



Main news in brief

No change to Kinross-shire boundaries

The Kinross-shire electoral ward is expected to remain as it is following the publication of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland's reports and recommendations to Scottish Ministers in late May.

As part of its Fifth Statutory Review, the LGBCS had proposed that part of the Kinross-shire ward should be split off and put with the Almond & Earn ward, and that the number of Kinross-shire councillors should be reduced from four to three.

However, following the public consultation period, which saw over 200 people comment on the Kinross-shire ward proposals, the LGBCS now recommends that the Kinross-shire ward boundaries should remain as they are, and that the ward should continue to have four councillors.

The September and October 2015 issues of the Newsletter carried several articles on this subject, including detailed research and analysis by Councillor Cuthbert, which assisted members of the public making representation to the LGBCS.

For more on this, see Councillor reports on pages 6 and 23.

91 houses to be built at former High School site

Persimmon Homes have been granted planning permission to create 91 houses at the former Kinross High School site. 87 of these will be new-build houses and four dwellings will be created from an existing school building.

An application by Persimmon to demolish all the school buildings and erect 102 houses was refused in spring 2014.

With the application that was granted consent on 8 June 2016, the section of the school building fronting Kinross High Street will be retained and converted to four houses. This building dates from 1906 and is described in the Council's Conservation Area appraisal as a key building of interest.

Kinross CC and Kinross-shire Civic Trust objected to the planning application, as the number of houses proposed is higher than the allocation of 70 in the Local Plan. Both organisations also expressed concerns at the lack of information provided by the developer regarding materials, finishes and the lack of detail in the plans for the Edwardian building.

For more on this, see pages 6, 7 and 17.

New Kinross Primary School gets planning permission

Planning permission has been granted for the new Kinross Primary School, to be built on the playing field in the grounds of the existing primary school.

Permission was granted by delegated powers, i.e. the application was approved by planning officers rather than going to the Development Management Committee of councillors.

The school lane that runs from Station Road to Bowton Road is expected to be closed for 18 months as from 4 July 2016 while construction work takes place.

For more on this, see Councillor report on page 17.

Late-breaking news

Good news for Kinross-shire

Kinross-shire is set to benefit from last minute changes to the Perth & Kinross Council budget agreed at a full council meeting on 22 June.

Following lengthy discussions with officers, the other opposition groups and the SNP administration, local independent Councillors Mike Barnacle and Dave Cuthbert managed to get four items added to the budget proposals, which subsequently gained cross-party support.

The first item to be added to the budget was £500,000 for cemetery extensions. The reason behind this is that both Kinross North and Orwell cemeteries are approaching capacity with no expansion space planned. Portmoak has one lair remaining with no expansion space. The councillors felt it would be wrong for Kinross-shire folk to have to be buried in Perth.

Secondly, road safety initiatives to the value of £300,000 were added to the budget. The four local members have a list of 46 outstanding items relating to road safety, some of which date back to 2012. In addition, they are petitioning for a safe crossing in Kinross town centre and have been told it will take at least 2 years to achieve as this year's road safety budget is fully spent already.

The third item is the traffic upgrade, signals and renewal programme. This had been excluded by officers from the budget but Councillors Barnacle and Cuthbert felt it was important to maintain traffic infrastructure and so requested that £300,000 be put back in the budget for this.

All the above funds will be phased over several years.

Finally, and most importantly, after many years of campaigning, Councillor Barnacle has managed, with the help of Councillor Cuthbert, to persuade the administration to budget for mitigation measures on the A977 to help manage traffic flow on 'the forgotten road'. £600,000 will be spent in two phases.

£100,000 will be spent in 2017/18 on speed limits and speed-activated signs for the villages on the A977 along with significant gateway features to the villages to help inform road users that they are entering a village environment.

On top of this, £500,000 is budgeted for 2018/19 to provide a large roundabout at the A977/B9097 junction between Crook of Devon and Drum. (27% of the vehicles using this section of the road are HGVs, buses, goods vehicles and vans and the A977 carries the highest number of vehicles of any A class road which is not trunked in Perth & Kinross.)

These projects are to be funded by reducing the budget proposal for Perth City Centre Placemaking (e.g. lighting buildings) by £1.1 million and a reduction in ICT infrastructure of £600,000.

These concessions were agreed with the administration in collaboration with the Labour, Liberal Democrat and Conservative groups who supported the recommendations.

Councillors Barnacle and Cuthbert were delighted that these projects were included in the administration's motion, with Councillor Barnacle commenting, "I returned home from the budget debate with a rare sense of achievement!"