

Milnathort Community Council

Minute of the Milnathort Community Council (MCC) Meeting held on Thursday 10th September 2015, in Orwell Parish Church Hall

1. **Welcome:** CClr Hamilton, Chair, welcomed CClrs Cottingham, Halford, Milne-Home, Pettinger, Smith and Thomson. Also in attendance were Perth & Kinross Council (PKC) Clr Cuthbert and 11 members of the public.
2. **Apologies:** Apologies were received from CClr Bennet, from PKC Clrs Barnacle, Robertson and Giacomazzi and from the Police.
3. **Police matters:** The Chair read out brief extracts from the Police report. There have been several instances of youths causing general annoyance in the village. Recent crimes include theft of a BMX bicycle in Bridgefauld Road, break-ins to sheds and garages, and other thefts. The Police also reminded people about using mobile phones whilst driving.
4. **Minutes of last meeting and matters arising:** The Community Council approved the minutes of the meeting on Thursday August 13th 2015. CClr Smith proposed, and CClr Halford seconded approval. Matters arising are discussed in the agenda items below.
5. **Planning applications:** The MCC discussed the following planning application, but made no comment:

15/01375/FLL: Erection of an agricultural building at land 300 metres south east of Ledlanet Garden Cottage for Mr Ken Brown.

6. **Planning applications determined:** Nil
7. **Post Office relocation/closure:** The Chair asked David Hall, Sub Postmaster, Milnathort to provide the background to changes in arrangements for the Milnathort post office:

In 1980 there were over 20,000 post offices, but this had reduced over the period to a figure of about 11,500 today. The Post Office (PO) was losing money; the Government's subsidy, to keep the service running, was currently £200 million per annum. The subsidy would reduce year on year to be about £70 million in 2018. The PO has asked postmasters to modernize their business: to run an open plan office with one counter, to extend opening hours, and to remain open on weekends. He indicated that about half of post offices had agreed to modernize, with the remainder not wishing to change their way of business.

David Hall advised that his current salary consisted of a fixed sum (about 1/3 of total) plus an element based on PO business conducted in the period. The PO would not offer a fixed salary/similar terms to new businesses. He saw three options for his business:

- Convert to new ways of working;
- Try to continue as now - maintaining his shop as well; or
- Pass on the PO business.

He advised that his preferred option, influenced by the age of his employees and himself, was to pass on the business, whilst attempting to sell/let the 'shop' element to a third party. He stressed that it was the PO, not himself, who had approached Giacomazzi's store; negotiations had been ongoing since January 2015. The outcome was that Giacomazzi's was open currently for the hours the PO required and had capacity; therefore transfer of the PO business to Giacomazzi's presented a good opportunity for the PO to maintain a branch in Milnathort. Over 95% of current services would be

transferred. There would be a six-week consultation with members of the public running from 26 August to 7 October 2015.

Joanna MD of Giacomazzi's then explained how the proposed transfer of the Milnathort sub branch to her store came about. The PO had conducted several studies over the period since January 2015. The PO's preference would be to locate the PO till between two existing tills on the main counter – i.e. to incorporate a fourth till. The PO intended to train all of the current shop's staff, but no extra staff would be engaged to meet the additional business. She advised that it would be impractical to run two separate queues for the different businesses, but the longer post office opening hours should go some way towards alleviating peak demand, however it would be prudent to adjust the conduct of business to match actual demand. She also advised that provision of other services, such as dry cleaning, was still to be resolved.

Explanatory leaflets/Consultation forms are available in the post office. The PO may be contacted:

- On line via the website: postofficeviews.co.uk
- By email: comments@postoffice.co.uk
- By telephone: 03457 22 33 44 or text phone 03457 22 33 55
- By post to: 'FREEPOST Your Comments' – note this is the full address - no further details are required.

- 8. Boundary Commission Public Consultation:** The Chair introduced this item by explaining the Boundary Commission's (BC) proposal to relocate part of the current Kinross-shire Ward 8 to Ward 9 – Almond and Earn, and thereby to reduce the number of Clrs representing Ward 8 from four to three. CClr Milne-Home advised that he had attended a joint Kinross-shire CCs meeting at which all CCs had expressed dismay at the proposed changes, which would split Kinross-shire; a leaflet had been produced explaining the background, and showing how residents may contact the BC to express their views.

Clr Cuthbert explained that the Scottish Government had changed the emphasis on deciding local authority boundaries in order to provide greater representation per person in areas of high deprivation; in effect city areas - e.g. Glasgow would have higher representation at the expense of rural areas such as Kinross-shire. The size of the area had no influence, with the exception of Highland, which had special circumstances. The MCC area of responsibility would not change, but if the BC's proposals were to be adopted, PKC Clrs from two separate wards would be required to attend MCC meetings in order to fully understand MCC's issues.

The Chair asked residents to consider the proposed changes in light of the following:

- Proposed changes would reduce our representation within PKC;
- The BC's guidelines indicate a respect for community identity, but the changes would remove several hamlets, as well as Glenfarg, from our community;
- PKC supports the view held by many, who do not wish to lose the Kinross-shire identity;
- Changes would leave Ward 8 with the highest ratio of voters to Clrs, thus reducing our 'voice' within PKC and elsewhere;
- The new boundary would be based on projections from 2012 rather than actual data.

Residents opposed to changes could:

- Seek further information from the BC or Clrs;
- Lobby the BC;
- Spread the word to others not aware of the consequences of these proposals;
- Sign a petition – local copy in Milnathort PO

The BC may be contacted at:

- Online: <https://www.consultation.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk/node/31>
- By email: lgbcs@scottishboundaries.gov.uk
- By telephone: 0131 538 7510, or fax 0131 538 7511
- By post: Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5HD

The Consultation ends on 22nd October 2015

- 9. The Refugee Crisis:** The Chair advised that he had received a letter from a member of the public proposing that Kinross be a hub for resettling refugees, using premises such as the old High School and former Medical Centre. Clr Cuthbert advised that PKC already had plans for the Local Authority's action on resettlement and would implement it when the UK Government begins the process, but the proposal to use former premises listed above was not practicable.
- 10. Community Council Elections:** The Chair advised that five of the seven CCLrs would be standing down in October 2015; new blood would be helpful and he strongly urged residents to consider offering their services to the community by serving on the CC. Clr Cuthbert stressed the importance of MCC's input to Clrs business, and the high respect in which Clrs accorded CCs views. Nomination forms are available at Milnathort PO or from CCLrs.
- 11. New Matters and Correspondence:** The Chair drew attention to a letter from a member of the public seeking reassurance that PKC would be implementing the promised one-way eastbound traffic flow in Victoria Avenue, before Scottish Water commenced work in New Road. After a short discussion supporting the urgent implementation of one-way flow, Clr Cuthbert agreed to raise the issue within PKC. A member of the public also raised an ongoing concern about inappropriate and illegal parking in Victoria Avenue; the Chair agreed to raise the issue with the Police at the next meeting.
- 12. Comments/Questions from the floor:** No further comments
- 13. P&K Councillors' Comments:** Clr Cuthbert advised that roadworks in the centre of Kinross should be complete by 21st September, and that a street party would be held between 1 pm and 5 pm on Saturday 3rd October 2015, supported by PKC. The event would include a performance by the Red Hot Chilli Pipers and others; it would show that once again local traders were fully open for business.
- 14. AOCB – DONM: Thursday 8th October 2015 in Orwell Church Hall, commencing at 7.30 pm**