



CULTS FIELDSIDE AND MILLTIMBER COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Annual Report 2016

Organisation and Activities

Membership – The following councillors served during the year:

2016
Mr Guus Glass (chairman)
Mr Derek Robb (vice-chairman)
Mr Colin Morsley (secretary, correspondence)
Dr Peter Smith (secretary, meetings)
Mr Graham Payne (treasurer)
Mr Peter Roberts (planning liaison officer)
Mr Nurul Hoque Ali (co-opted February)
Mrs Christine Anderson
Mr David Anstee
Ms Eleanor Brennan
Mr Norman Burt
Mr Colin Caldow
Mrs Lindsay Davidson
Mr Matthew Dickie
Mrs Sarah Gordon
Mrs Kirstin Gove
Mr Sandy Milne (resigned February)
Dr Shan Parfitt
Mrs Lorna Sharp
Mr Theo Parfitt-Roche (youth member – co-opted May)
1 youth vacancies

The Community Council was fortunate to be able to work with a nearly full complement of members throughout the year. This allowed us to take on some projects that were waiting in the aisles and also helped to spread some of the regular tasks. Sandy Milne had to resign for health reasons early in the year but the vacancy was almost immediately filled by co-opting Nurul Hoque Ali. In May Theo Parfitt-Roche was co-opted in one of the youth vacancies which leaves still one youth member vacancy at the end of the year.

Meetings – The Community Council held 10 regular meetings, on the fourth Thursday of each month. No meetings were held in December and July. The venue for the meetings alternated between the Cults Community and Sports complex (5) and the Deeside Christian Fellowship Church Cafe in Milltimber (4). In June CBMCC met in the Phoenix Community Centre in Newton Dee.

Most Council members managed to attend a good number of meetings leading to a healthy average attendance of at least 13 Community Councillors. The minimum number attending was 9 (one meeting) still well above the required quorum for a meaningful discussion. With the exception of one meeting, at least one of our three Elected Members attended and several times all were there to update the CC on their activities. Members of the public attended all meetings – numbers varying from 1 to 10 - to air specific problems with new building plans and other community matters. No member of the press attended any of the meetings. Members took the excellent initiative to arrange for coffee/tea to be available in the meetings.

Presentations - The Community Council received the following presentations during the year:

- A team of 5 persons from the AWPR Construction Joint Venture (CJV) and Transport Scotland accompanied by John Wilson, the City's Contract Managing Agent gave a presentation and answered questions on the road building progress at the January meeting. Alternative routing of the Deeside Way and noise and traffic problems were also addressed.
- Charlie Ferrari and David Suttie, Directors, Cults Developments Company Ltd, made presentations and answered questions on the proposed Inchgarth Development at both the January and the November meetings.
- David Adam, Operations Manager at First Bus, answered questions regarding the bus services through the area at the February and August meetings.
- Joanna Mackie, Service Manager in the Communities & Partnership Team, ACC, spoke and answered questions at the April meeting about developer contributions. Members expressed strong concerns, including the possibility that funds might not be spent, compartmentalisation and lack of co-ordination in the Council, and the absence of any public participation at any stage of the process. A further meeting with Communities & Partnership Team was agreed but has not yet materialized.
- Steve McHaffie, Director, Scotia Access Services, spoke about costings and options for Christmas lights at the August meeting.
- Inspector Bob Mc Kinney of the Crime Reduction Unit discussed crime trends in the city and the CC area and the need to raise awareness of the simple routines the public should consider to prevent opportunistic crime.
- Andrew Brownrigg, Leader of the city's development planning team, gave a brief resume of the current position regarding the Local Development Plan at the October meeting. He answered questions relating to the disappointing outcome of the examination by the Reporter of the Scottish Government.

Community Plan – It was agreed that the CC would create a 'living' Community Plan with the aim to give an overview of the community, to reflect the views of the local community as to desirable developments, highlight potential developments which are considered undesirable and to identify issues that need further exploration.

The Plan is intended to be a dynamic web-based document with information and views obtained through a variety of means, including meetings (CC and other groups), questionnaires and social media.

Festival – The traditional MBC Festival was organised successfully in August by an independent work group with support from the Community Council. John Page and Joyce Wright, the long-time leaders of the work group, have stepped down and a re-shaped committee have taken on the 2017 organisation. The community is indebted to John and

Joyce for many years of great summer entertainment they created and we wish to see them around, relaxing, at many future festivals.

Litter Picking – A single litter picking day was organised during the year with a few more helpers than in 2015. This allowed areas of Central Cults and along the Railway line path and around the Cults Primary School, both covered last year, to be cleaned in the one day. A reasonable amount of litter was removed. It was gratifying that this was less than last year.

Media – The CC funds 50% of the CBM Community website (the other half being funded by MBC News) and maintains most pages. The look and structure of the website were completely updated and simplified during the year and more information on local activities is being provided to the community. Pages under control of the Community Council were updated and show the latest available news items and reports. The CBMCC Facebook page continues to attract readers, with over 450 “Likes” and some items reach over 2000 people; it is proving to be a useful means to communicate faster with residents.

More Blooms in CBM - This project is now in its third year. Twenty-four hanging baskets were again purchased independently this year from Cove Bay Nurseries and installed by volunteers at various lampposts along the North Deeside Road in Cults and Bielside. ACC maintained i.e. watered, throughout the summer and took them down at the end of the season.

A further 12 whisky barrel planters were purchased and installed at various places along the North Deeside Road. Two were placed either side of the junction of Kirk Brae and a custom-made planter was also placed outside of Sainsbury’s opposite to create another mini hotspot.

Some 2,000 daffodil bulbs donated by ACC were planted at various location in Cults and Bielside. MBCBM also coordinated the obtaining, distribution and planting of 10,000 crocus bulbs in the wider Lower Deeside area in support of the Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland and the Royal Horticultural Society, Purple4Polio campaign. Some local contributions to help with funding the project were gratefully received. MBCBM achieved a rating of ‘Level 3 - Advancing’ this year with the ‘It’s Your Neighbourhood’ scheme from Keep Scotland Beautiful.

Nan Shepherd Commemorative Plaque – The Community Council researched the life of the late Anna (Nan) Shepherd, Scottish and internationally acclaimed novelist, poet and author and nominated her to be honoured by the City with a commemorate plaque at her home in Cults where she lived all her life. The nomination has been accepted by the City.

Newsletter – The MBC News is an independent community newsletter, supported by the Community Council. Several community councillors are serving on the editorial committee. Four issues were published in 2016 each including extensive news, reports and subject contributions from the Community Council and the Elected Members for the area.

Participation in City Associations – The Community Council is represented on the Civic Forum and the Community Council Forum

Paths Subcommittee – This subcommittee was established early in the year with the remit of encouraging more walking and use of local paths. The group have been trying to clarify the complex issues affecting paths in our area, such as: the right to roam, ownership of land, clear definition of the status of paths, identifying who is responsible for

the costs of maintaining a path and concerns about privacy. All these have a valid input into dealing with paths and balancing them is not easy.

Activities and achievements to date include:

1. Reconnoitring local paths to identify their existence, check their condition and record their status using the Paths for All (PfA) grading system
2. A regular "Walks Feature" established in MBC News: three articles describing walks published so far.
3. Several meetings and communications with Karen van Eeden, Environmental Planner from Aberdeen City Council to understand the legal issues involving paths and how developer funds can be used.
4. Meeting with Dan Cadle of the Forestry Commission to discuss recent path improvements undertaken by the Commission in Ladyhill and Foggieton Woods and the potential for a path linking Foggieton Wood to Countesswells Woods.
5. Meeting and walk with John Duffy from PfA to discuss: improvements to the paths along the River Dee; ways of improving and encouraging access to paths.
6. Investigated the costs of producing Walks leaflets.
7. Investigated the possibility of having a CBM/Village notice board in Cults.
8. An unofficial community walk held during the 2016 MBC Festival.
9. Ongoing communication with a local farmer/landowner about a new path linking Foggieton Wood to Countesswells Woods

The Paths sub-committee will continue to work with all stakeholders to gain as wide access as possible for path users of all types in Cults, Bielside and Milltimber. In 2017 this will include providing further walks and path information, organising a community walk, path improvements and signposting and links to other users e.g. cyclists.

Training Courses – Community councillors attended a training workshop on Planning Matters organised by Aberdeen City and the Community Path Grant Workshop organised by Paths-for-All.

Xmas Carol Event – The Community Council again produced a Christmas concert on the first Monday in December on Cults Square. The revisit of Fiona Kennedy added to the musical content of the event and the record crowd did their best to match her singing. This year we raised the record amount of £557.13, in our collections in aid of the VSA Christmas Events for old and young. We have now raised over £4,500 over the years for this charity.

Xmas Festive Lights – CBMCC embarked on an Xmas lights project during the year with the aim to give our community a festive makeover. We were delighted to obtain sufficient sponsorship from local businesses to fund an initial four festive lights, that were installed along the North Deeside Road in Cults in addition to the tree lights on Cults square we already own. This is an ongoing initiative with the aim to brighten up the main road (and suitable side roads?) in Cults, Bielside and Milltimber during the festive season. Further sponsorship will be sought from prominent local businesses and/or individual residents.

Community Issues

The Community Council addressed the following issues arising within the CBM area during the year. The subjects are listed alphabetically.

AWPR – The first and second phases of the work on Milltimber junction are now complete, with the temporary diversion of the A93 to allow the AWPR cutting and installing a bridge for the A93 now operating. Work has also begun on piling for the new bridge across the River Dee and the South Deeside Road. The new bridges for access to Station Road and the A93 crossing should be completed in 2017.

Although there is some improvement, the general communication with the project organisation is still suffering from repeated formal reference to the Local Enquiry. The CC made representations regarding the safety of the proposed temporary deviation of the (cut) Deeside Way and community councillors made a site visit with operational staff to ensure the resulting, changed, arrangement was clear and safe for all users.

Residents of Station Road West initiated a very successful petition for a dedicated foot bridge to lead the Deeside Way over the AWPR. In spite of a record number of supporters the request was rejected by the Scottish Ministers on formal grounds. Acknowledging the weight of the petition, Aberdeen City Council requested a site visit and public meeting by the Scottish Government Transport Minister, Humza Yousaf. This was initially declined but has now been re-scheduled for early 2017.

Representatives of CBMCC attended meetings of Station Road West residents, relevant meetings of the North Kincardine Community Council and formal information sessions of the AWPR organisation. It was agreed in principle to form a workgroup of affected community councils but this has not led to any direct activity.

In spite of it being rejected consistently by Transport Scotland, the Community Council will continue to press the case for construction of a short new section of the Deeside Way railway path alongside the AWPR which would allow users of the path to access the new Station Road bridge directly.

Bus Services – The newly introduced Hail-and-Ride bus service 95, winding tortuously through Lower Deeside to the Bridge of Dee shops, was proposed for discontinuation at the end of the year due to very low uptake. The Community Council made representations that the proposed replacement, a Dial-a-Bus service, should be a daily demand service, Monday to Friday, as in other areas of the city, with a guaranteed reasonable response rate.

Cults Learning Partnership – Lower Deeside Community Association – The Steering Group of the Learning Partnership met twice in the first half of 2016. In the June meeting Aberdeen City Community Planning and Education officers introduced the Community Learning and Development Plan 2015-2018 with much emphasis on deprived areas/groups. This was followed by a city-wide event in September introducing Associated School Group (ASG) Partnership Forums to potentially replace the Learning Partnerships. These Forums are expected to be formed during the first quarter of 2017. It is not known if Community Councils are expected to participate directly.

The Lower Deeside Community Association, charged with organising/promoting learning in our area has not been active now for several years. Attempts by CBMCC to revive the Association or to resolve the situation in other ways, although initially promising, have not been successful during the year.

Deer Management – CBMCC were advised during the year that a Deer Management Plan had been agreed in Committee without further public consultation. Disappointingly the Plan appears to make no specific reference to the deer situation around smaller

private gardens which is the more complex problem to manage. We have asked for an extension of the Plan to cover this matter in more detail as soon as possible.

Up to date information on the occurrence of Lyme's disease in the area, obtained from NHS, shows that the incidence of Lyme's disease in Aberdeen City and Grampian continues to be relatively stable, with no indication of a significant sustained increase and similarly, deer sightings in the area have also not shown an alarming trend. The community council will remain attentive to potential deer-related health problems - as should Aberdeen City Council and NHS Grampian.

Developers Contributions – As a follow-up to the presentation by Joanna Mackie (see above), the Community Council submitted a list of possible community projects that could be financed by funds due to expire within a year. To our knowledge none of these were considered legally acceptable by City officers.

Dunmail Car Park – The Community Council worked with our local City Councillors to persuade Aberdeen City Council officers not to impose parking fees for the use of the Dunmail car park in Cults.

Earlspark Crescent – The owner of the forest behind the houses on Earlspark Crescent wishes to do some necessary tree management and hence requested access to his land over an adjoining section of Aberdeen City Council park land. This would require the removal of rocks and shrubs which would be replaced and the park restored on completion of the work. As the access route could have amenity and safety issues for local residents, community councillors made site visits and met with the owner and ACC officials to discuss alternative approaches - these have been investigated. A meeting with residents was held on in December where the landowner and tree surgeon provided details of their plans. Council officers have agreed to grant a 'licence to occupy' to the landowner and his contractor for access across Council ground. The licence will contain a number of additional conditions in order to protect the Council and ensure full restoration of the ground. By end year new information regarding title deeds of an alternative route had reopened the discussion.

Health and Social Care Services – CBMCC representatives continued discussions with NHS officers during the year to get clarity about the future plans for the medical services in the area. This engagement was lifted to a different level and also somewhat diffused by the establishment of the new Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership (ACHSCP) in April merging the relevant NHS and City Council services.

Community Council representatives are members of the West Locality Leadership Group (LLG) of the ACHSCP, a stakeholder body created to provide bottom-up management of services in the area. Progress of the new organisation to get to grips with its task is agonisingly slow. After an initial kick-off event in August the LLG met twice without discussing any health or care issues. Our representatives will make serious attempts to help the new set up work efficiently to the benefit of local residents.

On a more local level, CBMCC representatives joined NHS/ACHSCP officers in a very useful information meeting with the Cults Medical Group (CMG). As a spin off we were able to give some realistic and helpful feed-back when CMG considered extended phone triage by receptionists later during the year. The CMG practice and office managers have also agreed to brief the community council on triage in the January 2017 meeting.

Lower Deeside Networking Event – Three community councillors participated in this event, organised by the Aberdeen Council for Voluntary Organisations. While it was useful

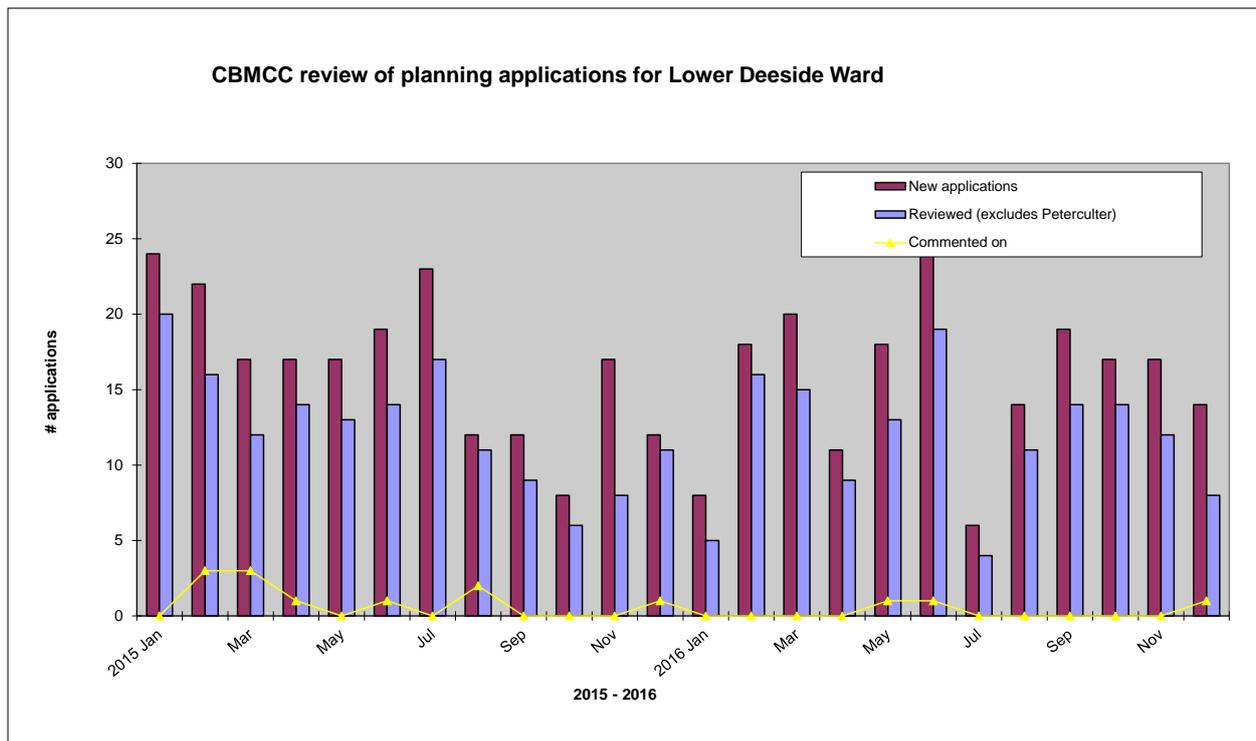
to talk to the various organisations present, opening the event to a wider public audience would have been more effective for the generation of more participants and volunteers.

Police Matters - The Community Council was informed about incidents and crime in the community by Community police officers reporting in most monthly meetings. City Wardens were represented in four meetings.

Local Planning Issues

Summary and Highlights

The number of Planning Applications in Cults, Bieldside and Milltimber was lower than in 2015 with 186 applications (200 in 2015) in Lower Deeside and 140 (151 in 2015) relating to Cults, Bieldside and Milltimber were reviewed. Letters of comment or objection were submitted on 3 applications (11 in 2015). About a quarter of the applications in CBM (33) related to building new houses; some were connected with the major developments taking place, see above, and others involved the demolition of an older, smaller house and the building of a new larger house or houses on the same plot or additional houses within the plot. The other main category for applications, around 40%, was for building extensions to existing houses.



Engagement with land owners and developers continues to improve as they come to the Community Council to share their ideas and get input on the type of development the community needs. The discussions have generally been fruitful with developers coming back with interesting proposals e.g. small homes for the elderly rather than large detached houses. We are also working to increase engagement with the community through our website and Facebook pages and the MBC News.

Local Development Plan (LDP) – The Scottish Reporters have now submitted their recommendations on the Local Development Plan (LDP). The bad news for our area is that the reporter has recommended the inclusion of three new development sites:

- Milltimber South for 60 homes and a small retail centre (the two fields used for grazing on south side of A93 NDR);
- 10 homes on the west side of Contlaw Rd (just north of Culterhouse Rd);
- 8 homes in Culterhouse Rd (next to current Churchill homes development).

Unfortunately, there is no ability to appeal. The LDP has been adopted by the City Council and we expect the report will be finalised and issued in January 2017.

Countesswells Development - The consortium partners have agreed the Section 75 legal agreement, which sets out their obligations for infrastructure funding and delivery. Subsequently the detailed planning application for the initial phase of the development (124 homes block C1/C2, 107 homes N10) was approved smartly to secure HMG Bonds of £30 million to support the development and construction has begun.

The consortium thinks it will take around 3 years for the first 700 homes to be built. A Primary school is due after 500 homes sold, which could be in 2019. The first access road will be to the Kingswells roundabout, due by the time 400 homes are sold. The road to Jessiefield junction will come after 1000 homes. The temporary health facility is expected after 500 homes are sold.

There were major road works on the Countesswells Road and the C128 Cults/Blacktop to Kingswells Road to install the utilities for the development. The roadworks caused significant disruption to local residents, which was as predicted in our comments to Planning and Roads on the development. The main work has been completed but there will continue to be activity requiring the use of single lane traffic under traffic light control. The Community Council has written to Aberdeen Roads Dept. with the aim of getting lessons learned about what should be done in the future to avoid the problems seen in 2016.

Friarsfield, Craighbank and Sunnyside Development – This is a development of up to 270 homes in three phases. CALA Phase 1 for 81 homes has been completed and construction for Phase 2, which is for 109 homes plus 12 affordable apartments, has begun. A link road to relieve traffic on Kirk Brae and Friarsfield Road will have to be provided after completion of 160 houses. Concerns were raised about the removal of some trees without permission; new trees will be planted by CALA.

The application for Phase 3 by Stewart Milne which was submitted and subsequently withdrawn in 2014, has not yet been re-submitted.

Inchgarth Road Development – a Planning Application Notice for a development of open land between the North Deeside Rd and Inchgarth Rd to the west of Pitfodels Station Rd. has been submitted. The proposed development would comprise a sports field, retirement homes and a link road between the North Deeside Rd and Inchgarth Rd. An alternative of just retirement homes and no sports field is being considered. The development will incorporate a link road between the North Deeside Road and Inchgarth Road which is seen as a key piece of transport infrastructure for Aberdeen. The detailed Planning Application is expected to be submitted in 1Q2017.

Oldfold Farm Development – the Oldfold development in Milltimber is for 550 homes by CALA. Work on Phase 1 for 61 homes is well under way and around 20 homes are now occupied. The temporary sales cabin on the open field on the South side of the NDR, was removed and the field restored as agreed (but see also the section on the Local Development Plan below).

South Avenue, Cults – The application from McCarthy & Stone to build 21 residential flats on the site of the property at 3 South Avenue was refused following objections from

the Community Council and other Cults residents. At year end a new proposal for 4 single bedroom flats on the site of 19 South Avenue was under review, as was a proposal for 4 single bedroom flats on the site of the house next to the public library in Cults.

Kingsford Stadium – Although just outside the CBMCC area the proposed stadium at Kingsford could seriously impact on local traffic. Community councillors attended public presentations on the preliminary plans and had one-to-one information meetings with the 'No Kingsford Stadium' group from Westhill and the Executive Vice Chair of Aberdeen FC. The Community Council responded in writing, expressing the wish to be included in a proposed transport working group. However, this has not materialized and a formal proposal has now been submitted for consultation.

City and Country Issues

The following, wider issues which would impact on the CBM community were also addressed during the year:

City Centre Masterplan – Representatives of the community council attended the delivery strategy workshop organised in the context of this plan and continue to take an interest in this topic through our involvement with the Community Council Forum and responding to consultations on draft plans. A Reference Group has been established to help provide input to proposals for City Centre Development. The group is chaired by Marie Boulton and has representatives from various city groups including the Civic Forum and the Community Council Forum. Progress continues on the first phase of projects being pursued over the next three years; these include the art gallery, music hall, Broad St. pedestrianisation and Union Terrace Gardens.

Consultations – The Community Council responded to a number of consultations initiated by the Scottish Government, Aberdeen City Council and Statutory bodies. These included Police Strategic Priorities, Police Powers to Search, Scottish Planning Regulations, Aberdeen City Active Travel, Aberdeen Cross City Transport, Aberdeen Station Gateway and Access from the South (Bridge of Dee) Plans.

Workshops and Events – Community councillors participated in a number of workshops organised in the city on the following subjects: Regional Licensing, Community Empowerment and Refugees Welcome and in the Union Terrace Gardens Stakeholder Engagement Event

Conclusion

The CBM Community Council has continued to benefit from the positive attitude of Community Councillors in the CBMCC meetings and their willingness to undertake community tasks as and when required. We thank our local councillors for their support on planning issues and other matters of concern to the community. The Community Council is very grateful for the support given by local businesses especially with regard to our Xmas related activities.

Aberdeen, February 2017