

AIRTH PARISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the general meeting held on 4th March 2015 in Airth Primary School in place of the meeting scheduled for the 18th February which was cancelled at short notice.

Members present. Domini Grant, Bob Smith, Aileen Amos, Ginny Sutherland and Ian Penman.

Also present. Cllr. Stephen Bird and Mrs Stark.

Walter Douglas, a founder member and former secretary and convenor of the Community Council died in hospital on 6th February after a long period of deteriorating health. His funeral was held on 18th February and was attended by most current and some former community councillors. It was a large funeral and many of his former political colleagues attended. Flowers from the community council were given to his widow Helen on Monday 2nd March. It was agreed at short notice to cancel the meeting on the 18th February as a mark of respect to Walter.

Our community police officer Maria Crawford has told Aileen that she was saddened to hear of Walter's death but had not been notified or she would have attended his funeral.

1. Minute Secretary. As Pauline was unable to continue to act as minute secretary, Bob Smith volunteered to take the minutes of the meeting. It was agreed that we should advertise the post in the Falkirk Herald and notice board.

2. Apologies Apologies for absence were received from Willie Watson, Jon Anslow, Jim Flynn and Cllr. Craig Martin.

3. Approval of January minutes With some minor amendments to the minutes as noted by Bob Smith they were approved, proposed by Ginny and seconded by Aileen. Bob will e mail the approved version to Brian Pirie for inclusion in the Council website.

4. Matters arising.

The flooding at the layby at Burgoyne's corner has been rectified as a blocked outflow has been cleared.

Robert attended the Holocaust memorial event in Falkirk.

The cause of flooding at Crookland gate has been investigated by Falkirk Council and further surveys are planned to determine the remedial action required.

Domini, Robert, Ginny and Ian attended the Fracking awareness meeting in Grangemouth. A report was given and will be noted under item 10 "Fracking". The code of conduct complaints procedure has not been sent out for comment as Domini is awaiting receipt of it from Brian Pirie.

Domini has been unable to contact anyone from the Castle Avenue/Drive Residents Association. Robert will ask his son who resides in that area if it is still in existence and if so who the contact is.

We have not heard from the Powfoulis/Bothkennar residents group if they wish to nominate Bob Sloan as a community council member. Robert will make contact with Ron Martin regards this. Domini has contacted Brian Pirie regarding Bothkennar and Skinflats being represented on our community council and he has said that this is not possible as the C.C. boundaries are clearly set. Bob Sloan is a resident of Airth Parish and would qualify for membership.

Domini has not made contact with Tracy and John Campbell regarding the cenotaph improvements as their grandchild had been very ill. We will make contact with them after we meet with Arthur Berg who has requested a meeting with Robert, Aileen and any other member regarding the grant which was awarded for the cenotaph work. This meeting will now take place at 11am on Friday 13th March.

Aileen attended the BBC radio broadcast from Falkirk and found it interesting. She spoke to BBC staff who wanted to establish a group of local representatives from the Falkirk area to comment on the BBC practices.

Aileen said she still awaits a letter of resignation from Robert for the files. No contact has been made with Ineos regarding a meeting to find out about their plans for shale gas and oil exploration in our area. It was agreed that we would not meet them on our own but suggest that a meeting involving all community councils in the area should be held, possibly hosted by Falkirk council.

There has been no further correspondence regarding the cones at the verge on the A905 opposite Murray Caravans.

Domini has written a letter regarding the Broadband service and she has a form to complete which will be sent out to all members.

Cllr.Martin has given Domini petition forms regarding a weight restriction on lorries coming through the village on the A905 and this issue was discussed and conflicting opinions on the merits of this were evident. It was agreed to put this issue on the Agenda of the April meeting and in the meantime Domini would contact the F.C. roads department for information and advice.

5. Police report. There was no police presence but a report covering the period from 17th December to 17th February had been sent. The Convenor read out this report, a copy of which is attached. _

6. Correspondence. As listed below.

Final bill from Lightways for Christmas lights received. This is for £1788.17.

E mail from Pauline Rodgers resigning from her post as minute secretary.

E mail from Maria Montinaro regarding an article in the Alloa advertiser.

E mail from Arthur Berg F.C. asking which documents relating to the cenotaph works the treasurer requires.

Clean up Scotland Newsletter.

E mail from Brian Pirie confirming that Domini is one of the 4 C.C. Convenors chosen to assist in the development of enforcement procedures in regard to the code of conduct for community councillors.

E mail from Andrew Mitchell of Dunmore complaining that our minutes were not available on the council website. Both Aileen and Domini replied to this stating that they had been submitted to Falkirk Council but due to staff reductions had not been put on the site.

Letter from Cllr. Martin regarding the flooding at Crooklandsgate, Letham.

Letter from Cllr. Martin regarding repairs to Kincardine Bridge. This was posted on notice boards in Airth, Letham and Dunmore.

E mail from Cllr. Martin regarding the flooding at the layby near Burgoyne's garage.

An open invitation to attend the BBC Radio Scotland live broadcast from Falkirk. Posters for this were put on our notice board.

E mail from the secretary to Brian Pirie regarding the change of names on the Airth Parish Community Council section on the council website.

E mail from Stuart Henderson regarding the spreading of biosolids on farmland close to the Moss road at Kersebrook farm.

Invitation to attend the Meet The Funders event in Grangemouth. Robert and Aileen will attend this.

Invitation to the Have Your Say Forum in Falkirk. Posters regarding this were put on the notice board.

Invitation to the Local Energy Scotland 2 day A.G.M. in Stirling on 17th & 18th March.

E mail from Brian Pirie informing us that the Scottish Parliament had voted in principle to agree the general principles of the Community Empowerment Bill.

Letter from the secretary to F.C. planners regarding the proposed new house at Haughs of Airth.

Letter from the secretary to F.C. planning department regarding the change to P.A.N. applications.

Letter from David Henderson informing us of the moratorium on on shore unconventional oil and gas developments.

Letter from Andrew Nunn of Cluff Natural resources PLC informing us that they have 2 licences for underground coal gasification under the Firth of Forth. He explains that the process they use does not include “fracking”.

E mail from Jim Flynn regarding the issue of rubbish accumulating behind the village Supermarket and takeaway shop.

Letter from Falkirk Council planners confirming that planning permission for 3 houses at the former Scout hall site has been granted.

Letter from Scottish water inviting us to attend their public meeting in Falkirk on 11th March. Robert, Ginny and Domini will attend this.

Communication from Margaret Lees regarding data protection documents we should be aware of before compiling our community resilience plan.

Invitation by Allison Leonard of R.S.P.B. Skinflats regarding the remedial works and seawall repairs at their tidal exchange project at Powfoulis. Robert will contact her and arrange for a site meeting so we can see the work first hand.

E mail from Cllr. Martin with information from Audit Scotland on Broadband delivery. The S.G. target is to have 85-90% of premises on line by March 2016 and over 95% by the end of 2017.

E mail from Cllr. Martin with a document from Cluff Natural resources detailing the procedures a processes relating to U.C.G. in the Firth of Forth.

7. Round the parish report.

Letham. Ian reported that he has started a Wednesday club in “The Hub” and various recreational activities are taking place. It was proving popular with some residents.

Dunmore. Ginny reported an incident where a large group of walkers had left the recognised and waymarked footpath along the Dunmore foreshore and had walked up through a planted field and through the busy farm yard. When spoken to one of the group became abusive and said that he could walk where he wished. Ginny tried to reason with him and pointed out the dangers of walking through a busy farm to no avail as he continued to be abusive and aggressive. This incident has been reported to the Falkirk Council countryside access officers and ranger who have said they will incorporate fencing at the area concerned to guide walkers on the recognised route. Angus Duncan also advised that the police be called if she is confronted with abusive and threatening behaviour again. Aileen commented that a notice showing the

Right of Way behind “The Smiddy House” in Dunmore is needed. This was agreed with Mandy Brown of F.C. a few years ago but has not been carried out. Robert will bring these issues to the attention of the Access Forum meeting in Falkirk next week.

Airth, Domini referred to the e mail from Jim Flynn regarding the accumulation of rubbish behind the supermarket and takeaway shops. She pointed out that Community Councillors could contact council officials themselves.

8. Planning issues. The removal of P.A.N. s from the weekly list was discussed. Donald Campbell has informed us that if a planning application relating to a P.A.N. has not been received within 1 year of the P.A.N. submission, it will be removed from the list and the applicant will have to go through the public consultation process again before submitting another P.A.N. Falkirk Council are also looking at planning applications which have been granted and have not yet progressed to the development stage with a view to removing them from the approved list.

Cllr. Bird informed us that the long standing Dunmore Park application had not yet been removed and consultations were continuing.

It was noted that the approval of the application for 3 houses on the former scout hall site did not appear to have taken our comments into consideration. It is envisaged that there will be a great deal of congestion at that area during the construction period and potential parking problems when the houses are occupied.

9. Website. The compilation of the website is progressing and some alterations have already been agreed. We will arrange a meeting to let all members view the content as soon as possible This could be combined with a “social event”.

10. Fracking. Domini has spoken to Maria Montinaro and expressed her disappointment that we have not been invited to C.C.O.F. meetings. The prospect of a meeting with Ineos involving all community councils in the area was discussed and it was suggested that Falkirk Council could arrange and host it. Domini will contact Brian Pirie regarding arranging this. Cllr. Bird advised us not to meet Ineos on our own to protect ourselves from unfair comments and accusations. It was agreed that a fact finding joint meeting with all other Falkirk District community councils and Ineos would be acceptable. It was agreed that community councillors should not give statements to the press and other media if approached.

Domini, Robert, Ginny and Ian had attended the meeting about fracking in

Grangemouth which was arranged by the "Falkirk Greens".

It was felt that the meeting was disappointing as there was little new to be learned. Most of what was said we have heard before. The meeting was late in starting as many of those involved had attended an anti fracking rally in Lancashire and had just returned.

There were 9 speakers, some of whom we had heard before and some new ones. All were giving a similar message about the dangers of fracking and the over dependency on fossil fuels and the effect it has on our environment and global warming.

The speakers were--

Maria Montinaro, media spokesperson for C.C.O.F. welcomed the moratorium on unconventional oil and gas exploration which had just been announced by the Scottish Government. She said that no-one knew about the coalbed methane project in Airth and Letham until 2012.

The C.C.O.F. chairperson who spoke about fracking, health, and the loss of her husband to cancer.

Leslie Dick a local farmer who spoke about his bad experiences with Dart Energy and their plans for coalbed methane extraction under his land.

Paul Young from a group called Scotland against fracking.

Professor Andrew Watterson from the School of Health Sciences at Stirling University gave a very interesting and informative talk on the various processes and chemicals involved and the dangers to human health and the environment.

Councillor Steven Carleschi explained how he became involved with the C.C.O.F. after being contacted by residents from Kinnaird.

Alison Duncan a Green Party M.S.P. spoke very eloquently about her opposition to fracking and overuse of fossil fuels in general and her support for renewable energy sources.

Andrew Kinnell of the Scottish Socialist Party Stirling Branch who announced that he was a vegan and opposed the exploitation of our resources and damage to our environment by rich multinational companies and businesses.

Norman Phillips of Friends of the Earth Falkirk who spoke about global warming caused by pollution by big companies and referred to child poverty in Grangemouth while there were some very rich companies in the town.

The meeting overran it's time and there was little time to have a question and answer session as it was snowing heavily and people wanted to get home before conditions worsened.

We had a general discussion regarding fracking and the following points were made.

Cllr. Bird said that he had relatives in Alberta in Canada who had no problems

with fracking but he pointed out that the area involved was huge with wide open unpopulated areas unlike the central belt of Scotland.

Ginny said that her relatives in Colorado have informed her that there are major problems with fracking in that state.

She also stated that insurance was a problem in this country as no company was prepared to insure wells or property affected by fracking.

The current moratorium on unconventional oil and gas exploration and development should give all parties time to provide evidence and information on the pros and cons of the process.

It was noted that Ineos had a 15 year contract to import shale gas from America to use in the Grangemouth plant. This may give everyone a “breathing space” before they pursue the development of gas fields in this country.

Cllr. Bird suggested a public meeting to keep residents informed and had concerns about individuals making comments on the issue.

11. Litter pick The litter pick last year was poorly attended and we agreed to consult with the school to see if they wanted to arrange to have a joint litter pick with us.

There was a document sent to us regarding Falkirk Councils litter strategy and other issues and it included an item offering grants to communities to take over and maintain “orphaned ground”, areas of unkempt ground used by flytippers etc. It was agreed to look at this document which had been forwarded to everyone and discuss it at our next meeting.

12. Treasurer`s report. Aileen informed us that we had £466.34 in our operating account and £2196.51 in the Christmas lights fund.

13 A.O.C.B.

Mrs Stark had to leave the meeting early before bringing any issue to the attention of the community council and said that she would wait and contact councillor Martin.

Arthur Berg has requested a meeting with Robert and Aileen and any other interested members to go over the paperwork for the grant for the cenotaph improvements. We will speak to him at the Meet the Funders event and arrange a time and date. He also suggests that we consult with the wider community on the issue of providing benches in the cenotaph garden.

Robert indicated that the next period of high tides will be from 19th to 24th March with 6.2 metre tides on the 21st and 22nd March. We will have to

monitor the weather at this period in case the conditions make for a tidal surge.

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

Date of the next meeting will be 18th March