

Holmehill Community Buyout

Chairman's Report 2016/7

This is my fourth report as Chair of Holmehill Community Buyout. The past year has been similar to previous years; we have managed to protect Holmehill from built development, but the general environment remains at risk of further damage, especially from high winds.

In last year's report I noted that Stirling Council had rejected Allanwater Development's (AWD) two planning applications. This was not the end of the saga as AWD appealed these delegated decisions. This appeal resulted in the original applications and the planning officer's actions being considered by Stirling Council's Local Review Body (LRB), as the original decision was made by officers.

There was an initial period of evidence submission, limited to people who had previously submitted objections. The process, which was extremely well run by Stirling Council staff, culminated in the LRB making an accompanied site visit on 2nd March, followed immediately by the decision meeting. In presenting their decision to reject the appeal, members of the LRB noted that planning decisions have to reflect the policies currently in force. This reinforced two key points: firstly that although a mansion was demolished on the site 37 years ago, it would be wrong to build another today; and secondly that the planning agreement signed in 1987 is no longer relevant. It was an excellent outcome.

In parallel, and at this point unknown to us, AWD had served a "Purchase Notice" on Stirling Council requiring them to buy the whole of the hill for £717,591.74 – the purchase cost of £600,000 and the £117,591.74 that they had subsequently spent on the site. Stirling Council rejected this notice. AWD appealed to Scottish Ministers, so it became public and we were able to participate as an "interested party". Our statement of case was submitted – which all related to the possibility of the Reporter granting the planning permissions, the refusal of which had led to this Purchase Notice. A Pre-meeting was arranged for Tuesday 25th April, but AWD withdrew their appeal on Friday 21st April, citing amongst other reasons, our wish to participate. But they indicated that they would be re-submitting a new Purchase Notice for the smaller area that was the subject of the rejected applications. To date nothing more has been heard.

The Forth Housing Association development at Bogside has been completed and is fully occupied with Dunblane residents, who all seem to be very pleased with their new homes.

Thanks to Alison Brown for stepping forward as organiser, we held another excellent Spooky Fun Halloween afternoon. We also attended the Girl Guides' Christmas Fair and a very successful, if somewhat showery, day at the Fling where a number of new members joined.

I would like to specifically thank the ongoing support of past and present elected members of Stirling Council and Dunblane Community Council for their ongoing support.

I also wish to place on record my appreciation of the support and effort from the core Board and other members who keep us going and all our supporters, without whom we would not be able to ensure that Holmehill remains protected for the future.

David Prescott Chair, Holmehill Community Buyout – 3 September 2017