

Agenda Balloch Community Liaison

6th July 3:30pm

In Attendance Ian Williams, Morven Reid, Melanie Smith, Catherine Bunn John McHardy, Helen Cameron,

1. Update on planning application – submitted 18th June

Junction for Culloden Academy

- The group are very disappointed that cycles are not given priority at the junctions. It is appreciated that this is part of a much broader issue where cars are deemed the primary form of transport. This doesn't marry in with the Inner Moray Firth Development Plan which has an ambitious take on active travel and encouraging changes in travel behaviour. It was understood that care had to be taken not to confuse drivers leading to accidents, however the view was that there needs to be a step change in approach if we want to become a truly cycle friendly city
- The Community Council will be objecting to the Planning Application for the junction at the school. The proposed junction has been designed as a main school junction. The Community believed that the 'new site' would be used for a sports pavilion/sports ground and the extension to the Academy would go on the existing playing fields. If this is followed through, then the junction requirements on Barn Church Road should be reassessed/ redesigned accordingly for the lower use
- There is a concern that trees may be taken down before the true need is fully appraised. It was suggested that the removal of trees should be kept to a minimum and reassessed once the junctions are completed. This may alleviate concerns over sight lines and lead to fewer trees being unnecessarily lost. The group were advised that mitigating planting would be required for any trees lost. – Helen will discuss with engineer
- There is a strong view that the speed limit on Barn Church Road should be reduced to 30MPH. There will be an increased number of pedestrians by virtue of the houses and the road is already dangerous with speeds in excess of the 40mph limit – this has been previously raised by the school parent councils and the Community Council. The reduction of the speed limit would also make junctions safer for emerging traffic. Such a change would support 'safer routes to school' and could be further enhanced by flashing 20s at school opening/closing. Representations with regards to this will be made by the various group

Housing Project

The purpose of the area design brief a was explained. The group were going raise any queries with Helen over the next few days.

- There was a request that mixed waste bins were located in strategic positions both for dog walkers and refuse collection.
- There was a request that footpaths through to the woods be safely maintained during construction

- There was a request that an area be designated for allotments/community growing scheme. This is a really important aspiration for the community.
 - Helen advised that the construction environmental management plan would be shared with the group and would be on the planning portal at the relevant time
2. Queries on Flooding and impact of the housing development
- A query had arisen between meetings as to whether the drainage being proposed for the housing development would alleviate the broader issues that Balloch has with flooding, particularly around the school. Helen advised that the drainage had been designed for the capacity of the site and guarantees could not be given regarding broader impact. Once the second suds basin is installed (Phase 2) it is likely that this will have a benefit to the broader area as it will capture water off the hill before it runs into the woods
3. Woodland – update and actions
- Helen advised that there was no further update from the Crown’s solicitor regarding the woodland transfer. This shouldn’t prevent the Community beginning to look at options for the woodland. There is an existing group – Culloden Forest Partnership which has members from the School of Forestry, UHI,NTS, Balloch CC along with Trish Robertson which may be happy to get involved with this project. Ian sits on this group and will raise the potential with them.
- Melanie noted that the school of Forestry would be keen to get involved.
- Barbara Lennox was also mentioned as a potential group member – Morven to follow up .
- Helen to touch base with Pablo Mascarenhas as he would be a good contact for the group as the Highland Councils Community and Democratic Engagement Manager
pablo.mascarenhas@highland.gov.uk –
- (post meeting note – email received from Crown Estates Solicitor confirming the status of the site and that they can now proceed to undertake a full title search (timeframe estimated as 8 weeks) – attached is the plan associated to this area of woodland for information
- Next steps – the members of the liaison group to follow up membership of new ‘woodland group’ (progress to be shared at next liaison group meeting on Aug 17th)
- Once membership established a meeting to be convened
- An invitation to the first meeting to be extended an existing woodland group to share their experience

AOCB

Melanie asked about progress with the plans for the land adjacent to the school. The School of Architectural Technology at UHI would be keen to get students involved in the project. The children at the school have drawn up sketches to show how they would like it to look. Helen to send this meeting note to Richard Jack (Karen Ross’s contact in Property Services) to ask if he wanted to use this forum as a means to engage on the site.

Date of Next Meeting

17th August at 3:30