

MOUNT BLAIR COMMUNITY COUNCIL PUBLIC MEETING

Draft Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the 34th Session of Mount Blair Community Council
held in the Session House, Kirkmichael on Monday 22 November 2010

Present: Andrew Duncan (Chair), Mike Purdie (Treasurer), Susan Scott, Donald Michie, Cllr Bob Ellis
Sergeant Alan Wilkie (Tayside Police), Steve Low (Tayside Fire & Rescue) + 7 public members

Apologies: Doreen MacIntyre, Cllr Caroline Shiers, Cllr Elizabeth Grant, Fiona Calvin, Sally Fenner

1. A Duncan welcomed all to the meeting and apologies were recorded.
2. **Minutes of the Last Meeting:** It was noted the correct terminology is VIP Informer System (not Informing as previously minuted). Proposed by S Scott and seconded by M Purdie the draft Minutes of the previous meeting were otherwise accepted as an accurate record.

3. **Steve Low, Tayside Fire & Rescue – Home Fire Safety**

A Duncan introduced Steve Low (District Liaison Manager) who manages local stations at Kirkmichael and Glenshee. Steve Low discussed the *Towards a Safer Tayside Consultation Document* highlighting the high volume of fires taking place in the community and the decision to adopt the **provision of free home fire safety visitations**. It was emphasized this is free advice tailored to each individual to look at potential fire dangers in the home. Anyone wishing to have this service carried out in their home should contact **0300 123 9998**.

Information leaflets were made available and a request made to distribute around the community. The Service can install/test a smoke alarm free of charge. It was agreed an electronic version of this flier be circulated on the community email system and included in the next edition of *Across the Glens*. A member of the public asked if any fire extinguisher for the home could be recommended; dry powder extinguishers were noted to deal with any kind of fire however cause a great deal of mess. It was recommended the public do not attempt to tackle any fire themselves. A Duncan relayed his thanks and Steve Low left the meeting.

It was recorded that a recent fire fatalities report found that 46.7% of fires in the home could have been avoided.

4. **Matters Arising**

New Guidelines for Community Councils (update) – It was noted there was no information pertaining to this following on from information previously communicated by D MacIntyre. It was agreed to carry this forward.

Addressing potential road issues over Winter season (update) – A Duncan advised he had been in contact with Blairgowrie Roads Department who have confirmed they are aware of the issues raised. M Purdie stated snow fences had been put in place 10 days ago. Nothing further to report.

James Small Memorial Work (update) – Following completion of works it was suggested the Community Council's thanks are recorded to Perth & Kinross Council for re-instating this memorial. Despite recommendation to replace bollards with something more in keeping, it was reported this will not be feasible.

A member of the public noted the 'concealed entrance' sign had been sited in the wrong position; a misunderstanding whereby the council understood this was to be placed elsewhere. Councillor Bob Ellis confirmed this sign is set to be moved by Tayside Contracts but a date is yet unknown.

It was requested that the Community Council consider applying for a grant to place a membrane/gravel and planting around the memorial. It was understood this area had already been earmarked for planting by Kirkmichael in Bloom however due to heavy cutbacks across all Perthshire in Bloom suggested this may not be feasible and application therefore proposed for the Drumderg Fund. It was agreed a decision is made on what to do, costing calculated and a grant application subsequently submitted to the main fund (if in excess of £250).

It was suggested an approach be made to the Conservation Officer to have the monument listed. If 'listed', it was stated that any damage occurring to the monument would be the responsibility of Perth & Kinross Council to re-instate it. M Purdie requested that the Secretary send a letter to the Conservation Office on this basis.

4. Meeting re. Motorbikes (28/9/10) - In Councillor Shiers absence, reference was made to the report previously submitted. A good representation of different points of view was noted with around 30 local motorcyclists, public members and police present. The police raised issues re. road safety and signage in general. A similar meeting set to take place next year looking at the success of the police/council initiatives to ensure residents have their say. It was noted that consistent issues on rural roads are a result of only a minority of motorcyclists as well as motorists. A Duncan summarised the issue would be progressed with the Council and the Police.

It was stated rigid guidelines are in place for pursuit of vehicles and noted Road Policing units assess complaints received before looking at where/what systems to put in place. Public members are encouraged to continue to log complaints with Tayside Police to strengthen local bid for focussed patrols. A Duncan reported unmarked police bikes on the road stopping alongside motorcyclists to offer advice etc. A query was logged if this positive initiative was still in place. Sergeant Wilkie agreed to report back to Sergeant Ness and newly appointed Inspector Ged Fitzpatrick (successor of Inspector Buckley-Jones).

Broadband Enabling Technology - A summary of the history was provided and no changes reported since previous meeting. M Purdie confirmed that PKC were not aware the Glenshee exchange was not eligible for this update however had already included Glenshee in a bid for another study. D MacIntyre to update. Householders were recommended to check with their service provider, particularly if contract up for renewal, to reboot and potentially negotiate a better deal. **BT Broadband Contact Centre helpline is 0800 111 4567.**

Council Run Services which could be run and sourced locally – Following announcements on government cuts, a discussion followed on how locals may provide assistance with services such as grass cutting and how this might be progressed. It was recommended an invitation be extended to the community for suggestions. Issues were raised on the requirement to have certain council insurances in place highlighting previous council restrictions. Following advice, it was agreed to approach the community and think about what services could potentially be provided and await budget cut confirmations (due 17/02/11) for further review and follow-up. Finally, a suggestion was made to seek alternative funding sources.

5. **Report from Community Police** - A summary of reported crime in the area and prevention advice was provided by Blairgowrie-based Sergeant Alan Wilkie, and the following particularly noted:

Blairgowrie targeted for metal thefts – After successful CCTV measures taken at hydro-electric premises, thefts are now prevalent in underground copper cabling. The persons responsible are reported to have hired vehicles with orange beacons and don high visibility jackets proceeding to enter manholes. Members of the public were encouraged to phone in and report any sightings to ensure all works are genuine.

Bogus workmen – It has recently been reported bogus callers are targeting vulnerable elderly residents. Under a false pretence to 'read the meter' or 'to check the water supply' the callers associate gains access at the back of the property to seek out valuables/money. It was reported there have been several incidents in Blairgowrie and Alyth but expected thieves will move on to more rural areas. It was further reported bogus callers are offering to carry out home repair works providing a quotation and subsequently charging an exaggerated fee. The *Nominated Neighbour* scheme was discussed whereby callers to elderly neighbours are diverted elsewhere. Further advice was offered and a request made to report any suspicious callers. It was recommended that a local press release be appropriate and this communicated in the email system.

Previous Crimes update – It was noted that the recent theft cases of a whacker plate (September, Kirkmichael) and theft of 2,000 Partridges (October, Blacklunnans) are undetected and still under enquiry respectively.

It was confirmed that the local community constable is Carol Cameron and Community Officer, Sandra Burgess. Sergeant Wilkie confirmed if sufficient notice was given of future meetings, officers would do their best to be in attendance. Sergeant Wilkie left the meeting. **Tayside Police can be contacted on 0300 111 2222.**

6. **Report from the Chair/Secretary:** A Duncan requested that this be carried over to the next meeting.
7. **Treasurer's Report:** M Purdie provided a summary of the financial activity during period 13th September to 22nd November 2010. It was noted the current Community Council Main Fund balance stands at £2,327.55. An opening balance of £143.49 was shown in the Drumderg Micro Fund with £800 payment (last in 2010) from the Scottish Community Foundation.

8. **Councillor Ellis Report**

School Bus routes – Following Cllr Shiers discussion with Douglas Kent, PKC Roads Department, it was recommended the snow clearing issue is monitored as the winter comes in. Although it was reported the council set out to clear the route prior to the school bus, due to increasing pressure to cover such a large area (and less available vehicles) this is not always the case. It was highlighted parents/ driver has the right to refuse to put children on the school bus if they think it is unsafe to do so.

Cairngorm National Park – Concerns were outlined with the terminology of ‘Highland Perthshire’. It was noted Cllr Ellis and Cllr Shiers recently met with Councillor Kate Howie (Pitlochry/Highland Perthshire) to ensure the interests of the communities in Mount Blair area in the Park. Councillor Howie has undertaken to attend a meeting of the Community Council and will do all she can to ensure good communication links are established.

Ward Councillors – Cllr Ellis noted that each ward is allocated 2 Contact Officer’s however only 1 is currently in place. A meeting is set to take place with Cllrs Ellis, Shiers and Grant and the appointed officer in early Dec.

The Alliance Trust Cateran Yomp (25/26 June 2011) – Cllr Ellis provided full details of this 24-hour charity walking event in support of the Army Benevolent Fund. With up to 500 participants plus supporters/organisers, it is expected the community will greatly benefit from what could become an annual event. Petrina Menzies confirmed information would be communicated in *Across the Glens* and Cllr Ellis agreed to pass relevant website details when available.

9. **Area Reports**

Glenshee – M Purdie confirmed part of Mount Blair had joined the National Park boundary. The intended temporary sign will no longer be put in place but expected the stone would be moved before end of Dec.

Following a review of signage/markings problems on the A93 almost 2 years ago between M Purdie and Councillor Shiers, an extended list of items recommended for road safety upgrading was produced. It has now been confirmed a minimal works order has been issued and expected to be completed by the end of Nov.

Kirkmichael – Concerns were raised pertaining to loose gravel and the poor quality of the recent resurfacing work. Rain has caused further problems with the water soluble materials utilised. A Duncan highlighted further issues with water on the road and not being addressed by the council; this has previously been reported but is still apparent. Concerns were also noted over falling stones from trailers at the Quarry road and it was stated it is the responsibility of the Quarry to ensure load is strapped down before leaving its premises and the responsibility of the driver thereafter. Cllr Ellis noted these points and agreed to follow up with the Road Dept.

10. **AOCB**

Recycling issues – Continuing issues were noted. Following the last meeting, a site meeting was planned to take place but outcome unknown. A query was also raised to the lack of ‘plastic bottle’ collection. Cllr Ellis noted these issues and agreed to raise with Lucy Garthwaite (Environmental Health, PKC).

Glenshee Signage – A member of the public raised issues on the amount and variety of signage (excluding council signs) at the Spittal of Glenshee junctions. Reporting an eyesore as well as road hazard, further discussions took place around the possibility of creating one professional sign for all and/or introduction of brown signage. Cllr Ellis and M Purdie agreed to discuss further.

VIP Informer System – A suggestion was made to adopt the previous Glenwatch system whereby a communication was set-up and co-ordinated by residents. It was believed that this was previously under the control of the community police officer but reported this resource was no longer available for this purpose, and the VIP adopted as the replacement system. Although the hi-tech VIP system has experienced problems and is not functional, it was stated the email system is in place for communications. Members of the public asked that resources and cost implications be reviewed to look at re-introducing the Glenwatch system and a note was made to add this an Agenda item for discussion with Tayside Police at the next meeting.

11. **Next Meeting** - Monday 21 February 2011 at 7pm. All welcome to attend.