

POW OF INCHAFFRAY DRAINAGE COMMISSION (SCOTLAND) BILL

Written submission received by Wing Commander G J Roberts

I should like to comment about the Pow of Inchaffray Drainage Commission (Scotland) Bill current being considered by Committee at Parliament. While I would agree that the extant Bill is in need of overhaul, I do feel that the new proposal it has some unsatisfactory elements, mostly already raised by others. Nevertheless I should like to add three specific comments/amendments for your consideration.

1. Firstly, along with other residents in Balgowan, we form a large proportion of the Heritors yet are given too modest a representation on the Commission to provide a meaningful voice for our community. Additional representation should ensure better dialogue to convey any concerns in Balgowan. A minimum of three representatives from Balgowan should be required, along with a requirement for at least two to be at any meeting of the other Commissioners to make that meeting valid.
2. Secondly, having adequate representation on the Commission would be my major thrust but this must be supported by adequate safeguards to prevent Annual Fees being increased without good reason or proper scrutiny. To be fair, the current Commissioners have not sought to increase the Annual Fee since 2007, when we moved to Balgowan. Nevertheless, there is some disquiet on this point and full transparency would go some way to allay fears.
3. Finally, the main thrust for the Annual Charge, for those in Balgowan, is the discharge from our Treatment Plant into the Pow. This point was made at a Public Meeting with the Commissioners at Findo Gask at the early stage of the process to introduce the new Bill. This Treatment Plant is yet to be adopted by the Council and, in the event of it being adopted in the future, some assurance is necessary that residents in Balgowan will not be required to pay both sewage charges and fees for the Pow Water. This is a simple case of fairness for future generations but very important.

In summary, I feel that the current Commissioners have safeguarded the Pow over the years in an economical way. They have used a local and reliable tradesman to maintain the Pow and deal with any obstructions and I would wish for them to continue in this fashion. To adopt a "large-project" view and seek numerous tenders would hardly seem necessary and likely bring additional costs. The same applies to other suggestions on further mapping and the like. The proposed Bill would bring more properties into the mix and the situation of some benefitting from the Pow without being asked for any contribution would end. Our involvement clearly stems from Manor Kingdom's application to build houses on the sawmill site being linked to supporting the Pow Water, presumably because of the Treatment Plant. If we are to contribute in the future, it must be proportional to the respective outflows along the Pow from farmland.

Thank you for taking the time to read my input, which I hope will be considered along with the others you have received. Fair play is all that is being asked for and I commend my suggested amendments to you.