

GAVINTON, FOGO & POLWARTH COMMUNITY COUNCIL
AGM : Gavinton Village Hall : Monday 20th May 2013

Chairman's Report

CC Membership

There have been changes in your Community Council during the past year. Three new members were elected in October 2012: Jane Devine, 2 Maitland Row, Gavinton; Keith Dickinson, Kirk Burn House, Cothill; and Lorraine Tait, Guile Howe, Raecleughhead. Sadly, by January 2013, Jane had had to resign, as she moved to Edinburgh. I thank her for her contribution and wish her well in the future. She has been replaced by Jean Coleman, Treetops, Gavinton, who was co-opted to the CC in January 2013.

I and all present members welcome Keith, Lorraine and Jean to the CC. They have already made a valuable contribution to our meetings and I am sure will continue to do so. In terms of our constitution, a co-opted member may be granted full voting rights at their third meeting. It is our intention to do this for Jean Coleman. If she so wishes, she can stand for election to the CC at our next election, which will be in September 2014.

David Seed, a long-serving member, stood down in October. I would like to thank him for his input to our discussions. I am sure that he will continue to take a close interest in our activities in his role as developer of the proposed new housing at the western end of Gavinton.

I would like to thank all the CC members, which includes Margaret Bishop, Pete Gibbens, Janet O'Kane, Kerry Renton and Ellen Curran in addition to those mentioned above, for their continued support.

Meetings held

This year the CC has met seven times, in June, September, October, December, January, March and April. Our three councillors, Frances Renton (LD), Donald Moffat (SNP) and John Greenwell (C) have attended most of our meetings and made a useful contribution to our discussions. In addition, we have had frequent attendance by the Police, now represented by the new Community Beat Officer PC 11049 Suzanne Jacobs, who has submitted a report to the meeting, available for inspection.

We have been represented at meetings of the Berwickshire Community Councils Forum, the Scottish Borders Community Councils Network and, more recently, the new Berwickshire Area Forum, which has replaced the old Berwickshire Area Committee of the SBC. As all Berwickshire CCs can be active participants in the BAF, the need for the BCCF has fallen away.

Planning Issues

The number of planning applications upon which the CC has been called to comment has continued to be low. In 2009/10 we considered 22, up to 32 in 2010/11 and down to 15 in 2011/12. This year we have considered, in addition to the planning application for the development of 54 new houses at the western end of Gavinton, 18 applications. Twelve of these were for full planning permission, four of which also involved listed building consent, and two were outline. They included two wind turbines, two sets of solar panels, six alterations or extensions to existing houses and three new houses.

The big one, of course, was the proposed development at West Gavinton. I do not propose to get into detail on that one at this meeting as it has been the subject of wide discussion and comment already, in which your community council has played a prominent part throughout. Nonetheless, it is important to say that this development would be the biggest

thing to happen in our area since the community council was established, and for many years before that. We will therefore continue to monitor it very carefully and would encourage all residents who will be affected by it – and that means all of us – to take a close interest themselves.

Community Resilience Scheme

We have circulated all our constituents to determine the degree to which people can contribute to, or would benefit from, a community resilience scheme along the lines being proposed by SBC. It is clear that the council intend to use these schemes as their principal conduit for emergency services throughout the Borders. Keith Dickinson has taken on the role of setting this up for us and I now ask him to give us an update on progress.

No Cold Callers scheme

Discussions with the police resulted in our offer of this scheme to residents of the village of Gavinton only, as the police do not support the scheme in non-urban situations. The response to the circulation of the village was 40% in favour and 60% not interested or against. On the basis of this, the police decided not to proceed, so the scheme will not be brought into operation.

Blackhill Windfarm Community Fund

We continue to be represented on the board of the fund by Donald Ritchie, who has been putting effort into strengthening the administrative systems. In the last year £9,000 was disbursed to 6 projects. The fund had £104,000 in hand at the end of the year.

Amenity

This spring is the last time that Drew Gibb has produced bedding plants for Gavinton's road-end flowerbeds. I would like to record a very warm vote of thanks to Drew for having maintained these beds and brightened our lives for many years. We now need a volunteer willing to take over responsibility for these. In addition to the three raised beds, we maintain a number of tubs of summer flowers plus a flower bed on the green, one beside the phone box on Main Street, and one outside the church gates. In addition, there is a planted area at the corner in the Glebe. The CC has the funds necessary to support these amenity areas out of its grant from the SBC, but relies on volunteers to do the work. We are grateful to all who contribute.

The CC has arranged for two trees to be planted to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee this year, one in Gavinton and one in Polwarth, to add to the one in Fogo planted last year. One of the row of oak trees at the eastern end of the village, planted by the CC about 25 years ago, was felled during the year to accommodate the installation of the new electricity substation.

The footpath to the Fogo footbridge has not yet been repaired. Discussions are ongoing as to how this will be funded. It is hoped to get the work completed during the current year.

Villeneuve-au-Chemin

During the year, contact has been established with the village of Villeneuve-au-Chemin in the main champagne-producing area of France to the southeast of Paris. It is a village of 200 people in a rich agricultural landscape, whose mayor is M Gilles de Cockborne, a descendant of the Cockburns of Langton (his family has been in the village since 1578). Their municipal council (equivalent of our CC) has agreed to develop a relationship with Gavinton. We are looking forward to all sorts of interesting exchanges over the years ahead.

Jim Clark Rally

And finally, something that is not strictly AGM business, but of public interest. This year the rally will be running over the first weekend of June. The Langton water splash will be in use on Saturday 1st June and Sunday 2nd June. The road will be closed from 11am to 4pm on both days, from west of Gavinton right along to Nisbet Rhodes. Passes will be available to residents so that they can drive in through the western barrier to access the village. Please check village notice boards for details.

John Marjoribanks

Chairman

Gavinton, Fogo & Polwarth CC

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