

Catterline, Kinneff & Dunnottar Community Council

Minutes for Public Meeting Concerning Stonehaven South

Catterline School, 14 October 2008

Attendees and Apologies		
Chair : Cllr John Carr		
Present : Cllrs Eric Wyness, Andrew Watt, Anne Masson, Bill Dargie, Stephen Hall (sec).		
Attending : Harry McNab (Bancon), Marianne McGowan (Stewart Milne), Stuart Young (Dunecht Estates), Ramsay Smith (adviser to Bancon) and over 40 members of the public.		
Apologies : Ian Duncan, Jim Marshall, Eeva-Kaisa Arter, Cllr George Carr.		

Introduction
Chairman John Carr welcomed everyone and gave a brief outline of the structure of the meeting, requesting that all comments be addressed to the chair. He then gave a brief outline of the Stonehaven South development plans within the broader context of the Draft Structure Plan, and the Local Plan that will follow it, explaining that the plans do not, at present, represent a formal planning application, but rather they are the public consultation phase of a proposal that will be submitted to Aberdeenshire Council for possible inclusion in the next Local Plan, with a view to taking it forward over the next 12 to 15 years. The deadline for this proposal to be submitted is the 6 th November. He then invited Mr Harry McNab of Bancon to address the meeting to give further details.

Presentation on “Stonehaven South”
<p>Harry McNab expanded the chairman's introductory remarks and explained that Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Councils are working together in a new approach to planning, which will no longer be done in “5 year chunks” but will instead be covering the outline for the next 30 years. The Scottish Executive expects significant population growth in the area over that period, and the Structure Plan (currently in draft form) being developed by Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City together has identified the “Laurencekirk to Huntly corridor” as a broad area for this expansion. They are currently seeking community views on where this development should be.</p> <p>He went on to detail their (Bancon, Dunecht Estates and Stewart Milne) proposal for “Stonehaven South”, explaining that it lies between the existing Braehead housing development and the land at East Newtonleys which already has outline permission for light industrial use and is currently the subject of a planning application for a supermarket and petrol station [APP/2006/3263]. The development will be mixed use, with approximately 1/3rd each allocated to residential, community use and business (class 4 to 6 – small offices and light industrial). The area is contained by landscape features – the ridge lines to the east and south and Dunnottar Woods to the west. Existing woodland within the site will be maintained and they also plan to develop the area between Black Hill and Dunnottar Castle as a “coastal park” with a visitor centre for the castle. They have been approached by the Stonehaven Allotment Association and hope to include 6 acres of allotments. Feedback from the council is that they want to replace Dunnottar Primary School, and space will be put aside for a new school if that is desired. Other local groups have contacted the developers with a view to the provision of sporting facilities – one indoor and one outdoor – and NHS Grampian are keen to develop a health centre in the area. He then summarized the feedback from recent public displays held in Stonehaven [separate document].</p>

Questions/observations from the floor

The Chairman then invited questions and observations from the floor.

George Swapp (Dunnottar Woodland Park Association) stated that the DWPA continues to pay attention to developments that may affect the woods. They have given evidence at previous public inquiries, and the possibility of future development remains a concern, so there is no doubt the DWPA will be making a response. Their priority is to safeguard the woodlands rural setting. It is a precious local resource, but small and vulnerable. There are also important local views from the War Memorial on Black Hill and from the Golf Course which must be protected.

Harry McNab responded that there was no intention to impinge on the woods, and he hoped that the woods might in fact benefit from the closing of the Dunnottar Braes to through traffic. The recent Braehead development had resulted in a section 75 agreement for a financial donation to the DWPA.

Frank Budd (Stonehaven Tourist Group) stated that he was concerned about the wording of the questionnaires handed out at the public displays in Stonehaven, which he thought were designed to produce a positive response. He stated that he found no support for the scheme in Stonehaven.

Harry McNab responded that there were questions that both allowed and attracted a negative response, and that these have been included in the feedback.

Alan Sutherland, who identified himself as being "kind of a member of the [Stonehaven and District] Community Council" raised concerns about viewpoints chosen in the brochure. He said they seemed to be specifically chosen to give a misleading impression of the visual impact. He was particularly critical of the lack of any representation from the Golf Course and Black Hill. He then began to circulate, from the back of the hall, a photomontage which he asserted represented what the development would look like from the Golf Course. This image was not available to the chair of the meeting.

Harry McNab stated that the plans were not finalized yet so it was not possible to give accurate representations, but that the Environmental Impact Statement that would accompany any formal planning application would include a landscape and visual impact assessment that would include the Golf Course and many other points. He rejected accuracy of the picture, stating that it showed housing outside the area on which they hoped to build, and that the housing types showed were not correct as they "would never build white houses with red roofs in that location".

Alan Sutherland then asked if accurate pictures from the Golf Course could be provided, to which Harry McNab replied that they could not be produced without a master plan, and they are not at that stage yet.

Freda Burns (Stonehaven resident) asked if, given that the business park at East Newtonleys is already approved, are we not wasting our time?

Garry Patterson asked why sewage pipes currently being installed if the plan is not finalized?

Harry McNab replied that the pipes were being installed on the instructions of the Scottish Executive. Marianne McGowan added that the infrastructure is being added for current Braehead development and business park.

Joan Duncan voiced concerns about infrastructure impact of the development and stated that she didn't think Stonehaven needs 1000 new houses. She suggested that a new village should be built instead.

Karen Hales (Kinneff resident) said she welcomed the development in principle, but was concerned about the density of the housing and the visual impact it would have. She also pointed out that the positive aspects of the development are dependent on groups other than the developers, and that we could end up with housing but no facilities as we have in the past.

Harry McNab stated that the sporting facilities are not linked to the council. The developers are committed to a broad spectrum of housing types, with 25% being 'affordable'. The target density is 30 houses per hectare, but they will look at different visual impacts as part of the planning process.

Stephen Hall (CKDCC) stated that he thought that this is the start of a really interesting process and that it is unique to be involved in influencing the way our community grows at such an early stage. He stated that that supermarkets and community facilities on the south side of Stonehaven would be a benefit for everybody down the coast to Inverbervie and beyond. He added that the delivery of the promised community facilities must match the proposal.

Maira from Barras asked if it would be possible to get someone from the Education Committee to the next meeting to discuss the proposed new school. Stephen Hall stated that he would try to do that.

Harry McNab added that the council are looking for larger developments to get critical mass to drive infrastructure developments.

Fiona Hill, picking up on an earlier comment by Mr McNab, asked what style the houses would be if they weren't "red roofed"?

Harry McNab replied that they don't know yet, but that the houses "won't stick out". Marianne McGowan added that the development deliberately avoids the most sensitive ridge line area.

Fiona Hill then repeated Alan Sutherland's request for accurate photomontage views.

Ken Mair backed up George Swapp's comments on Dunnottar Woods, and asked what the effect on the town centre will

be.

Harry McNab stated that their Retail Impact Assessment for the supermarket shows very little effect on the town centre. They have been asked to improve the bus services from town and from the South, which would bring more people to the town centre.

Ken Mair added that he was concerned about increased traffic in the town.

Frank Budd said he fears that utopian vision of a sustainable development with shops, community facilities and a new school will not be delivered, but remarked on his great respect for Harry McNab.

At this point, John Carr brought the meeting to a close.

Close

John Carr gave his thanks to Marianne McGowan, Stuart Young, Ramsay Smith and particularly to Harry McNab for taking the time to present the proposals to the Community Council. He also thanked all the other attendees for their enthusiastic and lively contribution to the discussion.

The meeting closed at 9pm.