

## Betty Shaw

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**From:** Betty Shaw  
**Sent:** 27 November 2014 13:13  
**To:** Nick Brian; Ian Innes  
**Cc:** Councillor John Kellas; Councillor Dave Cuthbert; Councillor Joe Giacomazzi; Councillor William Robertson; Councillor Michael Barnacle;  
**Subject:** 'michaelabarnacle@gmail.com'  
**Attachments:** Quality and Standard of Planning Reports, Relations with Community Councils etc.  
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Sent on behalf of Councillor Michael Barnacle

Dear Colleagues

### Quality and Standard of Planning Reports, Relations with Community Councils etc.

Further to our meeting on 9 September 2014 and in advance of the Planning Policy and Practise MOWG on 2 December 2014, I write to summarise issues of concern that have led to previous media comment on the above in an effort to suggest improvements that should be discussed in the foreseeable future; I apologise for the delay with this submission.

It is important to stress that the Press comments in June 2014 that led to complaints and investigation were selective. I also know that community representatives and other elected members have commented both in the Press and at Development Management Committee regarding inaccuracies, misrepresentations and omissions in reports being presented; since the process is quasi-judicial it is essential that all pertinent facts are in the public domain in advance of any decision, thus avoiding many bad ones. The three planning decisions in Kinross-shire that I highlighted clearly demonstrate issues of concern viz

1. Formation of a gypsy/traveller site at Crook Moss on 9 October 2013 – the subject of a separate letter to Planning on 17 November 2014, particularly in relation to enforcement of conditions.
2. Erection of two houses on edge of settlement of Keltybridge on 19 March 2014.
3. Demolition of former Kinross High School and residential development on 14 May 2014 – the subject of considerable comment from, and meetings with, fellow local councillors since, especially on a perceived conflict of interest.

Whilst I accept there is a balance to be struck between the pressure to speed up decision-making from central government and the quality of report needed to base a good decision upon, I suggest it is the latter aspect that should be paramount. Clearly officers' reports from Perth and Kinross Council services (especially conservation) and letters from statutory consultees, if detailed, should be included in planning reports and available in the public domain. The recent amended motion at Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee on 12 November 2014 and the Protocol of October 2014 require clarification.

Site visits seem difficult to facilitate, often involving numerous requests. Site history in reports should be more detailed i.e. whether approvals or refusals are delegated, committee or reporter's decisions.

Closer liaison between development management and forward planning is required, particularly where supplementary guidance is a work-in-progress or there is a conflict on policy priorities and precedence (i.e. Keltymbridge decision afore-mentioned). Where a planning permission is extant, no documents should have been removed from the files that could make enforcement difficult.

We should review the Perth and Kinross Council neighbour notification rules and operation, particularly for wind energy development, since I regard the 20 metre rule set by government as inadequate.

More local input from community councils and local members, with more weight being given to their views on planning matters is integral to the democratic process. There is a strong argument for facilitating improvements in this area. I would suggest again reconsideration of area devolved committees, as practised in other authorities, at least on a pilot basis. Planning officers could meet with local ward members to discuss contentious applications, a process commencing in Kinross-shire on 27<sup>th</sup> instant.

The attached paper from my ward colleague, Councillor Cuthbert, with his thoughts on improving the process contains many suggestions that I find currency with and which deserves detailed consideration.

Both through correspondence and comment from elected members, coupled with representations reported from planning workshops for communities, there is a clear desire for Perth and Kinross Council to address concerns in these areas. I believe a combination of the Planning MOWG and monthly management meetings of planning officers should enable us to make progress in improving matters so that the communities we seek to represent can have confidence in our planning system, through the empowerment envisaged in recent Scottish Government initiatives.

Kind Regards  
Councillor Mike Barnacle  
Independent Member for Perth and Kinross-shire