

Killearn Community Council

Annual report 2016-2017

The regular business of the Community Council involves commenting on planning applications, reporting road problems and monitoring local services. As in other villages in West Stirlingshire, closure of local shops and businesses was a major concern. The Co-op decision not to open a Post Office counter in the village store was a real disappointment. Previous trading figures led them to believe that it would not be financially viable. Should circumstances change, KCC will ask the Co-op to reconsider this decision. We were delighted to hear of plans to open the former Spar building as a Montessori School, but unfortunately the plans will not proceed at present. Several staff from Stirling Council's Economic Development Unit visited KCC to discuss their plans for rural development. Further details on all these topics can be found on our web site www.killearncc.org.uk.

- Punch Taverns were unsuccessful in finding a licensee to re-open the hotel, which closed in January 2016. We understand they also failed to find a purchaser for the building. A property consultant engaged to consider the viability of the hotel, or alternative uses for the building, met with representatives of KCC and KCFC to hear local views. He concluded that the hotel was not viable, as the Village Hall was now a successful wedding venue, and the Old Mill was meeting the need for a pub. An application for change of use from hotel to residential, and conversion of the hotel to flats was lodged in March 2017 and supported by KCC on a vote of 6 to 1. A development of flats in the centre of the village would meet a frequently expressed need for small housing units to purchase. A decision is awaited from Stirling Council.
- A further public consultation event on the proposed Blaressan development was held by Mactaggart and Mickel in September 2016, followed in December 2016 by a planning application for 35 houses, of which 12 will be affordable houses to rent from Rural Stirling Housing Association. The plans were revised in the light of comments by the public and discussions with KCC's Community Panel. The site is zoned for housing in the Local Development Plan, and a decision is expected from Stirling Council's Planning Panel in the near future.
- Broadband coverage in Killearn continued to improve at a slow pace, and 50% of the village now has access to Next Generation Broadband. Killearn Broadband Group (Chair Doug Ashworth) continued its efforts to investigate ways of improving coverage for properties and businesses in outlying areas.
- No further plans to develop the former Hospital site have appeared since the public consultation in May 2016. The recent tree felling operations have made this derelict site even more visible from the public road, and allegations of illegal demolition of buildings were passed to Stirling Council.
- A complete survey of the condition of roads and pavements in Killearn was made by KCC, and the results were discussed with senior staff of Stirling Council in April 2017. £1.23m and £1.24m was collected in council tax in Killearn during 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 respectively, yet only nil in 2014-2015 and £13,793 in 2015-16 was spent on capital projects. We are lobbying for a fairer distribution of resources in future. The pavement on Balfron Road from the Village Hall to the hotel was repaired in 2016-2017, together with passing places on Ballochruin Road. In 2017-2018 the pavement on Station Road from Drumore Road to Napier Road will be repaired, also road and pavement repairs at Harpers Road and at Gartness.
- Closure of the A81 at Balfron Station, owing to damage caused to the aqueduct by a vehicle collision, has been inconvenient for local residents and businesses. The

aqueduct carries the water supply for 600,000 homes in Glasgow. The repair is complex, and is scheduled to be carried out in summer and autumn 2017, avoiding the main tourist season as far as possible.

- Stirling Council provided funding for a traffic consultant to examine the pressures of parking in Killearn. A meeting was held of local businesses and organisations in the centre of the village, who own parking or whose activities generate a demand for parking. Occasional large events such as funerals and fireworks create problems for a limited time. It was felt that parking is adequate outside peak times, using public car parks at the Health Centre, on Main Street opposite the Co-op and on-street parking. People are asked to walk or cycle around the village where possible, and to avoid parking all day in private car parks, which can affect the viability of local businesses.
- Bin collections were a major source of confusion and complaint, following the introduction of the seven-day service, with Killearn having more than one collection day. The new method of working has saved Stirling Council a considerable amount of money, but the unreliable service requires to be improved.

The present Community Council will continue in office until October 2018. We were fortunate to be able to co-opt several new members – Heidi Bryce, Robert Dunn and Elizabeth Jones – but will say farewell to our Youth Member, Tom Morley, and to our Secretary, Margery Burdon. Her efficient handling of KCC business and her wise counsel will be sorely missed. We wish them both well in the future. Thanks to all KCC members and to our Minutes Secretary, Christine Bauwens for their hard work during the year, and to the Killearn Broadband Group and the Community Panel for their specialist advice. Thanks also to the Police and to our elected Councillors for their work on our behalf.

Margaret Harrison, Chair, Killearn Community Council

June 2017