

Holmehill Community Buyout

Chairman's Report 2015/6

This is the third report I will have presented as your Chairman. It has been another successful year in that we have managed to protect Holmehill from built development, but otherwise the property continues to gradually deteriorate with further wind damage to trees.

In the face of an excellent public response, Stirling Council was minded to refuse Allan Water Developments' (AWD) planning application for a modern mansion made in 2015. AWD withdrew their application – this entitled them to a fee-free reapplication.

This duly followed in early 2016 for broadly the same mansion, but attempting to make it look like the old house. It was accompanied by a parallel application for offices again in a pastiche of the old house.

Both applications attracted record numbers of objections and were comprehensively rejected in June 2016. The reasons for rejection clearly state that the fact that there was an old house on the site once but this does not give rights to build a new one. It very clearly rejects the "brownfield land" argument and sets out the reasons why that is the case.

We await a possible appeal, (only a few days to go now) as these latest rejections will make it difficult to secure a future permission to build on Holmehill.

I wish to particularly note our thanks to our elected councillors, the Community Council and others bodies for their ongoing support.

Fund raising and public awareness activities have continued, with another very successful Spooky Fun Halloween afternoon, attendance at the Girl Guides' Christmas Fair and another lovely sunny day at the Fling. We also had a successful litter pick, with more people attending than bags of rubbish picked up – a most satisfactory outcome. At all these events demonstrated evidence of strong community interest, for which we are very grateful.

Your chairman attended a workshop session of the Scottish Parliament's Planning Review Panel in his capacity as a Community Councillor where our experiences were clearly similar to those of many other communities. There is likely to be a new Planning Bill and we will need to be vigilant in ensuring our voice is heard. I have been invited (as a Dunblane Community Councillor, to participate in a Scottish Government Working Group as part of the development of new Planning legislation following the Planning Review.) It is likely that the Local Development Plan will become a lot more critical with LDP zoning effectively becoming "Planning in Principle". We will need to ensure we continue to interact with the Local Plan process as this will become even more critical in the future. It is also possible that community input into the Local Plan will become stronger

Forth Housing Association has started building their eight unit development on the Bogside site. These should be available for occupation in February 2017 with the tenants being people from or associated with Dunblane.

My thanks go to the all of the members who form the nucleus of the Holmehill Group, especially Steve as Treasurer, Chris for the ongoing records of wildlife and birds on the hill and Richard in maintaining the website. Without everyone we would not have been able to secure the 125+ objections to the recent planning applications.

I would particularly wish to place on record my thanks to Libby Hughes for the support that she has given as secretary – certainly keeping me on the straight and narrow. I am sure that Sue Harley will be a worthy successor and I am grateful to Sue for stepping into the role.

I must add thanks to all those who have come to our support when it is most needed, without them we may not have been able to secure the successes we have secured.

David Prescott - Chair of Holmehill Community Buyout - 31 August 2016