

GAVINTON, FOGO & POLWARTH COMMUNITY COUNCIL  
AGM : Gavinton Village Hall : 7 pm Monday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2014

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

CC Membership

There have been changes in your Community Council during the past year. Our Secretary, Janet O'Kane resigned from both the CC and the post of Secretary in October 2013 after seven years' service as Secretary. Janet has not yet been replaced and her absence makes us realise how much she contributed to the CC during her time in office.

A new member, Tim Jackson, Old Schoolhouse, Polwarth, joined us in March 2014. Tim was co-opted under Section 4.2.a of our constitution, which allows us to co-opt people with particular skills valuable to the CC. Tim will be handling planning matters. Under our present constitution, Tim cannot be an area member as he resides in Polwarth, for which there is one elected member, currently Keith Dickinson. We have proposed to SBC that the sub-areas within our CC area be abolished so that all CC members represent the whole CC area.

Jean Coleman, who was co-opted to the CC in January 2013, remains a co-opted member for Gavinton until the next elections, scheduled for September 2014.

I thank all the CC members, Margaret Bishop, Jean Coleman, Ellen Curran, Keith Dickinson, Pete Gibbens, Tim Jackson, Kerry Renton and Lorraine Tait, for their continued support.

Meetings held

This year the CC has met six times, in September, October, November, 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. Minutes of all these meetings have been posted on our website and made available to the press.

Planning Issues

The number of planning applications upon which the CC has been called to comment was very low. In 2009/10 we considered 22, 32 in 2010/11, to 15 in 2011/12 and 18 in 2012/13. This year we have considered only 7 applications, 3 of which also involved Listed Building Consent. All of these were for single dwelling reconstruction, extension or modification.

The big one in the background, of course, is the proposed development of 54 houses at West Gavinton. Nothing has happened on this at all during the year. We have been assured that it will go out to public consultation again before a decision is taken. We will continue to monitor it closely.

We also noted one scoping application for a new wind-farm on Langtonlees farm. Another proposed wind-farm immediately adjacent at Inchmoor lies in Gordon & Westruther CC area. The two together involve 33 turbines of 162 metres to tip of blade (the same height as a 40 storey block of flats). They would make an enormous impact on the area, so we are keeping a close watch on them.

I am very grateful to Tim Jackson for taking over from me responsibility for planning matters on the CC.

Community Resilience Scheme

Keith Dickinson has done a great job in getting this off the ground. We now have a plan in place, stores and equipment have been delivered and are now held at various locations through out the CC area. We are still looking for a co-ordinator for Gavinton village, as the person who had taken on the role has moved out of the area.

Blackhill Windfarm Community Fund

We continue to be represented on the board of the fund by Donald Ritchie, who continues to work to strengthen the administrative systems and efficiency. There has been much improvement during the year.

## Amenity

After a gap of several years, Gavinton is again going to enter the Scotland's Floral Gateway competition in the Wee Village category. The village was letterboxed in January, which resulted in a group of people coming together to undertake the work of improving the visual amenity of the village under the able chairmanship of Bridget Darling. New tubs have been installed on the Green and at the entrance to the Glebe, paid for by SBC under the small local grant scheme. The CC has allocated £200 for the purchase of plants for these tubs and other public places in the village. We hope that the whole community will get behind this scheme and contribute to our village becoming as attractive as it can be.

In conjunction with Keep Scotland Beautiful and their Clean Up Scotland campaign, the CC is organising a Litter Pick this coming Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> May, when we hope that a lot of residents will take part.

## Villeneuve-au-Chemin

In September Monsieur Gilles de Cockborne, mayor of Villeneuve-au-Chemin, our unofficial twin village in the main champagne-producing area of France to the southeast of Paris, and his son Thibaut visited us to take part in the commemorative events surrounding the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Flodden. The mayor is a descendant of the Cockburns of Langton (his family has been in Villeneuve since 1578) and he was here representing both his village and the Cockburns, who lost both the laird and his heir at Flodden. The CC and Gavinton Village Hall Committee jointly held a reception in Gavinton village hall, inviting all Cockburns in the area to join us. The whole visit was a great success and we hope to develop the links further over the coming year.

## Website

We had nearly 65,000 hits this year, but most were brief search engine visits. There were 5,645 sessions longer than five minutes, up 41% on last year. The most popular page continued to be the Richard Hillary page with 2,003 visits though this was well down on last year's 3,644. This was followed by the pages for Langton church, the village hall and the community council. On Google the site is the second result (after Wikipedia) for the search term 'Gavinton' in both regular search and 'Images'.

We want everyone in the community to make use of the website, both by putting content on it and using it as a source of information. We hope that new activities like the Film Club will result in a big increase in usage. I thank our Webmaster, John Robertson, for the quick and effective way he gets new material onto the site.

## Jim Clark Rally

And finally, something that is not strictly AGM business, but of public interest. This year the Jim Clark Rally will be running over the last weekend of May. We are affected in three areas.

In the north, the Langton water splash will be in use on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May and Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June. The road will be closed on Saturday from 8.50 am to 1.50 pm and 4.05 pm to 9.05 pm and on Sunday from 10.15 am to 3.15 pm, 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.

In the centre, the road from Polwarth to Bogend, via Marchmont Station, Sisterpath and Fogo village, will be closed on the evening of Friday 30<sup>th</sup> May from 8.50 pm to 1.05 am. This affects the routes on both sides of the Blackadder from Sisterpath to Fogo

In the south, all the side roads south of the B 6460 between Charterhall and Mount Pleasant will be closed on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May from 7.50 am to 12.50 pm and again from 3 pm to 7.50 pm.

John Marjoribanks  
Chairman  
Gavinton, Fogo & Polwarth CC  
19<sup>th</sup> May 2014