

# Catterline, Kinneff & Dunnottar Community Council

## Minutes for Monthly Public Meeting

Catterline School, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2013

### Attendees and Apologies

Present: Andrew Chedburn (chair), Tim Crabb, Billy Dargie, Karen Hales, John Carr, Phil Murray, Aileen Swarbrick, Eeva-Kaisa Arter (secretary)

Attending: Cllrs George Carr and Dave Stewart

Jim Black - Principal Engineer and Stuart McFarlane - Roads Manager, K&M Areas &Marr Aberdeenshire Council

PC Dale Croall

Patrick Keogh of Blue Energy

Members of the Public: Robert Adamson, Frances Crabb, David Evans, Ian McIntosh, Byron McKibben, Jack Milne, Debbie Murray, Pieter v d Poorte, Dave Ramsay, Duncan Scott, Pamela Scott, Alan Searle, Evelyn Watt, Ceri Webster et al.

Apologies: Ann Masson

### Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and the motion that they be approved moved by Aileen Swarbrick and seconded by Karen Hales.

### Matters Arising

With regard to bulk buying domestic heating oil, discussed at the November meeting, Karen Hales informed the CC that in her husband's view there would need to be interest from the community in order to make the plan viable.

### Police Report

PC Croall reported that the crime rate in the K&M area remained low. However, he urged residents to be vigilant and secure their houses and vehicles as well as notify the police of any suspicious activity and/or vehicles in the locality.

The 'Winter Safe Journey Campaign' was continuing until the end of the month, with a view to raising awareness of the dangers of winter driving/drink driving and to offer advice on motoring in winter conditions.

PC Small contacted the CC to note that there had been no increase in traffic/speed violations in the Catterline area.

John Carr inquired if the police had made any progress in their investigation into a house-break in

Barras, which had left an elderly woman devastated. He hoped there would be more police attention to cases like this. PC Croall would look into the matter and report back.

### Financial Matters

The current account amounted to £727.46 after Aberdeenshire paid in £540 whilst the savings account stood at £241.24

### Planning Applications

Ref.	Date	Address	Proposal
<a href="#">APP/2012/3821</a>	2012-11-28	Chapelton Cottage Stonehaven Stonehaven AB39 2TS	Alteration and Extension to Dwellinghouse
<a href="#">APP/2013/4147</a>	2013-01-11	The Steading Upper Westown of Barras Barras Stonehaven AB39 2XU	Alterations and Extension to Dwellinghouse

### Matters Arising from Planning Applications

The CC discussed and approved the applications.

### Catterline Landslips & Footpaths

A member of the public, Ian McIntosh noted that the Catterline coastal defences had been in place for 25 years, but the recent storms and concomitant coastal erosion had left a trail of concrete blocks scattered about. He feared the road to the harbour would disappear if urgent action was not taken. Cllr Carr concurred that a permanent solution was needed. However, there were strict financial rules and the Council did not allocate money for work on privately-owned land. There was, though, a newly-appointed Council Officer, whose remit was to look into floods and coastal erosion.

Stuart McFarlane, Head of Roads, assured the CC that the Council was fully aware of the situation in Catterline and, accordingly, the harbour road had been closed. It was a conscious decision to leave the road for the time being: a substantial amount of clearing would be necessary to gain access to the road and install rocks and gabions to support it. He confirmed that the Council would assume responsibility for the upkeep of the road.

Jim Black, Principal Engineer in the Council, said that previously work was done using rope access from the top because machines were unable to reach from the bottom. There was unstable material at the top, which would fall down if debris was cleared to allow public access at the bottom, especially after heavy rain. The Council was seeking prices from specialist firms to inspect the slip and this would be done from the top using ropes. Only thereafter could machines be brought in to clear the road for public use. The soft mass at the top caused problems; if grass could be introduced in that soft area, it would stabilise it to a degree. However, it might be necessary to remove it altogether to establish whether there was rock underneath. He proceeded to point out that the immediate work “will not be a complete fix – it will be a much bigger exercise to stabilise”. He stated that the slips at the back and furthest away were not as bad as the ones at the front but there

would still be minor slips in the future. One of the long-term priorities for a permanent solution was drainage, which would be very costly. As far as the slips were concerned, Jim Black reported that he had requested Jacobs Geotech, contractors for the work at Bervie Braes, to assess matters. Above all, there was nothing at present to indicate that there was a risk of the cottages tumbling down the slope. Throwing garden rubbish down the slope did not help, as it got waterlogged and caused soil erosion. A more serious matter was the springs at the top of the braes. These should be identified and drainage arranged. Planting trees on the slope would hold the soil together, but the roots did not grow deep enough to fix it for good. Work would only start in drier weather to make it safer for those involved.

In response to a resident's concern Mr Black said that although the verge of the road was eroding, the road itself did not show any cracking and was more stable than it looked.

George Carr mentioned the work done in Gourdon to stabilise the slopes. Water needed to come out of the slopes and old channels were mended. He also stressed the importance of locating the springs. Residents could do this and there might be funds available. It would be helpful to clear the drains to release trapped groundwater. He also suggested that it might be worth replacing the drains by a pumping station.

Stuart McFarlane fully agreed with George Carr on the importance of locating the springs in order to drain the water.

Bill Black remarked there were piling and pipes in Bervie Braes as well as drains. Frances Crabb added that the braes were burned to keep the drains and pipes clear. Bill Black agreed that if drains were identified, then something could be done.

In response to a resident's query Stuart McFarlane did not regard recent events as catastrophic as the "Council would need something catastrophic not to keep the road open".

Ceri Webster wondered if the water coming down from gutters was bad. Bill Black thought it was connected to the old drainage system.

Phil Murray was pleased about the Council's commitment to the road but wondered whether it would be ongoing or whether the road would be abandoned. Stuart McFarlane responded unequivocally: the road would not be abandoned. Earlier in the day he had inspected the slope by the Mill and noted a slip, but was puzzled why it had happened as the verge was intact. In his opinion the water coming down did not look like surface water, but seemed to be coming from somewhere deeper. This would need considerable work which the Council was committed to undertake.

Jim Black responded to David Evans' observation that at South Row the sea was eroding the clay and concrete blocks had been scattered and the gabions smashed, by undertaking to have the coast protection team take a look at the site.

George Carr suggested recording and costing all significant coastal damage in the Shire from south to north since there was funding available for catastrophic events. The area manager had a list for

this purpose.

To a member of the public's concern about the slip behind the divers' shed, Jim Black answered that that particular slip was not affected at the moment.

### **Footpaths**

In response to Ceri Webster's query about responsibility for the upkeep of footpaths, Jim Black explained some were 'core paths', which the Council looked after. Most were of this variety but there seemed to be no obvious criterion for such a designation. Many of the core paths connected to road networks. He did not think the footpath at the top of the brae was the Council's responsibility. If residents wanted to change the status of a footpath, they could propose it at the next consultation.

### **Landslip Action Group**

A residents' group to deal with the problem of landslips was formed at Andrew Chedburn's initiative. It would meet at the Creel Inn the following night. George Carr thought the best way of funding the work on the braes would be the money from wind turbines.

Phil Murray added that it would give impetus to the enterprise if the Council gave some technical advice, since consultants were not keen on working with small community groups. Jim Black promised to provide the names of consultants who would work with small projects.

George Carr noted that it was important to find out what types of trees could be planted on the slopes.

Ceri Webster wondered whether it might be possible to get a skip for garden rubbish, to avoid the waste being thrown down the slopes. George Carr pointed out that there was a skip for garden waste in Inverbervie. He also suggested looking into the community green waste scheme in Johnshaven.

In response to Debbie Murray's query about a time-scale for Council action on the problem of Catterline landslips, Stuart McFarlane said that at the moment it was too dangerous to do anything but possibly at Easter or April.

### **Correspondence**

- Aberdeenshire – Aberdeenshire LDP - Rural Development Planning Advice for Housing and Business Development in the Countryside and Greenbelt
- Stuart McFarlane, Roads Manager – No sliplane for Roadside of Catterline
- Cllr Jim Gifford, Leader of Aberdeenshire Council – response to CKD letter re road problems
- Atmos Consulting for Blue Energy – Hillhead of Auquhirie Wind Farm proposed extension public exhibition

### **Roads**

Andrew Chedburn enquired if road repairs were ongoing.

Stuart McFarlane explained that at that moment the priority was to make things safe. Money was running out, and the Council was concentrating on cases where people's properties were concerned; opening roads and repairing damages to bridges. Major damages would be seen to at a later date.

Billy Dargie wanted to know how often gullies were surveyed. According to Stuart McFarlane this happened once a year in connection with the clearing. He urged locals to report any road defects by ringing 08456081205 or reporting online.' The sooner the Council knows about defects, the sooner they get done.'

### **Hillhead of Auquhirie Wind Farm**

Patrick Keogh of Blue Energy informed the CC that Blue Energy was going to apply for three more turbines at Hillhead. There would be an exhibition of the plan at Stonehaven Leisure Centre on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March, from 3 pm till 8 pm. He encouraged the residents to visit the exhibition and fill in a questionnaire to give Blue Energy ideas about suitable projects to be funded from the Blue Energy community fund. He thought the landslips and a composting project would be worthy causes. If consent was given, then the turbines would be running in two years' time.

He confirmed that Blue Energy had started to put together a community benefit fund, which would cover Arbuthnot, KCD in the Mearns and Stonehaven to the north. Each of these communities should be represented on the panel deciding on projects. For the next 25 years it would have £13,800 to distribute annually, and would increase to £40,000 if three more turbines were to be given the go-ahead. Out of these monies 25 % would go on larger projects. One criterion for the distribution of funds was the proximity to the turbines: the closer the beneficiary was to the turbines, the more points it would receive. There was already an allocation of £5,000 to people affected by floods. He had indicated to Willie Munro that the money should not benefit Stonehaven alone.

John Carr expressed the need for a long-term project, which would be discussed next month.

### **Dunnottar Woods**

Andrew Chedburn reported that the lower parts in the Woods, around the Green Den area were like a swamp with many trees uprooted in the recent storms. He would be attending the Woodlands committee meeting on 31 January, which would be looking into floods and the bridge near Dunnottar Nurseries among other things.

### **Any Other Business**

Karen Hales was going to invite representatives of Green Cat Energy of St John's Windfarm to come to CKDCC's next meeting.

George Carr reminded everyone that a new LDP would be starting with rounds of consultations in September/October. He emphasized the need to look into policies. The 2006 LDP was still in place.

He pointed out that there were some changes: houses in the country – agricultural restrictions lifted; no restrictions about the proximity of turbines to houses; rural areas – no 20m notification distance about planning permission applications.

John Carr thought the Hillhead turbines were ugly. George Carr suggested asking the developers to send the CC pictures of available designs for consideration.

Frances Crabb reported that the burn at Catterline was blocked with fallen trees. The CC would find out which farmer was responsible for clearing it out.

**Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 26th February 2013