



## **Open Community Meeting**

**WRI, Nurses Lane, Comrie**

**Monday 01 June 2009, 7.30pm**

### **MINUTE OF MEETING**

In attendance – CDT Directors: Cathy Tilbrook (Chair), Jim Buchanan (Vice Chair), Chris Palmer, William Levack, Fran Loots, Felicity Snowsill, David Robertson. CDT staff: Isla Valenti, Emma Margrett

Apologies - CDT Directors: Alan Caldwell, Eunice Cartwright, Ian Findlay, Trish Withey

#### **Welcome**

A warm welcome to those present was extended by the Chair who expressed her thanks to everyone for coming on such a glorious evening and gave thanks to the three representatives from Perth & Kinross Council (PKC) : Merry Scott, Travel Plan Officer, Jane Pritchard, Access Officer and Margaret Roy, Public Transport Department who were attending the meeting as the main theme was sustainable transport and travel.

The Chair commenced by announcing that George Carson wished to speak to the meeting regarding Heinrich Steinmeyer, the German gentleman who spent time at Cultybraggan during the war and wishes to bequest his estate for the benefit of the elderly in Comrie. George Carson informed the meeting that Mr Steinmeyer will be visiting Comrie in the first two weeks of July when a tour of Cultybraggan will be arranged to show him the developments that have taken place so far. Mr Carson asked that anyone seeing him out in the community with Mr Steinmeyer would be more than welcome to introduce themselves to him and to stop and have a chat.

Cathy Tilbrook then introduced the first speaker from PKC, Merry Scott, who spoke to the meeting about her work with organisations and groups on travel plans and moving to more sustainable modes of transport. "Liftshare" is a Government funded scheme - part of Tactran Liftshare - ([www.perthandkinrossliftshare.com](http://www.perthandkinrossliftshare.com)) that connects travellers whether on a one off or frequent commuter use basis. There are currently thousands of people registered within Scotland and can be done on a country-wide basis however it was proposed that perhaps a private Comrie based group be set up under the overall umbrella of Liftshare (Tactran) which would enable only those living in the Comrie area to share with other commuters living in the Comrie area. Merry assured the meeting that all communication between possible liftshare matches is done through the Liftshare email system and not done directly between people and takes into account Data Protection issues for those using the scheme.

A question from the floor asked about impact on your car insurance to which Merry confirmed that there was no requirement to inform your insurance company however out of courtesy or if you wish to seek clarification you could do so using the template letter on the Liftshare website. The Association of British Insurers clearly states that car-sharing won't affect the insurance of their members, so long as a profit isn't made (guidelines are available

on the Liftshare website under FAQ). Merry was then asked from the floor if she had links with the Community Transport Sector as the person asking had previously been involved in the Tactrans Consultative Committee last year which, after the consultation period, the Government cancelled any plans for marrying the public and community transport system together and has resulted in an apparent lack of interface between Tactrans and the voluntary/community sector. A question was then asked about Car Clubs and their viability - to date a study on the Edinburgh Car Club has shown that it has taken 10 years to break even for the scheme. Merry added that the schemes tend to work in areas with a higher population.

Also from the floor was the question of Car Pools similar to those adopted in America and Australia, Merry had heard of such schemes but explained that as they were very difficult to regulate given the nature of such schemes this would not be something that Perth & Kinross Council would promote.

The meeting was then asked who may be interested in using a Liftshare scheme in the future to which people were in agreement that they would be especially if there was a Comrie based Liftshare scheme. One person from the floor said she had already signed up to the scheme however unfortunately had not managed, as yet, to be matched for her required journeys. The floor also asked if the scheme also catered for weekend, one off journeys - Merry responded that all journeys can be registered. Cathy thanked Merry Scott for her input to the meeting as Merry required to leave the meeting early.

Cathy Tilbrook, CDT Chair, then introduced Jane Pritchard who spoke to the meeting about her work within her region (Highland and Eastern Perthshire) and working alongside the local Countryside rangers and the work with the draft Core Paths Plan (a network of non motorised access routes in the countryside). The draft Core Paths Plan, having been out for consultation, is now being submitted to Committee this Wednesday - early indications are that it will be approved subject to resolving all outstanding objections of which there were 840. Thereafter decisions will be taken regarding a public enquiry and correspondence with the objectors. Once the Core Paths Plan has been adopted routes require to be way-marked (wooden posts with arrows). PKC would be looking to work in conjunction with groups such as CDT who may be in a position to apply for funding to refurbish areas not eligible for funding from PKC.

Jane was asked from the floor regarding access to Cultybraggan Farm and the subsequent damage caused by irresponsible access takers - two areas in particular were spoken of as being badly damaged (field at Dalginross and area opposite Eaglesfield) and damage to a silage field from a hand glider landing. The speaker requested that enforcement action should be taken to stop abuse from the minority of people causing the damage. Jane acknowledged the concerns of the speaker and suggested that contact should be made with the local countryside ranger.

Another question from the floor was asked regarding responsibilities of those owning and running shooting estates - Jane confirmed that the regulations have not changed and shooting estates have a duty under legislation to provide current temporary and relevant signs whilst shooting is taking place in order to protect the public in the paths areas. Jane also confirmed that there is guidance on land management on the PKC website and training can be sought from organisations such as PKC or SNH. A representative from the Rights of Way Society confirmed that they were currently in talks with the aforementioned shooting estate.

A question from the floor was asked regarding the provision of cycle routes within the Core Paths Plan in the area as they were keen to cycle but did not feel confident on local roads. Jane confirmed that the Core Paths were multi use therefore fit for use by cyclists.

Discussion then took place regarding the issues over certain parts of the Crieff to Comrie and the Crieff to St Fillans proposed routes, both of which have parts that are being contested. It was pointed out from the floor that this route is no longer all disused railway line as some sections of it were purchased from the rail company when it ceased as a rail track some 40 years ago, and have been built on. However there was a general agreement that efforts should be made to find an acceptable route with landowners that could allow this very important off-road link to extend from Crieff to Comrie. There was also a request from the representative of the Rights of Way Society for all enquiries regarding access and paths to be directed to the Community Council.

A question from the floor was asked if a path from Comrie village to Cultybraggan was included in the Draft Core Paths Plan. It was confirmed that at present this path was not included however the plan will be reviewed every five years.

Cathy Tilbrook, CDT Chair, then introduced the final speaker of the evening - Margaret Roy who spoke to the meeting about her work with the public transport unit for Perth City and South West Perthshire area. Her department are involved in the provision of community care, special needs, school and subsidised local bus transport. Margaret explained that they had little influence over the commercial timetabled routes but do feed back public responses at the regular meetings held between PKC and the commercial bus providers. PKC however do have more control over the PKC subsidised fare journeys (mostly early morning, late evening and Sunday services). The floor asked if Margaret had any influence over Sunday train services however this is not the case as PKC do not subsidise any train journeys therefore have no influence here.

A spokesperson from the floor spoke about the bus connection from Comrie to Stirling being dreadful with journeys taking a very long time and being impossible to get from Comrie to Stirling to commence work at 9am without having to leave the village extremely early. The floor also asked whether Margaret worked with the connecting authorities - yes PKC does work with the connecting authorities however it is not always possible to line up all connecting services for every route. It was suggested that a travel plan be collated for Comrie commuters and where frequent journeys occurred then PKC would look into what could be done with amending the connection times to make them more workable.

The floor also asked if the No. 47 service could be extended into Comrie to which Margaret agreed that this could be looked into prior to the next round of tendering for bus routes. Margaret also spoke of perhaps using Comrie as a test area for future services. She also informed the meeting that the number 47 service would be re-routed in the summer time via Springkerse due to bridge repairs which in turn would lengthen the journey time to Stirling.

The floor also asked why the last bus service had been stopped - Margaret explained that this was a commercial journey and not PKC subsidised and the stopping of it had come about due to the problems experienced by bus drivers and other passengers from drunken teenagers on this service. Police had been called by the drivers on many occasions and the decision was taken by Stagecoach to withdraw this service. Stagecoach also produced figures of usage in the wintertime, other than the problem passengers, which indicated that this was a little used service. Various members of the floor voiced their concern over the

impact this has had on events/businesses in and around the village as well as disenfranchising the responsible young folk of the area and also the unbelievable response by Stagecoach to cut the service because of some users which affected the whole community.

The floor spoke of the refurbishment of Perth Concert Hall and the encouragement to use it however due to the last bus service being withdrawn bus users cannot easily use this facility. Margaret agreed to speak to Stagecoach at the next joint meeting with new evidence gathered at this meeting for the need for this service to be reinstated.

Cathy Tilbrook thanked the three representatives from PKC and then spoke of the Cultybraggan Open Morning that will take place as part of the Comrie Fortnight. Cultybraggan will be open on Saturday 1st August from 10.30am to 1pm. Everyone is invited to come and explore the 90 acre POW camp that now belongs to the people of Comrie. It is a chance to inspect progress and discuss future plans. Activities will include: Guided tours of the Nissen huts & bunker, Comrie Carbon Challenge & street-by-street energy audit information, Cultybraggan history project latest news, Allotments information, Comrie skateboarders in action, sports tasters. Refreshments available. Guided walk to camp or free Co-Co bus shuttle to camp from Melville Square. More details will be confirmed - please check at the CDT office (tel: 670769).

Cathy also spoke about the free showing of "The Age of Stupid" on Friday 5th June at 7.30pm in the White Church as part of the CDT Climate Change Conference weekend (the film will also be shown on Sunday 7th June at 11.30am for anyone who cannot attend on the Friday). There will be lots of people coming to the village and many of them staying in local accommodation and all attendees have been encouraged to shop locally and been given a list of all local shops/restaurants.

Cathy also spoke about the recent film maker that had been in and around the village filming a promotional DVD on behalf of the Development Trust Association for Scotland featuring Comrie Development Trust - everyone who took part was thanked on behalf of CDT.

Lastly, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and spoke of the feedback received regarding some people in the community that were hesitant at attending these Community Open meetings as they were worried that they would be required to speak at meetings. Cathy wished to give assurance that everyone was most welcome and anyone attending could become as involved as they wished and there was no requirement for anyone to speak at the meetings if they did not wish to do so.

#### Next Meeting

The next open meeting will be held on Monday 06 July 2009 at 7.30pm in the WRI Hall - the main focus will be update reports from the various working groups.

Close of meeting : 9.00pm

#### Office details:

CDT  
5 Dunira Street  
Comrie  
Tel: 01764 670769  
Email: [cdt@comrie.org.uk](mailto:cdt@comrie.org.uk)