

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 11th January 2012
at Tarland Primary School.**

PRESENT: Cllr Rosemary Bruce, Councillor Marcus Humphrey, Constable Steven Lafferty (Grampian Police), Simon Power (MacRobert Trust) Simon Welfare (Chairman), Anke Addy, Sue Erskine, Archie Leith, Nigel Healey and 6 members of the public.

APOLOGIES: Councillor Peter Argyle, Evelyn Smith

1. Tarland Report

1.1 Village Farm Development: Simon Power presented a plan of the revised Village Farm proposal and answered questions from the CCC and the members of the public. Points raised included the following:

- The mix of house types was thought to be good
- The new access road was an improvement but there were still concerns about congestion on Melgum Road. There was disappointment that access other than that from Melgum Road hadn't been pursued.
- Given that houses were likely to have more than one car, provision of parking within the development was thought to be inadequate.
- Not much play area for children within the development. The plan to provide more play equipment to the park was not thought to be a satisfactory alternative.
- Insufficient affordable houses. It was explained that the 25% requirement (10 houses) had been met by building 9 houses within the development and by refurbishing a bothy off site. In addition, the MacRobert Trust had been unsuccessful in its application for an affordable housing grant.
- An alternative to the shared biomass heating plant might be installed such as a central gas reservoir and solar water heating panels on roofs.
- The one bedroom flats were required by Aberdeenshire Council.

The Community Council will be responding to the planning application as a statutory consultee (see Section 9)

1.2 Traffic Calming: Concern was raised about the fading condition of road markings around Tarland. Subsequent to the meeting, it was explained that the increased use of road grit in the 09/10 and 10/11 winters had caused accelerated wear on the markings. Road marking must be carried out in dry, salt free conditions so renewal isn't practicable before late March.

1.3 Footpath to the Knappieround Car Park: Nothing new.

1.4 Diamond Jubilee: The sub-committee meeting was postponed due to the extreme weather but will be re-convened shortly.

1.5 Christmas Tree Lights: Members of the community have expressed a preference for white Christmas tree lights over the blue ones obtained at very short notice. A set of white lights will be obtained for Christmas 2012 and may be used in conjunction with the blue lights.

1.6 Road Flooding Adjacent to Cromar Cottages: The road adjacent to Cromar Cottages flooded badly during recent wet weather owing to a restriction in the drain outflow in Balmuir Wood. Repair work should be included in the 2012/2013 Road Maintenance Programme.

1.7 Mobile Library: Following reports that the Mobile Library is to reduce its visit frequency, Councillor Bruce will visit Tarland on its next scheduled visit.

1.8 Remembrance Day Ceremony: Last November's Tarland Remembrance Day ceremony was marred by cars parked adjacent to the War Memorial. Arrangements will be made to keep the area clear this year.

1.9 Excessive Signage in Tarland: The approaches to Tarland Square have become blighted with both over-large and redundant direction signs. The Principal Roads Engineer has agreed to liaise with a view to reducing their number.

2. Logie Coldstone Report:

2.1 Logie Coldstone Hall: Use of the Hall is restricted by damage to the roof caused during the recent strong winds. The damage is unlikely to be repaired in time for it to act as a Polling Place for the local election and the School will have to be used.

2.2 Logie Coldstone School: The School Head position is to be re-advertised due a lack of suitable applicants to the first advertisement.

2.3 War Memorial Plant Containers: The dimensions of the required replacement containers have been determined.

3. Coull Report:

3.1 Parking at the Tarland-Aboyne path: A 'Passing Place' sign will be requested and the possibility of a dedicated parking area will be investigated.

4. Ordie Report: Nothing to report.

5. Tarland Welfare Trust/MacRobert Memorial Hall:

5.1 MacRobert Memorial Hall Renovation: Rapid progress is being made but the Tarland Welfare Trust has not been able to guarantee that it will be ready in time to act as a Polling Place for the local election, which will now have to take place in the School.

6. Tarland Development Group:

6.1 Newsletter: Two hundred copies of the newsletter, 'The Howe', were delivered to Tarland homes and many more distributed by email.

6.2 Youth Project: The Tarland Park Project Group (a sub-committee of the TDG) has met to discuss plans for the park. There will be a further consultation with the young people of the community on March 5th at which play equipment suppliers will be present.

7. Cairngorm National Park Authority. Nothing new to report.

8. Police Report

8.1 Crime in Cromar: Crime levels in the area remain low but there was a housebreaking in Tarland in December.

8.2 Aboyne Road/Coull Road Junction: It was noted that there had been another traffic accident adjacent to the Coull Road junction on the Aboyne Road. Constable Lafferty reported that there had been four collisions in the area since April 2010 but none of them were thought to be related to the hazards caused by the junction.

The Principal Roads Engineer had agreed that visibility at the junction is poor but observed that the obstructions lie within privately owned land.. The Road Service has no power to instruct the land owner to cut back the vegetation or set back the boundary and there is no budget for land acquisition or boundary realignment. However, warning signs will be erected north and south of the junction.

9. Planning Applications and Building Warrants

Tarland

07.11.11	Elderslie 8 Melgum Road Tarland AB34 4ZL	Planning application to replace existing garage with storage shed.(Retrospective)
05.12.11	Village Farm Tarland Aboyne AB34 4ZL	Planning application for a residential development of 40 dwelling houses and associated infrastructure
21.12.11	14 The Square Tarland AB34 4YL	Building warrant for alterations and extension.

Logie Coldstone

24.11.11	Newkirk Croft Logie Coldstone AB34 5PQ	Planning application for alterations and extension to dwelling house
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In respect of the Village Farm planning application, the Community Council submitted the following letter to Aberdeenshire Council:

“ The proposed development of 40 houses is by far the largest of its kind in Tarland’s history, and we are glad that the Community Council has been made an official Consultee, so that the views of the people who live in the village can be taken into account. Since the period for representations from the public ran over the long Christmas and New Year holidays, and since the developers failed to tell the community that they had submitted the application, we are grateful, too, that we

have been allowed extra time to consult the people whose lives and environment will be affected if the proposed development were to go ahead. In consequence, this letter contains both a summary of the opinions expressed by residents at a Community Council meeting this week, and also the Community Council's response as a Consultee.

1) The members of the public welcomed the prospect of new houses. There was, however, concern about the developers' wish to build 40 dwellings on a site designated for 24 in the current and future Local Plans. Some wondered whether Tarland could absorb so many at a time when there are around a dozen houses already for sale in the village. The proposal to provide no garages was criticised, the provision of parking spaces was thought to be inadequate, and there were worries about overcrowding and overdevelopment within the site.

The strongest objections were about the siting of the proposed access road into and out of the housing estate. Melgum Road, it was argued, is already too narrow and too cluttered with parked cars to allow any more traffic to flow safely, especially at 'rush hour' times, when up to 80 cars might be trying to leave or enter the development. Users of the narrow road into the village from Migvie and the Davochs feared that the junction would create new dangers where 'near-misses' were already common. There was concern, too, about the risks of heavier traffic negotiating the sharp bends at both ends of School Road. In the same vein, it was thought that construction vehicles would exacerbate these problems. An alternative route leading into and out of Duncan Road was thought to be safer and more likely effectively to integrate the housing estate with the village. Speakers believed that space to create this route had been set aside in the past, and that it could, and should, still be used instead of the one proposed.

2) The Community Council also welcomes the prospect of new houses, and members like the proposed mixture of house-types. We also acknowledge that the MacRobert Trust has made considerable efforts to create a development that is well-designed and aimed at fulfilling the greener aspirations of the modern world. That said, we have serious concerns about key aspects of this application:

a) Open space appears to have been sacrificed in the interests of constructing as many houses as possible on the site. The offer of providing extra equipment for the village play park some distance away will not compensate for a lack of areas in which neighbours can pass the time of day and children can play within sight of their homes. Neither of these groups is likely to be welcome in the proposed allotments. In any case, a separate project to raise more-than-adequate funds to improve the play park is nearing completion. Open spaces are much-valued in country villages and they make an important contribution to their sustainability.

b) We share the views about the road access to the development expressed by the members of the public above. We are disappointed that alternative routes do not seem to have been investigated, and, in particular, that the potentially far safer option of a junction with Duncan Road does not seem to have been seriously considered.

c) We are very disappointed that the developers are proposing to build only 9 affordable houses. We had hoped for more. A Housing Needs Survey undertaken by the Rural Housing Service in 2008 concluded that 'there is significant housing need within Tarland. It is not only people in housing need that recognize the lack of affordable housing options in Tarland. 95% of the respondents [to the survey] indicate that there is a need for low-cost housing.' It went on: 'Tarland has difficulty holding on to its young population. This may be due to lack of employment opportunities or further education, but may also be due to lack of suitable housing leading to people in this age-bracket having to move to a more suitable area. Many villagers felt that young people have little or no hope of obtaining affordable housing.' The survey was commissioned by the MacRobert Trust and has been used by them in their presentations to justify the increase in

the numbers of dwellings they want to build at Village Farm. Yet the allocation of 9 affordable houses does not even reach the benchmark of 25% set by the Scottish government. In our view, the Trust's claim that the provision of a single affordable home elsewhere in the village in the past few years is enough to satisfy the minimum requirement does not absolve it from its responsibilities as the owner of most of the land in and around Tarland. We believe that the argument that the cost of making the development as green as possible prevents the construction of more affordable houses is misguided and unhelpful. The true test of a sustainable development, in our opinion, is whether it provides enough opportunities for young people to stay in the community that has nurtured them and to contribute to its future. The current proposal for affordable housing does not go far enough for it to pass that test.

For these reasons, Cromar Community Council, while welcoming the proposal to build new houses in the village, is unable to support this application in its present form"

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 22nd, 7pm at Logie Coldstone School