

Killearn Community Council

Annual report 2017-2018

The regular business of the Community Council, commenting upon planning applications, reporting road problems and monitoring local services continued as usual during 2017-2018. The severe winter weather caused great damage to the roads in and around Killearn and problems for local residents, who turned out in strength to clear roads and pavements. Cars thoughtlessly parked on yellow lines on Main Street obstructed heavy vehicles and caused buses to be re-routed. This experience made it urgent to revive the village's resilience, or emergency plan, and a joint working group was set up with Killearn Community Futures Company (KCFC). On a lighter note, the filming for television of the children's book, 'Grandpa's great escape' in Killearn brought Tom Courtney, Jennifer Saunders and David Walliams to the village in Autumn 2017, to the delight of local residents.

- The proposed housing development at Blaressan field off Station Road was approved by Stirling Council (SC) in September 2017 and site clearance commenced in January 2018. This development of 35 houses will include 12 houses for social rent by Rural Stirling Housing Association, which are expected to be completed in November 2018. Street names have been taken from the village war memorial – Aitken Street and Wilson Crescent from World War I and Barclay Way from World War II. The builder has contributed a sum of money to be spent on children's play in the village, and KCFC is in process of forming a Friends of the Playpark group to take this forward.
- Conversion of the former Killearn Hotel into 14 flats was approved by SC in October 2017 and a proposed development of 12 homes for social rent and one market house for sale at the foot of Lampson Road was approved by SC Planning Panel in May 2018. The Panel felt that the social benefit of the Lampson Road development outweighed the constraints of the Local Development Plan and its own planning policies.
- A survey of the condition of roads and pavements in Killearn was made by KCC and discussed with SC in 2017. As a result, Harpers Road has been resurfaced, and Cedar/Elm/Elder pavement repairs are currently under way, with road resurfacing to follow in August. The pavement on Station Road has been renewed, and much-needed signage provided at the Wellgreen and Ballochruin Road, which now officially exist! The most serious disruption was caused by the long-delayed repair to the bridge on the A81 at Ballat by Scottish Water, necessitating long detours and loss of custom for businesses at Ballat and farther north. Estimated completion date is now mid-June.
- Broadband upgrade has continued to be slow, but an increasing number of properties in Killearn are now connected to faster broadband. The business voucher scheme is to re-start, offering businesses up to £3k to connect to an available fibre source. KCC receives regular reports from Doug Ashworth, Chair of the Killearn Broadband Group (KBG), and we are grateful for his commitment to the village. Doug also drafted the response from KCC and KBG to the Scottish Affairs Committee (Westminster) public inquiry into digital connectivity. Doug and Euan Shaw established a radio connection from Killearn Exchange to Auchengillan Outdoor Centre, via Abbeyfield, enabling faster broadband there, but this achievement is

threatened by a proposed forestry development which would interrupt the signal. Forestry proposals in rural areas need to take account of broadband requirements in local communities. Mobile phone networks Vodafone and O2 upgraded their masts in the area, leading to better signals. This could also provide the option of mobile broadband services for outlying properties in Killearn.

- Parking on the B834 and A809 by visitors to Finnich Glen continued to cause problems, and the Mountain Rescue service was called out regularly to rescue visitors who had got into difficulty there. KCC requested that SC erect signs at the entrances to the Glen, warning visitors of the hazards of the site, which is widely publicised on social media as a film location. Discussions about parking are ongoing.

KCC established a Facebook presence in Spring 2018, to communicate with a wider audience. We supported Scottish Parliament consultations on 20 mph speed limit in residential areas, and Low Emission Zones in cities (to commence in 2019) and responded to SC's proposals on Community Council governance. Discussions took place on a Children's book festival which SC are organising in Killearn Village Hall on Sunday 2 September. This will be a free event, with children's authors, music and play activities and a book exchange. Further details on all these topics can be found on our web site www.killearncc.org.uk.

We were fortunate to recruit Fiona Rennie as our new Secretary, and Eva Mailer as the new Youth Member. The present Community Council will continue in office until October 2018, and a new Community Council will be formed in November to serve for the next four years. This will be my last annual report as Chair, and I would like to thank all KCC members and our Minute Secretary, Christine Bauwens for all their hard work during the year. Thanks also to the Killearn Broadband Group for their specialist advice, and to the Police and our elected Councillors Berrill, Davies and Lambie for their work on our behalf.

Margaret Harrison, Chair, Killearn Community Council

June 2018