish Parliament 'Reporters' currently holding Public Hearings in the Plan area. The STRUCTURE PLAN also has moved towards a more certain outcome following the eventual dismissal by the Court of Session of the Objections lodged by Penny Uprichard of St Andrews. It is likely however that this is just

in time for it to be overtaken by the TAYPLAN Development Plans for the whole of the DUNDEE City Region Area.

- 2.0. TAYPLAN is gathering pace, and it is clear that their Development Plan process will rapidly become the pre-eminent influence on local Plan making and Development within our area. According to a Report in the magazine 'PLANNING' [23RD September 2011], whilst two of the City Region plans have slipped back [Aberdeen & Edinburgh], and Glasgow is only 'imminently' awaited, the Dundee Plan [TAYPLAN] is two months ahead in its programme – watch this space!
- 3.0. CHANGES TO THE PLANNING SYSTEM continue to be rolled out as a part of the provisions of Planning etc [Scotland] Act 2006; the latest being a major relaxation of PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT regulations, particularly as applicable to domestic property.
- 4.0. WIND TURBINES & WIND FARMS: Community Council has asked Fife Council to require 'full environmental impact analyses' on a number of proposed Developments within our area. The nature of our relationship however with FC Development Services sometimes make it rather difficult to know what, if any, notice of our concerns has been taken by them. In August 2010 however, and after careful consideration, we did Object to a single turbine located on the Dryside Road on the boundary of the supposedly protected landscape of the Lomond Hills Regional Park. Notwithstanding, it was however approved by the NE Fife Area Committee, and is now in place. What must be stressed is that we have by no means made objection to all single turbine farm based proposals, most of which have seemed entirely satisfactory to us. Also, after careful discussion, we did not make objection to the very prominent Clatto Hill Wind Farm, but principally because it lies out with our community council area. We also commented fully [and critically] in a formal Response to Fife Council on their Revised 'Wind Energy Guidance' document.
- 5.0. Other major Planning involvements have been:
 - The Proposed Conversion of the FOREST HILLS HOTEL in Auchtermuchty into a House in Multiple Occupation. There was a spirited Public Meeting in December as a part of our Community Council Meeting [and also a similar meeting held by the Auchtermuchty Community Association]. After careful consideration we lodged Objection, and this was in due course upheld by the NE Fife Area Committee.

- The Proposed CARAVAN PARK in the heart of Gateside. Again at a meeting in February, well attended by the public, we agreed to make Objection to this proposal. However, despite several meetings with FC officials, and a close involvement of the Gateside Community Association, this Proposal has still to come before the NE Fife Area Committee for their consideration.
- The CORE PATH network seems to have died the death within this area, despite all our previous commitment to it. Your Chair is particularly disappointed that the Eden Valley Path connecting Auchtermuchty [via Strathmiglo, Gateside and Burnside] to the Perth & Kinross network in the west seems as remote as ever.

6.0. OTHER MATTERS: The work of the Community Council however does not only concern planning matters:

- LICENCING BYE-LAWS: After consultation with the Community Associations in Auchtermuchty, Strathmiglo and Gateside, we have asked the Licensing Authority that each of these communities, as defined by agreed settlement boundaries, be included within the bye-law.
- BINN FARM ENERGY PARK: We have continued our active engagement with the representative Community Committee set up under the auspices of Perth & Kinross Council. We have also maintained close contact with the principal users of the site, and with SEPA. Representatives of SITA visited the Community Council, and exhibited in Strathmiglo and Gateside. Two community councillors also visited a facility in Dumfries similar to that now proposed [NB – at our expense, not the Developers!].
- STRATHMIGLO POST OFFICE: After maintaining contact with the PO. Community Council notes that the relocated office is now an accepted part of life within Strathmiglo.
- BANK OF SCOTLAND BRANCH, AUCHTERMUCHTY: It is with disappointment that despite our [and others] protestations, the Bank proceeded with the closure. Little by little the range of local facilities ebbs away!
- TRAFFIC: Community Council continues to make representations to Fife Council and the Police about excessive traffic speed in all parts of our area. We are grateful for the actions being taken – but still feel that the speed of large ‘tippers’ along the A91 must be addressed.
- A92 CLOSURE: This is underway at the moment, and is directing significantly increased traffic levels through Strathmiglo and Auchtermuchty [with some ‘rat running’ through Dunshalt]. It remains your Chair’s view that there

should have been an 'on-line' diversion on the A92 itself, particularly having regard for the length of the closure. The peace and safety of local residents has been set below the convenience of BEAR Scotland!

- ROAD REPAIRS: There continues to be concern at the apparently temporary nature of some of the pot-hole repairs carried out by FC. Councillor Lothian again draws our attention to the recession driven reductions in public expenditure! There was however appreciation of FCs efforts during the heavy snows during the past winter.
- FOUR COLOUR BINS: Now in place and the new system up and running.
- POLICE REPRESENTATION: We have become accustomed to the changes in our relationship with Fife Constabulary, and community councillors are attending the Police Community Meetings in Auchtermuchty & Strathmiglo.
- LOMOND HILLS REGIONAL PARK: The Community Council remains a member of the Park Committee, and is grateful to George AITKEN for continuing to represent us on it.
- ASSOCIATION OF SCOTTISH COMMUNITY COUNCILS: It is with dismay that we have noted the apparent demise of this important representative group. We do however continue our membership of the ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF RURAL SCOTLAND.

As most community councillors will know, my fourth Annual Report will be my final one. I have decided that because of the considerable other pressures in my life, that after 20 years, [10 of which were as Secretary] I must stand down. Thank you for the experience, and indeed for your friendship and support, it has been a roller coaster ride. I enjoyed it, hope that you occasionally did so also; but who needs a Chair in their 75th year!

DAVID COWLING
Chair

26th September 2011.