



Clydebelt Newsletter and AGM Agenda 19th November 2013

Dear Members,

The AGM of Clydebelt will be held in Trinity Church Hall Roman Road Duntocher at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 19th November.

Dedicated to protecting the environment
of the KILPATRICK HILLS and
surrounding area.

www.clydebelt.org.uk

AGM time again and during the year the committee made the decision to remove from our large membership list all those who had not responded to the request to get in touch by email or send back the tear off strip on the last four AGM newsletters. It was also decided that at this AGM, a membership fee should be discussed and implemented. Perhaps this will further reduce our membership list but we are not prepared to hand deliver nor can we afford to post to disinterested or perhaps even deceased 'members'. If you have received this you must have been in contact in some way, within the last four or five years. Hopefully you will continue your membership when we request Membership fees.

West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan

About every five years local authorities bring out a revised local plan. The one now emerging is, more ominously, being called a Development Plan. These plans set many aspects of overall planning using guidelines and directives from central government. In particular is the designating of land into categories for use such as housing, industrial, retail, green space, green belt. Clydebelt has always examined the draft plans, which are produced for public consultation, in particular to see what changes are being proposed in removal of greenbelt or open space for housing. Once land is allocated for a specific purpose it is very difficult to prevent that development subsequently taking place. Hence if you have objection to the outline development on a piece of land the objection must be made at the formation of the plan and is unlikely to succeed if you only object when a specific application is submitted after the plan is in force. Representations on the new proposed plan must be submitted by November 29th. Unresolved objections are adjudicated by a planner from the Scottish Government's Reporters Department.

Of concern in Duntocher is the proposed removal of 'Duntiglenan Fields' from green belt. This was attempted at the current local plan consultation some five years ago. A builder wanted the greenbelt removed and local residents (and Clydebelt) were arguing for its retention. The reporter judged on the side of the residents. So what has changed? Last year the council put out a consultation document asking for comment on major issues including the removal of green belt from several sites including this one. Clydebelt tried to bring it to member's attention at the time, but as mentioned above, most members had not bothered to get in touch with their contact details. Only three objections were received, including Clydebelt's, and this has perhaps given the planners the impression there was little opposition and Duntiglenan was a site they could attempt to remove from green belt. Government directives have also changed and local authorities are being encouraged to stimulate the building industry and economy by release of green belt. Duntiglenan is being promoted for up to 100 houses. To see and comment on any aspect of the proposed local plan use this link, or go direct to the WDC website or see documents in the planning office at Rosebery Place and perhaps libraries. **Deadline is 29th November.**

<http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/planning-and-the-environment/planning-and-building-standards/local-development-planning/local-development-plan/#.Unq9FuLxAlI>

Clydebelt will be making comment on this and other aspects of the proposed plan

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of last AGM
3. Matters arising
4. Secretary's report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Election of committee
7. Current Issues-Local Plan
8. Future Plans & Membership Fee
9. A.O.C.B.

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Refreshments
Tea, coffee, biscuits

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**Talk by Paula Baker R.S.P.B
Local RSPB Reserves**

Sheep Hill

Nothing seems to have happened for almost a year. At a planning meeting last December, changes in the conditions of quarrying brought about by a Revision of Mineral Permissions (ROMP) were not agreed and deferred to a future meeting and subsequently delayed again.

Clydebelt and others were trying to reverse the planning permission given in 1949 and re-approved in 2005, to remove Sheep Hill and its Iron Age fort, a listed ancient monument. We have written to Scottish Government planners and local MSPs but nothing seems to be happening.

More on our blog site and previous newsletters. (Web address below).

Kilpatrick Hills Forest Design and Recreational Plans

It's not all bad news regarding the Kilpatricks. **Forestry Commission Scotland** are well on with their plans and have held a number of consultations to consider routes and access points for walkers, mountain bikers and horse riders. The aim is to try to keep everything as 'low key' as possible but still promote a 'wilderness experience' to the one million people who stay within about ten mile radius. Rumours that a timber extraction road might be made right across the Hills have been discounted. Timber from the plantations above Bowling and Milton will come out to the A82 via the Sheephill Quarry road at Dunglass roundabout.

East and West Dunbartonshire Councils are proposing to designate the Kilpatrick Hills as a **Local Landscape Area (LLA)** in their respective Development Plans. This will help to manage change and the protection of the area's special qualities. Along with SNH they have produced a draft '**Statement of Importance**' identifying its extent, describing the landscape character, including those qualities identified as special and explaining the reasons for the designation.

http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/2589585/proposed_kilpatricks_hills_local_landscape_area_-_draft_statement_of_importance.pdf

Lang Craigs Woodland and Overtoun House

Roy Barlow of the Woodland Trust has been trying to make arrangements with the Pastor Bob Hill at Overtoun House for toilet facilities to be available for the public. The house is let by the Council to an American Christian group for £1 per year. They originally asked for a 99 year lease. The local community council, Clydebelt and a few others went to court to try to stop this, but under threat of having to pay the Council's court costs, if we lost the case, settled for a 35 year lease. The group is now advertising bed & breakfasts, wedding and conference facilities etc. They have to maintain and repair the property which like many WDC properties was badly neglected (Have a look at Balloch Castle!)

The possibility to have had an outdoor/heritage/activities/café/ranger centre etc.etc. perhaps associated with a regional country park like Muirshiel or Country Park like Mugdock has been lost. There is a café on Friday and Saturdays in winter 10.00-4.00. Worth a visit and walk round the grounds and Lang Craigs- one of the Kilpatricks finest walks. <http://overtounhouse.com/> <http://www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk>
<http://www.mugdock-country-park.org.uk/>

Merkins Wind Farm

At last this has come before the Planning Committee and turned out to be a bit of a cliff-hanger. The council planners were recommending refusal, perhaps due to strong objections from Scottish National Heritage, the National Park, Friends of Loch Lomond and many others. Only six councillors attended and one declared an interest and withdrew. Cllr. Agnew and Provost McAllister voted for refusal and put up good cases why it was against the planning regulations. Cllr. McColl and O'Neill voted for the application to be passed claiming it had little visual impact on the landscape and emphasising the benefits the developers might bestow on the local community. Our interpretation is that monetary or similar gain is no way to judge a planning application; it must first sit within the planning guidelines. Fortunately, with the casting vote Cllr. Gail Casey was firmly against. Clydebelt had also objected mainly on the grounds of visual effect of the turbines on the Kilpatrick Hills and views from and to the National Park. It was a test case, if passed it would be difficult to prevent similar wind farms all over the Kilpatricks. The developer will, no doubt, go to appeal.

Posties Park Objections to building on this have to be in by Nov. 14th **See our blog site**

Our Blog site ---we have a link at <http://clydebeltblog.weebly.com/index.html>

For more information on some of the above and other topics visit the blog section on our web site.

There is a Kilpatrick Hills section at www.flickr.com/group/kilpatrick-hills/ with some remarkable pictures.

If you have any interest in these topics or any other aspects of the Kilpatrick Hills and the environment of surrounding areas, please come along to the **AGM, November 19th 7.30 Trinity Church Duntocher**, member or not we will be glad of your support and are willing to listen to your concerns.

Please come and show your support and hear our speaker Paula Baker from the R.S.P.B