

ABERFELDY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Aberfeldy Town Hall.

Tuesday 1st August 2023 at 7.30pm

MINUTES

Welcome

Victor Clements (Chair), Lorraine Reed (Vice Chair), Elaine Fraser Murdoch (Secretary), Jean Duff (Treasurer), Val Ferguson, Rob Stubbs

In Attendance: Provost McDade, Cllr John Duff, Roddy Kennedy (Dull & Weem CC), Peter Ely (Kenmore CC), Sue Dolan- Betney (Glen Lyon & Loch Tay CC), Andy Aitken (Killin CC), Mary MacDougall (Aberfeldy Development Trust, ADT) and 10 members of the public.

Apologies

Susan Craik, Norma Carr (Community warden)

Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes were taken as read, proposed by LR and seconded by VF.

Matters Arising

ADT had not expressed an interest in the former Aberfeldy Coach garage premises.

Cllr Duff yet to speak to Golf Course about plastic bridge.

The Campus are happy that school buses park up there, and not at the monument.

ADT where to co-ordinate a local response to PKC local Place Plans.

The PKC Chief Executive had visited Aberfeldy in July, but no feedback.

The centenary celebrations for the Perthshire & Angus provincial MOD had been very successful, including a mass choir in the Square.

No more instances of campervans inappropriately parked in front of petrol station.

There had been a report of a car having hit the war memorial, but no obvious damage.

Crime Prevention and Community Safety

The defibrillator unit at the Bowling Club had been discharged, but unfortunately, the person being revived did not survive. There are 5 X publicly accessible units in Aberfeldy, and it is important to note that they have been used on several occasions with success. We are however aware of two people who could not be saved. JoD and our community warden keep the units maintained and operational should they be required for a medical emergency, and they are an important asset within the town.

Focus Topics:

Taymouth Development

This issue was becoming very prominent at the moment, with a lot of coverage in the press, and over 300 people at a meeting organized by local politicians the week before, at which a majority of people seemed to be very much against the development, but a significant minority were in favour.

Concern had been expressed about the very poor communications, and that the issue had become extremely divisive within the community

The meeting heard from 10 X members of the community, a majority of whom were sceptical or concerned about the development, largely for the same reasons articulated widely by others.

The 3 X community councils around the loch plus Dull & Weem CC were also all in attendance.

Dull and Weem CC are positive with the investment in the employment opportunities , although many in the community have concerns

Killin CC were also largely supportive, and did not see the threat to Loch Tay that others fear. They believe that there are already sufficient safeguards in place and in the Loch Tay Association, they have a structure for over seeing these. They seen no pressure on boating infra structure at the western end of the loch.

Glen Lyon & Loch Tay CC were also largely supportive, but they did have specific issues to address regarding development work around Glenlyon Estate, and their priority was to focus on those. There is a suggestion that certain works had been carried out without proper permission. Glenlyon Estate is owed by DLC, but is distinct from the main development project at Taymouth.

Kenmore CC had been dealing with this issue for many years. They feel that they have a good line of communication with the developers, and they are much easier to work with than previous owners of the estate. They believe that the outcome will be a good one for Kenmore, with facilities being upgraded and improved, and holiday let accommodation in the main village being converted to residential housing. They do not believe that there is a plan for a "gated community". The houses within the main property will not be sub let. Schools locally were well under capacity at present, and it is felt that the proposal can only improve that by creating opportunities for local working families.

KCC also pointed out that while there has been a lot of talk about "the Americans", most of the interest to date in the project has actually been from Europeans, and almost all of the management staff and advisors are either Scottish or UK based.

Aberfeldy CC members were also generally in favour of the project, but it was important that we keep our eyes open and pay attention to environmental protections. It was felt that there was a lot of disinformation about the project, and some of the language being used was very divisive and sometimes defamatory.

On the positive side, the project is creating a lot of work for people in the town at present, and the jobs are well paid, across a wide range of disciplines, including management positions and the employment of skilled craftspersons. It has been estimated that of the 200 people currently working on the project, 80% were local, and a large proportion of these would be from Aberfeldy.

The monthly wage bill coming in to the town might therefore be £300-400,000. It was felt that the castle will become a valuable long term employer within the area.

On the negative side, the danger is that the project is so big that it over whelms local housing, labour and infra structure provision. Aberfeldy already requires over 200 more houses to satisfy demand, and this will only increase that problem. The castle is likely to compete for the best of local labour, and potentially push up wages. This will be good for those concerned, but will put pressure on other small businesses to adapt in the town, who may struggle to justify similar pay rates. There is likely to be more pressure on facilities, including roads. All of these are big issues, and will require action at a government and local authority level to deliver. Arguably, this will be the biggest challenge facing Aberfeldy CC going forwards.

Provost McDade felt that PKC Planning had the capacity to deal with the project properly, as did Cllr Duff. There was less confidence in the ability of SEPA and Nature Scot to properly oversee environmental protection. It was felt that if this could be resolved, then many of the concerns expressed by those objecting could hopefully be met.

Aberfeldy CC would now contribute to quarterly community council meetings with DLC, with LR and VF being our representatives, and EFM acting as a back- up as required.

Gran Fondo road closure

This cycle race would be taking place on Friday 4th August, and would effectively cut Aberfeldy in two for several hours. There was a lot of anxiety about this, particularly with Perth Show going on as well. However, the event would be happening, and it is hoped that people will come out to watch.

Cottage Hospital

The application for turning the CH in to holiday accommodation had been refused by planners, but the reason was inadequate information regarding flood risk and mitigation, and it is likely that if this is rectified, then the application will get consent. This application was hugely controversial in Aberfeldy, with 80 objections, including the CC. However, use as holiday accommodation was not deemed to be a material reason for refusing consent. It is likely therefore that if the developer can address the flooding issue, that the building will be developed as holiday accommodation.

Aberfeldy Development Trust (ADT) was set up to try and deliver more affordable housing in the area on the back of this issue, but had been advised that the site was too difficult to develop as housing.

Moneess trees

It is likely that the PA will run a press article on this issue, which has still not been resolved. VC, EFM & John Duff now to meet Moneess on 21st August to discuss.

Wade's Bridge

ADT were looking at setting up a "Friends of Wades Bridge" group to try and co-ordinate maintenance efforts prior to 300th anniversary in a few years time. Various repairs had been done in recent years, but many felt that these had not been done to a suitable standard, and that there are key issues to address or rectify. An inspection had been carried out by experienced heritage architects, and had identified areas to improve.

ADT would be carrying out local consultation on the subject, and both Aberfeldy CC and Dull & Weem CC would provide input to any working group.

Graveyard

VC to contact Derek Wittman again re possible site.

Griffin Community Benefit Panel

Micro grants

There were two micro grants to decide after meeting, which would likely use up remaining funds. LR has asked if Aberfeldy CC can get a top-up, to be decided at next meeting of main panel. Demand has been high in the town this year.

Main Fund

Next meeting in September

Reports

Chair

The school bus parking issue has hopefully been resolved, as per Matters Arising.

Secretary

No additional report

Treasurer

We are still having difficulties with signatories for bank account, despite these being in place since 2009.

Housing/Planning

No other matters to discuss.

CIr Reports

The new grey bins were being distributed at present, to be operational PKC wide from November. The blue recycling bin is now for only paper and cardboard, with all other recycling material to go in the grey bin.

JoD sits on a group looking at the possibility of a national park covering Highland Perthshire.

AOCB

Mention was made of the old church on the Crieff Road, and also the old Chinese takeaway on Dunkeld St. Abandoned buildings to be put on agenda for September meeting.

RS to sit as a CC member on the Campus Management Committee.

Date of Next Meeting Tues 5th September 2023