

**Minutes of Kemnay Community Council meeting held on 28th January
2016 at Kemnay Village Hall**

Present: Sheila Simpson, Gavin Adam, Margaret Basley, Bill Blackwood, Sasha Brydon, David Evans, Gaenor Berkin, Rob Mackay, Bob Ingram, Douglas Laing, Janet Newberry, Kate Rigby, Hazel Smith, Vaila Spencer, Sue Wainman

In Attendance: Cllr. Sheena Lonchay, Cllr. Alison Grant, Doug Milne (Area Manager), Colin Gray (Emergency Planning Officer), Jill Sowden (Community Planning). 47 members of the public

1. The Chair welcomed those present.
2. Apologies – None.
3. Police Report – this was noted but to be discussed at next month's meeting.
4. Minutes of the last meeting – this was approved by Hazel Smith and seconded by Gaenor Berkin with one amendment; Item 5 should read "Approved Kate Rigby" (not Ingram).
5. Kemnay Floods – the remainder of the meeting was thrown open to comments and observations from members of the public including Hamish Simpson, Jean Simpson, Ken Ledingham, Allan Davies, Brian McKechnie, Kylie McLaughlin, Hazel Smith, Pauline Paterson, John Carnie, Eileen Cook, Alex. Rennie, Vaila Spencer, Donnie McIver, Alistair Thomson, Jim Buchan, Allan Knox, Keith Milne, Bill Elrick, Brian Adam, Jean Simpson. There was a detailed airing of the events in Kemnay especially relating to the night of Thursday 7th January and a discussion of the various issues that are recorded below.

A. *Issues about the emergency phase of the Flood*

Shared across the village:

- Late warnings of flood threat by SEPA to both local residents & Council officials
- Miscommunication issues eg e-mail addresses of Council officials didn't work and much information was therefore shared via Facebook sites
- Travelling by road was difficult as some roads were impassable due to flooding
- Difficulty of accessing sandbags on the night
- Flooding through the drainage system as well as the River Don being in full spate
- Excellent community effort with friends & neighbours helping each other
- Kemnay Academy used as a rest centre and local residents made use of this facility. Others made use of the Church Centre.

Specific to Kembhill Park:

- Flood water entered the area through the gap between the end of the bunding and the perimeter fence of Scottish Water's facility; once the water was in the Kembhill Park area it could not drain away due to the

bunding. The trapped water was contaminated with human waste, diesel etc.

- Some houses on Bremner Way in the Alehousewells area were threatened by flood water from the river due to the lack of bunding and the drains being overwhelmed
- There was a suggestion that the design of Scottish Water's boundary fencing at the pumping station and the gap in bunding had contributed to the problem
as the river water was held back rather than being allowed to flood naturally.

Specific to Milton Meadows estate:

- Flood occurred due to flooding from the river coming round the side from the direction of Milton Farm & at the same time the drainage system became completely overwhelmed adding considerable volumes of water very quickly.
- Residents affected were very grateful for the help provided by so many people on the Thursday night

Specific to Cairn View

- Drainage system was overwhelmed causing flooding to some properties on Stuart Crescent & also on Fyfe Park
- Standing water stayed on these roads for some days until water tankers removed 650,00 litres of water to relieve the situation; these were organised and paid for by a private individual.

B. Issues about the recovery phase of the Flood

- Communication problems could be eased if Kemnay had its own Emergency Action Plan with clear lines of communication both within the village and to key Council personnel. This would include the Emergency Planning Team who operate an on-call rota system and the Area Manager.
- SEPA's ability to provide early warnings of floods would be enhanced if SEPA would install gauges in Kemnay to monitor levels of water in the River Don.
- There was a suggestion that the more expressions of concern even complaints that are made to SEPA & Scottish Water might help for those organisations to register and better understand the seriousness of the problems faced by Kemnay.
- Closing of the gap in the bunding was raised by many people as a priority; Doug Milne indicated the Flood Engineer is visiting Kemnay on Saturday and his assessment is vital and SEPA insists on this. Doug Milne indicated that in his view the closing of this gap is a top priority but stressed this is a multi-agency approach.
- Cairn View/Kirkstyle drainage problems; Doug Milne indicated that the Council have not adopted the roads due to concerns about the drainage system, whilst Deveron Homes are blaming the Council for failure to maintain the drainage system around Kirkstyle Garage. It was pointed out that the field that the latest houses were built in was traditionally a wet area and the view was expressed that the SUDS system was not capable of coping with the volume of water coming off the field.

- Milton Meadows & Alehousewells ; suggestion was made that possibly non-return valves could be fitted into the drainage system so that water could only flow in one direction to the River Don and not the other way.
- Flood Wardens scheme: Stonehaven have adopted a Flood Warden scheme and it was suggested Kemnay could take a look at this.
- There is a grant scheme which is funded by the Scottish Govt. and administered by Local Authorities; this provides grants for up to £1,500 for private individuals and up to £3,000 for businesses affected by floods.
- Information was provided as to the function of the Relief Centre (based in the British Legion) for providing practical and emotional support. This involves different agencies including Garioch Community Kitchen and the local churches
- The Kemnay Newsletter and Social Media sites were suggested as important vehicles for getting information out to people in the community.

C. Broader Issues

- Residents criticized Aberdeenshire Council's paper "Flooding: Roles & Responsibilities" as it states "There is no statutory duty for a Local Authority to prevent property from flooding nor is there a duty to provide sandbags". Doug Milne clarified that both filled sandbags and self filling facilities will be made available to communities. He pointed out that once the sand is wet that the bags disintegrate quickly and that reuse /storage of filled bags was therefore impractical..
- Doug Milne indicated that the Council are setting up a Flood Recovery Group and is seeking representatives from flood affected communities. There is a place for one representative from Kemnay.
- Questions were asked by residents as to the decision making process and who is in charge. Doug Milne stressed that this is not only the responsibility of Aberdeenshire Council but also Scottish Water, SEPA and the developers. He asked for the communities support in taking forward discussions with these bodies. He stated that by short-term he meant that Area plans have to be completed by the middle of next week and the Infrastructure Committee then considers these. And that by medium term he is thinking in terms of end of April.
- The Scottish Govt. has recently published its national Draft Flood Protection Plan (SEPA: Flood Risk Management Strategy) and Doug Milne stated there is a concern that the River Don is not mentioned. He asked for the community's support in lobbying for this to be changed.

The meeting closed after the Chair thanked the audience and panel for their contributions, and special thanks were accorded to David Evans for his work in providing such helpful information on the Village website during the period of the floods.

6. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 25th February