



Crieff Community Council

Chairman's Report 2023 – 2024

After having been absent from the scene for quite some time, Crieff's Community Council was resurrected last June by a group of Crieff residents independently deciding that 'something had to be done'.

Of that original group, only three remain, the others having discovered that the Council's work was far more than anticipated and wasn't compatible with having a day job and bringing up a family. We're most grateful to those who joined us temporarily but fully understand their predicaments.

We were a bunch of absolute but optimistic novices and the first hurdle we encountered was changing the signatories on the Community Council banking account — that took us nine months.

Having been appointed Chairman at that first meeting, I cajoled colleagues into becoming *pro tem* office-bearers in the belief that we would manage to recruit others who would be more comfortable with the specialist duties of vice chair, secretary and treasurer.

Unfortunately, this didn't happen. Whilst we now have a small team of enthusiastic volunteers gifted with different skills, we haven't managed to fill those posts.

Despite that however, we *have* managed to re-establish the Community Council as a credible force that acts on behalf of the community. Problems brought to us have been dealt with speedily although we soon discovered that dealing with many of them was beyond our powers or – more frequently – beyond our patience and our ability.

Our – mostly monthly - Community Council meetings have been well attended and have always been very friendly and constructive events. Our press and PR coverage has been consistently positive, and we have a monthly report in the Quair Magazine. We established our own new website (www.crieff.scot) with an integral town diary that's updated and consulted on a daily basis; we organised a public road safety meeting highlighting over 20 local issues that resulted in important 'lifesaving' improvements on Broich Road.

For almost nine months we researched and reported on the credible future of Crieff's public toilets and attracted considerable financial and in-kind support for our plans. With Crieff Community Trust we conducted a public survey and attracted a record response of over 700, 98.5% of whom told us what we already knew — that public toilets were an essential service for the town, especially for one that aspires to be a tourism centre. Despite those efforts, our plans has been put aside in favour of simpler and more immediate project from the newly formed Crieff Regeneration Group of which ythe Community Council is a member.

We feel confident that as the only group in Crieff lobbying and badgering for the establishment of a regeneration body, our voice was heard and helped to trigger the seed-corn finance allocated by the Independent Group of PKC Councillors.

We have instigated and organised periodic litter-picking and street cleaning voluntary groups which have been widely praised. We have investigated and reported on local transport needs, empty shops and derelict buildings, dangerous pavements and pavement blockages.

We have, with our events Committee, organised a very successful Spring Fair in MacRosty Park, the inaugural Crieff Food Fest in October and have plans for a host of future events. We have recently instigated and produced a printed newsletter that we hope will grow and appeal to those not at ease with modern phones and iPads. We fought and won, for Crieff's inclusion in the ill-fated PKC Tay Forest National Park application to the Scottish Government.

We have tried wherever possible to respond positively to the voiced and the perceived needs of the community – private and commercial – but are well aware of our limitations.

We would like to think that our input on such a variety of fronts has helped to foster the image of the town and its more optimistic view of the future.

Personally, I've attended very many meetings representing the Community Council but have realised just how much the 'system' unrealistically expects of its unpaid, voluntary councillors to make up for the finance-induced shortcomings of its regional authorities.

In closing I would like to thank all those who have supported the Community Council in the past year: my councillor colleagues of course and our ward councillors: those who've attended our periodic meetings and those officers and staff of Perth & Kinross Council who've felt able to respond to our queries and our needs.

I would make a final plea for volunteers to join our ranks on the Community Council. It can be hard work, frustrating . . . even infuriating. But the wins that we experience make *Serving the Community* all the more worthwhile.