

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: DEVELOPMENT OF LAND FOR RESIDENTIAL PURPOSES AT
LAND TO THE NORTH OF ELMVIEW, LARBERT, FOR
GLENBERVIE GOLF CLUB - P/14/0063/PPP
Meeting: PLANNING COMMITTEE
Date: 26 June 2014
Author: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Local Members: Ward - Bonnybridge and Larbert

Baillie Billy Buchanan
Councillor Tom Coleman
Councillor Linda Gow

Community Council: Larbert, Stenhousemuir and Torwood

Case Officer: John Milne, Senior Planning Officer, Ext. 4815

UPDATE REPORT FOLLOWING SITE VISIT

1. Members will recall that this application was originally considered at the Planning Committee on 28 May 2014 (copy of previous report appended), where it was agreed to continue the application for a site visit. This visit took place on 9 June 2014.
2. Following the summary of the proposal by the case officer, clarification was sought in respect of the habitat/ecological status of the application site. It can be confirmed that the site is not covered by any designation relating to habitats or ecology. However, in the emerging Falkirk Local Development Plan, Green Network Opportunity GN25 – Glenbervie to Denny Strategic Route/Corridor – fronts the site. This proposal is an opportunity to provide a missing link within the core path network to enable a circular route between North Broomage and Denny via Glenbervie and Torwood.
3. The development of the site would not adversely impact on the aspirations of Green Network Opportunity GN25, with pedestrian access being taken on the public footpath fronting the site.
4. A further letter has been received from the applicant's agent, confirming the following matters:-
 - A check on the title deeds will be required to establish ownership boundaries but, following a preliminary check, the club's solicitors have advised that the boundary wall that fronts the site, along the Stirling Road from the Clubhouse appears to be owned by the golf club.

- With regard to the issue of errant golf balls raised by Mr Cruickshank of Elmview, having duly considered his position, Glenbervie Golf Club would like to restate the points made previously that they will ensure that suitable ball stop measures will be in place. This will comprise (i) the retention of the existing trees nearest the 17th fairway, which are approximately 10 metres from the boundary of the proposed development, particularly those nearest the 17th tee; (ii) further broad leaf tree planting also to be carried out in this area again as close as possible to the existing and proposed housing development; (iii) this area classified as “out of bounds” to golfers. Consideration will also be given to; (iv) the erection of a metal wire ball stop fence; and (v) the possible slight realignment of the 17th fairway, provided this doesn’t change the integrity of the golf course.
- If the Planning Committee is minded to grant planning permission for this development proposal, the club will accept appropriate planning conditions which address the protection of houses and gardens from miss-hit golf balls.

5. In addition, the applicant’s agent has confirmed that no removal of trees on the site would take place prior to survey and discussions with regard to tree retention/replacement planting with the Planning Authority.

6. Members are respectfully reminded that the layout of 4 dwellinghouses is indicative only and that the number of dwellinghouses and format of layout are not established at this moment in time.

7. **RECOMMENDATION**

7.1 **With no matters further arising that are material to the planning application, it is recommended that the Planning Committee refuse planning permission for the following reasons:**

- (1) **The proposal is contrary to Scottish Planning Policy (May 2010); Falkirk Council Structure Plan Policy ENV1 Countryside and Protected Areas; Falkirk Council Local Plan Policies SC3 Housing Development in the Countryside, Policy EQ19 'Countryside' in that the proposal represents new residential development in a rural location with insufficient justification and therefore fails to meet the terms of Development Plan policy.**

Pp

.....
Director of Development Services

Date: 17 June, 2014

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Planning Application P/14/0063/PPP.
2. Letter of Objection from Alastair Cruickshank, Elmview, Stirling Road, Torwood FK5 4SL received on 5 March 2014.
3. Scottish Planning Policy (May 2010).
4. Falkirk Council Structure Plan.
5. Falkirk Council Local Plan
6. Falkirk Local Development Plan.

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone Falkirk 01324 504815 and ask for John Milne, Senior Planning Officer.

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: DEVELOPMENT OF LAND FOR RESIDENTIAL PURPOSES AT
LAND TO THE NORTH OF ELMVIEW, LARBERT, FOR
GLENBERVIE GOLF CLUB – P/14/0063/PPP
Meeting: PLANNING COMMITTEE
Date: 28 MAY 2014
Author: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Local Members: Ward – Bonnybridge and Larbert

Baillie Billy Buchanan
Councillor Tom Coleman
Councillor Linda Gow

Community Council: Larbert, Stenhousemuir and Torwood

Case Officer: John Milne, Senior Planning Officer, Ext. 4815

1. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL / SITE LOCATION

- 1.1 The application site comprises an area of wooded land to the edge of an existing golf course. The site, some 0.278ha, sits to the north of a small group of residential properties, located parallel to Stirling Road, Torwood.
- 1.2 The applicant proposes, in principle, a development of 4 houses, taking vehicular access from an existing lay-by which runs parallel to Stirling Road. The applicant indicates that vehicular access to the site would be by means of a single access road.
- 1.3 As the application is in principle, no details of house types or definitive housing layout has been submitted nor considered. An indicative plan showing 4 detached dwellinghouses was submitted with the application. A supporting statement was also submitted and is included as Appendix 1 of this report.

2. REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

- 2.1 The application has been referred to the Planning Committee at the request of Councillor Nicol.

3. SITE HISTORY

- 3.1 No site history post 1990.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Scottish Water have no objection to the application.
- 4.2 Falkirk Council's Environmental Health Unit advise that if permission were to be granted the applicant should undertake a noise impact assessment to determine the impact of transportation noise on the development. In addition, in the event that unexpected contamination is encountered following the commencement of development, all work on the affected part of the site should cease and further approach made to the planning authority.
- 4.3 Falkirk Council's Roads and Development Unit advises that the application site is located on the eastern side of the A9, approximately 150m south of Torwood. The A9 at this location is a derestricted unlit distributor road which links North Broomage with Plean. Vehicular access to the proposed site is via an existing adopted layby which runs parallel to the A9 for a length of 180m or thereby.
- 4.4 The layby provides access to several existing residential properties. Therefore, the principle of turning and emerging traffic at this location is well established. Nevertheless, the intensification of traffic onto the A9 is not considered to be in the best interests of road safety. However, should planning permission be granted, a number of suspensive planning conditions are recommended by the Roads Development Unit.
- 4.5 In addition, the Council's Flood Prevention Team has requested submission of a Surface Water Drainage Strategy for review.

5. COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- 5.1 The Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood Community Council object to the planning application for the 4 houses. The proposed site is contrary to the Local Plan as it is outwith the urban boundaries of both Larbert and Torwood on land designated as Countryside under Policy EQ19 of the Falkirk Council Local Plan
- 5.2 The view of the Community Council is that the proposal does not appear to meet the 3 criteria required under Policy SC3 Housing Development in the Countryside of the Falkirk Council Local Plan. The development is not essential for the management of a business which requires a countryside location, it is not a conversion of residential or farm properties, and it does not appear to meet the requirements of infill development.
- 5.3 Finally, the Community Council are aware that the Local Plan has only made provision for small scale growth at 2 housing development sites within the Torwood area – McLaren Park and the Torwood Special School site.

6. PUBLIC REPRESENTATION

- 6.1 One letter of objection has been received by a neighbouring occupier, who raises the following matters:

- It is noted that the site is outwith any urban and village limits and is therefore countryside. The proposal does not conform the policy criteria for new development in the countryside.
- The loss of the existing trees would be detrimental to the rural character of the area as a whole.
- The existing trees provide significant shelter and a visual containment to the adjacent 17th hole on the golf course. If removed, there would be an increase in golf balls finding their way onto existing residential property.
- If the application is approved the proposed plan, albeit indicative only, indicates 4 large detached properties serviced by a cul-de-sac. From the point of view of the setting of the site and the pattern of the nearby existing development, it would be preferable if the houses “fronted” the adjacent layby on the west boundary of the site with minimal front gardens. This would ensure a sense of continuity with existing development and avoid an incongruous presentation of “gables” to Stirling Road. In such a format, it might be possible to retain a wider strip of trees than that shown on the indicative plan. The Council might also wish to consider that with judicious planning and potential reduction in the number of units proposed, that a more significant section of the stand of trees could be retained protecting both the existing and proposed houses from stray golf balls. Another possibility is for the Council to request that the Golf Club redesign the nature of the adjacent 17th hole perhaps by narrowing the fairway and / or moving it in an eastward direction.
- It should be considered that if the Council be of a mind to grant consent that they require the Club to carry out alterations to the 17th fairway. These alterations could also include an enhanced tree planting scheme to the rear of the neighbouring property with the possibility of some form of defensive net or barrier being included in such a measure.
- The terms of the Supporting Statement submitted with the application is noted, but the Council should consider the nature of the supporting arguments presented. The Club’s work with young people is to be applauded at a time when the nature of golf going forward is under some pressure. However, the extent of the Club’s economic benefit to the area is limited. Admittedly, there is a significant staffing level with perhaps higher than might be found at other golf courses in the area, but the Clubhouse itself is closed for long periods during the winter and unavailable to Members and local people alike.

7. DETAILED APPRAISAL

Under section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, the determination of planning applications for local and major developments shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Accordingly,

7a The Development Plan

Falkirk Council Structure Plan

7a.1 Policy ENV.1 ‘Countryside and Protected Areas’ states:

- “(1) *There is a general presumption against development in areas defined as countryside, unless it can be demonstrated that a countryside location is essential or is an appropriate form of agricultural diversification. Where it is established that a countryside location is essential, development proposals will also be assessed in relation to Local Plan policies appropriate to specific protected areas as defined generally by Schedules ENV.1 and ENV.3.*
- (2) *The policies applicable to countryside and protected areas within it, together with the detailed boundaries of each area, will be set out in Local Plans.”*

7a.2 The Development Plan identifies the boundaries between urban areas and the countryside. To protect the amenity of the countryside, the aim is generally to confine built development to the urban areas, unless it can be demonstrated that it is essential for the development to be located in the countryside or it is an appropriate form of agricultural diversification. The proposed development does not satisfy these criteria. An assessment of Local Plan policy follows.

Falkirk Council Local Plan

7a.3 Policy SC3 – ‘Housing Development in The Countryside’ states:

‘Housing development in the countryside will only be permitted in the following circumstances:

- (1) *Housing essential to the pursuance of agriculture, horticulture or forestry, or the management of a business for which a countryside location is essential. In these instances, the applicant must demonstrate:*
- *The operational need for the additional house in association with the business*
 - *That no existing dwelling which might have served that need has been sold or otherwise alienated from the holding*
 - *That there are no reasonable opportunities for reusing or converting redundant buildings rather than building a new dwellinghouse*
 - *That the business as a whole is capable of providing the main source of income for the occupant;*
- (2) *Proposals involving the rehabilitation of former residential properties, or the conversion of farm and other buildings to residential use, where*
- *The building, by virtue of its existing character, makes a positive contribution to the rural landscape*
 - *The building is in a reasonable state of repair, still stands substantially intact and is capable of beneficial restoration, as verified by a report and certificate from a qualified structural engineer*
 - *The restored or converted building is of comparable scale and character to the original building*
 - *In the case of former non-residential buildings, the building is no longer required for the purpose for which it was built; or*

- (3) *Appropriate infill opportunities within the envelope of an existing group of buildings, where the development would not result in ribbon, backland or sporadic development, and the proposal satisfies Policy SC8.”*

7a.4 The proposal is not considered to comply with the criteria listed nor has any justification been provided by the applicant in terms of the acceptable criteria.

7a.5 Policy SC8 ‘Infill Development and Subdivision of Plots’ states:

“Proposals for the erection of additional dwellinghouse within the emphasize of existing properties or on small gap sites will only be considered favourably where:

- (1) the scale, density, disposition and design of the proposed houses respect the architectural and townscape character of the area;*
- (2) adequate garden ground can be provided to serve the proposed houses without an unacceptable impact upon the size or functioning of existing gardens;*
- (3) adequate privacy will be afforded to both the proposed houses and neighbouring properties;*
- (4) the proposal would not result in the loss of features such as trees, vegetation or walls, such that the character or amenity of the area would be adversely affected;*
- (5) the proposed vehicular access and other infrastructure is of an adequate standard; and*
- (6) the proposal complies with other Local Plan policies.”*

7a.6 In this instance, the proposal cannot be considered as emphasize a small “gap site” within the existing cluster of buildings. The site is at the periphery of the residential grouping, and its development would continue a ribbon of existing development.

7a.7 Policy EQ19 – ‘Countryside’ states:

- “(1) The Urban and Village Limits represent the desirable limit to the expansion of settlements for the period of the Local Plan. Land outwith these boundaries is designated as countryside and will be subject to the detailed policies for specific uses indicated in Table 3.3. Development proposals in the countryside for uses not covered by these policies will only be permitted where:*

- it can be demonstrated that they require a countryside location;*
- they constitute appropriate infill development; or*
- they emphasise suitable existing buildings.*

- (2) In circumstances where development meets the relevant countryside policy criteria, the scale, siting and design of development will be strictly controlled to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the character of the countryside. In particular:*

- the siting should be unobtrusive, making use of natural features to integrate development into the landform and avoiding skylines;*
- building design should be sympathetic to vernacular building styles and comply with the design principles contained within the Council’s ‘Design Guide for Buildings in the Rural Areas’; and*
- boundary and emphasise treatments should be sympathetic to the rural area, with a preference for stone walling and hedging using native species.”*

7a.8 This policy further distinguishes between urban, village limits and countryside, representing the desirable limits to the expansion of settlements for the period of the Local Plan. In this instance, the proposal does not meet the criteria whereby new development in the countryside could be considered acceptable.

7a.9 Policy EQ26 – ‘Trees, Woodland And Hedgerows’ states:

“The Council emphasizes the ecological, landscape, economic and recreational importance of trees, woodland and hedgerows. Accordingly:

- (1) Felling detrimental to landscape, amenity, nature conservation or recreational interests will be discouraged. In particular ancient, long-established and semi-natural woodlands will be protected as a habitat resource of irreplaceable value;*
- (2) In an area covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or a Conservation Area, development will not be permitted unless it can be proven that the proposal will not adversely affect the longevity, stability or appearance of the trees. Where necessary, endangered trees and woodlands will be protected through the designation of further TPOs;*
- (3) Where development is permitted which will involve the loss of trees or hedgerows of amenity value, the Council will normally require replacement planting appropriate in terms of number, size, species and position;*
- (4) The enhancement and management of existing woodland and hedgerows will be encouraged. Where the retention of a woodland area is integral to a development proposal, developers will normally be required to prepare a plan and make provision for its future management; and*
- (5) There will be a preference for the use of appropriate local native species in new and replacement planting schemes, or non-native species which are integral to the historic landscape character.”*

7a.10 The application site is covered with woodland, with approximately 75% of the area to the western (A9) side comprising a block of mature conifer woodland (Sitka Spruce, Larch, Pine) and the remaining 25% of the area to the east (golf course side) being mixed semi-mature broadleaves. It is likely that the planting will have been established by the golf course itself for screening. The woodland is not covered by a TPO, nor is it an ‘ancient and semi-natural woodland’ site; however, it does make some landscape contribution to the woodland setting and the approaches to the village.

7a.11 Although woodland removal for development is generally not appropriate in terms of national and local policy, the developers may use the argument that the conifers are a commercial crop, or that they may be reaching their terminal height in terms of wind blow in any case, so that removal may need to be considered for other reasons in the long term. However, in normal circumstances of felling there would always be general expectation that the area would be restocked with trees following felling of the conifers for any commercial reason. Removal of the semi-mature broad leaves on the inner eastern side of the site would not be appropriate due to the amenity contribution.

7a.12 On balance, the loss of trees on the site could not be prevented although, if development were approved, the applicant would be encouraged to retain elements of mature trees.

7a.13 Accordingly, the proposal does not accord with the Development Plan.

7b Material Considerations

- 7b.1 The material consideration to be assessed are Scottish Planning Policy (May 2010), the policies within the emerging Falkirk Local Development Plan, the points raised by the applicant and comment from objectors and consultees.

Scottish Planning Policy

- 7b.2 Paragraphs 94-95 of Scottish Planning Policy emphasize the opportunity to expand the opportunities for new development in the countryside through Development Plan policy:

“Development plans should support more opportunities for small scale housing development in all rural areas, including new clusters and groups, extension to existing clusters and groups replacement housing, plots on which to build individually designed houses, holiday homes and new build or conversion housing which is linked to rural businesses or would support the formation of new businesses providing funding. Opportunities to replace rundown housing and steadings, and to provide limited new housing along with converted rehabilitated buildings, should be supported where the new development is designed to fit in the landscape setting and will result a cohesive grouping.”

“The aim is not to see small settlements lose their identity nor to suburbanise the Scottish countryside but to maintain and improve the viability of communities and to support rural businesses.”

“All new development should respond to the specific local character of the location, fit in the landscape and seek to achieve high design and environmental standards, particularly in relation to energy efficiency. Planning authorities should apply proportionate standards to access roads to enable small developments to remain viable.”

- 7b.3 In this instance, the site is not supported by Development Plan policy. While the application is to secure the principle of 4 dwellinghouses the linear nature of the existing housing raises concerns that new development may not respond to the specific local character of the location.

Falkirk Local Development Plan (Proposed Plan)

- 7b.4 The Proposed Falkirk Local Development Plan (FLDP) was approved by the Council for consultation in March 2013, with the period for representations running from April to June 2013. It is expected to be adopted in early 2015, at which point it will replace the current Structure Plan and Local Plan. It provides the most up to date indication of Falkirk Council's views in relation to Development Plan policy and constitutes a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

- 7b.5 The following policies of the emerging Falkirk Local Development Plan are relevant to the assessment of the application under consideration:

- Policy CG03 – Housing in the Countryside
- Policy CG01 – Countryside
- Policy HSG05 – Infill Development and Subdivision of Plots
- Policy GN04 – Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

- 7b.6 These policies broadly accord with current Development Plan policies and have been considered in part 7a of this report.

Points Raised by Applicant

- 7b.7 The applicant has submitted a statement in support of the proposal (Appendix 1). While explaining the background of the golf club, the statement also emphasizes the aspiration of the club to improve the golf course and maintain a strong level of membership. In order to pursue these goals, the club intends to sell the application site if planning permission is achieved.
- 7b.8 It should be noted that no reference is made to current Development Plan policy to support the proposal.

Points Raised by Objectors

- 7b.9 It is acknowledged that the proposal does not accord with Development Plan policy with regard to new housing in the countryside.
- 7b.10 As the proposal is recommended for refusal, no suspensive planning conditions have been incorporated to mitigate the loss of the existing woodland.

Points Raised by Consultees

- 7b.11 As the application has been recommended for refusal, matters raised by consultees with regard to traffic impact noise assessment, sustainable urban drainage systems, screen and structure tree planting have not been raised with the applicant. This might have incurred abortive costs for the applicant and these matters would not be significant enough to alter the recommendation to refuse the application.

7c Conclusion

- 7c.1 The proposal is contrary to Scottish Planning Policy and Development Plan policy in that the established criteria for new housing in the countryside have not been met.
- 7c.2 Regardless of the woodland cover issue, dwellings at the location would visually contribute to ribbon development along the A9 corridor and would be in a location that is physically detached from the main building grouping of Torwood. Acceptance of any housing in this location would set an unwarranted precedent for housing development alongside the A9 in this location.
- 7c.3 While the applicant has submitted a statement supporting the proposal, economic justification for housing does not outweigh the considerations of Development Plan policy.
- 7c.4 The application site is outwith the village limit of Torwood in the designated countryside, where there is an overriding presumption against development unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. No acceptable supporting information has been submitted to justify a rural location.

8. RECOMMENDATION

8.1 It is recommended that the Planning Committee refuse planning permission for the following reasons:

- (1) The proposal is contrary to Scottish Planning Policy (May 2010); Falkirk Council Structure Plan Policy ENV1 Countryside and Protected Areas; Falkirk Council Local Plan Policies SC3 Housing Development in the Countryside, Policy EQ19 'Countryside' in that the proposal represents new residential development in a rural location with insufficient justification and therefore fails to meet the terms of Development Plan Policy.

Pp

.....
Director of Development Services

Date: 19 May 2014

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Planning Application P/14/0063/PPP.
2. Letter of Objection from Alastair Cruickshank, Elmview, Stirling Road, Torwood FK5 4SL received on 5 March 2014.
3. Scottish Planning Policy (May 2010).
4. Falkirk Council Structure Plan.
5. Falkirk Council Local Plan
6. Falkirk Local Development Plan.

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone Falkirk 01324 504815 and ask for John Milne, Senior Planning Officer.

GLENBERVIE GOLF CLUB Ltd**Application for Outline Planning Permission****Supporting Statement****1. Background**

- 1.1 Glenbervie Golf Club (the Club) has been around for over 80 years having been founded in 1932 and plans to ensure its continued existence to provide a sporting facility for the youth of today and future generations. The Club owns and occupies circa 190 hectares {270 acres} of spectacular land in the Larbert area of Falkirk, to the east side of the A9 road and just to the north of the M876 motorway. It has operated as a private members club since opening and whilst a Limited Company, any profits are re invested in the Club and not available for distribution to members. A copy of the Memorandum and Articles of Association is attached. The Club has an inclusive membership of male, female, junior and senior members with total numbers in excess of 900. The Club conforms to equality legislation and has done so for a number of years. Not all members are playing members and there exists a category for Clubhouse membership, allowing those members to use the clubhouse and dining facilities.
- 1.2 Glenbervie is a well-known club in golfing circles. The late John Panton, a Ryder Cup player and much honoured man in the golfing world was the Club professional for many years and, as with his daughter Cathy, won many golfing titles and awards. The Club currently has two young golfers with Scottish International Caps, Graeme Robertson and Fraser Moore. We see that very much as a consequence of our policy of actively encouraging young golfers to achieve their potential. A significant feature of our development plans is to enhance the experience for young people as they are introduced to the game of golf.

2. Current Innovations

- 2.1 The Club has developed a 5 year strategy for the development of the course the purpose of which is twofold, firstly to improve the golf course but secondly to maintain a strong level of membership of the Club. The Club intends to make the golf course playable and fit for purpose over a longer period of the year. Because Glenbervie is very much a parkland type course, drainage is a major issue especially given recent weather patterns. It is important for any golf club to retain membership and indeed introduce new members to the game of golf and therefore it is important that Glenbervie utilizes its assets in the best way possible.
- 2.2 The Club is closely involved with ClubGolf. This is Scotland's national junior golf programme supporting the early development of young golfers through structured coaching. ClubGolf has many partners and stakeholders; they include, as partners; Scottish Golf Union, Scottish Ladies' Golfing Association, Professional Golfers' Association, the Golf Foundation and SportsScotland; and as stakeholders; The R&A, European Tour, Ryder Cup Ltd, Scottish Golf Clubs, national and local government, Active Schools Network, Local Authorities.

- 2.3 The Scottish Golf Union has recently (July 2013) accepted Glenbervie Golf Club as a Development Centre to provide golf coaching to aspiring young golfers to allow them to achieve their potential in the sport. Although Development Centres are sited throughout Scotland Glenbervie is the only one in Falkirk District.
- 2.4 Both ClubGolf and coaching through the Development Centre are open to non-members of Glenbervie Golf Club.

3. Facilities

- 3.1 The Club has an eighteen-hole golf course, which has in the past hosted a number of major events including Regional Qualifying for the Open Championship and on two occasions the British Boys Championships. On the first occasion this was won by Ryder Cup player and recent captain Jose Maria Olazabal and on the second occasion by Ryder Cup player David Howell. As part of its commitment to invest in both young people and novice golfers the Club recently developed part of its extensive practice ground to form a 9-hole par 3 Academy Course. Other practice facilities include covered bays, artificial turf areas from which to play, a practice green and bunkers. The Professional and his staff provide lessons in all aspects of the game which are available to all, members and non-members alike, using the Club's facilities.
- 3.2 The Clubhouse provides locker rooms and changing facilities for male and female players, a restaurant and lounges for the benefit of members and visiting golfers.

4. Community Benefits

- 4.1 Golf is an integral part of life in Scotland - the home of golf. So it is in the Larbert area with Glenbervie a significant player in the development of the game. Membership is available to all who wish to join and the Club is an important asset in the local leisure industry. Many of the Club's members live out with the Larbert/Falkirk area and bring economic benefit to the area. The Club is also a significant employer over a range of skills and talents. Members of the community may wish to simply join as Clubhouse members to enjoy the benefits that brings. The Club is very aware of its role in maintaining the land on which it sits and preserving the wonderful woodlands within its boundaries.
- 4.2 The Club hosts 'Open' competitions during the year which attract players from all over Scotland to the Larbert area, some of whom stay in local hotels and generally contribute to the local economy.

5. Membership Profile

- 5.1 The Club has a current membership of 617 Ordinary members, 91 Junior/Young members, 34 Honorary and Life members, 139 Non-playing Clubhouse members and 26 Country members. There is little doubt that golf in Scotland is going through a difficult period in relation to golf club membership. The causes are varied but include the recent financial climate affecting all walks of life and the weather patterns over the past few summers. Indeed 2013 was a welcome break from the summers of recent years past. Scottish Golf Union (the body governing amateur golf in Scotland) figures suggest that last year alone, 5000 members were lost from the game. This figure is typical of the last few years.

6. Flora and Fauna

- 6.1 The land owned by the Club is significant and covers about 190 hectares (270 acres), only a part of which is the golf course. Aside from being one of the most outstanding golf courses in Central Scotland, if not the whole of Scotland, the Club has a long standing relationship with the Scottish Woodland Trust for the preservation and maintenance of the historic Wallacebank Wood which is situated on Club land. Last year, the Club entered into a programme of tree replacement on and around the golf course itself with about 40 trees being planted, each one sponsored by a member with a sum of £6000 raised. Wild flowers, including wild orchids can be found on the property.
- 6.2 Wildlife abounds within the confines of the land owned by the Club. Deer, Rabbits, Hare, and Squirrels can all be seen regularly on the course. The Head Green Keeper is very much aware of the environment in which he works and much of this work is for the promotion of wildlife and their habitat.

7. Care for the Environment

- 7.1 For the irrigation of the course the club draws its water from its own natural Bore Hole rather than treated water from the public supply.
- 7.2 The overall development plans include improvements to our waste to water processes. Whilst Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) are content with our current arrangements we have opened discussions with SEPA to identify opportunities to make further improvements.

8. Glenbervie as an Employer

- 8.1 The Club provides employment over a range of skills and expertise for up to 30 people throughout the year. Those roles are; 2 administrative staff; 6 green keeping staff; one labourer; one seasonal worker (Summer only); one gardener; one handyman; one cleaner; 12/14 staff employed in Bar/Catering activities; a professional and two additional shop staff.

9. Buildings

- 9.1 The Club has three main buildings; the Clubhouse which has male and female locker rooms, lounges and a restaurant, office accommodation; The Professional's shop premises; and the Green keeper's shed which contains a changing room, toilet, head green keeper's office, small workshop, mess room and equipment garage. In addition, there is a toilet block on the course.

10. Future Plans

- 10.1 The Club has a vision for the future beyond the 5 year Course Strategy, to expand the range of facilities to not only promote golf and help with membership of the Club but also to include other sporting and leisure activities. This vision will help sustain and increase employment at the Club.

- 10.2 It is our plan to continue with the drainage work on the course greens, the practice area and fairways and in addition, to replace old and expensive to maintain machinery and equipment that is no longer fit for purpose. We intend to further develop the 9-hole Academy Course and other leisure facilities, and replace and improve Green Keeping equipment. The accommodation for Green keeping staff, equipment and vehicles has reached the end of its economic life and is no longer fit for purpose. The overall development plans include the replacement of these facilities and further development of the course.
- 10.3 The implementation of these plans would result in the Club increasing staff numbers.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1 The successful implementation of this plan will inevitably result in significant expenditure. In order to raise the necessary funds, a proportion of which it is anticipated be funded from the Club's existing financial resources, the Club would offer, for sale and development, land which is surplus to requirements. The area of land identified to be surplus to requirements and which does not interfere with the playing of golf on the course, is that situated adjacent to the lay-by on the A9 road close to Torwood Village. The enabling finance realized from the sale of this land, with outline Planning Permission for the erection of 4 dwelling houses, is seen as an appropriate method of securing a contribution to the funds needed to take our vision and plans forward and allow the current Board and members to pass Glenbervie on to future generations in excellent condition.

12. Summary

- 12.1 Glenbervie Golf Club Limited has current facilities which have stood the Club in good stead since 1932. It is an inclusive club, rich in golfing history. The golfing environment is currently such that all clubs must ensure that they are using their facilities and more importantly their potential, in the best possible way ensuring their members gain value for their membership. A golf club is nothing without its members and their retention is crucial to the continuation of any club. The game of golf is an integral part of life in Scotland however nothing can be taken for granted and clubs must do their utmost to ensure it remains so. The opportunities for Glenbervie to enhance their product are very much viable if the resources to achieve them are available. It is the belief of the Club's Directors that the proposal to sell land for development that is surplus to requirements would contribute to the resources to fulfill our plans and bring them to fruition.
- 12.2 The game of golf provides not only sporting skills but also life skills that are important for young people. Glenbervie Golf Club has embraced both ClubGolf and the work of the Scottish Golf Union through their Development Centre programme to introduce children and young people to the game and improve their skills.
- 12.3 As a small business, Glenbervie Golf Club Limited is employer to a not insignificant number of staff who rely on the existence of the Club for their livelihood. There are also clear benefits to the local economy via the existence of the golf club. The realization of our plans will ensure sustained levels of employment and indeed provide the opportunity to increase staff numbers.

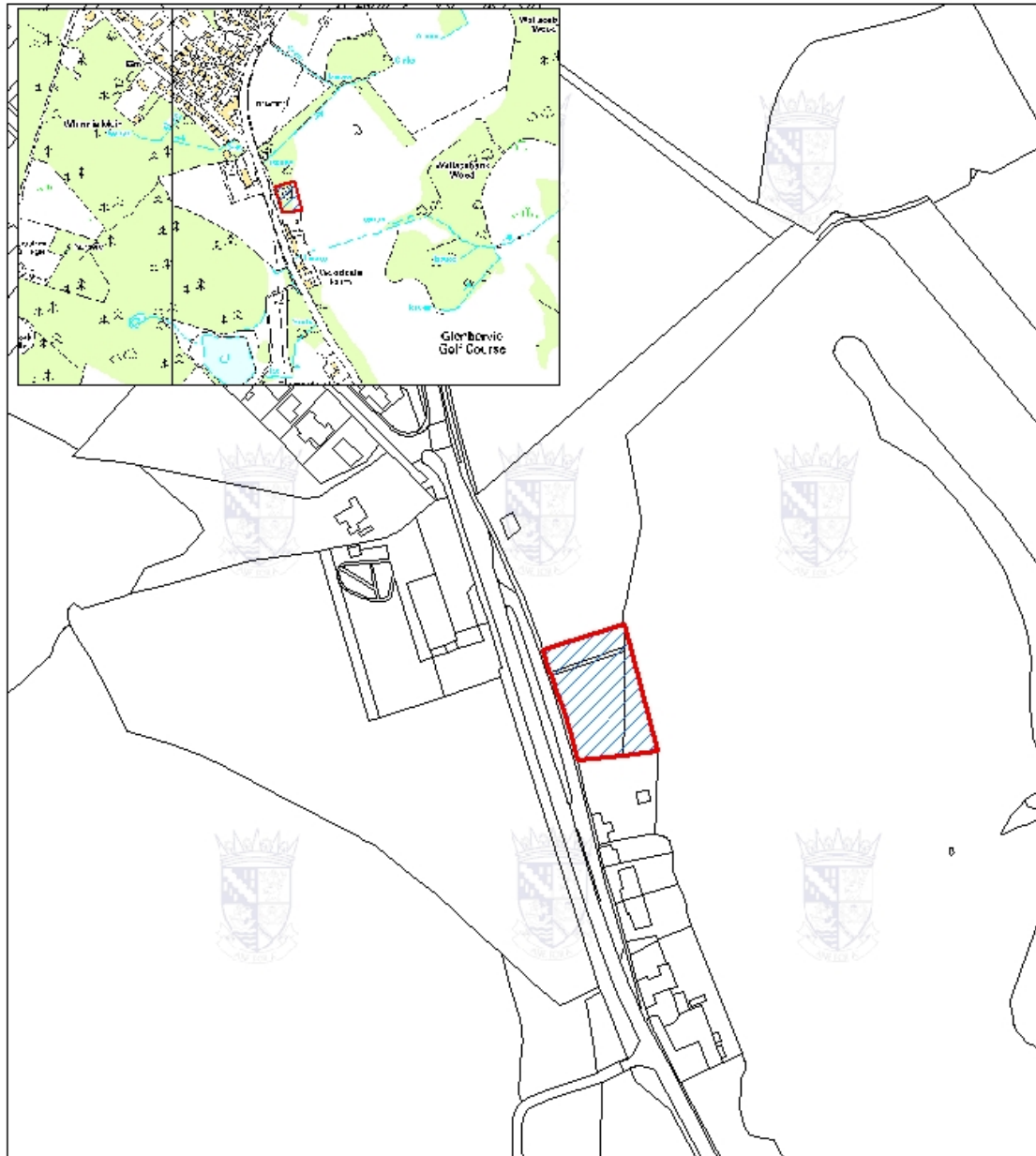
- 12.4 There is little doubt that Glenbervie Golf Club Limited has the potential to flourish in the golfing world and become a centre of excellence in the game. If the Club is enabled to realize this potential, the benefits would spread to the wider community through employment and visitor footfall.
- 12.5 It is with the foregoing in mind that the Directors of Glenbervie Golf Club Limited seek the approval of the Planning Authority of the application before them.

Planning Committee

Planning Application Location Plan

P/14/0063/PPP

This plan is for location purposes only. It should not be interpreted as an exact representation of the application site.



Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HM SO.
© Crown copyright and database right 2014. All rights reserved.
Ordnance Survey Licence number 100023384