

## **CALLANDER COMMUNITY COUNCIL 14.12.20 Meeting CHAIR'S REPORT**

### **General update**

Since the last meeting, the focus has been on discussing priorities with the other office bearers and others within the changing context of post-Covid needs.

An account of this thinking was included in an article, written by invitation for the BLV December/January issue, reproduced below.

It was good to welcome a new councillor, Moe Guertin, to fill one of the co-opted member vacancies and we look forward to working with him. We hope to fill the remaining vacancy at the 14.12 meeting, when we will have the full complement of 14 members.

### **Meetings attended since the November Monthly Meeting As CCC Chair**

**12.11** On-site. Stephen Easton (SC) and David Shearer (CCC). Further discussion of plans for improved signage, to be discussed in January.

**14.11** Outdoors. Meeting with Moe Guertin to discuss current CC priorities.

**17.11** Coffee shop Meeting with a member of the community who wished to discuss misgivings and concerns about CC management.

**20.11** Regular online meeting with Carlyn Fraser (SC) and Marilyn Moore (Call Ent capacity) on current road and parking concerns and developments.  
AP: Potential A84 20mph experiment (18 months) tbc.

**26.11** Online meeting with Maria Lucey (SC) and WSP consultants: Meadows Car Park flooding update

**06.12** Phone discussion with SLV residents representative (document circulated) on concerns and action before 2021 season.

### **In a joint or individual capacity**

**18.11** Bridgend/South Church Street Floods group  
Update on their concerns over individual properties and lack of SC response.

**27.11** CCCDT monthly board meeting

**02.12** VIC board meeting

**08.12** Callander Enterprise. Monthly meeting.

**09.12** Bridgend/South Church Street Floods group  
Follow up to the digital meeting with SC/WSP and report of Ward Councillors meeting. Their notes circulated separately. Visit to properties with M Lucey being arranged by them.

**SH 13.12.20**

## **CALLANDER COMMUNITY COUNCIL: MOVING FORWARD**

In 2018, for the first time in recent years, the current Community Council was elected by a ballot of the whole town. At this October's AGM, a new set of office-bearers was elected by these councillors. During our first meeting, in November, we voted in a new co-opted member with the requisite two-thirds majority. We hope that our second vacancy will be filled at the December meeting, and welcome the increased range of relevant cross-community experience. This article was written immediately after that meeting.

### **Looking ahead**

The context in which we are all now living and working is central to the Community Council agenda. The changes in individual needs over the past year have produced a new awareness of ways in which groups of people can and must support each other. This was demonstrated in the Callander Support scheme, organised by the Town Coordinator working with volunteers, and the FETCH delivery service, operated by High School students, as well as by many other individual acts of kindness. By focusing on both emerging problems and practical solutions, we can identify our activities for the months ahead.

### **Listening**

Much of the meeting was taken up with listening: listening to those members of the community who came to ask questions, air personal concerns and to challenge. To accommodate this, we had already adapted the Agenda to give increased time for public input early in the meeting.

Listening is important for the whole community: it is a central feature of the work that the Town Coordinator is starting on the new Community Action Plan (CAP), now renamed Local Place Plan. This will replace the current 2017-2022 version. The initial stages involve analysing the current and evolving nature of the community, listening to its concerns and needs, and identifying how these may develop into the future. The aim is to involve as much of the community as possible in this analysis. The Community Council look forward to participating in this, alongside other local organisations.

Similarly, listening is at the centre of an evolving document, 'A Consideration of CCC – purpose and practices' - produced by two community councillors, Roger Watt and Brian McKay, and reviewed monthly by the Community Council. This examines the range of organisations across Callander and their relationship with each other and with the Community Council. How do they listen to each other? How do they listen to the rest of the community? How does the Community Council facilitate this? This document will grow and evolve over the coming months.

### **Conflict**

Much has been said recently about perceptions of 'Conflict of Interest'. This has usually centred on the nature and make-up of the CCC and the Callander Development Trust (CCDT) and the fact that five of the current councillors

(myself included) are also CCDT directors. Most of the comments have misunderstood the nature and purpose of community councils and development trusts – of which there are over 200 across Scotland, many including members of both bodies. At the meeting, we were reminded by a member of the public that community councillors being simultaneously directors of CCDT has been the norm for over 15 years, ever since the CCDT was founded.

To clarify the position for everybody, we had asked the Governance department at Stirling Council for a clear ruling. This was read out at the meeting:

*For the sake of clarity, there is nothing in the Scheme that states that on being elected as a Community Councillor you have to forego/give up your involvement/membership/affiliation with other organisations/bodies in community/civic/political life, nor indeed any private commercial interests. There is also nothing in the Scheme which states that if elected to an office bearer position on the Community Council, you cannot hold an office bearer role in another organisation.*

Thus, at the start of meetings, or before the discussion of any specific items, councillors must declare any potential areas of conflict of interest. They then do not vote and only speak if invited.

### **Language**

The less acceptable feature of this perceived conflict has been the personalised nature of many of the comments posted on Facebook by a few people, based on misconceptions but also, more seriously, attacking individuals either directly or through insinuation. The tone and content of some of these attacks moved a number of other people to respond with their own queries, opinions and – above all – disgust at the nature of many of these postings.

At the meeting, we stated clearly that, while welcoming questions and appropriate criticism, we will not tolerate personal attacks or misinformed statements on social media or through print. In fact, the Chair has the ability to close down meetings if comments disrupt proceedings.

It also needs to be remembered that councillors, like members of other groups, are giving their time and energy to local projects and issues. Any problems are best solved by discussion, rather than by accusation.

### **The future**

I hope this clarification of the ways in which the newly elected group of office bearers and the reinvigorated CCC are planning to move ahead will reassure any members of the community who were unsure of our remit and purpose. We are happy to answer questions posted on [www.ourcallander.org.uk](http://www.ourcallander.org.uk) or via email – or in person. Our aim is to work together for the whole community in these evolving and uncertain times - above all, by listening.

**Susan Holden**

**Chair Callander Community Council**

**10.11.20**

