

GATEHOUSE OF FLEET COMMUNITY COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting – 11th April 2006 – 7pm – Community Centre

Present: Franca Bruno – Provost
David Rennie – Treasurer
Tony Vaux – D & G Councillor
Liz Modrate – Secretary
Ron Forster
Des McClelland

Alison Steel – Deputy Provost
Mary Cousins
Suzette Harris
Gerard Macnamara
Chris Walker

Member of the Public: The Provost welcomed Russell Brown MP who has been attending other local Community Council meetings in the area.

Stewartry Area Committee meets on Mondays in 2006 :

24 April/15 May/19 June/21 August/18 Sept/16 October/20 November/18 December
April Agenda not yet available.

1. **Sederunt and Apologies:** Mark Laird – on Community Council business.
Alex McLaren
Allan Lowden

3. **Minutes of Meeting on 14th March:** Accepted – proposed R Forster, seconded M Cousins.

4. **Matters Arising:** Action points from last meeting:
3a – C Walker reported that the tobys issue is being addressed by Charles Clemie.
3l – R Forster is awaiting an up to date Programme of Works.
5a – No further action on the pond weed although it continues to spread.
5c – The Boundary Changes issue is now complete – action cleared.
5d – A meeting has taken place with the Planning Dept (R Irving), the Provost, R Forster and A Lowden with two main points:
 - i Any objection to planning must be put in writing to R Irvine;
 - ii ‘Planning issues’ is one of the statutory roles for Community Councils and perhaps regular meetings should take place with the Planning Dept.
5e – S Harris attended a Scottish Power presentation by Angela Reddington at a recent Stewartry Area Committee Meeting at Gatehouse School. There will be a report on the situation in six months time. Although there were no major complaints, M Cousins had a recent power problem and S Harris is to take this forward with Scottish Power. One fact she did learn was that Scottish Power rely on the public to report failures as there is no central control to detect these.

PC Geddes joined the meeting at 7.20pm

2. **Police Report:** PC Geddes reported that PC Bradley was on holiday. PC Geddes advised that the recent vandalism seems to have stopped but a positive line of enquiry is still ongoing. There had been a handbag stolen recently from a car parked at Cairn Holy and he stressed the need for items to be put out of view when parking. A new Police Warning Scheme has recently been introduced which allows the police to issue warning letters for minor offences by first time offenders, thus freeing up valuable court time. However, PC Geddes stressed that this did not extend to repeat offenders or more serious offences. Operation Juggernaut has been very successful and has detected over 200 offences (mainly tachograph misuse). *PC Geddes left the meeting at 7.45pm*

5. **Dumfries & Galloway Report : Councillor Vaux**

T Vaux had very little to report. The budget savings have now been quantified as between £13M and £18M. D Rennie asked if there was any indication where the savings would be made and T Vaux had been assured by the Labour Council that it would not be from front line services. A general

discussion took place with Russell Brown about potential savings and it was agreed that this may be an opportunity to review spending across the board and be more 'creative' with resources.

6. Provost's Report and Correspondence : The Provost had received a paper from the Scottish Executive on "Age and Experience" issues to comment on and this had been handed to D Rennie to reply. **Action : D Rennie**

The Provost had also had a reply about the Health & Community Care Plan paper noting her comments.

6a. The Secretary's Report - *In the future this will replace the Provost's report*

Action Points from March meeting as follows: :

a) 3h: At Charles Clemie's suggestion, contact has been made with Fiona Lessals (Safe Routes to School Officer) and she is to arrange a visit to the Primary school after the Easter holidays. One or two members of the Community Council may meet her beforehand as interested parents. Since this has been arranged, C Walker has had a letter from Marion Kirkpatrick of the School Board who feels that there is no problem with the drop off at the school, but the situation will be reviewed again in six months. The Secretary is to reply, noting the School Board's points. **Action : Secretary**

b) 2: A letter has gone to Kevin Brown in the Environmental Dept in Castle Douglas about the problems of dog fouling. It was suggested that, as this has a direct impact on them, the Council road cleaners could be asked to report anyone they find continually allowing this to happen. No response to the letter as yet.

c) 5f: The NHS Trust in Dumfries (c.c. to GPs in Gatehouse Health Centre) have been asked to clarify the position of patient transport. Since then, the Provost has been informed of yet another example of problems with this. No response as yet, but Russell Brown asked to be kept informed of this situation. **Action : Secretary**

d) 7: A letter has been sent to June Watters with the concerns of the Community Council regarding the continued delay with planning permission for the new Health Centre. The Secretary has reminded them that correspondence regarding the Health Centre dates back to pre-2000 and has requested a timetable of action for this project. No response as yet. The Community Council were unanimous in their condemnation of this lack of progress, especially as a commitment to monthly updates has not been met. A strong letter asking for a more substantial commitment to the people of Gatehouse is to be sent. **Action : Secretary**

e) Official Recognition – A letter with a brief resume of two long serving Community Councillors has been sent to Anne Sweetin of Stewartry Area Management, and a reply is awaited.

f) Black Bags – Dates and times for the distribution of black bags have been passed on to David Dougan and R Forster.

g) Community Council Training Day – The next one is on 27th April at 7pm in Parton Village Hall – "Engaging the Community and Maintaining Links with the Council". S Harris, D Rennie and perhaps R Forster are to attend.

h) Stewarty Council of Voluntary Service – A membership form and details of various seminars is available and C Walker is to report back to the Community Council on whether it would be of any benefit. **Action : C Walker**

The meeting asked that it be minuted that the Council should be reminded of their statutory duty to respond to letters within 7 days, and replies within 28 days. All the above letters were sent within a few days of the last meeting on 14th March, with no response as yet. **Action : Secretary**

7. Planning Applications – Dean of Guild : G Macnamara confirmed that there was only one planning application – the revised plans for the new Health Centre – with only two minor changes; the roof; and the waste store which has now been extended to make it part of the main building. The plans were handed round and no comments or objections will be made.

8. Mill on the Fleet Update – Councillor Rennie : D Rennie reported that the Mill had opened as scheduled on 1st April. In the short term it is business as usual and long term, the role of the Board will be looked at. The lease has still not been signed but T Vaux felt that this was now imminent. D McClelland asked how sub-letting fitted in with the Mill's charitable status but D Rennie and T Vaux assured him that this was within the rules. C Walker had recently been informed that there was interest in the Mill from an outside party and that it had been brought before the Council. T Vaux and D Rennie confirmed that the Council had a duty to consider all enquiries.

9. Treasurer's Report – D Rennie : It was now the end of the financial year and D Rennie was preparing the accounts for the AGM in May. He had dealt with all his action points from the March meeting and had a card from Graham Robertson's wife, Jill, thanking him for the remuneration. Details from the Council on the coming year's support grant had come. The present grant is £575.50 and is to increase by £75 this year. The Provost hoped that this would not be affected by the proposed cuts currently being sought.

9a. Finance sub-committee : This is a new sub-committee set up to oversee the larger issue of Council funding, especially in light of current potential cuts for the region. This is to be led by C Walker, with D Rennie, the Provost, K McConchie and M Laird. Meetings will be held every two months to update the Community Council of any developments.

10. Ron Forster's Report : The meeting with Chris Hopkin is still not arranged to discuss stage two of Portmacadam – the refurbishment of the Quayside. The seating materials are due on Thursday when the seat making can start. A CD on the site is due from David Devereaux. The Provost has still had no reply from Alison Keith regarding the manhole cover at the town end entrance to the pathway. Although the Council have stated that they have no problem with this manhole being covered over out of sight, the Community Council are very uneasy about this situation. The Provost is to write to the Council asking for an official letter confirming that they see no problems with this issue. R Forster envisages problems in the future should anyone need access to the manhole as it is completely covered over. **Action : Provost**

11. A O C B.

a) Garage Site – C Walker asked the Provost what was happening with the garage site at the top of High Street. She said that there had been a meeting the previous day between the GDI and interested parties. The site has been offered solely to the GDI at a reduced price to be used for the general good of Gatehouse. A deadline has been put on this of 1st May. The GDI are considering what can be done and there will be a further meeting in two weeks.

b) Forestry Draft Strategy Document – S Harris had read this and reported it to be an excellent document. Comments have been asked for and both S Harris and A Steel are to comment by the 29 May. **Action : S Harris/A Steel**

c) Toilets in Car Park – It has been reported to the Secretary that the toilets in the car park had not been opened on a few occasions. As the holiday season is upon us, she is to look into any reasons for this. **Action : Secretary**

d) New Lighting – D McClelland noted that the new lighting was excellent but was at a loss to understand why the lights on the outside of the Mill building were now being switched on. D Rennie is to look into this. **Action : D Rennie**

Russell Brown thanked the Community Council for their welcome and a very useful meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

The next meeting is the AGM and is scheduled for 9th May 2006, 7pm at the Community Hall