

AIRTH PARISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL.

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING HELD IN AIRTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

AT 7.00PM ON WEDNESDAY 20TH FEBRUARY 2013

COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS PRESENT.

P.RODGER, R.SMITH, A. AMOS, A.RAMSAY, I.PENMAN, J.ANSLOW,

ALSO PRESENT.

COMMUNITY CONSTABLE LYNSEY SCOTT, CLLR CRAIG MARTIN,..(F.C.) ,
L.WATSON (D.V.A.) M.PENN, JIM COCHRANE (LARBERT)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Stephen Bird, D.Gilmour, W.Douglas.& Jo Tibbles.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of our meeting on 17 th January were approved as a correct record of the proceedings. Proposed by A.Amos. and seconded by P. Rodger.

POLICE REPORT.

Lynsey Scott of Central Scotland Police gave a comprehensive report on police activities in the parish from 18th January to 19th February. A copy of this report is appended.

She also told us that the school are still trying to support a voluntary one way system for traffic near the school.

We had been given a consultation document on the Draft Strategic Police Plan which was due to be returned by Friday 2nd February. Lynsey had not seen this so R. Smith agreed to e mail her a copy for her to make comment.

The P.A.C.T. priority is to prevent and reduce speeding by vehicles on the Letham road. Hand held radar has been used and the mobile speed board will also be used in the coming weeks.

The convenor thanked Lynsey for her report.

MATTERS ARISING.

The Dart Energy planning application will be dealt with as an agenda item

PRESENTATION BY S.E.P.A. ON THEIR ROLE IN MONITORING COAL BED METHANE GAS EXTRACTION IN OUR AREA.

As requested by residents who attended our last meeting, Andrew Hemmingway and Emma Taylor of S.E.P.A. gave us a presentation on their role in monitoring the Dart.Energy activities in our area and answered questions put to them by the Community Council

members.

Emma Taylor gave a brief explanation of the differences between “conventional” and “unconventional” gas extraction like coal bed methane and shale gas. She explained that fracking is not normally used in coal bed methane extraction but is required when extracting gas from shale which is much harder than coal.

The first step in the production of gas is for the developer to obtain a PEDL licence which is issued by the D.O.E. and is controlled by the Westminster government. Dart Energy hold the licence which covers our area as well as other areas in Fife and Dumfriesshire. Reach Oil is another company which holds an exploration licence in other areas.

S.E.P.A. are responsible for monitoring all aspects of the operations including drilling permissions, air quality, ground and surface water quality in areas surrounding wells, quality of treated water leaving the sites, abstraction of water for use in drilling and ultimately along with the H.S.E., the proper reinstatement of abandoned and depleted wells.

They are constantly reviewing current controls and regulations to ensure that they are fit for purpose and keep abreast of developing technology.

S.E.P.A. will control drilling operations in that Dart must apply to them for a licence to drill each well. They are currently agreeing a monitoring plan with Dart for testing ground water quality in the vicinity of the wells to ensure that this does not become polluted as a result of the operations. The current quality of the ground water will be assessed to give a baseline for comparison and monitoring.

Andrew Hemmingway is based in the Stirling office and has 15-20 years experience as a water specialist. He stated that the treated water from the sites would either go direct into the River Forth if good enough quality or by tanker to a specialist company, Calachem in Grangemouth for further treatment and disposal. Where the water is discharged direct into the Forth it will be into deeper water to help dilution and will be subject to a new discharge licence. Doing this will also prevent erosion of the sensitive salt marsh bounding the Forth. The pollutants in the water pumped from the wells are mainly iron and salt and are easily treated. Sampling by SEPA will be at least 12 times per year. S.E.P.A. are also learning from the experiences of others in Australia and the U.S.

Andrew informed us that an assessment of various aspects of the process showed a low level of risk of abstraction of water having an adverse effect on the volume of water in the Pow burn as the amounts used are relatively small,

Dart currently have a licence for 11 boreholes and are surrendering this for 8 of them and replacing them with another 8. The new application is for 14 wells and before work proceeds environmental monitoring and management plans must be drawn up and agreed. There would be sampling of water at each borehole and the costs incurred by S.E.P.A. will be covered by the licence fees.

Gas produced will be pumped to a treatment plant where it will have an odour added before it is pumped into the national gas main which runs through the area.

Leaflets detailing regulatory guidance on the subject of coalbed methane and shale gas were distributed to those present.

Members present raised several questions which were answered by Emma and Andrew.

Q. M.T. was concerned that extraction of large amounts of water from under our parish would affect the stability of the area.

A. Boreholes will be sited to avoid known coalmines which are detailed on maps.

Q. I.P. Asked about damage to the public roads by vehicles and machinery and the responsibility for repairing them. Also what would happen if there were problems with noise.

A. Roads issues would be dealt with by Falkirk Council through the planning system and other problems like noise by the environmental health department of F.C..

Q. R.S. Methane gas occurs naturally in the area through decomposition of organic material and would this affect the monitoring of the sites for gas escapes.

A. There are systems available which can differentiate between recently produced methane and methane extracted from coal and shale.

The convenor thanked Emma and Andrew for their presentation and they asked us to contact them if we have any further questions or concerns to raise over this issue.

At this point Jim Cochrane from Larbert left the meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

17/01/13 E mail from Borestone C.C. regarding Coalbed methane extraction at Airth..

17/01/13 E mail from Grangemouth C.C. regarding their holding objection on the Dart Energy application.

22/01/13 E mail from Cllr. Martin regarding proposed wind turbines at Rosehill.

23/01/13 E mail from S.E.P.A. regarding their presentation.

23/01/13 Consultation on draft strategic police plan.

30/01/13 E. Mail from Shona Barton regarding the consultation on redesigning the criminal justice system. Consultation ends on 30th April 2013.

05/02/13 E. Mail from Planning Aid regarding spare places at their training session on 16th February.

05/02/13 E. Mail from Shona Barton regarding the Scottish water consultation. This ended on 12th February .

07/02/13 E. Mail from Planning aid rescheduling the training session to 20th April. Domini and Aileen will attend this.

08/02/13 Letter and receipts from F.C. licensing board for our gaming licence.

08/02/13 E. mail regarding the "Tell me Scotland " portal.

08/02/13 Letter regarding the UK honours for voluntary workers and groups.

13/02/13 E mail from Lesley Sweeney regarding a photo shoot in May to publicise the launch of the paths and walks leaflets.

20/02/13 E. mail from Shona Barton with a summary of the Community empowerment bill..

PLANNING ISSUES

The only new planning application in our area was for alterations to the rear of a house in Dunmore village, reference P/13/0064 Ful and P/13/0065 LBC. We have no comment to make on this.

Aileen Amos had been speaking to John Milne who told her that Falkirk Council have now decided to put all planning objections, supporting letters and comments on line the same as is done in Stirling and Clackmannan.

The Dart Energy application will be the first case to adopt this and F.C. will be writing to every person who has submitted a letter for their permission to put their contribution on line. They will have 5 days to respond before this is done.

THE DART ENERGY APPLICATION

Aileen has been told that no date had yet been set for the public hearing on this application and that planners from Falkirk and Stirling Councils had attended the exhibition in Dart's office in Stirling. Also that letters of interest had been received from external consultants who wished to do some of the additional studies and assessments on the effects of the proposals on the geology and environment.

We placed notices in the Falkirk Herald and on our community notice board giving our e mail address and postal address requesting that residents who had not already done so let us know their opinions and comments on the Dart application to allow us to formulate a response. Unfortunately we had no replies to this request, so we have recorded the information obtained at our various meetings and from comments made direct to community councillors by residents over the past few months.

This has allowed us to collate the various comments and concerns from residents in the Parish, some objecting to the application and some supporting it. and Pauline will draft a letter for approval by the Community Council members and send it with the comments we have received to Falkirk council planners

ADOPT A KIOSK - DUNMORE TELEPHONE BOX.

As requested by the Dunmore Village Association, we had made enquiries about adopting the kiosk on their behalf but after studying the contract documents we decided that it was not something we wished to do at this stage as the legal responsibility for ensuring the maintenance and insurance of it would always be ours although we had no doubts that the current members of the D.V.A. would fulfil their obligations. Also the telephone would be decommissioned as part of the arrangement.

However, we did agree that if there were any moves by B.T. to remove or modernise the Dunmore phone box, we would fight with the D.V.A. for its retention and if need be arrange for it to be adopted.

A letter to this effect was passed on to L. Watson of the D.V.A.

TREASURERS REPORT

As the treasurer was not present, we did not have a report.

A.O.C.B.

When questioned about the bus service through Airth Cllr. Martin said that Falkirk Council will be funding it for another year but they are looking to alter the route so that it will not go through the Inches at Larbert. F.V.H. Board will also be reviewing their transport in March. Another 250 car parking places are to be provided at Larbert Hospital.

The Wilderness Park project is no further forward but it is hoped that work will be starting in March this year.

The traffic islands in Airth Main Street are needing replaced. This work is scheduled to be carried out soon.

The High Street, Cemetery Brae and the Crow Brae near Letham are in a terrible state with numerous potholes and damage. Cllr Martin said that the Authorities were aware of these issues. We hope that these will be attended to soon.

We will ask Kate Fuller of the R.S.P.B. to attend a future meeting to give us an update on the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative. R.Smith will contact her to arrange this.

R.Smith distributed copies of the Paths and Walks leaflet and has more available if anyone requires further copies. They are also available in the Bakers shop and Community Centre. Wille Whyte an amateur baker has approached R. Smith offering a free service to bake cakes and scones for community or voluntary groups in the area. His details will be passed on to interested parties. He can be contacted on 832829.

A.Amos noted that there seemed to be a lot of activity at The Parsonage with several vans and other vehicles parked at it but we have no knowledge of any planning application being lodged as this is a listed building. R.Smith suggested that it may be that repairs and reinstatements following the fire which gutted part of the building are being carried out. And do not need permissions. Cllr Martin will check on this for us.

The convenor thanked everyone for attending and noted that the date of our next meeting is Wednesday 20th March 2013

Airth Community Council Meeting – Police Report

January 2013 – February 2013

Dunmore

0 crime reports

South Alloa

0 crime reports

Letham

0 crime reports

Airth

4 crime reports

- 3 domestic incidents – 19 year old female and 27 year old male reported to Procurator Fiscal. One ongoing enquiry
- 1 Vandalism – vehicle damaged in Castle Drive, Airth- enquiry ongoing
- 7 road traffic offences including dangerous driving, vehicle defects and failing to stop and failing to report a road accident and failing to wear a seatbelt.

The PACT priority for Airth for February is to prevent and reduce vehicles speeding at Letham Cottages, Letham.

We have been using Hand Held Radar and have deployed the mobile speed board over the past few days. These both act as a deterrent. A number of fixed penalty tickets have been issued. These checks have led to other offences, including defective lighting and failing to wear seatbelts.