

KILSYTH COMMUNITY COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2008 – 2009

What makes an effective community council and does Kilsyth Community Council pass the test?

Certainly!

Community councils work on the basis of:

- 1) Conveying the views of the community, on any issue, to the appropriate authority.
- 2) Exercising a General Power of Competence. This means taking action in whatever way they think fit (and legal!) to promote well-being in their community. Anything considered to be of economic, social or environmental benefit is justifiable - in fact anything 'good.'

My annual report will demonstrate how we have carried out this remit.

MEMBERSHIP

Unchanged since last year, this comprises 6 elected members, 4 co-opted as individuals and 4 co-opted as representatives of other local groups. The 4-yearly elections to community councils were due to take place last October but postponed by North Lanarkshire Council pending the implementation of a new Scheme for Community Councils being drawn up by the Scottish Government and not yet formalised.

PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT

What can one say!

Development in suitable locations is of the utmost importance to the town. Planning permission, which was supported by the Community Council, is in place for housing developments at Barrwood Quarry, Newtown Street, Bogside, Main Street, Woodend Farm Steading and for chalets at Woodend.

Unfortunately, due to the present economic crisis, work is at a standstill but all should be "ready to go" when financial matters improve and plans can be realised.

The future for Cavalry Park is unknown. The outcome favoured by the Community Council would be retention within Greenbelt and incorporation into Colzium Estate, as has been well documented during a few hard battles...

We gave full support to the plan for a Day Care Centre at Westfield and are delighted that construction is to go ahead shortly.

Question marks still hang over the resolution of the White House issue. We continue to hope and grumble but accept that this is a complex matter which North Lanarkshire Council is facing and is endeavouring to resolve with the owner. Whilst the eyes of the world are on the other White House at this time, we daily face the eyesore of ours...

Some of the alterations to the original plans for an extension to the First Stop Shop were criticized by the Community Council but disappointingly we were unable to comment officially, due to strict adherence to certain protocols as interpreted by North Lanarkshire Council.

The new Local Plan has not yet been finalised. The Community Council have taken part in the consultation processes during the various stages.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Following on from the precedent set last year, the Community Council contributed to the huge success of the Snowdrop Festival at Colzium by arranging to have the Museum opened and 'manned' by our members over two weekends, also by arranging for a local caterer to provide a tearoom service in the Banqueting Hall at these times. We hope to repeat this at Civic Week and again on Open Doors Day.

Kilsyth is now a designated 'Walkers are Welcome' town and the local group involved in achieving this status was enthusiastically supported by the Community Council, who also heartily endorse their efforts to promote Kilsyth as a possible venue for next year's conference of the national association whose headquarters are based in Yorkshire.

The controversial plan to close Colzium Estate during the Carnival except on payment of an entry ticket, was vigorously opposed by the Community Council. This issue has now been resolved to the satisfaction of both the organisers of the Carnival and the general community who will be able to continue to enjoy the estate freely, with the exception of entrance to certain of the Carnival events which will take place within designated areas of the estate and will require the purchase of a ticket. We applaud the manner in which North Lanarkshire Council were able to bring all sides together to reach an amicable agreement on this and we wish the Carnival organisers every success in their ambitious project which has proved so popular in past years.

The Community Council had raised the question of installing official tourist signs for the approaches to Colzium Estate and are delighted that North Lanarkshire Council have implemented this along with the Gateway features now being constructed.

We are confident of agreement to the request that our Kilsyth Coat of Arms be shown at Colzium. Since it bears a connection to that of the Livingstone Lords of Kilsyth who built Colzium Castle it would be a feature appropriate to Colzium and a gesture appreciated by the townspeople who have always regarded Colzium with proprietary pride and affection.

HERITAGE

During the year, continuing our occasional series of historical evenings at the Coachman Hotel, two very successful events were organised, one in June as part of Civic Week and the other, which was the fourth in the series, in March. The enthusiasm of the large audience and their eagerness to learn more of the heritage we share is very gratifying to

the Community Council and to the others who contributed. These meetings are fast becoming a regular institution.– the wealth of history, our well versed local historians and an opportunity for social interaction have proved to be a winning combination.

Last summer the William Piper paintings of Kilsyth in the '50s (nine in number) were generously gifted to the community by the artist who is resident in the U.S. The Community Council became trustees, guaranteeing that they would be put on public display. We are delighted to have them out on loan now to Kilsyth Health Centre where they are on view in the public waiting area.

Other items of memorabilia acquired by the Community Council during this year comprise - Charter of Confirmation of the Barony of Kilsyth, dated 1831; clock celebrating the 40th anniversary of the foundation of Civic Week; old glass bottle from Hamilton Bros' aerated water factory which was in Edward Street and set of teaspoons in Kilsyth Co-operative Society presentation box dated 1939. It is expected that these will all be put on display in Colzium Museum.

WEBSITE www.kilsyth.org.uk

Minutes of Meetings are retained on the site for one year, (also available in Kilsyth Library)

A directory listing all shops, businesses, cafés etc in the town centre is kept up to date and shows addresses and telephone numbers of each.

Items of interest are diverse and links to other organisations and sources of information are many.

In the past year, visits to the site originated from 52 different territories (but it was noted none from Japan or Iceland – so a bit of marketing required there!)

We welcome the submission of appropriate material for inclusion on this site.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It can be seen by reviewing the names of those who have given presentations during the year that we endeavour to be well-informed on all matters prior to discussion and I would like to highlight their names. We thank them for help and their willingness to attend our meetings.

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| From North Lanarkshire Council: | Ken Wilson, John Whittaker, Pat Kelly, Dave Sutton, Richard Cartwright, Kirsty Gray |
| From British Waterways: | Liam Griffin |
| From Strathclyde Police: | Chief Inspector McTear |
| From Walkers are Welcome: | James Hunt |
| From The Scottish Parliament: | Hugh O'Donnell |

We greatly appreciate also that Cllr Jones, Cllr Key, Cllr Griffin, Community Police Officers and the Press all attend our meetings on a regular basis and work with us in partnership.

Speaking to other community councillors from other parts of the country has made me

realise that in this area we are fortunate to have particularly good communication with the Local Authority and others, even on the rare occasions when we may disagree!

As I end my final term as Chairman, I wish my successor good fortune and should like to take this opportunity to formally thank all of the members for their co-operation and support, especially my fellow office bearers and in particular our secretary, Alex Machray who has my sincere admiration for his professionalism, his business acumen and his encouragement- and of course his courage - at all times.

Finally, I would say Kilsyth Community Council is in good heart and I look forward to continuing to share the ups and downs of community council life in this very active and committed group.

Thank you

Margot Macmillan

15th April 2009