

TROSSACHS AREA NETWORK MEETING

Brig O'Turk Village Hall

Tuesday 4 October 2005 at 7.30 pm

Present:

Community Representatives

Pamela Abraham, Strathard
John Clow, Stathard
Ron Dalton, Gartmore
Ros Dingwall, Strathard
John Epps, Strathard
Allan Fail, LKCT
Rena McGregor, Brig O'Turk
Gene Maxwell, Trossachs
Ron Mendham, Trossachs
David Shearer, Callander

Also Present:

Gillian Barrie, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority
Susan Brookes, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority
Lesley Campbell, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority
Gordon Donaldson, FCS, Aberfoyle
Theresa Elliot, Strathfillan Community Development Trust
Tim Messer, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority
Iain McInnes, Chair, Community Partnership
Owen McKee, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority
Lynne McKinley, Stirling Council
Margaret Murray, Stirling Council
Councillor Paul Nelson, Stirling Council
Tony Teasdale, Rural Stirling Housing Association

1. WELCOME

Gillian Barrie welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the agenda for the evening. The meeting was advised that (a) Iain McInnes, Chair of the Community Partnership was in attendance, (b) Gene Maxwell had resigned as Director of the Community Partnership and (c) the Association of Community Councils had nominated John Epps to be co-opted as Gene's replacement.

2 FEEDBACK FROM THE LAST MEETING

Stirling Council had responded to waste and recycling issues raised during facilitated discussion at the last meeting. Copies of the response had been circulated with the agenda for this meeting and additional copies were available.

In acknowledgement of the litter and visitor management pressures affecting communities, Keep Scotland Beautiful had been approached with a view to developing a campaign/relevant projects. It was proposed to establish a Litter Sub-Group with representation from the National Park and Stirling Council. Community representation

on the sub-group would be welcomed and anyone interested should contact Gillian Barrie at the National Park on 01389 722003.

Since the last meeting, Loch Venacher Management Group had met to look at visitor pressures around the loch. The Visitor Management Committee had agreed to feed into the Litter Sub-Group and vice versa.

An update on the rural roads consultation meeting held at Gartmore Village Hall on 9 August 2005 would be available at the next meeting.

A rolling programme of issues raised at Network meetings and the progress made would be available at the next meeting and future meetings.

3 AFFORDABLE RURAL HOUSING

Tony Teasdale provided background to how Rural Stirling Housing Association operated. The Association was a Registered Social Landlord and had built over 400 affordable homes in north and west rural Stirling. Most of the stock was new build with the exception of a few refurbished properties. A mix of property types was provided and provision was also made to accommodate tenants with access difficulties.

A housing association was an independent, not for profit body that worked closely with government agencies and was accountable to its shareholding membership. Registered Social Landlords were governed by Communities Scotland and had a duty to meet legal requirements and performance standards. If standards were met organisations would become eligible for Housing Association Grant. This could cover 75% of total development costs of new build schemes. A Scottish Executive initiative was also proposed which would introduce a shared equity scheme.

The following areas were also outlined:

- Key development issues
- Quality of services
- Working with communities
- Allocations Policy

The Housing Association was legally required to publish an allocations policy and waiting list. A nomination arrangement was also in place with the local authority however this could change if the stock transfer proceeded. Local letting initiatives had been designed to give greater priority to those living or needing to live in the area. In conclusion, reference was made to the possible acquisition of property at Stronachlachar which Communities Scotland appeared willing to fund.

Tony Teasdale was thanked for a very interesting and informative presentation.

4 COMMUNITY REPORTS

The undernoted community updates were provided:

Strathard: The recent housing development in Stronachlachar had highlighted the need for larger homes and more shared ownership. It was acknowledged that Kinlochard had been fully developed.

Callander: The need for additional sewage capacity was highlighted. Tony Teasdale explained that Callander had been designated as a rural growth area and that there was a move towards providing dedicated sites for affordable housing. Preparatory work had

started on the National Park's Local Plan however research into housing needs would need to be carried out. It was unlikely that work on the draft Local Plan would commence before Spring 2006. Emphasis was placed on the need for communities to focus on Local Plan requirements. Some sites identified in Stirling Council's Local Plan had already gone through the planning process and would have to be fulfilled. The eligibility criteria of tenants' right to buy and the Scottish Executive legislative review was explained and highlighted as a key issue.

Brig O'Turk: The housing shortage was causing staffing problems for the Trust. Since becoming part of the National Park house prices had significantly increased making them unaffordable to locals. In terms of the current Local Plan, the village environment had been drawn to ensure there was no more building. It was expected that demographics would also change through time.

Kilmadock: The large housing development outlined in the Local Plan was not moving forward as quickly as anticipated. The development would incorporate private housing, a percentage of affordable social housing, business space and a GP surgery. The Housing Association had hoped to afford the remainder of the site, but this would be dictated by the speed of development.

Thornhill & Blairdrummond: The Community Council had recently been given a presentation by Stirling Rural Housing Association on affordable housing therefore submitted apologies for this meeting. The Community Council asked that it be noted that affordable housing had been highlighted as a priority in its Local Action Plan.

5 A COMMUNITY APPROACH TO RURAL HOUSING ISSUES

Theresa Elliot, Director of Strathfillan Community Trust (SCDT) gave a presentation on developing affordable housing. In 1992 Community Councils had undertaken a survey on various community issues which highlighted the need for affordable private and rented housing. In 1997 Corrum Survey Trust helped to develop SCDT and undertook a further survey, which again identified this need. British Rail Properties Board was approached and agreement reached on purchasing five properties. Discussions were held with Stirling Council and Rural Stirling Housing Association and it was decided that a Trust would be the preferred model. Theresa advised on the benefits of becoming a small social landlord. The undernoted areas of the process were also outlined:

- Negotiations
- Funding (grants and loans)
- Housing Management (allocations policy, tenancies, repairs and maintenance)
- Staffing

The meeting thanked Theresa for her interesting presentation.

6 FACILITATED DISCUSSION AROUND AFFORDABLE RURAL HOUSING

At this point in the meeting those present were given the opportunity to raise issues relating to affordable housing.

Issues/Responses

- *A common housing list*

If the Council housing stock transfer proceeded Housing Stirling would be asked to take control of a central housing register. Also highlighted was the possibility of one housing list but with retention of respective policies.

- *Why the need for so many Housing Associations in the Stirling area*

It was explained that Stirling Rural Housing Association was the only Registered Social landlord in this area. Forth Housing operated in urban Stirling.

- *New Local Plan*

The need for early consultation at a local level in advance of finalising the new Local Plan was acknowledged. Consideration needed to be given to how to build on Local Action Plans. It was recognised that more than waiting list information would be required and more research would be needed into local housing needs. The need for appropriate infrastructure to support new housing, ie water and sewage treatment plants, school capacity and expansion proposals would be essential. Engaging with the Forestry Commission at a micro-level on sites for future development was offered.

Key Points

- Engage local communities early on in the Local Plan process and identify local needs and mechanisms;
- A clear understanding of housing allocations policies;
- Further research needed to accurately establish the extent and type of local housing needs.

7 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

Apprenticeship Scheme: The Director of Gartmore Community Trust advised that a steering group with appropriate representation had been established to develop ideas that would underpin an apprenticeship scheme. Funding secured by the Partnership had enabled a survey to be undertaken to identify business constraints and boundaries. The survey confirmed that the National Park area lagged behind the rest of Scotland.

There were more young people interested in the scheme than businesses. Of 92 trades companies only 12 had expressed an interest in taking on an apprentice. Pupil, parent and employer sessions, led by Careers Scotland, had taken place and as a result of positive feedback the scheme had been developed. Implementation of the scheme, which hoped to attract 35 apprentices, would require funding over five years and intakes were proposed for September 2006 and 2007.

An important element of the scheme would be to provide grants to small business to assist with training costs. The cost of training an apprentice was in the region of £30,000. Findings had highlighted that businesses would incur a net loss of around £10,000. Funders were being approached and a manager for the scheme would need to be recruited by the end of the year. The National Park Authority had offered support through the provision of administrative costs and office accommodation for the Manager.

It was confirmed that if successful, the scheme could be extended to other areas, eg hospitality. Owen McKee advised that Perth and Kinross College operated a scheme which provided catering training at business locations.

Organising Committee: An invitation was extended to community representatives to join the Network Organising Committee.