

# PORTMOAK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## Draft Minute of Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2020

### Online meeting via Zoom

1. **Attendance:** CCLrs: Graham Cox, (Chairman); Dave Morris (Vice Chair); Ann Davidson (Treasurer); Susan McGregor (Secretary); Anne Cragoe; Susan Forde; WCILrs: Callum Purves and Willie Robertson; and 3 members of the public.

**Apologies:** none

2. **Approval of Previous minutes: from 10/03/2020 APPROVED**

3. **Matters Arising from Previous Minutes:**

**Item 1: Covid-19 impact in the area:** Chr G Cox wanted to look quickly at the impact of Covid-19 in Portmoak. Good news on horizon: To provide context he indicated that there was good news on horizon: Sweden are showing almost identical cases and fatality rate as Scotland, and probably going to declare herd immunity shortly, so there appears to be low levels of virus and therefore light at end of tunnel. Downsides: if Covid19 is eliminated no longer high priority for a vaccine. Elimination is straightforward by actioning lockdown, more difficult is how to continue to suppress the virus. Pandemic situation may continue through Winter and into Spring hence PCC shall need to actively plan measures to support the community.

**Item 2 Footpath from Scotlandwell to the Church, Hall and beyond:** The Chairman acknowledged that the development of this footpath had not progressed since last meeting. Nevertheless, PCC had responded on 19<sup>th</sup> June, to a PKC consultation under additional Covid19 initiatives, to again highlight dangers of footpaths in Scotlandwell, Kinnesswood, Easter Balgedie, and Wester Balgedie. WCILr Purves commented that in addition to this response, PKC were also looking to introduce other 20mph limits, and possibly extend the 20mph Kinnesswood trial to Scotlandwell. WCILr Purves had also asked PKC for their views on the PCC consultation response. This was about 2 wks ago. WCILr Robertson suggested PKC may have capacity issues during the pandemic. PKC employees have been redeployed and are just now starting to come back from redeployed positions. PKC have been swamped with requests from the latest consultation and may be struggling to process requests from all the different areas.

WCILr Purves indicated frustration that some actions for implementing social distancing signage changes were being taken without due process being followed e.g. in Kinross, they have started putting out stickers for 1-way system on pavements but no risk assessment has been done re: crossing roads at certain points. Meanwhile Rural requests with long standing concerns have been ignored.

The Chairman offered if PCC could do anything to help expedite actions? He had witnessed a near fatality when out walking along footpath down to Scotlandwell where a person had stepped off footpath into the road, to allow a mother with a pram to continue on the footpath, but had stepped into path of an oncoming truck which in turn had to take avoiding action swerving to other side of road, luckily there was no oncoming traffic. To note the Social Distancing guidelines are forcing people to step into the carriageway as the footpaths are not wide enough.

WCILr Robertson agreed that that particular section of road has a terrible path. There is urgency to spend, but there should be long-term planning for spending.

CILr Morris commented that this situation always seems to arise, PCC need to have a set of oven ready projects ready to go when funds become available.

The Chairman repeated the offer from the PCC to WCILr Robertson and WCILr Purves that if the PCC are willing to assist to facilitate PKC to help them spend their money.

**ACTION: WCILr Robertson requested the PCC should email PKC that there has been no action to alleviate road traffic concerns, and he would seek to mobilise the request at a meeting on Monday morning.**

CILr Cragoe queried if her request had been actioned for the ferns to be cut back on the footpath along Kilmagadwood. WCILr Robertson confirmed this had been reported to Community Greenspace for action.

**Item 3 Portmoak Traffic Calming & 20mph speed limit:** The Chairman requested an update from WCILr Purves who commented that there had been a large number of requests for 20pmh zones in Kinross-shire. WCILr responded that he has been, and will continue, to actively pursue this with PKC.

WCILr Robertson responded that he was advocating a new policy which would require 20mph limits to be established in all areas where narrow pavements existed. WCILr Purves agreed with Willie Robertson. The Scotlandwell 20mph limit is progressing. In case of Kinnesswood it had been previously raised to PKC Officers about the offer from Daryl McKeown to discuss various options and there was still an option to do that, though maybe not site visits at present. This measure is a very quick short term measure. We should still look to progress this and arrange another meeting. For other traffic calming issues the officers need to do site visits.

Cllr Cragoe commented that the local community had raised concerns again and there was a suggestion to start a petition to raise awareness of the issue. It may be possible also to get a road traffic engineer to visit the area and give the local community some guidelines on best options. WCllr Robertson suggested to try and progress 20mph speed limits without petition for now, though a petition may be useful later.

The Chairman indicated that PCC have a plan that they would like to see happen which included: 1. 20mph limits in Scotlandwell; 2. improvement to the path between Scotlandwell & Kilmagadwood; 3. Buildouts in Kinnesswood, Road layouts in WBalgedie and Scotlandwell. The PCC are prepared to compile a coordinated plan if this is helpful to PKC. Currently the PCC were going for a piecemeal approach due to offers of funding for specific changes.

The Chairman commented that the Scottish Government policy of staying 5 miles within your locality had attracted a huge increase of visitors into Portmoak, the carparks at Moss, Church and Village Hall are packed. Portmoak want to welcome people, but visitors are often not used to driving in the countryside, there is an increase in cars and motorbikes speeding, litter, bikes and pedestrians. While restrictions have been lifted people are not changing their habits accordingly, they are continuing to stay local. A member of the public pointed out that these issues are true in all areas of Portmoak, not just the largest villages.

WCllr Robertson agreed these were problems which had taken PKC by surprise, also wild camping and leaving rubbish, tents and bbqs. To date in Kinross-shire this has not been a huge problem, but there has been an increase particularly at Burleigh Sands and Glen Vale.

**Item 4 Portmoak Cemetery:** There was some confusion as to the actions arising from the last PCC meeting. The Chairman summarised: PCC believe there are two viable sites: site#1 adjacent to the existing Church cemetery is owned by people in Kirkcaldy, site#2 is between Easter & Wester Balgedie and owned by a local farmer who is amenable to selling the land.

Cllr Cragoe thought at the end of the last meeting it was decided to look at both sites: Site#1 is the easiest option as infrastructure is there and requires only cutting through the hedge. Site#2 is easier to obtain, but it would be more expensive to convert. It was thought PKC were to write to the owners of the land adjacent to the cemetery to ask their permission.

WCllr Robertson thought that site#1 next to cemetery had been dig tested and the site wasn't suitable. Cllr Cragoe said another site at the bottom part of the cemetery had been tested and was unsuitable, but the site beside the road is suitable and requires only to be cut through the hedge. Cllr Cragoe had emailed PKC and spoken to Liam Hynd last week, and was expecting a call back but this has not happened. Site #2 will incur costs for the land and cost to adapt it and is also exposed and not ideal for burial services. Site#1 has infrastructure e.g. Car park existing already.

The Chairman commented that the last contact with landowners of Site#1 was with regard to the Scotlandwell footpath and they were not interested in selling. In original LDP that land was zoned for development, but in LDP2 it is no longer zoned for development so the owners may be more receptive now.

WCllr Purves: suggested if Site#1 is an easy extension and the community are able to get an agreement from the landowners that would be the best way to proceed. Under current policy it is unlikely that a compulsory purchase will be made. It doesn't mean it's not possible. It would be best if PCC could contact the land owners again.

The Chairman responded to WCllrs that PKC do not appear to be willing to use their powers where necessary. He asked if PKC staff would come down and do a site visit before the next PCC meeting.

WCllr Purves agreed to ask for the site survey. But reiterated the compulsory purchases powers aren't so straightforward, where appropriate they should be used, but under the current policy it is unlikely. Cllr Morris commented that there was an excessive reluctance on the part of PKC to use compulsory purchase powers to deliver public needs and this attitude had to change, as a matter of urgency.

WRobertson thought the PKC Officers had probably taken decision to concentrate all burials in the same site. It could be suggested there is dragging of feet. Nothing will probably be done, leaving people with no option other than a plot in the Kinross cemetery. WCllr Purves concurred that this is the policy - to concentrate burials in the main conurbations.

**ACTION: WCllr Purves to request PKC to conduct site visits at both sites. PCC to contact landowners for Site #1.**

**Item 5 Rural Transport:** no additional updates

**Item 6 Loch Leven water quality:** WCllr Robertson: believes that the guidelines have been relaxed with regard to the upper amounts of phosphates allowed to go into the loch. It was unclear who was responsible for what appeared to be the steady erosion of the protection standards that had been established for water quality in Loch Leven in previous years. It might be related to recent large house building projects in the Kinross area.

**Item 7 Kinnesswood Road Safety Action:** nothing further at this stage, covered by earlier discussion.

**Item 8 Core Path PTMK 115 (Glen Vale to Glen Lomond and Dryside Road):** The Chairman outlined again the increase of visitors coming into Portmoak during lockdown, also that this coincided with the farmers' lambing period. There had been some difficulties including signage removal. Cllr Davidson explained the Core Path PTMK 115 was previously indicated with a sign on Dryside Road which showed where the core path left Dryside Road and turned up towards the Lomond Hills – the

sign had gone and is still missing. The question was would PKC or someone else (possibly a landowner) put the sign back so that people could see the route of the core path. Additionally, a social media forum was promoting the walk to John Knox's pulpit via Glenlomond, and incorrectly citing directions for a path from the car park at Glenlomond direct to John Knox's pulpit. Currently Glenlomond residents have placed temporary signage at Glenlomond village diverting the traffic from Glenlomond along the Dryside Road to Glenvale. although this throws the parking problem over to Fife. The problem has already been communicated to PKC, and needs only action. WCllr Robertson indicated he would ask Dave Stubbs at Community Greenspace what is happening. Cllr Davidson offered to assist Dave Stubbs, should a site visit be appropriate, to indicate exactly where the sign should go. Cllr Morris indicated that the PCC Paths Group had brought this missing sign problem to the attention of PCC Community Greenspace several weeks ago but their intended site visit had been cancelled because PKC had a policy in place which regarded such site visits as "non essential". There was an urgent need for this policy to be changed.

**ACTION: WCllr Robertson to request an update from Dave Stubbs**

#### 4. New Matters arising

**Item 1. Bank of Scotland closure Kinross:** PCC noted that this had been postponed, for the time being.

**Item 2. Community Resilience Planning:** No further action beyond activities associated with Covid 19.

**Item 3. SEPA/Scottish Enterprise River Leven Catchment Project.** Cllr Morris reported on recent press coverage of this project, which was a joint effort by these two government agencies to promote sustainable development aims in the context of the climate emergency, along with a range of partner organisations. It was a ten year programme for completion in 2030 and had attracted international recognition as an exemplar of how economic and environmental goals could be achieved in cooperation with local community interests. So far the focus of effort had been in the lower reaches of the River Leven but it was anticipated that initiatives would follow in the upper reaches, including the area around Loch Leven. So far the emphasis had been with Fife based organisations and there appeared to be, as yet, no engagement with PKC or local community councils around Loch Leven. Ward Councillors and PCC welcomed the opportunity for dialogue with SEPA and SE on this project and this would be pursued in the near future.

#### 5. Reports:

a. **Police: no representatives from the Police were in attendance.**

The Local Police Report: The Chairman commented that police presence in Portmoak has been a game of 2 halves: first lots of police cars cruising about enforcing lockdown, but no evidence of police when there were issues with Scramble Bikes on core paths, or checking the speed of traffic on the local roads.

b. **Planning:**

1. **New applications:**

**(a)** *20/00711/AML: Land 20 Metres East Of Leven House Scotlandwell  
Erection of 2 dwellinghouses (matters specified in conditions of 17/02274/IPL)  
Closing date for comments: 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2020*

PCC had requested an extension of this closing date so that the application could be discussed at the PCC meeting on 14 July but this request was refused by PKC. A letter of objection to the planning application was submitted to PKC on 10 July. PCC had received confirmation that the application had been approved on 7 July, three days before receipt of PCC objection. PCC noted, once again, that there was concern that, despite the original planning application for 10 houses having been rejected by a Scottish Government Reporter, that had been followed by repeated applications for smaller numbers of houses at the same location which had all been approved by PKC. This had resulted in the number of builds being now almost the same as the original rejected application. The Chairman expressed annoyance at the way in which PKC seemed oblivious to the waste of time and effort on the part of PCC and others in making representations against these planning applications. The Planning team at PKC seemed to make no consideration of what PCC says on this matter and completely ignores the previous decision of a Scottish Government Reporter. We need to get to a situation where the PCC comments are listened to. WCllr Robertson commented that the land was part of a flood plain and almost a bog on occasion.

WCllr Purves, commented that the decision date appeared to have been on the 7th July knowing that a representation from the Community Council, as a statutory consultee, was still awaited. PCC agreed to make representations to the Scottish Government to the effect that the planning process in PKC was not fit for purpose. Cllr Robertson indicated that similar concerns had been expressed by other Community Councils in Kinross-shire.

2. **Progress with Developments:** *Westfield Community Liaison Committee: update on public availability of minutes of the Westfield Liaison Group meetings.*

The last meeting, a site visit to the Hargreaves energy from waste facility (under construction at Earlsgate, Grangemouth) was the same day as the last PCC meeting and will be reported to next meeting of the Liaison Committee. A tender document has been prepared by Hargreaves for the feasibility study (by Hargreaves and Brockwell Energy) of the proposed, multi-user, off-road path between Westfield and the B996/B9097 junction, with links into local communities. PCC was pleased to note that this work was proceeding despite the Lockdown difficulties.

Cllr Morris noted that George Lawrie had left TRACKS. WCllr Robertson, explained that because much work had stopped over the Summer with regard to Covid-19, nothing had been done about replacing George Lawrie. In the meantime it was hoped that George would still be able to provide some advice on the Westfield project, as needed. The Chairman queried if there was any news about the actual financial viability of the Westfield site given current economic difficulties.

A local member of the public who has visibility of the site commented there appears to have been some work around the wind turbines, and landscaping. Apart from that there did not seem to be much happening on site.

- c. **Paths Group: to note progress:** Cllr Dave Morris reported that both the PCC Paths Group and PKC had been busy out strimming paths. The increased activity by PKC was related to Covid 19 requirements and the need to keep 2 metre separation between path users. The Paths Group have been progressing the Kinnesswood car park sign and associated leaflet, and this is near completion. There has been an increase in volunteer participation in the Paths Group which is great. At the moment, weather has been quite dry so paths are in good condition.

- d. **Treasurer CC Accounts:**

Michael Bruce Way: Balance no movement £2,171.73

General Account: Balance no movement £695.80

Awaiting £700 invoice for leaflets and sign.

Funding for leaflets applied for.

## 6. Ward Councillors Reports:

WCllr Purves: flagged that PKC are conducting an engagement process: Recovery and Renewal process, Impact of Coronavirus, to tie in with wider objectives. There was a move to adopt a more “think yes” approach within the council and other ways to reduce bureaucracy. What can council do better? What can community groups take on and do better. It seems good that PKC are open to change. The consultation process was open to all of the public.

**People within the Portmoak Community are invited to express their views of their experience during the Covid-19 pandemic by visiting:** <https://consult.pkc.gov.uk/housing-environment/covid-19-impact-survey/>

WCllr Robertson: explained that due to the Covid-19 pandemic PKC are exceeding their spending limits in lots of areas, and an emergency budget was likely. Things are very much up in the air: school transport is a consideration, for example, with a huge increase in costs due to physical distancing requirements. Road safety measures may be constrained by budget considerations.

## 7. Matters notified to the Secretary plus matters raised from the floor.

**Co-Options of additional members to PCC:** The Scheme for Establishment of CCs in PKC limits the number of coopted members to no more than one third of the total CC membership. This means that PKC has already reached that limit with two co-opted members out of six total members. But we can add people with particular skills or knowledge as “Associate Members”. Option is for a fixed period, or the term of office of the CC. In addition people who are coopted, e.g. Sue McGregor & Ann Davidson, will become normal full members after 12 months, at that point in time PCC would have 6 full members and could move to co-opt more members, subject to PKC agreement. If you exceed one third under any circumstances a by-election is automatically triggered. The WCllrs agreed this was correct. PCC agreed to appoint Graham Smith and Kenneth Donaldson as Associate Members, subject to their agreement, with a view to co-opting them in due course.

Guidelines on holding physical Community Council meetings: The WCllrs indicated that most CCs were proceeding with online meetings.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 2135.

8. **Date of next meeting:** 7.30pm Tuesday, 11th August 2020 via online Zoom meeting (access details can be requested by emailing [Secretary@Portmoak.org](mailto:Secretary@Portmoak.org))