
**Dalgety Bay and Hillend
Community Council**



**Annual Report of
Dalgety Bay & Hillend Community Council**

Compiled by:

W Allan – Acting Vice Chairman

R Green – Secretary

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Introduction

2015/16 has been a difficult year for the Community Council, dominated by issues relating to the sustainability of initiatives undertaken by the CC over recent years against a background of diminishing CC funds and volunteers.

Between 2011 and 2015 a cumulative CC overspend of £25,000 over income left the council with only £163 in uncommitted funds in April 2015. This erosion of funds has been accompanied by a steady loss of volunteers to assist in the delivery of CC initiatives without corresponding numbers coming forward to replace them. Many CC members and volunteers have provided their time and assistance to the CC for over 20 years, combining this with similar involvement in numerous other community groups. Their contribution to our community has been greatly appreciated and it is fully understood that they cannot be expected to continue indefinitely.

Some community groups are now struggling with the lack of new volunteers willing to come forward to replace those who have contributed more than their fair share to the community over many years. This is a widespread problem in modern society and it is against the background of diminishing resources that the CC has worked to tackle in the past year, trying to balance what was possible against community expectations of what was desirable. The following is a summary of the principal activities of the CC in 2015/16.

1. The Diary

For many years, production of the Diary has been made possible by 3 volunteers working without assistance: Editor, Advertising Manager and Distribution Manager and door-to-door distribution by 80 volunteers. None of this would be possible without the valued advertising support of 60 local businesses. By early 2016 it became clear that losses of volunteers within the key 3-man team, combined with increasing gaps within the distribution team were placing continuity of the Diary at serious risk. Loss of around 40% of delivery capacity by March occasioned the difficult decision to temporarily cease production of the printed Diary from April onwards pending re-launch as and when a clear and robust long term team could be established to take the Diary forward. In the interim, provision of the electronic version plus 500 printed copies are being maintained by a very small team of Community Councillors in the hope of re-launch of the printed version from September this year but to date, lack of volunteers coming forward to assist is hampering progress towards this end.

2. Facebook

In February the CC launched its own Facebook page to augment provision of community related information provided via the Diary and the CC website. This was launched specifically to appeal to the 25-55 age group, which in practice constitutes 80% of our Facebook users. Despite objections that Facebook is for youngsters, only 5% of our users are under 25 compared with 15% over 55 and the page has exceeded our expectations in terms of positive feedback from the community.

www.facebook.com/dalgetybayandhillendcommunitycouncil/

3. Christmas lights

Since 2012, including capital costs, the CC has spent £20,000 on the provision of annual Christmas lights for the community. The Christmas lights last season were disappointing in as

much as we were receiving reports of some not working almost as soon as they were installed. This continued throughout the time they were up and reports of failures to the company providing them was once met with a hostile reception. To make matters worse we are now in receipt of a quotation for £400 for the repair of the motifs following their inspection after removal. On top of the annual cost of £3500, not including provision for renewal, this is a luxury we cannot continue to afford.

4. Town Floral Enhancements

In 2015, Dalgety Bay was once again awarded Silver Gilt and Hillend Bronze in the Beautiful Fife competition. Thanks go to all those whose time and efforts made this possible. Over the past few years the CC has spent approximately 3 times the sum received from Fife Council by way of Floral Grant on town floral enhancements, largely on the provision of hanging baskets along Regents Way. Shortage of funds resulted in the difficult decision not to continue with this provision in 2016, with future reintroduction dependent on identification of a means of sustaining this annual feature in the longer term.

5. Participatory Funding

The following received assistance from the Fife Council Participatory Budget funds provided to the CC in 2015: Girlguiding Aberdour & Dalgety Bay, DB Twinning Association, DB Friends of Encongolweni, DB Bowling Club Schools Initiative, DB Horticultural Society Show, Inverkeithing High School Awards and a one-third contribution to the cost of the 2015 Christmas Lights.

6. Twinning association

The planned visit by the Ocsa delegation for the signing of the Twinning Agreement was cancelled at the last minute on a decision made by Fife Council in line with UK Government guidelines. Prior to this the Community Council reconsidered its grant of £2600 towards the funding of this visit and reduced it to £1000 at a special financial meeting held last August. Monies donated to the Twinning Association have been have stayed with the Twinning Association in the hopes the return visit can be reinstated. We await communication from the Twinning Association on this matter.

7. Barns Farm decision by Shell

After consolidated effort by all concerned namely - Dalgety Bay residents who wrote to Shell UK, Gordon Brown MP, Alex Rowley MSP, Community Council members and Keep the Bay's Living Space campaign group, Shell UK chairman Mr Erik Bonino took the decision to take the fields of Barns Farm off the market and put a halt to the planned housing development. Our thanks go to Mr Bonino and the team from Shell who conducted its own survey through consultation and interviews with the people who would be affected the most by such a development.

8. Foreshore progress summary

Following considerable community concern over apparent lack of progress by MOD in commencing foreshore remediation works, the CC assisted Roger Mullin MP in preparation

for a meeting with Defence Ministers in March over timescales for completion of the works. The meeting was extremely productive in moving matters on and works are expected to commence in the very near future, with a corresponding agreed programme of regular progress reports being provided. Delays in receiving access agreements from landowners have now been resolved and while the originally planned completion date of 2018 may not be achievable, MOD is committed to completion as soon as practicably possible.

9. Town Centre Path

We made some progress towards formalising Robbie's Path through the town centre land by engaging a community payback work force and donated materials. Unfortunately the team were not licensed to use machinery and the promise of the top layer of asphalt didn't materialise, leaving us with a path that is not fit for the purpose intended and more of a hazard than the original path of choice worn by pedestrians walking across the grass. The promised grant of £5000 from the Muir Dean Trust to allow us to complete the path eventually came through on 3rd June and we plan to finish the path with a reduced specification compacted whin dust top layer in the next few months.

10. Retiral of Chairman

In February, Colin McPhail MBE, member of the CC since 1982 and Chairman for the past 28 years retired from the Council. Colin's contribution to the community over many years, with unstinting assistance from Corrie, cannot be over-stated and the CC on behalf of the entire community thanks Colin for his tireless work and wishes him well in his well deserved retirement from public life.

11. Membership concerns

The end of this reporting year sees our membership at its lowest ever. For various personal reasons, four members including the chairman have resigned or retired bringing the membership below the allowable threshold defined in the SOE. To get above that threshold of 10 members we need to recruit 4 new members before the 12th September meeting or the Community Council will be dissolved. Ideally we need to recruit more than minimum in order to make the membership as representative of the community as possible. Hopefully those showing an interest in joining during the past months will decide to join now that the issues surrounding insurances has been resolved.

12. Ownership of woodlands and associated liabilities

During the past six months the subjects of land ownership and liabilities placed on Community Councillors has highlighted a shortcoming in the insurance cover the Community Council had through the Fife Council scheme. We did not have Office Bearer indemnity for the four Community Council office bearers nor did we have Trustee Indemnity for the same four office bearers in their role as trustees of the three woodlands of which the Community Council took ownership in 2013. The fact that the four office bearers are trustees of the woodlands was only made apparent to the Treasurer and Secretary following the publication of the Dalgety Bay Community Woodland Group's management committee report earlier this year. At the same the Treasurer and Secretary found out they are members of the said management committee, 14 months and 4 months after taking up office.

After a long period of communicating with the insurers via the Risk Management Section of Fife Council's Corporate Services, we now have the cover that should have been in place when the transfer of land ownership happened.

13. Ownership of town centre and associated liabilities

The Community Council also owns the land in the town centre across which Robbie's Path runs. The completion of this path will be a huge relief to the Community Council and its many users.

14. Plans to resolve land ownership

The past year has been one of considerable change and challenge for the CC and the way ahead is not without difficulty. The district population entitles DBHCC to 19 members but the current number of Community Councillors is 6, being 4 under minimum complement to continue in operation from September onwards. Unless this problem will be resolved before then, the CC faces automatic dissolution pending an election which will require a minimum of 10 candidates standing to ensure re-establishment.

Efforts to attract volunteers for co-option to vacant places have been hampered by the various emergent issues facing the CC for resolution and not least concerns over potential personal liability over CC land ownership. The depleted CC has spent the past few months working systematically through these issues and has established the parameters for a way ahead. While insurance cover has now been put in place against liability risk, the plan for 2016 is to transfer CC landholdings to long term full community ownership by establishment of a Community Land Trust, in common with over 50 other Scottish bodies entrusted in total with over 500,000 acres of land in community ownership.

The Community Council can only reflect and implement the views and wishes of the community and in the current scenario within which only one per 2000 members of the community is involved within the Community Council it cannot be deemed to be truly representative. The framework for re-launch has been put in place and town residents are urgently needed to come forward to assist in ensuring a future for the Council.