



**Ceres and District Community Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting Monday 09 September 2024**  
**Craigrothie Village Hall**

**Present:** Moira Henderson, John Hudson Cllr Margaret Kennedy, and three members of the public.

**Zoom:** Alistair Ewan, Faith Nicholson and one member of the public.

**Apologies:** David Beveridge, Neil Martin, Cllr John Caffrey.

1. **Welcome:** The Chair welcomed all attendees to the public meeting, both in the Craigrothie Village Hall and on Zoom, and noted the apologies as received.
2. **Andy Brown Bereavement:** The Chair noted the sad loss of Andy Brown, who was a well-liked resident of Chance Inn. He lived in the village for many years with his wife who he cared for before her passing a number of years ago. New arrivals to the village were always given a special welcome from Andy. He had a taxi company in Cupar and so was known to many and well liked. He recently moved to Cupar but sadly passed away unexpectedly, and he will be missed.
3. **Ceres & District Community Trust Update:** Alistair Ewan reported via Zoom on the Community Trust actions and ongoing project developments.
  - **The Glebe:** Lease offered, agreed verbally, between Community Trust and Church of Scotland but the written lease differs, it will get sorted, 25-year agreement,
  - **The Glebe:** The replacement of the collapsed bridge is the main immediate project, without which several other projects cannot proceed. The Trust did manage to get funding, but the timelines did not work. However, this will remain an important project going forward.
  - **Denhead to Old Mill Road Footpath-:** This work has also been completed, all funded out of the Community Trust resources.
  - **Moor Road:** SGN have now released the necessary funding and have instructed D. T. Stewart and Sons accordingly.
4. **Flooding in Ceres:**
  - **Scottish Flood Forum:** The aim of the Scottish Flood Forum is to reduce the impacts of flooding on individuals and communities, including establishing a network of community resilience groups in flood risk areas to equip communities to cope with the impacts and threat of flooding.
  - Cllr Margaret Kennedy reported on discussions with John Brack from Transportation. One issue concerning the run-off from Doves Loan is possibly being resolved with the landowner getting ditches cleared. However, this needs to be checked.
  - The wall built in Latch Burn at the back of Wemysshall Road remains a flood risk. It is reported that SEPA have sent a strong email to Planning, noting that SEPA do not support the construction of the wall in the burn. It is recognised that it should not be there but a legal process is now taking place. A member of the public, with legal expertise, advised that that residents at risk could warn the owner that they will claim.

- **Flooding in Chance Inn:** There is no current problems but it was noted that last year Fife Council were slow to correct the issues and with increased poor weather approaching it is expected that this will not be repeated.
- **Other Local Flood Action Groups:** It was noted that there are active regional flood action groups, including Falkland and Auchtermuchty, that interact cooperatively. It may assist the Ceres and Craigrothie resilience groups to liaise with such active flood groups.
- Continued flooding by old Kingarroch was raised and a local resident clarified the Fife Council work had carried out in rectification, including the inherent issues that were discovered.
- Cllr Margaret Kennedy reported that there is now an agreement to incorporate drain channels into the speed table on Anstruther Road.

## 5. **Traffic Matters:**

- It was noted that Chance Inn is now increasingly becoming a through traffic route.
- **Craigrothie and Chance Inn Traffic Calming Measures:**
  1. It was summarised that the Fife Council traffic calming proposals for Craigrothie and Chance Inn have been amended due to problems with the location of build-outs. In discussions between the Community Council, local Councillors and Fife Council it had been agreed that after public consultation the final redesign process would be discussed. Local input was ascertained, but unfortunately the proposed meeting has been subject to a number of delays. However, a Teams meeting is now scheduled for Tuesday 10 September (tomorrow) and we shall report back accordingly. **(Refer Post-meeting Note no. 1)**
  2. A member of the public opined that best option was for builds-outs at the village entry and that build-outs in the village do not slow traffic entering the village. We need to slow entry speeds. The two recent accidents were highlighted, one by Old Mill Road and the jack-knifed truck near to primary school.
  3. **Refer Post-meeting Note no. 1**
- A member of the public reported increased incidents of speeding on Teasses Road out of Ceres.
- A member of the public commented that disabled parking in Cupar and St Andrews is limited and also abused. Whilst it is not within the C&DCC district boundary, our residents are affected.

## 6. **Area Internet Connection**

- The internet connection speeds in Ceres, Craigrothie and Chance Inn have been the subject of complaints for some considerable time. It has been a serious problem, those attempting online bank transactions and especially for local businesses. The Ceres Highland Games again reported problems for their car parks and also for traders.
- It was confirmed that this has been the context of substantial discussion between the Community Council and our local councillors, with the result that the situation has now been with Wendy Chamberlain MP.
- **Refer Post-meeting Note no. 2**

## 7. **Local Authority Planning Applications**

- There were no reports of any significant planning applications.

## 8. **Local Road Maintenance Works**

- The CC noted that the Fife Council website <https://www.fife.gov.uk/> has a facility for reporting on maintenance problems. This is effective and is relatively easy to use.
- The approaches to both sides of the raised crossing near Ceres primary school are potholed to a serious condition and urgently require maintenance.

- The erosion to the side of the A916 at Garlie Bank below the reservoir and just before the sharp 90° right-hand bend was reported by the Community Council, but Fife Council responded that it had been repaired. This is clearly not the case and requires to be followed up. A member of the public has photographed the situation and this was forwarded to Cllr Margaret Kennedy.

#### 9. **Police Report**

- General advice for reporting crimes and other emergency incidents can be found on the gov.scot website <https://www.mygov.scot/report-crime>
- Two break-ins have been reported locally, at the Loch Garage in Ceres and on Old Mill Road in Craighrothie, where a car was stolen. A car has also been stolen in Ceres.

#### 10. **Resilience Group / Warm Spaces:**

- Kenny McLeod reported that Craighrothie Village Hall will not be available as a place of safety whilst planned refurbishment works are carried out. Further details should be available at the AGM on Wednesday 30 October 2024.

#### 11. **Any Other Business**

- **Church Building:** Trustees are considering taking over the building, with the idea for accommodation to provide a source of income. Money may be available for the capital cost, but a business plan is required. However, the first indications are that the income will be probably insufficient. An architect has produced scheme design, with attic space accommodation. but it is estimated to cost £3.0 million. There is also the consideration of the Session House. There is a deadline of end 2024 and if no plans are concluded, then it will be sold.
- **Inspiration Orchestra:** All were invited to attend on a performance by the Inspiration Orchestra at Ring Farm on Thursday evening 12 September at 7:30pm.

**The Meeting Ended: 9:00pm**

**Next Public Meeting: Monday 11 November 2024 at 7:30pm, Ceres Memorial Hall**

## **Post-meeting Notes:**

### **1: Meeting on Traffic Calming Measures for Craigrothie & Chance Inn**

In summary, Fife Council originally proposed a blanket 20 mph speed limit within Craigrothie, 40 mph buffer zones on both A916 approaches to the village, build-outs located at the village boundaries on both A916 approaches and also the B939 (Ceres Road), speed cushions strategically located within the village on both the A916 and the B939, one speed table adjacent to the village primary school on the A916.

Subsequently, Fife Council engineers inspected the site and considered that the build-out locations on the A916 were both visually impeded by blind corners and all three build-outs were deleted from the proposals. All other Fife Council proposals remained intact. In response, the Community Council wrote to Fife Council and requested further discussions and, in particular, alternative physical restraints at the three entry points to the village.

Fife Council agreed to an online Teams meeting but unfortunately due to various reasons this took until Tuesday 10 September 2024 to convene. The meeting was attended by a Fife Council Traffic Management Engineer, two Councillors and two members of the Community Council. It was clarified at commencement that any major revision to the Fife Council proposals would undoubtedly delay the works, require a return to planning and consequential budget problems.

The Community Council could agree to the residual Fife Council proposals but requested full-width speed tables as alternative restraints at the three entry points to the village. The CC also requested a simple mini-roundabout at A916/B939 Village Hall junction, which needs only to be a painted circle plus give way lines / signage on all entries to the roundabout. The entry/exit to/from the B939 downhill towards the village needs adjustment to improve the turning.

Fife Council rejected both proposals on grounds of engineering problems, budget cost and delays. They did propose that a speed survey would take place after the works, which should ascertain to what extent the village entry and traverse speeds had been reduced. In the event that further measures were required this would be the subject of further discussion.

Therefore, a compromise solution has been agreed in which the original proposals are to be implemented, but without the build-outs. A speed survey will be carried out as soon as feasible after the works are completed. The CC has requested consultation with regard to the extent and location of the survey.

The works are currently anticipated to commence in October 2024, although for operational reasons this may change.

### **2: Connectivity for Ceres, Craigrothie & Chance Inn**

In summary, with few exceptions, the connectivity in the Ceres & District Community Council area is slow or poor, and even non-existent. Therefore, for some time the Community Council, in conjunction our local Councillors, has been canvassing for an improvement in the area connectivity and, in particular, for a full fibre optic roll-out programme. This has now been escalated to involve our local MP, Wendy Chamberlain, together with our local MSP, Willie Rennie. Wendy Chamberlain has taken the issue direct to BT Openreach.

On 25 Sep 2024, at 13:46, Wendy Chamberlain responded to the CC Chair, noting that she had received an email response from BT Openreach and copying it to the CC.

The following is the text as received from BT Openreach:

*"Thanks for getting in touch concerning Wendy's constituent, Moira Henderson, Chair of Ceres and District Community Council.*

*I'm sorry to hear Ms Henderson and her colleagues have a concern over connectivity within Ceres and Craigrothie. I appreciate this is an in-demand service, particularly in rural locations, and I can understand residents' concerns.*

*I've reviewed the details and there is a fibre broadband service available to the majority of properties in the area. There's no further upgrades planned at this time, but this may change in the future.*

*Currently, fibre enabled cabinets have been installed within both villages providing a Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC) service to both communities. FTTC is a mix of fibre and copper. Speeds on FTTC are dependant on how far the property is from the fibre cabinet. To get the top speeds of 80mb, the property should be within 100-200, from the cabinet. At around 1.5km the signal loss will be significant enough that the speed will drop significantly, or connection may not be possible.*

*There is one cabinet which serves Craigrothie and two within Ceres. All the properties are well within the 1.5km threshold for FTTC and the vast majority of properties have superfast speeds of 30mb or more. The cabinets were installed using funds from the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband (DSSB), the original fibre delivery funded by the Scottish Government.*

*There has also been a very limited build of full fibre within Ceres. This was part of small projects that were limited in scope and there's no plans for further build work at this time.*

*Overall residents in both areas have access to good broadband speeds which should support the majority of online functions.*

*However, I appreciate that faster speeds are more desirable these days. With that in mind we're now moving away from fibre via cabinets and switching to full fibre service. This is the latest technology with fibre cables installed right into the property, supporting speeds up to 1GB.*

*We are currently rolling out full fibre across the UK to upgrade our network. Our aim is to reach 25 million premises by the close of 2026. So far we have put over 15 million homes and businesses within reach of full fibre.*

*The roll out is based on exchange areas. When an exchange is picked up, we'll roll out FTTP to the vast majority of premises within the boundary. Currently, Ceres exchange has not been announced in the schedule. However, as we move forward more exchanges will be brought into the programme. My advice to Ms Henderson and the council would be to periodically review our website below for the latest roll out news: <https://www.openreach.com/>*

*I see Ms Henderson also has some concerns over the Digital Switch. These are our plans to convert to a full digital network, with both internet and voice services provided over broadband.*

*I understand this has caused some concern, but in the long term will provide a far better service for everyone. With a digital line voice calls can still be made as usual. The only change is that the phone should be plugged into the broadband router instead of the traditional white master socket.*

*The full fibre network is far more reliable than the current standard copper. Overall, customers on full fibre should see far less outages as there is no signal loss on full fibre, like there can be with copper broadband. It operates using light to transmit the broadband signal. However, the equipment that converts the light into a usable connection within the property does require an electric connection. We have asked providers to arrange for customers to have a 1 hour battery back-up in the event of a power outage. This should be sufficient in most circumstances to make emergency calls on the day. However, customers should speak with their providers, as they may offer other back-up services.*

*We began work on the digital switchover in 2018. Communications have been sent out to all our 600+ Communications Providers (CPs), announcing that copper services would be phased out from 2025. We have asked that CPs begin to make contingency plans for all their customer and in particular, their vulnerable customers.*

*As the CPs have the majority of interaction with end customers, its right that they should be directly involved in how to manage the needs of their customers. Also our responsibility for the network ends at the termination point within the customer's property. Equipment such as phones and modems are covered by the CPs.*

*Different operators may put in place additional support. The beauty of our network is that we supply services to a range of providers, giving customers the choice of who they connect to.*

*Additionally in the event of a major outage, reporting issues to us is often not required as our internal systems will pick up these kinds of loss of service and will make the repairs in the network to restore service to everyone. From working with power networks across the UK during storm Arwen, they also operate a similar system and can pick up outages proactively.*

*While outages at this scale are thankfully rare, we have never guaranteed a fault free service. The vast majority of issues can be sorted on the day, however the existing copper network can also require additional work to repair that can leave some customers with no phone service for many days.*

*Additionally, the fibre network itself has no intrinsic value. Copper cables are extremely valuable and we do have issues with cable theft that can leave customers out of service for long periods while main cables are replaced and reconnected. Using a network that carries the signal using light beams, where the major components are clip and connect plastic, removes the concern of cables being stolen and leaving possibly thousands of customers with no service.*

*Taking all these factors into account, the fibre network is no less problematic than the current copper service.*

*What we want to focus on is improving the day to day experience for millions of customers. We often hear issues with rural services around the copper network, which will be eliminated when full fibre is extended to those homes and businesses. Fibre will be far more reliable in day to day service terms, by removing drops outs and speed issues with broadband and giving a much better voice service, than the current copper network.*

*While this may be a big change, we believe it's one for the better and in the long term our customers across the UK will feel the benefits of a fully digital network.*

*I'm genuinely sorry for any concern caused to Ms Henderson, however I hope she is reassured both villages have a fibre service available now and the changes we are making long term should benefit them. If you need anything further, please get in touch with me."*

The CC is requested by Wendy Chamberlain's office to consider the response and to follow up with a discussion. It was also suggested that the CC provide either a definitive list of names and addresses or the number of residents of Ceres, Craigrothie and Chance Inn residents that are having issues with connectivity.

The CC is not satisfied with the BT Openreach response, which does not provide any assurance that the current unacceptable connectivity will be redressed at any time in the foreseeable future, and will continue to pursue an improvement and full fibre access for all residents.