



Cambuslang Community Council

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Chair: John Taylor • Vice-Chair: David Thomson • Secretary: Hamish B. Allan • Treasurer: John Bachtler

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Mr Lindsay Freeland
Chief Executive, South Lanarkshire Council
Administration Services, Council Offices,
Almada Street
Hamilton ML3 0AA

20 August 2015

Dear Mr Freeland,

Participation request – Douglas Park (Stewarton Drive / Douglas Drive)

I am writing on behalf of Cambuslang Community Council with a formal request to participate in the decision-making process concerning the future status and use of the site at the corner of Stewarton Drive and Douglas Drive, known locally as Douglas Park, in Cambuslang, and for the Community Council to be formally involved **before** the sale of the site goes ahead.

Specifically, we would like to be consulted on the future status (in terms of planning and development) and use (as greenspace or other usage) of Douglas Park.

The reasons why Cambuslang Community Council considers that it should participate in this process are as follows.

- (a) Cambuslang Community Council is a statutory body which has the general purpose to ascertain, co-ordinate and express to South Lanarkshire Council the views of the community of Cambuslang in relation to matters for which South Lanarkshire Council are responsible.
- (b) In the specific matter of Douglas Park, Cambuslang Community Council is aware of extensive local concern in the community about the planned sale of Douglas Park especially in those areas of the community close to, and most directly affected by, the proposed sale. The local community have made numerous representations to Cambuslang Community Council requesting it to represent their views to South Lanarkshire Council both with respect to the immediate proposal for the sale of Douglas Park and also its future status and usage
- (c) To date, there has been no consultation by South Lanarkshire Council of the local community in the matter of the proposed sale of Douglas Park, either via Cambuslang Community Council or with the residents of Stewarton Drive, Douglas Drive and neighbouring streets. We have not received a reply to our letter of 11 August 2015 requesting an early meeting on this issue.

- (d) Preliminary research and enquiry have indicated serious questions about the way in which the proposed sale of the Douglas Park site is being conducted by South Lanarkshire Council, which, *inter alia*, including concerns that:
- the status of the site, which is inalienable common good property and amenity greenspace, has been misrepresented in the marketing brief;
 - the development of the site would be counter to the Local Development Plan;
 - there are issues concerning the gifting of the land to South Lanarkshire Council and from which the Council is arguably seeking to profit at the community's expense;
 - there has been an apparent failure to identify and protect a right of way across the site; and
 - there has been a failure to protect amenity greenspace under Scottish Government planning guidance on open space.

All of these issues require further investigation, clarification and discussion with representatives of the community.

- (e) South Lanarkshire Council have not considered all options for the future of the site. Local residents have asked Cambuslang Community Council to register with South Lanarkshire Council the community interest in buying the site. They are also willing to discuss other options for the management of the site, which would potentially deliver an improved outcome.

Cambuslang Community Council has the following knowledge, expertise and experience which are relevant to the future of the site:

- (a) it has local knowledge about the state of Douglas Park and other amenity greenspace in Cambuslang, its usage by, and value to, local residents;
- (b) it has long-standing expertise and experience of open space and amenity greenspace issues and has access to expertise on landscape management, horticulture, law, accountancy, planning and other professional skills relevant for the future status and use of Douglas Park;
- (c) it has previous experience of the establishment and operation of community-based groups to improve greenspace, most recently through the creation of Friends of Holmhill Wood Community Park and long-standing collaboration with Friends of Cambuslang Park; and
- (d) it has processes and resources for effective consultation and representation of the local residents with an interest in Douglas Park.

Lastly, Cambuslang Community Council is seeking a decision on the status and sustainable use of the Douglas Park site that is acceptable to the local community. Specifically, this would involve the retention of the site in public ownership, maintenance of the site as a community-owned asset or as a partnership between the local residents and South Lanarkshire, and an improvement in the quality of the greenspace (through voluntary and other fund-raising) to return the site to its former state (with flower-beds, park benches, children's play equipment etc).


We would hope that South Lanarkshire Council share our concern to find a solution that is acceptable to the local community in line with the national and local commitments to community empowerment and consultation, not least under the obligations on public bodies that will soon be in force under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

We therefore request the immediate participation of Cambuslang Community Council in the process of determining the future of the Douglas Park site. To enable this to take place, we request that South Lanarkshire Council immediately withdraw the site from the sale process and begin discussion with Cambuslang Community Council.

We note that time is of the essence and look forward to hearing from you at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,



 John Taylor
Chair, Cambuslang Community Council

cc.

Cllr Russell Clearie
Cllr Clare McColl
Cllr Richard Tullet
Ann Gee, SLC Head of Housing & Technical Resources
Geraldine McCann, SLC Head of Legal Services
Douglas Park residents action group