

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the City of Brechin & District Community Council held in Hudson's Bar on Tuesday 7th November 2023 .

David Dewar took the chair welcomed the company, introduced the top table ,and explained the meeting had been called to discuss the recent flooding events.

Present.

Community Councillors, David Dewar, Garry Robertson, Ken Bruce, Douglas Murray, Robin Lee, Leah McLean and Eric Gray
Angus Councillors. Chris Beattie, Jill Scott, Gavin Nicol, Kenny Braes and Beth Whiteside
Mark Armstrong ,Deputy Chief Executive Angus Council
Graeme Dailly, Director of Infrastructure and Environment Angus Council.
Jennifer Anderson. Economic Development Department Angus Council.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received form Telmo Teixeira and Sandra Livingston .

Mark Armstrong and Graeme Dailly gave a resume of events from Thursday 19th October till Sunday 22nd October which saw areas of Brechin flooded and many people evacuated from their homes. The flood defences were designed in 2011 and built in 2014 and 2015 for a one in 200 years event. Due to climate change it is now obviously a much shorter timescale. The flood defence wall was built to contain a river rise of 3.8 metres. The gauge had broken a4.4 metres but it was thought the rise had been around 5 metres. The wall had overtopped around 0300hrs on Friday 20th October.

The chair then opened the meeting to questions from the floor.

It was asked why the wall at the top end of the flood defences near Brechin Castle damaged in a storm in 2015 had not been repaired. Graeme Dailly replied that this wall was not part of the flood defences so was not a priority. It was then stated that this was where the flooding had begun and parts of the town were under water before the wall overtopped .

The wall that collapsed opposite the Brigend Bar was a heritage wall not designed to withstand floods. It was stated that this well had never been properly abutted to the flood defence wall and collapsed due to the pressure of water on River Street .

It was asked if the river could be dredged as far down as the fish farm on Southesk Estate .. The reply was that SEPA had done research into this all over Scotland which showed that dredging would only reduce the river height by millimetres.

There followed a wide ranging discussion in which many opinions were expressed including the planting of trees upstream to try to absorb some of the water before it

reached settlements further down, opening up flood plains to contain the water and building higher flood defences to contain the water.

One resident stated she had lived on River Street for 21 years and this was the 4th time she had been flooded. Other residents said they would not return to their properties but would rather see them demolished. The question of insurance was raised with residents saying they either could not get insurance or the premiums were unaffordable.

A question was asked about help for rehousing affected residents with one person saying they had advised to seek private rentals. Mark Armstrong said the Housing Department was working hard to re home people and the questioner was advised to contact the team working out of the Crickety.

Some business at Eastmill are unable to reopen because the power supply has not been restored. They also need skips to remove the debris. The pumps at Eastmill could not run when the power went off so a generator was sourced to power them. Unfortunately no one knew how to connect the generator to the pump.

The question of how the repairs was going to be financed was aired and the reply was that with widespread damage not only in Brechin but all across the county, especially to housing, roads and bridges .Angus Council did not have the resources to pay for it all. They are in discussion with the Scottish Government over extra finance.

Councillors Braes and Whiteside said that all options would be considered and nothing was off the table but it was important to wait for the results of surveys and modelling in order to ensure that we got it right,

Tribute was paid to the Emergency Services, Council Staff and Volunteers who had worked so hard over the period of the emergency.

A follow up meeting will be arranged probably early in the New Year when the results of the surveys and modelling is known.

David thanked the attendees particularly Mark Armstrong and Graeme Dailly before closing the meeting at 9.10 pm.