

KEMBHILL PARK FLOOD GROUP

Meeting Note

Inaugural Meeting 14/09/16

Present:

Brian McRitchie, Margaret Cheyne, David Cheyne, Lillian MacNicol, Mary Buchan, Sandy Sievwright, Eileen Fordyce, Alex King, Muriel King, E Meldrum, J Meldrum, AnnaBella Milne, Helen Chalmers, Jude Galas, Kerry Cairns, Alan Davies, Estelle Davies, Lucy Brydon, Sasha Brydon, Alan Knox, Brian Anderson, Brenda Anderson, Alastair Gill, Michelle Shek, Paul Shek, Irene Ferguson, Gordon Middleton, Keith Milne, Paul Hendy (Scottish Flood Forum), Gavin Penman (Aberdeenshire Council), John MacNicol, Tony Webb, Sharon Webb, Mike Middler, Jim Buchan, Ken Ledingham.

Agenda:

1. Welcome/Introduction, Jim Buchan

Jim Buchan welcomed those present and set the scene for the meeting by commenting on the following:

Jim explained the purpose for this meeting was to formally constitute the Kembhill Park Flood Group by adopting the proposed constitution and elect a committee with office bearers and members. All interested residents, he explained, can be a member of the Group but only the committee members will meet on a regular basis to conduct its business and keep the whole group informed.

Some people have been in touch to say that they are interested in becoming members but said they could not come this evening and have passed on completed membership forms.

Jim also thanked the people who had volunteered to progress the business of this group in the months since the flood.

Why have a KPFG?

Jim explained that a small group of concerned residents have already been meeting regularly and have initiated a number of activities.

- The Petition – to raise awareness about the cause of the flood.
- Letters to Aberdeenshire Council – to raise various issues and start a dialog about getting the flood defences improved.
- Documentary research – concerning the existing flood defence and the Sewage Works.
- Correspondence to our MSP.

- Collecting and distributing copies of various newspaper articles.
- Letters to Scottish Water and SEPA.
- Setting up an Email list to keep residents informed.

Jim explained that other parts of Kemnay have a residents association and that the flood has raised the need for a unified voice to have more influence with bodies like the Council and Scottish Water as well as providing a link with other organisations such as the Community Council.

The flood he said had focused peoples minds on the need to coordinate efforts to get our flood defences fixed.

By having a formally constituted organisation he suggested we can better access other resources and services such as-

- Apply for grants
- Achieve Charity Status (Not for Profit)
- Gain access to better communications facilities such as Word O365
- Be seen as a voice for the community with a mandate from it
- Most important keep the community informed and listen to residents' concerns

Not all houses he said had been flooded but all Kembhill Park residents were at risk so anything the KPFG could do to reduce the risk of a further incident is well worth doing and we will be better prepared if there is a next time! Jim said that we need to have a group of people who can put together procedures to prepare for a future flood event by organising Flood Wardens, arranging for the deployment of temporary defences, coordinating helpers, etc. It is worth noting he thought that the community's response to the flooding had been tremendous. It was amazing he said to see young and older people coming together and supporting each other. This was celebrated when KPFG had a residents' BBQ, the organisation of which was also supported by the Kemnay Parish church and Graham Collie.

Jim indicated that there is a need to set up a Flood Warden scheme with volunteers being trained to provide the most effective support in the event of a future flood event and said this was a major piece of work for the Committee.

Jim stated that KPFG needs to keep pressing to get a permanent solution to the inadequacies of the existing flood barrier.

It is easy to see what is needed and the Council's current initiative to provide a temporary solution is a positive step towards getting the result we all need. Any interim solution is welcome but we need to work together towards getting a robust permanent answer to the problem.

It is clear he said that we need to be recognised as a PVA so that we can have access to the resources needed to fix the current inadequate situation. We are aware the SEPA is conducting a review at present but to become a PVA a flood risk study is needed to assess that risk and make decisions as soon as possible.

2. Adoption of constitution

All

Jim introduced the draft constitution and explained why it was necessary to establish a formal group membership.

He indicated that there would be opportunities for discussion about the proposed constitution before it was put forward for adoption.

Gordon Middleton interjected at this point and said he wanted to circulate a paper which he had written about his understanding about the sequence of events which led to the flood.

Jim asked the residents present if they wanted to consider Gordon's paper at this point by abandoning the agenda item to approve the constitution. One of the residents interjected and suggested that we should proceed to adopt the constitution and then have a discussion about Gordon's paper.

Gordon insisted that he wanted to see the constitution altered with regard to the clauses which related to the expulsion of committee members at the discretion of a majority of committee members and thought these clauses were deliberately aimed at people such as himself who held different views to the KPFG.

After discussion it was agreed to alter the wording of three clauses so that the membership, not the committee, will have the power to expel a member if circumstances warrant such action. This can be done at either a Special General Meeting or at the Annual General Meeting.

After agreement to incorporate the changes discussed to the constitution, Jim asked the people present to signal their approval of the modified version of the constitution by raising their hands. There were no objections raised so the modified constitution was adopted by a unanimous vote and the meeting progressed to the election of Office bearers as follows.

3. Election of office bearers

All

Office	Nominee	Proposer	Seconders	Vote
Chairman	Ken Ledingham	Jim Buchan	John MacNicol	No objections
Secretary	Jim Buchan	Ken Ledingham	John MacNicol	No objections
Treasurer	John MacNicol	Ken Kedingham	Judith Galus	No objections
Member 1	Steve Gill	Ken Ledingham	Greg Galus	No objections
Member 2	Judith Galus	John MacNicol	Ken Ledingham	No objections

Member 3	Helen Chalmers	Ken Ledingham	Judith Galus	No objections
Member 4	Alistair Gill	Margaret Cheyne	Michelle Shek	No objections
Co-Opted Ex-Officio Member	Irene Ferguson	Ken Ledingham	Jim Buchan	No objections

4. Membership fees

All

Jim Buchan introduced this item and asked if KPFG should have a nominal membership fee to help cover operational costs. Ken had proposed £1.00 for the membership fee. Discussion took place and it was agreed that a fee was necessary and it was agreed that the sum of £5.00 per year be adopted. There were no objections.

5. AOCB

All

One resident commented about the Watergate barrier and said he was not impressed with the demonstration which took place recently. Paul Hendy intervened and indicated that the barrier was a very effective piece of kit and had been tested worldwide. Residents would not be expected to stand near the river to deploy the barrier which would need to be in place well before a flood was expected. In view of the time scale involved in getting a permanent solution Jim suggested that we should accept the interim solution being offered by the Council. Gordon again raised the issue of the existing flood bund and whether part of it was removed at some point. He asserted that he had been prevented from sharing this information with residents. Jim indicated that he had a number of emails where he had invited Gordon to share any new evidence or information which proved that what he was saying had any merit but that Gordon had not provided this information until this evening when he had tabled his paper. Jim said that he looked forward to reading the paper to see what new evidence Gordon had discovered.

At the request from other residents present it was agreed to move on to item 6.

6. Watergate flood barrier proposal, Gavin Penman, Aberdeenshire Council

Gavin Penman then gave a presentation about the Council provisions for flood risk assessment in Aberdeenshire and outlined the background to their work.

He indicated that the legislation governing what they could do was the Flood Risk Management(Scotland) Act 2009 and outlined a number of key points about the situation in Kemnay as follows

- SEPA does not consider Kemnay to be a PVA at present but is likely to do so in the next review which they are conducting at present. This is not due to be completed until 2019 at the earliest.
- The Council's current flood risk alleviation plan for areas in Aberdeenshire which have been designated PVAs covers the period 2016 to 2022. Kemnay is not on that list as it is not designated a PVA.
- The Council can do other works at their discretion but require the approval of SEPA before they can do anything of a permanent nature.
- Gavin then turned to what the Council can do to assist areas hit by flooding.
- First of all he said they can issue flood warnings so that residents can take precautions where it is possible to do so.
- Gavin said that the Council is in the process of building up a flood plan for Kemnay as there is not one already in place.
- In an emergency he indicated the Council will provide sandbags which it was acknowledged were of little use at Kembhill Park due to the construction of the houses.
- Flood warnings he explained were the responsibility of SEPA and work is currently being done to improve flood warning times for Kemnay
- In the meantime, he indicated that residents should sign up for the SEPA Flood Line so that they will automatically get flood alerts and warnings
- The Council he said is providing the Watergate flood barrier as a temporary measure but the community will have to be involved in planning how this device might be deployed. He indicated that discussions were taking place in the Council's legal department about issues of insurance liability but did not think this process should take too long.

Ken invited questions from those present as follows

- One resident asked about the length of time it would take to obtain the Watergate flood barrier since many local authorities in England were purchasing such equipment at this time following an injection of money from the Government and we might experience a delay in getting the barrier. Gavin indicated that he did not think there would be a problem once the order had been placed.
- On being asked why Ballater had been added to the Council's list of priorities for the period 2016 to 2022 he indicated that politics had played a part in that decision.
- Gordon then asked if the Council could reinstate the flood barrier Gavin indicated that the Council cannot do anything of a permanent nature until Kemnay is declared a PVA and a comprehensive flood risk study is carried out.
- Irene explained to the attendees that a letter had been sent to Aberdeenshire Council requesting a Flood Risk Assessment for Kemnay overall and asked Gavin when a response would be received. Gavin stated that a response to KCC would be sent next day.

Due to the meeting overrunning there was no time to address all of the questions which KPFG had put to the Council about the Watergate barrier and Gavin agreed that he would give a written response to these questions as soon as possible.

There being no further questions Jim closed the meeting by thanking everyone who had attended and said that he looked forward to working with everyone who had signed up to become members of KPFG. He also encouraged those residents who had not yet filled in a membership form to do so and return these to him.

7. **Date of next KPFG meeting-** to be arranged