

**BROUGHTY FERRY COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 2nd APRIL 2013**

PRESENT - George Ferguson, Davick Hewick, David Hewick Fiona Potton, Janice Bell, Stan Nutt, Doug McLaren, J Adams, C.Doig.

Visitors - Ken Guild (Councillor), G.Colgan and E. Zwirlein (Dundee City Council) G. Lyttle. C. Jefferson

1) Welcome and Apologies.

Apologies were received from L. Bidwell, D. Scott, C. Jenkins, W. Campbell and K. Cordell

2) Speakers.

George welcomed everyone to the open meeting and apologised for the low public turnout due to the holidays.

The first speaker was Colin Doig, An architect from Dunard Designs Ltd. who can adapt existing homes to comply with the new Social Welfare Reform bill. Owner/Occupiers can covert two bedroom housing into one bedroom and they offer a free initial consultation with impartial advice. They can be contacted on 01382 772945 or at dunarddesigh@live.com.

The second speaker was Elaine Zwirlein from Dundee City Council who introduced Gregory Colgan to speak on the Social Welfare Reform. They offered leaflets about the new benefits but admitted the current system is unwieldy. The ethos is to encourage more people into employment but some will be worse off. In Dundee, the under occupancy charge applies to over 3000 houses, resulting in benefit reductions of 25% for more than one bedroom and 14% for one extra room. Help is being given with budgeting schemes through the Council and some people have already exchanged. The Dept. of Work Pensions estimate most claims will be done on-line and the council fear vulnerable citizens will be unable to do this or access basic bank accounts. From June the Disability Living Allowance will be replaced by Personal Independence Payments and the council have set up groups to help. 1) Universal credit council tax reduction – Dundee has received £60000.00 from the government to set up a pilot project for individuals requiring help. 2) Social Welfare Fund will administer crisis grants but fear demand will outstrip funding. There is a dedicated helpline number – 01382 431188. 3) Housing services – the council have already started visiting 3300 under occupied houses to consider options. 4) Support Initiatives – help will be given to allow more people to move to a smaller house. They will also try to help support clients with debt control. 5) Employment and Learning – funding has been given to train volunteers and computers are to be made available for use in housing associations and libraries. An early learning module about the Welfare Rights Review is to be sent to 8000 council staff – this can be accessed by all members of the public. Basic numeracy and literacy skills are to be reviewed to help those who need it.

George Ferguson asked how the elderly can access computers but this only affects people of working age at present, and volunteers are being trained to help individuals with computers. Fiona Potton asked about homelessness and eviction. Elaine Zwirlein replied the council is trying to help by introducing youth housing options to give key advice. At present there are only a small number of evictions in the city and under occupancy evictions will be looked at separately.

Graham Lyttle, a former IT consultant, offered himself as a volunteer. He also asked if people would be made to move to more undesirable districts but exchanges are mutual.

David Hewick asked if there was a demand for double rooms if people had to move out and was told yes, but single occupancy housing will be difficult to obtain. There is not enough housing stock available.

Doug McLaren asked how under occupancy occurs – usually there has been a family in the house for several generations. Only foster carers and armed forces personnel will be exempt regarding the extra room.

David Easson asked if pensioners could be included on houses exchanges as they might want to downsize –more points are now being given to people under occupying.

J. Adams asked about disabled people perhaps with dialysis machines in the spare room. Ken Guild stated that the UK government have stipulated no help will be given but the council can make discrepancy housing payments in this situation, but these payments have to come out of the housing budget. Housing Associations are also included with mutual exchanges and they too will not evict unless necessary. As a result of several meetings, housing associations and the council are working as a partnership.

Stan Nutt asked if councils had been given enough time to sort everything out and was told the timescale had been set by Westminster and represents a huge challenge.

There being no further questions, George thanked all the speakers for their input at the meeting

2) Approval of minutes of 5th February 2013 and Report of 5th March 2013

The minutes were proposed by D. Hewick and seconded by J Bell.

3) Matters arising

Closure of Marchbanks Depot – D. McLaren felt the council had considered the matter before it was published – This is to be made an agenda item at the AGM as time was running out

4) Planning report

The plans for 5 Fintry Place had been re-submitted and David did not object. Armistead has had a lot of vandalism whilst empty and he feels improvements are still required.

Regarding the Health Club on the land west of the library, improvements have been made but there are still concerns about the cottage at the back. After standing for 150 years, damage has occurred to the staircase leading from Camphill Rd but it is not “in a poor state of repair” and could be easily repaired.

The Proposed Local Plan has now been submitted and the reporters have now to decide. Consultations regarding the Linlathen Housing site was extended by three weeks but not advertised.

Scottish Water had been videoing the sewers in Cedar Road which showed roots protruding through them.

At this point, time ran out and George brought the meeting to a close. Any other business will be stated at the A.G.M. on Tuesday 7th May at 7PM.