

**Kingsbarns Community Council**  
**Minutes of meeting held at Kingsbarns Memorial Hall,**  
**Monday, 2 March 2015 at 7 p.m.**

In attendance: KCC members: Jean Bell, Eileen Brown (Treasurer), Dr. Martin Dibbs (Secretary), Margaret Harkins, Dr. Huw Lloyd-Richards (Chair), Shona McIntosh, Councillors John Docherty, Donald Macgregor and Elizabeth Riches; P.C. Gillian Tetlow (Community Police Officer); 28 members of the public.

Representing Scottish Power: Graeme Stewart, Craig Graham and Joanna Gillespie.  
Representing Fife Council Housing Department: John Mills, *Interim Head of Housing* and David Robertson, *Housing Team Manager (Affordable Housing)*.

The meeting opened at 7 p.m.

### **1 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from KCC member Calla Cobb.

### **2 Presentation by Scottish Power**

Scottish Power had been invited to the meeting to explain the circumstances and the affects on the residents of the power cuts in the village in December 2015.

Craig Graham, Scottish Power's District Manager (Central Fife), gave an overview of the electricity supply system in the area. He then turned to the planned disruption to the electricity supply to the village on 9 December 2015 from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. in order to connect a new sub-station in Station Road. The work had been completed by 2:45 p.m. but almost immediately power was lost again due to a cable fault. As a consequence, many residents, including the elderly and vulnerable, were left without any means of heating, lighting and cooking for a further 22 hours on an extremely cold day and night in the middle of winter. Following the intervention of Chair, compensation to Kingsbarns residents had been increased from £30 to £110. However, what had exacerbated the situation was an incorrect phone number on the notification letter advising the planned power cut, a series of inaccurate estimated times for the restoration of power to the village and an unhelpful and unsympathetic response from SP's customer services to residents' phone enquiries.

Mr. Graham apologised to the meeting for the inconvenience the power cut had caused Kingsbarns residents and stated that, given the same circumstances, the situation would have been managed in a completely different way. Asked why a generator capable of meeting the power demand of the village was not available from the outset, Mr. Graham replied that it was thought unnecessary given the expected level of disruption to the power supply. It was also questioned why there was a planned disruption in the middle of winter which would affect the elderly and vulnerable. Mr. Graham could not say whether Fife Council's Emergency Officer had been contacted once the extent of the problem was known. He explained that SP had spent £447,000 on refurbishment on the main power line over the past year but there was still more work to be done on the spur line affecting Kingsbarns. Asked whether SP could be confident that the present electrical infrastructure could support

the proposed phase 2 of the housing development Mr. Graham stated that the substation was not operated by SP but by an independent operator who would have to be approached on this point. Chair thanked Mr. Graham and his team for their contribution and honesty and hoped that the new system would be fit for purpose.

### **3 Presentation by John Mills, *Interim Head of Housing, Fife Council.***

Mr. Mills, together with David Roberson *Team Manager (Affordable Housing)*, attended the meeting. This was facilitated by Cllr. Riches at the request of the Community Council in order to explain the reasons why Fife Council Housing Department allowed the shared equity housing on the Village Green development to be sold by Ogilvie Homes on the open market at the full price and also to set out their nomination policy in relation to the allocation of the houses for rent on this development.

It was explained that the Cambo Estate had been awarded a grant from the public purse of £667,000 under the Rural Homes for Rent scheme in order to build 10 homes for rent. At the time planning permission was granted, 12 affordable homes in total were to be built, 10 under the Rural Homes for Rent (RHfR) Scheme and 2 further ones, at that point, also for rent which would be built privately and owned by Cambo Estate. At some stage after, responsibility for these two homes passed to Ogilvie Homes and they were redesignated as shared-equity homes with assistance from the government's Help to Buy Scheme. In late 2014, the Housing Department claimed that they had been unable to find buyers for these houses and rather than acquiring them themselves for £130,683 each, had instead agreed that they could be sold at their full price (£196,000) on the open market. Shortly afterwards Ogilvie Homes had found buyers for them. Councillors were only informed of this decision days before the houses were sold off and were therefore too late to intervene. Fife Council had bought houses on developments in other parts of Fife and with hindsight it was admitted that these two houses could also have been bought as rental properties for those on the housing register. There was no adequate answer given as to why this was not done in this particular case.

Chair then invited councillors to raise matters with Messrs Mills and Robertson before questions from the floor. This part of the meeting was often noisy and provoked a very angry response from the floor. The general feeling was that the Council had lost an opportunity to acquire additional public housing for those in need and this had contravened one of the Reporter's condition for granting planning permission. Subsequently, Fife Council's decision had allowed Ogilvie Homes to benefit financially at the expense of the taxpayer.

In regard to allocation policy, it was pointed out that under the terms of the RHfD grant from the Scottish government, 50 per cent of nominations had to come from the local authority. Following a meeting between Allan Russell of the Housing Department and KCC in November 2014, feedback regarding housing allocation for this development was promised but has never materialised. Mr. Mills said that he would follow this up. Mr. Mills went on to say that the current position regarding allocation was that Fife Council had managed just two successful lets with one possible while the remaining seven had been filled by Cambo Estate.

Finally, it was agreed that Cllr Docherty would contact the Housing Minister regarding this matter; Audit Scotland would also be contacted regarding this matter; Mr. Mills agreed to keep the councillors informed regarding the final tenancy allocations on the development.

#### **4 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The minutes were proposed by Shona McIntosh and seconded by Jean Bell.

#### **5 Matters Arising**

##### **5.1 Flooding**

It was noted that Fife Council had no plans to take the tenant farmer to court over floodwater escaping from his field at Barnslaw and flowing across the Main Street. In this connection, David Brown of Fife Council's Transportation Department had arranged for a quantity of recycled surface dressing to be offloaded at the point where flooding occurs, a gap in the field boundary used by the farmer as an entrance and exit from the field for agricultural machinery.

##### **5.2 Memorial Bench**

Chair had previously agreed to restore the memorial bench when the weather had improved. The meeting noted that the present owners of *Simpatico*, the former shop and post office, were prepared to restore the bench.

##### **5.3 Station Road Junction**

The safety of this junction for pedestrians and its suitability, particularly for the manoeuvrability of vehicles, had been questioned in the previous meeting of KCC by John Robb. It was agreed that Chair and John Robb would investigate and report back to the next meeting and, if necessary, contact Fife Council Transportation Department with view to making improvements to the area.

#### **6 Planning Matters**

It was reported to the meeting that KCC had requested to be a statutory consultee on two development applications. On the advice of the Planning Sub-Committee, KCC had submitted objections to the following development applications:

- 14/03693/FULL, Barnslaw
- 15/00287/FULL, 1 Kildinny Yards, Kingsbarns

#### **7 Co-option of Further Members to KCC Planning Sub-Committee**

It was agreed that Sue Jenkins, Shona McIntosh and Martin Dibbs would be co-opted to serve on the Planning Sub-Committee.

#### **8 Any Other Business**

It was noted that a meeting involving the Hall Committee, Kingsbarns Community Development Trust and KCC would be arranged soon in order to discuss improvements to the facilities within the Memorial Hall, how the Hall currently meets the needs of the residents and to discuss ways in which the facilities could be improved to the benefit of the local community, i.e. provision of a shop.

#### **9 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 4 May 2015 at 7 p.m.