

PORTMOAK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Draft Minute of Meeting held on 12th November 2019

at Portmoak Village Hall, Scotlandwell

1. **Attendance:** CCllrs: Graham Cox, (Chairman); Susan McGregor (Secretary); Anne Cragoe (Treasurer); Susan Forde; and Dave Morris; and WCllrs: Richard Watters and Willie Robertson; and; 4 members of the public.

Apologies: WCllrs Mike Barnacle and Callum Purves and Police Scotland.

2. **Approval of Previous minutes:** The Minutes of the meeting held on 8th October were approved.
3. **Matters Arising from Previous Minutes:**

Item 1: School Access: *to achieve clear access for large vehicles (including emergency vehicles) to the School and, separately, to secure safe access routes for children.*

Despite repeated requests over the past year to make progress on this matter, PKC had made no response. However, in advance of this meeting the Project Officer, Traffic & Network, had advised that "Buchan Avenue and Bruce Road waiting restrictions were included in the List of potential projects being reviewed for the Road Safety Projects Assessment Criteria Report. Due to the proximity of the school, the park and the bus stops (public amenities), the scheme records a high score and ranking. As a result, it is currently in the List of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) being progressed. New drawings and a covering letter are being prepared and should be distributed before the end of this month. Any decision on whether to proceed will depend on the feedback from the community. As explained previously, even with objections, the proposed restrictions could still go to the Environment and Infrastructure (E&I) Committee. The report would detail the various expressions of support and opposition. Then, it would be up to the Committee whether to refuse, request an amendment or approve the proposals."

The CC has responded to the consultation in respect of restricted parking on Buchan Avenue. It noted that at the same location PKC had commented that proposals to revise and improve child safety including marked crossings will be presented separately.

CCllr D Morris confirmed there has been a communication to Buchan Avenue residents about painting of yellow lines. Informally there have been no responses or reactions as yet.

CCllr G Cox commented that the priorities of emergency vehicles access would be achieved. The revised school bus service from Scotlandwell to Portmoak Primary is full and this has had a massive impact on alleviating parking problems and congestion. **ACTION: WCllr W Robertson said he would pass on these comments to PKC.**

Item 2: Footpath from Scotlandwell to the Church, Hall and beyond.

There had been no progress over the past year. In advance of this meeting the Project Officer, Traffic & Network, had advised that "The assessment and ranking of the footpath scheme was based on an estimated cost for the length of path to be constructed over the distance between the village and the church, regardless of which route is selected. The scheme was placed at number 495 at that time but has since been overtaken by projects with a higher ranking. It is sitting amongst over 50 schemes which cannot currently be delivered as land is not available within the road boundary. The majority of these projects are footways contained within the New Rural Footways report. As stated previously, no progress has been made assessing any of the suggested

footpath routes as priority is being given to those projects that have already been agreed with the Local Elected Members at Committee, and which can be delivered within the agreed timeframe and budget. We have not had the staff resources to start on the Scotlandwell footpath(s). However, schemes remote from the road corridor would normally be assessed and constructed by Community Greenspace.”

The previous CC considered the response by PKC to this situation was inadequate. The current route was seen as dangerous for pedestrians and long recognised as unsuitable for children necessitating school transport to and from Scotlandwell. The long awaited option appraisal of identified routes would inform progress. Some, but not all of the identified routes, lay within the road boundary. Its decision was to recommend to the next CC that it should establish a Working Group to clarify an optimum route. Membership could include CC and community members and George Lawrie from TRACKS. External funding could be sourced to support the option appraisal.

The new CC agreed unanimously that this was an ongoing problem of 15 years or more, that the path was very unsafe and that there was no disabled access. A local resident commented that the street light poles were up the bank of the path indicating the bank had slipped and the issue was therefore the responsibility of PKC. For the immediate future, the CC agreed the primary requirement was to continue to negotiate with land owners. A path on the west side of road is constrained by a requirement for a traffic light crossing, while there are better options for the east side so the latter option is more likely to proceed. **ACTION: The CC agreed to meet as a small group discussion to decide two or three proposals to take to PKC.**

Item 3: Resilience - being better prepared for risks. Community Emergency Plan.

The CC commented that there had been several outputs from PKC. The Emergency Plan is to be updated and circulated in the next few weeks

Item 4: Portmoak Cemetery No progress to report. It was noted that that previous CC Chairman had been speaking to the PKC officer in charge of cemeteries, Willie Greg. The new CC will seek an update. It was understood a possible field had been offered at Portmoak, also that a plot in Milnathort had been offered. It was commented that people in Portmoak want to be buried in Portmoak, not Milnathort. **ACTION: WCllr W Robertson to speak to Willie Greg (PKC).**

Item 5: Rural Transport (Kinross-shire Community Transport Group) WCllr R Watters reported that the initial meeting called by WCllr Mike Barnacle had a low participation. A second meeting was being arranged (date to be confirmed) to get some impetus and traction of progress. CCllr G Cox commented that WCllr M Barnacle’s work on this matter was appreciated. It was noted that one of the issues was that people are often trying to travel to Edinburgh not Perth, so routes were through Fife and Lothian as well through as Perth & Kinross. There are difficulties in aligning bus schedules through different regions. If bus times were not aligned then commuters will not use buses due to poor connection times.

From the Rural Transport questionnaire circulated earlier in 2019 it was identified that many people need to be able to get into Kinross and to then reach Edinburgh or Perth by 0900hrs. It was commented that an extension of the Halbeath or Inverkeithing routes and a bus lane coming out of Edinburgh to reduce travel times would both be useful. Inverkeithing and Halbeath Park & Ride car parks are often full even early in the morning. Work place taxation was mentioned and the difficulty for PKC to raise taxes when commuters are travelling to Edinburgh or Glasgow. Taxes will be payable to those cities, not PKC. **ACTION: WCllr M Barnacle, Cllr S Forde and A Cragoe will attend a forthcoming meeting and then have a working group to discuss progress.**

Item 6: Hedges: 1) Woodmarch 2) Bruce Road/A911 junction: initial trimming had been effected 3) Footpath from Easter Balgedie to Kinnesswood: a preliminary cut had been undertaken. 4) Impeded sight-lines to the left at the junction of the road from Wester Balgedie/Glenlomond with the A911. Contact has been made with all farmers and householders, so action should be

being taken. Light trimming effected at one or more of the above locations was insufficient. If not done by next month WR will raise it again. **ACTION: WCllr W Robertson will contact PKC.**

Item 7: Kinnesswood Village Shop.

CCllr D Morris had spoken with Charlotte McKinnon of the Kinnesswood Shop Steering Committee. The Steering Group met with David & Ishbel Buchan to inform them of the financial appraisal completed by the Steering Committee. This showed a poor prognosis for future running of the shop without a substantial increase of prices and sales. Kinnesswood village shop will therefore close on 24th December 2019, and the Shop Steering Group is not able to do anything to forestall that. David has indicated he will explore options for continuing an interim shop at the garage, but this was not a permanent solution.

CCllr D Morris commented that he had seen the financial report. Funding from different sources is available, but it is tricky to get funding to continue a loss making shop. Community shops work best if they are combined with a café or meeting place and the current shop has constraints that make this unfeasible. There was also a fundamental problem of lack of parking. The shop Steering Group will continue to explore options.

CCllr G Cox suggested that there was a need to make a 5-10 year plan for Portmoak. The current shop location is not viable, but another location e.g. at the golf course, may be possible. Improvement of path access to the Loch Heritage Trail could help.

CCllr D Morris commented that the CC and community tried to secure land for shop/café/meeting place at the site of the Lomond Inn, but representation was ignored by PKC planning. It is the responsibility of the local Development Trust to negotiate other sites for the future shop plans.

Item 8: Loch Leven: arrangements for assuring and sharing information on water quality.

The CC has pursued a FoI Request with Scottish Water seeking information on effluent waters entering the Loch from Scottish Water, the body responsible for the Milnathort/Kinross Wastewater Treatment Works.

WCllr R Watters had attended a meeting with: SEPA, CEH, Loch Leven Fisheries, WCllr W Robertson and others. Most of the phosphorous going into the Loch is coming via the South Queich according to the last test done in 2016/17. The water quality was not all bad news: in 2018 there was a brown algal bloom; and 2019 was a green algal bloom. However, over the last two seasons water clarity has increased to a depth of 4.5m and fish levels are also improving. Measuring algal bloom is difficult. Scientists from the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) thought 2019 bloom may have been due to a phosphate reaction, the reasons are uncertain. However, prior to this there had been 5-6 years of improvement. There is a problem with phosphate build up in sediment, but it became clear at the meeting that if the input of phosphorous can be cut then the phosphate level in the sediment will drop. Brian Darcy suggested that there should be a maximum tonnage of phosphorus going into loch, which will cut total overloading. WCllr R Watters suggested a restriction of input to 8 tonnes per year. Further if house building continues, even if 99% of phosphorous is stripped out there is still a net increase. Kinross & Milnathort treatment plants don't always cope. If more housing is permitted to be built, then PKC, WCllrs and CCllrs are not doing their duty by the Loch.

WCllr R Watters commented that lots of rain helps to flush out the loch. CEH want the Trust to control gates at sluice house more, to effect flushing but flushing phosphates downstream has implications too. CEH want a research project to manage and investigate the matter.

A member of the public commented that historical levels of phosphates still continue to affect the bloom. Another member of the public enquired if SEPA could not have more of a role?

WCllr R Watters responded that SEPA say they can raise the standards, but ideally there should be data first to support the approach, then get Ministers to buy into the science. One problem is the shared drain space during flooding events: in Milnathort the treatment plant cannot cope and the gates are opened to let floods through. There should be a telemetric facility to record these events. It appears that, possibly due to climate change, the sheer intensity of recent rain has started to cause problems. Untreated sewage entering the Loch has 40 times more phosphorous than treated sewage. CCllr S Forde commented that allowing the phosphorous to increase is storing up issues for the future.

A member of the public commented that they had had involvement in 1990's Commission on Phosphates in Loch Leven – the issue of phosphates is trying to solve a problem from 100 years ago. If you just manage housing and farming, you can bring levels down to 2ppm. But there still is problem from roads and soil erosion. If the Todd & Duncan factory had not been there there wouldn't be such a residual issue.

CCllr G Cox requested the CC note in the Minutes that there is a risk to Loch Leven. Prevention is required for next 20-30 yrs. A tangible way forward is to restrict phosphorus load to 8 tonnes per year. PKC is to review its Local Development Plan in view of this work.

CCllr D Morris called for the CC to demand a moratorium on further housing and development. Sewage is one issue, soil blowing off fields is another but this is difficult to control, but we do have control over housing.

WCllr W Robertson commented that there had been a moratorium on housing because the High School couldn't cope with increasing child numbers but since the building of the new High School, house building had resumed.

Item 9: Heart 200:

CCllr D Morris attended a meeting chaired by Mike Wishard along with Mike Williamson a councillor from Pitlochry. It discussed a formal complaint of PKC awarding £50K to the Heart200 team without any evaluation of the impact the route would cause. There was antagonism among Community Councils and a formal complaint to Audit Commission. As this was outside the remit of the Commission it was referred to the PKC Audit Committee. There is a lot of general concern about the impact of Heart200.

4. Future Plans for the Community Council.

CCllr G Cox asked "Is there anything we could do better as a CC?" CCllr D Morris commented it was disappointing that only 4 people had put forward their names to be on CC and this was something of a community crisis. As a result of a skeleton CC the community will need to accept less work can be completed. The CC agreed that meetings needed to be more collaborative with public participation. The CC also needed to increase awareness by using social media that the CC is effective in making representations to PKC. The use of Portmoak Primary School for some of the CC meetings, possibly from January 2020, may hopefully increase the numbers of public attending meetings.

CCllr D Morris commented he did not believe PKC listens to the Ward Councillors and CC representation. There is belief from some that the CC makes no impact. CCllr G Cox commented that, in mitigation of PKC, they may not consider CC representation is valid if the Community are not supporting the CC.

CCllr S McGregor commented that roles within CC are difficult to quantify and this may dissuade people from becoming involved. CC work should be packaged to encourage people to take on one specific manageable task.

5. Reports:

1. **Police:** 1) No local report; and 2) The CC noted the Area Commander Bulletins of: 9th, 16th & 23rd and 30th October and 6th November.
2. **Treasurer:** The balance at the month ending 31st October 2019 was £586.70 in the General Account; and 2,021.23 in the Michael Bruce Way Account giving a total of £2,607.93. The new financial year will now run from 1st September to 31st August. Arrangements were in hand to: remove the approved list of 3 former signatories to CC Accounts; to seek approval for new signatories; and to provide electronic access by Treasurer to accounts.

3. **Planning: to include:**

1. New applications:

- a) 19/01660/FLL Iona, Back Dykes Road, Kinnesswood. Installation of a replacement door. No objections
- b) 19/01670/FLL Croc An Fhraoich, Glenlomond. Erection of a Shed. No objections.

2. Progress with Developments: **Westfield Community Liaison Committee:** The CC noted that the next meeting is provisionally on 27th November; a CC representative would be identified and that the Minutes of the Committee can be found on Portmoak CC website. CCllr G Cox commented: gas turbines are now not in the plans and there is an interest in solar panels going head.

Why did PKC agree to the use of roads for the plant? Cllr D Morris responded that there was representation from Ward Councillors and CC to object but it was ignored by PKC. WCllr W Robertson commented PKC did not lodge any objection. There was pressure from Ward Councillors to do so, but PKC will probably use the incinerator so this may be why there was no opposition.

4. **Roads:** The CC noted:

Item 1: Wester Balgedie: A resident of Wester Balgedie raised the issue that Wester Balgedie and Balgedie Toll junction area has no VAS (Vehicle Activated Speed) signs. There are compounding road issues: a blind junction at bottom of a hill, a concealed exit opposite the junction, and a 60MPH limit on the road from Mawcarse should stop further away from junction. There is also regular flooding on the A911 beyond the Toll junction. With regard to flooding gullies have been cleared, but there is a ditch soakaway to the field owned (or leased) by a local farmer. That ditch has not been cleared, so the flood forms. Gary McConnell (PKC) is going to speak to the farmer explaining that it is their responsibility to clear ditches. Three VAS signs were requested: 1. At the Toll; 2. at the top of the hill at the East end of Wester Balgedie; and 3. on the West side at Loch Leven Larder. The 40mph speed limit on the Mawcarse Road needs to be moved away from the junction to the top of the hill at Pittendriech. Budgets suggested are £5,000 ball park figure for equipment and fitting of VAS.

CCllr G Cox asked why the Easter Balgedie VAS was sited there? The CC responded that there was a consultation on E Balgedie, and the CC requested that siting. WCllr W Robertson said he would look at the VAS with PKC, but the CC should ask for VAS as well. Once the VAS are requested PKC will then approach CC and residents for discussion on the location within Wester Balgedie. CCllr S Forde recommended that Scotlandwell needs an additional VAS. The CC would assess this. **ACTION: Susan McGregor and Willie Robertson to write to PKC requesting 3 VAS signs to be put in budget.**

Item 2: Mawcarse Road – 50m past Toll CCllr S McGregor commented there was also considerable flooding on the Mawcarse road – 50m past Toll, coming off fields. It extended to about 50m along road. **ACTION: WCllr W Robertson to raise flooding issue with Gary McConnell (PKC).**

Item 3: added 12/11/19: "Road heave" on the C501 between the B920 junction and Auchmuirbridge. A member of the public raised the matter of "road heave." There was concern that with traffic increase due to the development at Westfield, the road could quickly deteriorate.

6. Paths Group:

Main tasks completed: bracken bashing and cutting back gorse on the hill. The good news is that the paths information board would be commissioned. The contributions in support were: £400 from Kinross Road Runners; £500 from Portmoak festival and £400 from a Perth Fund. The Group meets on a Thursday at 2pm at Portmoak School should any member of public wish to join them.

7. Ward Councillors Reports:

WCLlr Richard Watters noted that there was £50K for funding projects to deal with inequalities e.g. providing funding for village halls. Application closure had been put back to 15th January. The Panel of the Action Partnership will meet on 3rd or 4th February. Portmoak CC can provide a representative. **ACTION The CC to consider a representative to the Action Partnership.**

8. Matters previously notified to the Secretary plus matters raised from the floor. The CC noted: General Information from PKC on Community Empowerment; Perth & Kinross Community Transport Fund 2019/2020.

9. AOCB: Member of Public commented that it was sad to find that in one fell swoop that there was so much change in one CC election: changes to positions of Treasurer, Secretary, and Chairman. CCLlr G Cox agreed, but it is an opportunity to represent the community more broadly. Need to use social media to promote work of CC. A member of Public asked if it would be possible to leaflet to all houses about the CC's work as not everyone uses social media and email.

10. Date of next meeting:

The next meeting of the Council will be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 10th December 2019. The meeting closed at 21.10 pm.