

AIRTH PARISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the general meeting held on 18th March 2015 in Airth Primary School

Members present. Robert Smith, Jon Anslow, Aileen Amos, Ginny Sutherland Willie Watson, and Jim Flynn.

Also present. Cllr. Craig Martin, Sandra Perry, Stephen Sloper and community Constables Donna Connor and Chris Morrison.

Minute Secretary. As there has been no response to our advertisement for a minute secretary, Robert Smith agreed to take notes and compile minutes for this meeting. We will continue to try and recruit a minute secretary through the press and notice board.

In the absence of the Convenor, the Vice Convenor Jon Anslow led the meeting.

1. Apologies Apologies for absence were received from Domini Grant, Ian Penman, Maria Crawford and Cllr. Stephen Bird.

2. Approval of March 4th minutes With the inclusion of a reference to Cllr. Martin on the weight restriction petition in the minutes they were approved, proposed by Aileen and seconded by Ginny. Robert will e mail the approved version to Brian Pirie for inclusion in the Council website.

3. Matters arising.

There has been no response to our request for a minute secretary as yet. Paul Barret from The Powfoulis has agreed to join the Community Council as a nominated member representing the Powfoulis and Bothkennar residents group. The Secretary will inform Brian Pirie of this.

Aileen attended the C.C.O.F. meeting in Larbert.

Aileen, Ginny and Robert attended the Scottish Water meeting in Falkirk.

We have been unable to make contact with the Castle Drive residents group as yet. Robert will try and make contact with Margaret Kier who was involved with this group previously. There is a group called the Castle Drive Residents but they are only active in collecting the fees from residents to pay the factor for the maintenance of common grounds in that area. Their secretary is Alison Patterson of 18 Castle Drive. Robert's daughter in law told him that some young mothers in the Castle Drive/Avenue area have been discussing the need for a Pelican crossing at that part of the village.

The Countryside Access Forum meeting which Robert attends was cancelled so he has been unable to table the issue of the R.O.W. sign at the Smiddy House.

4. Police report. As our own community constable was unavailable, community constables Chris Morrison from Denny and Donna Connor from Larbert attended and delivered the police report. They commented that compared with other areas, crime in our area was relatively low. Between 18th February and 18th March, 44 calls to Police Scotland had been made and 25 crimes had been reported in the Airth Parish area. 16 of these were vehicle related and include vehicle rectification tickets, not wearing seat belts, careless driving, no insurance and speeding. Other crimes include vandalism to a gate in Kennedy Way, 1 domestic assault, 3 assaults by patients in Airthrey Care nursing home, 1 attempted theft at H.L. Plant, a housebreaking at Castle Drive and an attempted housebreaking at The Path. The police warned residents to be more security conscious by locking cars, doors and windows and concealing keys from view as there has been a spate of thefts by “fishing “ keys through letter boxes in the Larbert area.

5. Correspondence. As listed below.

Letter and forms from Falkirk Council regarding our public liability insurance. Aileen requested assistance in completing this form. R. Smith agreed to help. Copy of a letter sent to Katrina Smith regarding a new social network Streetlife .com which has set up a new on line community for Airth. This could be useful for publicising meetings and events. Individuals can sign up at www.streetlife.com.

E mail from Cllr. Martin regarding the Ineos Community Liason group and a copy of the minutes of their meeting held on 19th January. It appears that we had received an invite to join this group last year, but due to unforeseen circumstances, Ginny had been unable to attend and we had received no further invitations.

E mail from Allison Leonard RSPB Skinflats regarding a site visit to view their plans for remedial works and damage repairs at the tidal exchange project at Powfoulis.

E mail from Cllr. Bird regarding the drain across from Murray caravans.

Letter to potential funders regarding the floodbanks and the need for repairs.

E mail from Cllr. Bird regarding the planning application at the Parsonage reference p/15/0116/FUL.

E mail from the Big Advice Team Scotland regarding our request for funding for the floodbank survey.

E mail from IKM consulting with a quotation for carrying out the floodbank survey. This is for £5804 + VAT.

Letter from Falkirk Council regarding the review of late hours catering policy.

An invitation from Ineos Upstream to all community councils to send 2

representatives to a briefing on their proposals to investigate and develop shale gas production in our area. This will take place at 09.00 on 19th March. Robert and Aileen will attend and report back at our next meeting.

6. Round the parish report.

No reports from Dunmore or Letham.

Jon Anslow has still to contact Mandy Brown of Falkirk council regarding a notice board for South Alloa.

Jim Flynn delivered the following report from Airth Primary school.

The fence which was damaged by high winds has been replaced and strengthened.

The ECO group is willing to be part of a joint litter pick with the Community Council. The date to be agreed.

Channel 5 are coming to the school on 20th March to film the pupils' work on the solar eclipse. They plan to broadcast this on their news programme.

Education Scotland visited the school last week due to their work on skills development. They took various photos of the pupils, some parents and business partners and they plan to use these on all their skills related policy and paperwork.

The major curriculum focus this term has been Spanish. All staff have attended a 10 week development programme at Larbert High School in order to deliver Spanish to the children of Airth in an active and fun way. Next term all our cluster schools will have a major focus on Spanish from nursery to P7. This will have an amazing impact on our children's ability in languages when they reach secondary school.

The school would also like to know the Community Council's thoughts on the use of the school building more as a resource for the wider community, eg open the library once a week in the evening for community use, hold adult numeracy and literacy classes during the day, and hold a community event to showcase the existing groups who can be involved with the community. They are looking for other suggestions for this proposal.

Jim and Mr Sloper informed us that they have been told that the opencast infill at Waterslap was to be finished with 2 inches of top soil and grassed over. Jim referred to a dip in the ground near Airth castle and wondered if it was caused by subsidence.

Jim had to leave the meeting early after giving his report.

7. Planning issues.

The application for a new house at Haughs of Airth has been withdrawn. There may be an application to convert existing farm steadings to a house.

The planning application for an extension at the rear of the Baker's and to

roughcast the building should improve the look of the building.

The documents for the planning application for the Parsonage are now available and this will be discussed at our next meeting.

It was noted that the scout hall site is now up for sale.

There does not appear to be any interest shown in the Crown hotel as yet.

8. Treasurer`s report.

Aileen informed us that we had £404.87 in our operating account and £2196.51 in the Christmas lights fund.

9. Litter pick.

The date for the litter pick was agreed as Saturday 25th April, meeting at the Community Centre for a briefing before a start at 10am. Robert will contact the school and put up a poster. A risk assessment will be prepared based on the standard one issued by Falkirk council.

10. Cenotaph.

Aileen and Robert met with Arthur Berg to go over the paperwork and finalise the details of the additional grant required to supply and erect the flagpoles in the cenotaph as the original amount requested and awarded was insufficient to carry out the work detailed in the application form. We gave him copies of paperwork which we had and he may request a further meeting to sign off the project. He instructed us to hold a public consultation before any further work and provision of benches is undertaken. It was noted that some of the paperwork he had given us was dated August 2014 which was before the community council became involved in the project.

11. Scottish water

Aileen, Ginny and Robert attended the Scottish water meeting in Falkirk on 11th March and after their presentation asked several questions. Our questions had been sent in prior to the meeting and copied to all our community council members.

Water and sewerage charges will increase by 1.6% annually over the next 4 years. They serve 193,000 customers in the Falkirk and Clackmannan areas. Many of the problems associated with drainage and sewers are created by inappropriate use by the consumer. Items like fats, oils wet wipes and cotton buds can create major problems in sewers.

They are heavily supervised by SEPA who monitor all their operations and 318,000 samples of domestic water are taken and tested every year.

If coal bed methane and shale gas extraction were proposed, they would look

at all the issues at planning stage to ensure that the water supply was protected from damage or pollution, much the same as they do with other developments like industry, forestry and agriculture.

They have not been approached by any company asking them to provide water for “fracking”. However, they do supply large quantities of water to industrial users and could do so if approached. Unpurified water would be used and this would have no detrimental effect on the supply of drinking water.

Scottish Water do not use boreholes to supply our water and have no plans or need to use them in our area in the future.

They have no plans to build any new reservoirs in Scotland in the next 25 years. Due to problems with some contractors, the spreading of human sewage sludge on farmland is currently suspended and will now be shipped to a landfill site in Fife.

They are currently looking at the flood defences for all their waste water treatment works including the one at Airth which was flooded and put out of action in December 2013.

Flouride is not added to the drinking water in Scotland.

Waste water from coal bed methane or shale gas operations would not be treated in their W.W.T.Works but treated by the gas contractors under the supervision of SEPA who would ensure that it was suitable to return to the environment.

12 Culvert at Dunmore.

The basin and culvert at Dunmore are in need of repair but no one knows who owns or is responsible for them. Ginny has checked her titles and maps of Dunmore Home farm and this area is not in her title. Cllr. Martin will try and arrange for a search to ascertain ownership. The stonework in the basin has been well designed and built but is now deteriorating and some parts are collapsing. The road passing over the culvert may be dangerous and the handrails at the sides have sunk and may not be safe for walkers using the private road. It may be that help to repair the stonework may be obtained through the I.F.L.I. as it is part of the heritage of Dunmore.

Responsibility for the road may lie with the owners of the properties served by it.

13. A.o.c.b.

Mr Sloper informed us that the Falkirk Council survey of the flooded drainage outlet at Letham had been completed last week and discussions on a solution to the problem were ongoing. He met with SEPA and discussed the potential change to the line of the Pow burn. He thinks that it should be returned to it's

original line and that the infilling of the opencast site at Waterslap is not helping the situation. Consultations with the various landowners would be required.

Kincardine Community Council are holding a meeting in Kincardine regarding the proposals for underground coal gasification.

Robert referred to Kaye Adams's radio Scotland phone in programme where shale gas and "fracking" was the subject. It was a very well balanced programme with callers from many different backgrounds and views on the subject. Some were experts in the oil and gas industries and others were environmentalists and most were quoting figures and appeared to be knowledgeable on the subject. It was interesting to hear the opposing claims and counter claims. Robert noted that one person referred to the use of up to 350 toxic chemicals used in the fracking process, while another who was involved in the industry stated that only 12 chemicals had been licenced for use in the U.K. and not all would need to be used at the same well site and that they were all in use in other everyday items.

Aileen noted that Robert has still to provide a letter of resignation from the post of secretary for the files.

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

Date of the next meeting will be 22nd April.