

AIRTH PARISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL.

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING HELD IN AIRTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

AT 7.00PM ON WEDNESDAY 11TH DECEMBER 2013

ELECTED COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS PRESENT.

.D.GRANT, R.SMITH, A. AMOS, J. ANSLOW, WILLIE WATSON,

ALSO PRESENT.

L.WATSON (D.V.A.) ANN RAMSAY, CLLR. CRAIG MARTIN..

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Ginny Sutherland, Ian Penman Cllr. Stephen Bird.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of our meeting on 20th November 2013 were approved as a correct record of the proceedings. Proposed by Aileen Amos and seconded by Domini Grant.

POLICE REPORT.

There was no Police presence at the meeting but this may be due to the fact that the meeting is a week earlier than normal. A police report has since been received by e mail and is appended.

MATTERS ARISING.

Domini referred to the process for selection of office bearers at our last meeting and asked if anyone had any concerns over the way it was conducted and as there were none expressed, confirmed that she was happy to act as convenor and would endeavour to do this to the best of her ability. She referred to the code of conduct for Community Councillors and reaffirmed the need for all members to work together for the good of our community while showing respect for each other. and each other`s views. She also referred to the need for members to be objective when dealing with community issues and the need to declare an interest and take no part in decision making where appropriate. The use of e mails should be restricted to circulating information to members and if there is an issue giving concern, it should be referred to the convenor for inclusion on the agenda of the next meeting. Jon Anslow disagreed and said that the use of e mails was a useful vector for debating certain issues. Copies of the draft constitution were sent out to all members for perusal and comment. An open letter asking for nominated members has been e mailed to all other community groups we have contact details for and a notice has been posted on the notice board and in the Falkirk Herald. for 2 weeks.

The secretary contacted Jon as requested to remind him about completing responses to

consultations on Traffic warden provision and the Marine Environment.

A copy of the Dart P.A.N. for exploratory drilling at Orchardhead near Skinflats has been forwarded to a farmer in that area who may be affected by it.

The planning application for 7A High Street referred to at the last meeting is for an extension to the side of one of the new houses in the “Blomfontaine” development.

Falkirk Council has been contacted to arrange the lets for the school for next year. This is now an on line process and the dates will only be confirmed up until June 2014. We will have to reapply for the rest of the year in August when the schools return after the summer break. Additional invitations to the Christmas lights event have been sent out to the Provost, our elected members, the church and the school.

Lesley Sweeney has arranged for an appropriate notice to be erected at the entrance to the field just inside the Castle gates following complaints from the farmer about blocked access.

Ian Penman and R.Smith visited Isobel Cameron in hospital and confirmed that she is recovering. A get well card from the C.C. has been sent.

The St Andrew`s night celebration performed by the Rev. Todd`s very talented family in the Church was excellent and appreciated by the many people who attended.

The brass band playing Christmas carols at Dunmore was a very popular and well attended event. Domini was able to attend this.

REPORT ON THE INNER FORTH LANDSCAPE EVENT ON 26TH NOVEMBER

Domini and Bob both attended this event in The MacRobert centre at Stirling University and after the introduction by Anne McCall of the RSPB, heard talks from Mairi Stewart, the author of The Firth of Forth, an environmental history, Tom Dawson and Ellie Graham of SCAPE (Scottish Coastal Archaeology and the problems of Erosion) There are around 50 projects seeking funding and the group are in the process of bidding for the second round of funding. There is a great deal of interest in the foreshore and the history of our area with particular interest in “Higginsneuk” and the Newmills area at the mouth of the Powburn. We suggested that they should link this with the old 12th century church yard at Airth Castle as the Higgins family grave and headstone are still visible. This may be a project we could pursue along with Airth castle as the old church is steeped in history. Although it is an unsafe ruin at the moment it could be made safe as another attraction for tourists.

It was suggested that we invite Ian Edwards of Falkirk Council to address our February meeting as he is heavily involved in the IFLI.

ADOPTION OF CONSTITUTION,

The secretary will type out a constitution based on the model supplied by Falkirk Council with the alterations to suit our Community Council ready for approval by the CCLO.

RESULTS OF OUR REQUESTS FOR NOMINATED MEMBERS.

To date we have had 3 nominations, Ian Penman from the Letham Tenants and residents group, Ann Ramsay from the youth club and Jim Flynn from the school., Nominations will still be accepted up until the 18th December and these will be discussed at our meeting in January.

CORRESPONDENCE

E mail from Cllr Bird regarding the planning application for a replacement telecommunications mast and equipment housing adjacent to the hotel at Bowtrees. This is on the site of existing equipment but will be larger to cope with increased demand.

E Mail from Maria Montinaro regarding the forthcoming pre enquiry hearing on the Dart Energy planning application. and a request for donations to pay for legal representation for the groups opposing the application.

E mail from Maria Montinaro listing the 4 Community Councils who have agreed to contribute to the cost of hiring a QC to act for the CCOF (Concerned Communities of Falkirk) who oppose the Dart application..

Willie Watson commented that he felt that there was a degree of hostility shown to Maria by some members of the community council and that she was pursuing an issue which he fully supported, protection of the river Forth and the local environment. The convenor pointed out that while several members of the previous community council had agreed with Maria's opinions on the Dart proposals, her aggressive attitude towards APCC and the feeling that she had abused her position as a community councillor had created this situation.

Letter to Robert McMaster of F.C. regarding speeding at Letham Cottages and Airth Castle Drive.

Letter from Robert McMaster of Falkirk Council acknowledging receipt of our letter regarding the above. This issue has been passed to Greg Pender for his attention.

E mail from Cllr Martin regarding the recent flooding at Airth caused by a breach in the seawall opposite the playing field.

PLANNING ISSUES

There were no new planning applications relevant to Airth Parish.

Aileen Amos commented that although there had been alterations carried out and a change of use undertaken at The Parsonage, a listed building, a sign and large marquees erected, there had been no formal planning applications lodged. with Falkirk Council. Cllr. Martin informed us that council officials were aware of the situation and were engaged in discussions with the owner. It was agreed that we would do nothing on this issue until we have further information. Cllr Martin will try and get us an update on this issue. R Smith noted that the National Trust owned the historic Pineapple adjacent to the Parsonage and if they had concerns over what has been done by their neighbour they would have raised the issue with the planners,

REPORT ON THE DART PRE-ENQUIRY MEETING

The secretary attended the pre- enquiry hearing in Larbert High School on Wednesday 4th December. There was a large turnout for this as some people appeared to think that there would be discussions on the issue taking place.

The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the reporter, the applicant, those opposed to the application and the legal teams representing all parties. The ground rules and agenda for the enquiry were agreed .The reporter said that she did not want to hear the same arguments

made by several different parties and suggested that the 4 Community Councils who had indicated that they wished to make representations (Larbert and Torwood, Blackness, Bo`ness and Shieldhill and California) operate under the same banner rather than each one bringing up the same subject. Written representations like ours previously submitted will still be considered as part of the process. The reporter pointed out that only relevant planning issues will be considered at the hearing.

There was a great deal of time spent by the various lawyers making legal points and asking questions so I would envisage that the hearing could be a lengthy process. The secretary will receive the notes on this and future meetings in due course and will pass them on to all members as they become available.

R.Smith noted that Ineos in Grangemouth were considering importing fracked gas from America as the North Sea supplies are diminishing and this gas is vital to their process.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS. EVENT

Everyone agreed that the event had been a great success and was extremely well attended. The format was suitable and will be the same in the future. Willie Watson said that a lamp is needed at the raffle table. The raffle drew in £176 and we still have a few prizes to use in the future. It was a pure coincidence that Provost Pat Reid picked his own ticket to win the mystery prize—a giant monkey which went home in the back of the council limousine. The convenor thanked the community councillors and the others who worked hard to make the evening a success. The secretary is to write to the school to thank them for providing the choir for the evening.

Donations to the Christmas lights fund were £1505 so far.

TREASURERS REPORT

Aileen informed us that we currently had £3964.15 in our account and the bill for the Christmas Lights is normally due to be paid in March. She issued copies of the mandate from the bank to get the names changed for operating the account. This is to be completed in black ink and accompanied with a letter from those persons already acting as signatories.

NEW FUND RAISING ACCOUNT.

We will endeavour to open a separate savings account with the bank to lodge funds raised for the Christmas lights. This has proved difficult in the past as the Bank of Scotland seem reluctant to provide this type of account.

A.O.C.B.

Following a comment about the tubes protecting the trees at the new woodland below Airth Castle, the CSFT have confirmed that the 5 year maintenance period has long since passed and responsibility reverts back to the landowner. However, it was pointed out that this is an area which is used like a public park by residents and is currently of no benefit to the landowner, and it was suggested that a project involving local volunteers be instigated to remove tubes if appropriate. R Smith will have a look at the site and take professional advice before consulting with the landowner.

The convenor stated that the secretary should claim expenses for the supply of ink, stationery and postage from our operating budget.

We will advertise for a paid minute secretary, but before doing so we will try to contact the person who did this service for the School Parent Council.

Aileen Amos referred to an agreement reached 6 years ago with Tom Leighton who was in charge of Support and Leisure for Falkirk Council. £5000 had been allocated to purchase the land which Dunmore Bowling Club stands on. However, this was not paid and had become part of a large fraud involving at least £27,000 , possibly as much as £100,000 and had resulted in Tom Leighton being convicted of various offences. Since then, Falkirk Council have purchased the land from Mrs Munnoch and lease it back to the bowling club.

Willie Watson said that he would like to see the riverside path between Dunmore and Airth upgraded and made suitable for all users. This will be a major project which we can promote as part of the IFLI.

There have been complaints about lorries and tractors going through the High Street to access Airth Mains Farm. Domini will ask her husband to speak to his employer about this issue as he currently leases the buildings at Airth Mains as part of the Sugarich operation.

Lillian Watson informed us that Scottish Hydro had money available until the end of March 2014 for new boilers and home insulation for suitable applicants. She will give us a poster to display on the Community Council Notice board.

Cllr. Martin informed us that the Hospital bus from Clackmannanshire had been taken out of service and that the Health Board were withdrawing from the public transport agreement made when the new Larbert Hospital was opened.

There being no further business, the convenor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

The date of our next General meeting is Wednesday 15th January 2014 at 7pm in Airth Primary School.