



CRIEFF COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes for Community Council Meeting held on 3rd March 2025

Strathearn Community Campus, Crieff, 7.30pm

Present: 13 members of the public

Community Councillors: Brian Wilton (Chair) & Kayleigh Keith,

Ward Councillors: Bailie Rhona Brock, Councillor Stuart Donaldson, Councillor Noah Khogali

Apologies: Marlene Galashan, Eileen McDonald, Pete McCarra

1. **Welcome and apologies**

The Chair welcomed all those present and gave apologies for Community Councillors Marlene Galashan, Eileen McDonald, Iona MacPherson and Pete McCarra

2. **Previous minutes**

Distribution of previous minutes not confirmed.

3. **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

4. **Police Report**

No police report had been received

5. **Planning applications**

None of any note.

6. **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman welcomed everyone and advised that in the absence of the Secretary, he would – with the meeting’s permission – record the session for the production of the Minutes.

Public Meeting

His first item concerned the public meeting called to discuss the future use of the Drummond Arms site after demolition. Almost 100 attended and the overwhelming opinion was that housing was not an appropriate use of the site.

After that meeting there had been a front-page article in the Strathearn Herald which had also appeared in the Perthshire Advertiser. Coverage had also been obtained in the Courier and reportedly, also in the Daily Record.

The only response from PKC had been from a Lib Dem councillor who commented “I do think some residents of Crieff need a reality check. Some of the comments from the Community Council chairperson were breathtaking” and were described as ‘somewhat delusional’. He had continued: “The council was absolutely clear that it was purchasing that site for affordable housing. It wasn’t opening it up for community consultation and I think there needs to be a robust response to those in the community who think that is the way to proceed.”

The Chairman said that he had responded with: “I trust that Councillor Barrett’s ill-advised and intemperate remarks don’t represent a more widely held contempt for the Crieff electorate and the safeguards of local democracy.”

There had been no response from Cllr Barrett or anyone from PKC continued the Chairman, which might indicate that the suggested contempt was more prevalent than he had thought.

After that public meeting, he continued, a process called a Participation Request was brought to his attention in which local communities could request to be consulted in specific local issues. He had submitted an application and felt it important that the meeting heard what grounds had been detailed for the submission.

Neither the Community Council nor any other organisation in Crieff has been consulted in any way on the wishes of the community to effect the most beneficial outcomes for the regeneration of the centre of Crieff, its business community and its ability to increase much-needed tourism traffic which is essential to help save the High Street, its shops and its jobs.

As a community council our primary statutory role is to ascertain, co-ordinate and express to PKC the views of the community which we represent.

These have been clearly stated to us but have not been acknowledged or acted upon by PKC which necessitates this Participation Request.

If granted, we will include in the participating group, individuals with expertise and experience relating to the outcome.

Our involvement's aims are to more closely explore the economic and aesthetic needs of the town and discuss the feasibility of an alternative use to housing for the vacated Drummond Arms site.

If the request was granted, he had no idea of the form that the community participation would take and asked Cllr Stewart Donaldson if he wished to say anything on the subject.

Cllr Donaldson said that such requests were uncommon but one had recently been granted to Comrie about proposed library closures. He spoke briefly on affordable housing but said the most important issue would be the demolition process and the PKC officer in charge of that was John Fyfe.

Baillie Rhona Brock added that there would be a public meeting to explain the demolition process. Questions were asked about repurposing parts of the building and Cllr Donaldson, advised that was being investigated. He also said that no firm timescale could be given at this early stage for the demolition but he expected a start to be made by the end of March.

The Chairman said there were two important questions they needed to ask: whether or not the façade of the building was saveable and what was to replace it. The overwhelming opinions had been that the replacement should, be a mixture of public space and community facilities, the exact nature of which would need to be discussed if PKC accepted the community view.

The longer-term challenge for the town was the regeneration of the centre and the Chair suggested that there was no need for any further surveys since there were three previous very professional ones, the eldest being 12 years old, which voiced the same concerns as were being heard in 2025.

To a question on the future use of the old Primary School and the council offices in James Square, the Chair said that PKC was actively planning on how to convert the school to affordable housing. He hoped – as did very many folk in Crieff – that it didn't end up being demolished. He concluded that the Community Council may well submit another other Participation Request on the topic.

Crieff Regeneration Group.

The Chair – who represents the Community Council on the group – advised that it was mainly concerned with events for the next two years designed to attract more visitors to Crieff. He would like, he said, to see a much longer term view taken as mentioned earlier. The problem was that there just weren't enough available volunteers with the

necessary experience, skills and time to devote to the very varied improvements that were required.

Community Benefit.

There was a brief explanation and discussion on Community Benefit and the likelihood of Crieff being involved. The Chair advised that a group of interested local community councils (including Crieff's) had come together to form a unified team to negotiate with the relevant power companies when the opportunity arose. Cllr Donaldson said that how much Crieff might benefit was not known but would become clearer as the wind farm project developed. Bailie Brock said that the number of turbines had been reduced from 23 to 19, so there would be less Community Benefit than originally thought.

Cllr Donaldson suggested that future funding might well be accessed from Persimmon Housing and Alan Murphy (Crieff at Christmas) advised that his group had been awarded £1,00 toward Christmas Lighting and that Persimmon did have a dedicated grant process. He also hoped that when Community Benefit funds were granted that they would be given to the Community Council rather than Crieff Community Trust. The Chair agreed with the sentiment but said it would be up to the Community Benefit group to allocate such funds.

7. Events Committee Report

Kayleigh Keith gave a detailed report on the Spring Fair on 24th April in Taylor/MacRosty Park from 11am to 3pm. She also mentioned the summer arts event, Crieff Food Fest, Halloween and Hogmanay. The Chair spoke briefly of the November Jigsaw Festival – the first in Scotland. Kayleigh agreed with a questioner that there would be a consolidated programme produced very soon.

A question was asked about the Visit Crieff website, its owners and its operation. Kayleigh and the Chair agreed that the different local websites were very confusing and that steps were being taken to rationalise the situation.

8. Litter picking.

Mark Hunter hadn't been able to attend the meeting but he had, as always, been working hard with his teams and really making a difference in the town. The Community Council was hoping to buy printed hi-viz gilets for the teams but was awaiting costings and budget approval.

9. Treasurer's Report.

The treasurer was not able to attend but the situation hadn't changed since the last meeting, and there had been no payments in or out.

10. Any other Business.

The Chair said he was delighted to welcome a new recruit to the Community Council and he proposed the acceptance of Nikki Livett which was seconded by Kayleigh Keith and voted through in absentia by Marlene Galashan. The Chair expanded, saying that Nikki worked at the Scotland Shop, was a great supporter of the Council and attended almost every meeting – information that was greeted with a round of applause.

Star Hotel Mural.

June McEwen explained the Star Hotel mural project which would be installed on the visible gable end after demolition of the main buildings. Her proposal had been accepted by Creative Crieff, and she was now planning its subject matter and implementation. There was much discussion and many helpful suggestions.

She then talked of reintroducing the arts festival but explained that without funding, it would be very limited.

PKC Budget.

Cllr Donaldson spoke of the PKC budget which had been completed the previous week. One of the items of particular interest was that the Community Council annual budget for approved expenses such as meeting rooms, stationery etc., had been increased from £730 to £1,000.

The recycling centre hours had been extended slightly. And £7 million had been added to PKC's property investment portfolio. Increased funding was also allocated for groups such as 'Friends of cemeteries. Funds also allocated to dealing with ash dieback.

A questioner asked about the land that had been earmarked for Glenturret Distillery and the Chair promised to inquire as to its future use by Glenturret.

The derelict site on King Street/Commissioner Street was also mentioned and it was explained that it was privately owned, and the Dundee owner(s) had declined to participate in any development possibilities.

The Chairman thanked those attending and the meeting closed at 2045.

Next meeting

Monday 7th April 2025. Strathearn Campus. 7.30pm.