

Minutes of Meeting of Elie and Royal Burgh of Earlsferry Community Council held on 7th July 2026 at Earlsferry Town Hall

Present: Carol Birrell (Acting Chair), Angela Anderson, Grizelda Cowan, Kirsty Barclay, Christian Aitken, Richard Smith and Alison Christian (virtually), Alistair Graham, Co-opted members George Cowan and Nicky Nicholson, and Paul Doran from Cruden Homes

Apologies: Cath McIntosh,

Declarations of interest: none

Purpose of the meeting: To discuss planning application 26/01491/ARC* and decide by vote what action, if any should be taken by EECC

Carol opened the meeting by welcoming approximately 60 members of the public and explained that as Statutory Consultee Elie and Earlsferry Community Council has the opportunity to submit formal comments on this planning application. She explained that, having already identified several aspects of the application that cause concern, the plan would be to introduce each one and give members of the public the opportunity to express their views. It is well understood that the principal concern is that regarding our failing sewage system and how an extra 86 houses could only make matters worse and it was agreed that we would address that particular concern last.

Housing Numbers

In the 2023 PIP Condition 10 limited the total number of homes on the site to 55 unless otherwise agreed by the planning authority. The proposal has now increased from 55 to 86 homes, an increase of approximately 58%. Although it is accepted that there may be benefits, including additional affordable housing, which is linked to the overall number of units, the first two phases alone are estimated to bring around 590 additional residents to the village, almost doubling our current population.

If a similar increase were applied to the proposed third phase east of Wadeslea, the total development could approach 490 homes, potentially bringing more than 1,200 additional residents. Whether or not that ultimately occurs, it represents an important precedent that deserves careful consideration.

Paul Doran assured the meeting that a broad mix of housing would be applied but there is to be no formal plan to ensure that the new owners would necessarily be 'local'. The range of accommodation was proposed as:

10 retirement homes

20 affordable through Woodhaven Homes which would be for rent or discounted sales for the which the Rural Burden Housing would apply

10 Kingdom homes for rent

40 private homes of varying sizes

Paul explained that 55 houses on such a large site would not be appropriate as it would not constitute value for Crudens and that, by increasing the number to 86, the strategy would be to provide a wide mix of housing rather than larger, more expensive houses.

Concern was expressed over the impact on the GP practice. Paul assured the meeting that the Health Board, as a Consultee would have a say in the matter. Concern was also expressed over lack of jobs in the area for prospective buyers and the question was asked if there really is a demand for that number of houses in Elie. Paul explained that that is not a matter for developers.

It was suggested that 55 houses could go in a smaller space but Paul explained that that was not an option.

An invited show of hands from the visitors was practically unanimous that there is no support for the increased number of houses from 55 to 86.

Road safety and general infrastructure

There are also significant concerns regarding road safety within the Wadeslea area. These include Construction traffic, visibility at the junction with the High Street from Wadeslea Road onto the A917

and the proposed entrance at the south-east corner of Wadeslea. Congestion is already considered to be a problem by the Roads Department along the length of Wadeslea Road with the increasing number of motorhome and campervan traffic.

There was a general consensus that Cruden hadn't necessarily considered traffic with regard to the busy summer season and it was suggested they visit during this season to fully understand the scale of how the village changes during the summer

Paul assured the meeting that there was to be a traffic management plan. He was asked what consideration has been given to time and flow of construction traffic particularly during busy times. He explained that Crudens are used to building in sensitive areas and that he didn't see it causing a significant increase in traffic – 1-2% increase based on experience in other sites. It was noted that the traffic census was conducted in 2022 based on a population of 700 rather than noting that the population rises to over 4000 at times. It was expressed that there is already considerable congestion around Wadeslea and concern was voiced regarding traffic accessing Wadeslea to and from the new development as the original plan had showed all traffic entering from the A917 and having only pedestrian traffic through Wadeslea.

The meeting was unanimous in expressing extreme concern over perceived traffic problems.

Lack of green space and houses with very small gardens

The plans show relatively small gardens, which some may feel are more appropriate in an urban environment than in a small coastal village. The amount of publicly accessible green space appears limited, with much of the open area comprising the Sustainable Urban Drainage System rather than usable recreational space. The required children's play area does not form part of this phase of the development. However, the potential number of new children has grown. Most seemed to agree that the lack of green space seemed to be a direct result of the increased housing numbers

It was suggested that the area originally proposed for the care home could be used as that still belongs to Elie Estate and is not part of the Cruden development site .

It was pointed out the frequent comparison with Longniddry is irrelevant as Elie and Longniddry are very different.

The all-important question was asked – ‘What was the point of the PIP when the new proposals are so different?’ and received applause from the whole room.

Sewage concerns

We believed that this development would finally provide the catalyst for long-overdue improvements to our ageing sewerage infrastructure. The issue has generated substantial correspondence, involved our MSPs and MPs, and is now the subject of an investigation by Environmental Standards Scotland. At their recent public consultation, Cruden Homes assured residents that their proposed Sustainable Urban Drainage System, or SuDS, would ensure that the development would not make existing sewerage problems worse.

However, the Drainage Impact Assessment remains in draft form and, according to experts advising the Harbour Trust, contains significant shortcomings. Nevertheless, it also contains sufficient technical evidence to support the Harbour Trust's objection.

Among the concerns that have been raised are:

- Before a single new home is built, the Harbour overflow spills approximately **57 times each year** and Cadgers Wynd around **61 times each year**, together discharging annually almost **37 million litres of untreated combined sewage** close to our bathing water.
- All three village combined sewer overflows already fail the industry's **Formula A compliance standard**, indicating that the network is currently non-compliant.
- Without effective mitigation, the development is predicted to increase spill volumes by up to **20%**, increase flooding at manholes throughout the village, and increase flows to the treatment works by up to **18.6%**.
- The proposed mitigation consists of approximately one-third of a football pitch of additional surface water removal, around **39 metres** of enlarged sewer pipe and a **7 cubic metre** storage tank. Even if these measures perform exactly as intended, the system is still predicted to experience around **118 overflow spills each year**.

A recent letter from Wendy Chamberlain MP states that Scottish Water believes the current infrastructure can continue to be managed through regular maintenance and that the need for wider infrastructure upgrades has not yet been demonstrated.

The Harbour Trust has, however, been pursuing this issue with Scottish Water for several years. Information obtained through Freedom of Information requests records **115 annual spills** from the Harbour combined sewer overflow, including spills during dry weather, suggesting insufficient network capacity.

Monitoring of Scottish Water's own overflow map since March 2026 indicates that all three combined sewer overflows have continued to spill with similar frequency, including during dry weather. This information has been sufficient for Environmental Standards Scotland to escalate the matter with SEPA and Scottish Water as a potential issue of non-compliance with environmental law.

In addition, our water supply is increasingly failing. It is accepted that Crudens are reliant on Scottish Water Horizons, the argument is based on flawed data - our argument is with Scottish Water and Fife Council rather than with Cruden Homes who, in turn, have to rely on the DIA from Scottish Water. A member of the public expressed that the CC MUST represent the wishes of the whole community. A member of the public informed the meeting that the Loch Run is in dire need of repair. There is grade 5 damage to the culvert and a large section cannot be surveyed. It is currently under investigation and this needs to be completed before it can be used for surface water from the development's SuDS.

We were reminded of the Condition 3 set by FC in the 2023 PIP:

"3. NO WORKS SHALL COMMENCE ON SITE until confirmation that the requisite upgrading of the sewer system is going ahead and the timetable for this is submitted for the written approval of the planning authority. This shall sit alongside a requirement from Scottish Water for a drainage impact assessment to fully understand the mitigation required. Unless otherwise agreed in writing with Fife Council as planning authority, no unit shall be occupied on site until the upgrading of the sewer system is complete.

The room agreed unanimously that Cruden's plan is inadequate and that an upgrade to the entire village sewerage system by Scottish Water is required prior to the development going ahead.

Community Council members discussion and action

At this stage most of the visitors left the meeting leaving about 15 members of the public to witness the Community Council's decision on action. Paul Doran also left the meeting and we thanked him for his contribution to the meeting.

It was universally agreed among the CC that no one is opposed to the principle of building new homes in Elie especially as some of these homes are to be 'affordable. However, it was agreed that there are several issues causing considerable concern within the application – as had been well demonstrated in the earlier part of the meeting and it was accepted that we have a duty to act according to the wishes of the whole community.

It was agreed that a comprehensive letter listing our concerns and demands be written and sent to FC Planning as in our role of Statutory Consultee. It was agreed that this should be compiled with some urgency by Alistair, Carol, Angela and Grizelda who would email it to FC planning by 14th July. This letter will be posted on our EECC website and it is expected that it will appear on the FC planning portal quickly.

A further vote was taken to decide if we should make a comment via the FC planning portal and it was agreed by a majority that we should submit a comment similar to that in our letter and officially lodge an objection to the application on the grounds already expressed, by 30th July.

The meeting was closed at 10pm.

* Anyone wishing to make a comment on this application, whether in support or opposition, should go the Fife eplanning website - <https://planning.fife.gov.uk/online/> , log in and comment as you wish.