

AIRTH PARISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the general meeting held on 21st March 2018 in Airth Primary School.

Members present. Robert Smith, Aileen Amos, Stephen Sloper, Murat Dilek, Jaqueline Drew.

Also present. Cllrs. Joan Coombes and Laura Murtaugh, Ron Martin, Kath Martin, Tom Sloper, George Russell, Robert Hotchkiss.
Colin Crabbe from Dunmore was present for part of the time but left early after making his point regarding snow clearance.

Craig Stevenson and James Miller from Police Scotland were also present for part of the time to deliver the police report.

As our minute secretary was on holiday, Robert Smith agreed to take notes and compile minutes for this meeting.

As neither the Convenor nor vice Convenor were present, Aileen chaired the meeting.

1. Apologies Apologies for absence had been received from Jon Anslow, James Toal, Cllr. Jim Flynn, Rev. Jim Todd and community constable Chris Morrison.

2. Approval of October minutes The minutes of the February meeting were approved and seconded by Aileen and Robert respectively. Stephen Sloper requested that the minutes be sent out for members to read in advance of the meeting. Aileen said that she had been sending them out to members, but there seems to have been a problem with e mails getting to some recipients. Stephen also commented that not all our minutes are on the council website as there were no minutes for December posted. Aileen explained that there was no December meeting as the old Community Council had been dissolved. Aileen also confirmed that although she sends them in to Falkirk Council timeously, they do not always get posted although she posts them on the Airth Parish Community Council site which is on the Falkirk Council website.

3. Police Report.

The police officers delivered a verbal report covering the period from 21st February to 21st March and left copy of the full report.

Briefly, there were 9 crimes reported to the police during this period. 4 were road traffic matters, theft of a camera from the RSPB site, theft of a parcel left in a secure place, vandalism, disorder and police assault. 6 have been detected, 1 is undetected and 2 are ongoing enquiries.

There have also been 62 calls to police from Airth parish this month, mainly road traffic matters linked to the recent snow storm, but also disorder linked to the recent old firm game.

The Community Policing team at Larbert has experienced a change of personnel this month as Inspector Rutland has been promoted to a new post in the Scottish Police College and has been temporarily replaced by Inspector Lynne Rushford.

At our last meeting, Jon Anslow had mentioned that the cycle clubs were using the local roads again and requested that the police speak to the organisers to instruct them to split into smaller groups. The officers said that they would speak to P.C. Chris Morrison to deal with that issue. The officers left the meeting after delivering their report as they were still on duty.

Colin Crabbe complained that the contractors assisting with clearing the roads during the recent snow storms had been instructed not to clear the road between Airth and South Alloa resulting in Dunmore Village being cut off from Thursday evening until Friday evening and that disabled and vulnerable residents were at risk as carers could not gain access to the village. It was pointed out that Letham and Bothkennar roads had not been cleared until the Sunday.

Cllr Murtaugh explained that no contractors had been instructed by the council not to clear the road between Airth and South Alloa. Some farmers were operating independently and using their own initiative so there may have been confusion over who was doing what. Colin Duffy from Dunmore home farm had cleared the road to South Alloa and started working back from Dunmore to Airth and met with contractors working north from Airth on the Friday evening.

It was noted that the road north of South Alloa had been cleared as Stirling Council gritters come to South Alloa to turn back towards Stirling. There appeared to be less snow towards Stirling. It was suggested that Falkirk and Stirling councils should co-operate and coordinate the work of keeping the A905 trunk road open should similar conditions occur in the future.

Although this item was already on the agenda under item 9, a lengthy discussion about the snow ensued.

Councillor Coombes indicated that many contractors and farmers had been recruited to clear roads throughout Falkirk district and without them on board, the council would have been unable to cope. It was impractical to keep expensive equipment in reserve for the relatively rare extreme weather events like the one we have just experienced.

Stephen Sloper commented that communities had worked together and

praised the local Farmers for the work they had done during the emergency. Robert Smith highlighted the importance of the Community resilience group during emergencies like we had just experienced and that we had checked that an invalid in Dunmore was being looked after by his family when his carers could not reach him. Colin Crabbe then left the meeting.

4. Matters arising.

The scheduled road repairs on the A905 between Dunmore and South Alloa have been delayed by the snowy weather and will be carried out as soon as practical.

The date for the litter pick and foreshore clean up has been agreed as Saturday 7th April. The event will be supported by Falkirk Council and volunteers should meet at the entrance of the banks road to the W.W.T.W. at the bottom of Shore Road at 10am. No insurance cover is available for this event and volunteers are required to be responsible for their own safety.

Cllr. Murtaugh will give an update on the flooding problem at Letham Terraces under the round the parish item.

5. Correspondence. As listed below.

Copy of letter from Elspeth Forsyth of F.C. which was sent to residents of Crawford Square to inform them of the proposed environmental improvements.

Copy of letter to Cabinet Secretary Angela Constance MSP regarding funding for our minute secretary.

E mail from Cllr. Jim Flynn regarding the poor quality of the road repairs on the A905 between Dunmore and South Alloa.

E mail from Cllr. Jim Flynn regarding the removal of the tree protectors on the Airth to Letham woodland walk.

E mail from Yvonne Boles of the RSPB with information relating to their planning application for the reserve at Powfoulis

E mail from Scottish Water, Shaping the Future.

E mail from Yvonne Boles of the RSPB with information requested when they attended our February meeting.

E mail from Cllr. Murtaugh regarding the flooding at Letham Terraces and the supplying of sand bags for Greendykes cottages.

E mail from Yvonne Boles of the RSPB confirming their participation in the foreshore litter pick.

E mail from Safer Scotland regarding the Community resilience event on 21st March. Robert and Aileen attended this.

E mail from Kate Anderson confirming our places for the Community resilience event.

E mails from James, Jon and Robert regarding minute taking at our meetings.
E mails from James regarding the issue of snow clearance on the A905 during the recent snow storms.

E mails from P.C. Chris Morrison and Robert Smith regarding goose shooting out of season for crop protection.

E mails from Waste Services and Robert Smith regarding the litter pick. It confirms that Falkirk Council do not provide insurance for voluntary litter picks.

E mail to Leslie Dick seeking permission to enter his land for the litter pick.

E mail from Anthony Timlin of Tender Care regarding unsafe memorial stones in graveyards.

E mail from Billy Paterson of Antonshill Residents Association with concerns that Fracking was going on at the former Dart site at Letham which is now owned by Ineos. Robert had spoken to him and it was a misunderstanding of the facts by one of their members who had raised the issue. They were meeting with council planning officials to confirm this.

E mails from Stephen Sloper with a copy of the response from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman upholding his 3 complaints against Falkirk Council for their handling of the reinstatement of the former open cast site at Waterslap farm.

E mails to and from John Milne and Robert Smith regarding the RSPB planning application for their reserve at Powfoulis.

E mail from Robert to the Cabinet minister chasing for a response to our letter regarding funding for our minute secretary.

E mails regarding the build up of rubbish at the corner of Shore Road and Dower place.

E mail from John Milne inviting members to meet him at the RSPB reserve at Powfoulis to view the site.

E mail from Cllr. Murtaugh regarding the rubbish build up at Dower Place.

E mail from Aileen to Brian Pirie regarding training for Community Councillors.

E mail notification of closure of Waterslap Road near Letham for water main repairs.

Monthly report from the Community Wardens with contact details.

Notification of minutes of Community Council meetings which have been uploaded on to the council website.

Letter from the UK Parliament informing us of events planned for 2018 to celebrate 100 years of some women and all men the right to vote for the first time. One of these events is Equaliteas 18th June to 2nd July. A host pack is available to assist in organising a community event. No one present offered to investigate and organise these events.

6. Treasurer`s report.

Aileen informed us that we had £174.76 in the Admin. Account and £2771.24 in the Christmas lights account. She also noted that the minute secretary had not yet cashed the last two cheques she had been given.

7. Round the Parish report.

South Alloa. Nothing to report.

Dunmore. Issue of road clearance of snow covered previously. James Mitchell had cleared the road within Dunmore with his tractor.

Airth. Stephen Sloper commented on the issues of gravestones being toppled. It seems to be council policy to leave dangerous gravestones lying flat following the death of a child in a Glasgow cemetery.

Dog faeces on public paths and tracks continues to be a problem both in the village and on the numerous paths and tracks round the area. Robert Hotchkiss stated that his grandchild had been contaminated with it and brought it into the house. Several of those present had also issues with dog`s dirt.

Cllr. Coombes stated that small amounts of dog poo can be put into the food waste bins and that Community wardens will target offenders if information is given to them. This can be in confidence. Mr Hotchkiss was given contact details for the wardens. Cllr. Murtaugh stated that there were 26 waste bins in the Airth area for use by dog walkers.

Robert Smith suggested that the introduction of a dog licence would create funds to finance community/dog wardens and Ron Martin suggested that when dogs are chipped for identification, a D.N.A. sample is taken from them. This could be used to identify dogs and their owners with a view to prosecution of offenders.

Letham. Cllr. Murtaugh gave an update on the flooding problem at the entrance to Letham Terrace. Flooding had occurred again after the snow melt and the council had deployed resources to try and relieve the effects on local residents. She confirmed that there are discussions ongoing between councillors and council officials to determine a satisfactory and permanent solution to this problem. Finance for this project is still available and it is suggested that Falkirk Council and Scottish Water work together and pool resources and expertise to progress this issue. The work must be carried out this year, but there are various confidential issues to be addressed by officials and other relevant parties. Letham residents have been notified of the situation. We agreed to wait until concrete proposals are agreed between officials and councillors before the community council meets with them. Murat

Dilek enquired if a project manager had been appointed as yet and Cllr. Murtaugh stated that several officials were involved at the moment.

8. Planning issues.

The Community Council had been invited to accompany John Milne of Falkirk Council on a familiarisation visit to the R.S.P.B. site at Powfoulis that day, but no members were available to attend. However, Ron Martin had gone with John to see the site with a view to lodging an objection to the planning application. He commented that there were a great many dead guillemots on the shore of the reserve and felt that the R.S.P.B. could have done more to rescue these birds when they were alive. These were casualties of the recent bad weather and hundreds had been picked up well inland around the Stirling area. However, this is not really a matter relevant in strict planning terms. There is a great deal of paperwork associated with this application and a letter with comments will be drawn up and circulated to members for approval before it is submitted.

Proposal for an extension to a house at 8 Miller Place, Airth. R.Smith declared an interest in this as it was next to his daughter's house and could not make comment. The remaining councillors have no comments to make on this application. Other applications are for a timber outbuilding at Vine cottage Dunmore and outbuildings and fencing to the rear of 30 Letham Terrace. No comments to be made on these. The extension to M`Dina at Dunmore has been granted. The application for 5 flats adjacent to the Crown Hotel in Shore road has been called in by the planning committee and a site meeting will be held on 3rd April. Parking provision for this site is an issue as Shore Road is extremely congested. George Russell enquired if there was other ground available in Shore road to provide additional parking. Any spare ground is in private hands. Cllr. Joan Coombes gave an update on the environmental improvements planned for Crawford Square. The landscape architect has worked up a design and residents consulted. The work is now out to tender and it is hoped that this project could be underway by the summer.

9. A905 blocked by snow.

Following on from the previous discussion, George Russell stated the importance of Falkirk Council getting a system in place to have a list of authorised contractors and farmers available so that they can be utilised and co-ordinated efficiently. Basic information about location of available machinery, insurance and drivers can be kept on record and updated periodically so that they can be contacted and mobilised quickly. He said that it was not about money, but working efficiently. He also touched on the issue of

liability for damage caused during snow clearance work and cited the case of a contractor being sued for damage caused while he was undertaking voluntary work to help his community. Abandoned vehicles were a problem and George could not clear the Cemetery Brae and High Street because of an abandoned vehicle. Ron Martin said that this was also an issue at Bothkennar where the roads are very narrow. The community was very appreciative of the work done by all the farmers in the area in opening and clearing roads and to George Russell for his help in clearing the Airth Health Centre and Airth and Bothkennar primary schools. Murat Dilek had mobilised a group of parents and children to clear paths at the school and residents in all areas had undertaken snow clearance. At the request of the matron, volunteers were contacted to clear the snow from the drive and car park at the Airthrey care nursing home to allow access for emergency vehicles.

10. Community Resilience.

Aileen and Robert had attended a seminar in Edinburgh that day on Community Resilience. It was hosted by the Scottish Government and was aimed at communities who were engaged in Community resilience projects. This was even more appropriate given the recent weather related events. While our community worked well in snow clearance and looking after vulnerable residents, it is hoped that we can progress with getting the Airth and District group more organised and functional. Aileen remarked that some groups had been able to attract funding for insurance cover and other resources.

11. Waterslap.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman has upheld 3 complaints against Falkirk Council which were made by Stephen Sloper regarding their handling of the restoration of the former opencast site at Waterslap farm. The report was marked confidential and Stephen had e mailed copies of this to community councillors. He says that it has taken him a year to get to this stage and that the community should be given the opportunity to have their say on environmental issues.

Cllr. Murtaugh said that it was a very complex matter and that council officers were working on a report to say what they propose to do. This will be made available to all relevant parties. Stephen Sloper considered that there should be a retrospective planning application made and the community should be mindful of issues raised by this development. Cllr. Coombes stated that these applications are normally approved.

Aileen Amos stated that we should await the report containing the response

from Falkirk Council and Cllr. Murtaugh said that officials were getting all the facts established and preparing their report. There is no date available for completion of this as yet.

12. A.O.C.B.

Robert Smith had received a complaint from a resident that lorries were parking in the area at the former Pine`n` Oak site and this is designated for cars only. Kerbs and drainage have been damaged by lorries crossing over the path to get into the car park. Cllr. Murtaugh will investigate this with the roads department.

Aileen thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Our next meeting will be on the 18th April 2018 in Airth Primary School from 7pm until 9pm.