

# Airth Parish Community Council

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Minutes of Meeting held in Airth Primary School on Wednesday 19th April 2017

**(Those present were informed that the meeting was being recorded)**

**Members Present :**            **Jon Anslow (Convenor)**  
   **Ginny Sutherland (Vice Convenor)**  
   **Aileen Amos (Secretary / Treasurer)**  
   **Robert Smith (Assistant Secretary)**

**Also Present :**                **Laura Murtagh; Jane Rae (Minute Taker);**  
   **2 Police Constables (part of meeting)**  
   **Craig Martin (part of meeting)**

**1. Apologies :**                **Cllr. Joan Coombes; PC Christopher Morrison;**  
   **Cllr. Stephen Bird; Rev. Jim Todd; William Watson**

## **2. Police Report**

Two colleagues of PC Christopher Morrison came into meeting halfway through to present his report in his absence.

The report covered the period from 15th March to 19th April 2017 and identified 6 reported crimes / offences in Airth, Dunmore and South Alloa. These included drinking in the street, domestic incidents, communications offences and assault. There were also 61 calls to Police from Airth in this period, mostly relating to road traffic matters, bogus workmen, concern for persons and missing persons.

During the last week of March 2017 police carried out 'Operation Alternate' at Higgins Neuk roundabout where a number of vehicles were stopped and checked at random. As a result 5 road traffic offences and 2 drug offences were detected.

PC present updated the meeting regarding problematic parking at primary school. Parking tickets have already been handed out but it is too early to gauge impact of this.

PC also asked meeting to put word out for anyone in area who has any drugs intelligence to pass this onto PC Morrison.

Attention was drawn to new initiative by Police Scotland for community engagement and reassurance - "Your View Counts". A public consultation process is to be launched and will widen eventually to a survey being available online.

Ginny Sutherland took the opportunity to bring the constables up-to-date with the problems of fire raising and general abuse of area within Dunmore Estate. The estate can be included in the "anti-social behaviour patrol" carried out on a regular basis by police. PC undertook to pass this to PC Morrison.

### **3. Previous Minutes :**

Robert Smith had compiled minutes of previous meeting. Aileen Amos wished to add one point regarding Cllr. Jean Coombes agreeing to follow up with Falkirk Council on the issue of money available for minute secretary. Subject to this change the minutes were approved by Aileen and Jon.

### **4. Matters Arising :**

- (a) Sewage at Dunmore** : Robert still unable to contact Melvyn McGregor of SEPA.
- (b) Graham Terrace garden** : Still not been tidied up. Council has attempted to contact tenant but to no avail. Robert will try to contact tenant again.
- (c) One Way System at Shore Road** : A temporary mix up as to who (Aileen or Robert) was to take this up with Council. Clarification of plan needed. Robert Smith to write to Roads Dept. Jon Anslow suggested that a trial period to see how it goes may be an idea but not sure how long this would need to be for. Robert Smith suggested we wait and see what the proposals are and respond after next meeting.
- (d) LDP** : Aileen Amos and Robert Smith both attended. No development plan yet (see under "Planning").

### **5. Correspondence :**

- Letter from David East, Communications Manager, INEOS - invite to Community Liaison Group Meeting on Monday 24 April 2017. Aileen Amos to attend.
- Dispatch Confirmation note from Amazon regarding purchase of Digital Voice Activated Recorder for use at community council meetings.

- email from Robert Smith to Bonnybridge Community Council informing them of his and Aileen Amos's intention to attend meeting being held regarding Unconventional Oil & Gas Exploration on 23rd March 2017.
- email from Rhys Stenhouse of Wellbeing Scotland with information of an Election Hustings meeting being held on Tuesday 25th April at 7pm at Thornhill Community Hall, Falkirk, and inviting community council members to attend.
- Press Release from Steven Boyle of INEOS regarding their acquisition of the Forties Pipeline System and Kinneil Terminal from BP.
- email from Brian Pirie, Democratic Services Manager, Falkirk Council, regarding a Scottish Government Consultation on Parking to be held on 30th June 2017. Robert Smith wondered if a response should be made, Jon Anslow not keen and Aileen Amos suggested those present should have a meeting specifically to make a decision. It may be possible to make an online response. Laura Murtagh informed meeting that this was a bill that the last parliament ran out of time on and it has been brought back to firm up into legislation.
- email from Robert Smith to Community Council members regarding the possibility of Jane Rae taking on duties of Minute Secretary.
- email from Nicola Turner of Keep Scotland Beautiful regarding "Spring Clean Up" in association with Greggs the Bakers. This will be ongoing until May. There is a need to let them know if we will be involved. Hasn't yet been discussed at school due to holiday. (see under heading "Spring Clean")
- Latest news posts from Planning Democracy
- email from George Russell Construction to Aileen Amos regarding a planning proposal for the Falkirk Council LDP2. *"A design and vision for Airth Mains has been produced which includes 70 bungalows to be made available to persons and couples aged 55 and above, thus having no impact on schools and education facilities. There shall also be bungalows made available for rent, which in turn gives the possibility of larger properties in the village vacating to give way for younger / larger families to settle in. There shall also be the visitor centre which will provide tourism and employment opportunities to local community."*

## **6. Round the Parish :**

South Alloa : No progress has been made on provision of noticeboard.

Letham : Nothing reported.

Airth : Litter etc. still a problem. Robert Smith also noticed that there was a lot of dog fouling on the Cemetery Brae. He agreed to contact Community Warden.

Dunmore : The meeting had a lengthy discussion regarding general misuse and abuse of Dunmore Estate and Dunmore House, particularly by young adults. This was led by Ginny Sutherland who recounted her experience of fire raising, fly tipping, dog fouling and wanton vandalism in the area. No deterrent seems to work, whether it be locked gates (which were forced opened by bolt cutters) or signs (which have been defaced or physically pulled down) and Ginny herself has had to tolerate verbal abuse. Generally when police are called they arrive too late to catch anyone and Ginny expressed concerns at the potential for a serious incident or injury. What was once an asset to the community, i.e. picturesque area for walks, has now become an eyesore. Dunmore House itself is in ruins but can't be demolished due to it being a listed building. People, particularly youngsters, are being drawn to it as it features on several internet sites in various "attractive" guises. There had been several incidents lately of fire raising and young adults have been seen hanging about, apparently not all live locally. Robert Smith suggested contacting Community Wardens regarding fly tipping and dog fouling. Ginny Sutherland wondered if private landowners could erect fly tipping notices or does it have to be on Council-owned ground?

*See reference to possible intervention by police at previous section under heading "Police Report" on p.2 of these minutes.*

## **7. Treasurer's Report :**

Aileen Amos informed the meeting that there was £641.41 in the admin account which included a grant of £374 from Falkirk Council. There is £1953.44 in the Christmas Lights account. The operating costs for Ethan's Light is still to be taken into account.

## **8. Planning Issues :**

**(a) Extension at 57 South Green Drive** : This has been agreed. No issues.

**(b) The Escarpment** : Aileen Amos had spoken to John Milne, who informed her that he had meetings on 18th and 19th April with planners and builders regarding this. £600,00 is money available for affordable housing and £700,00 for education. Any deviation from this has to be approved by Council. The agreement is that this has to be used within the Falkirk area and not necessarily Airth but this was felt to be unacceptable. In theory this money could be split between affordable housing and a possible other option as yet unidentified. The area the Council identified for this housing is bad for flooding - perhaps their financial situation necessitated this offer.

Aileen Amos agreed to contact Craig Martin in relation to this and also speak again to John Milne. Robert Smith expressed the opinion that he wanted to see things moving.

**(c) LPD2 plan - email from George Russell Construction :** *see extract from email under "Correspondence"*. It was the consensus that only selling bungalows to people aged 55 or over was very restricting. It was agreed that the Pineapple did attract people to area and Robert Smith added that the visitors' centre was an appealing idea and could be an asset. It was agreed that at this stage however a polite response should be made to George Russell. It was discussed whether any more involvement was necessary at moment but it was agreed that it is in the very early stages. More generally, the Council's LPD2 plan is open for relevant comments and Jon Anslow asked Robert Smith to identify anything worthy of comment within local area and respond appropriately within a week (due by 8/6/17). Robert Smith mentioned 80 houses being planned for Skinflats but this not within our area.

#### **9. Spring Clean :**

Due to Robert Smith not driving currently, he advised that he would not be able to visit and identify all areas locally that require to be cleaned up. Laura Murtagh agreed to speak to Mrs Carson, Headteacher, to gauge school's wish to be involved in this initiative and whether any children may volunteer. Laura will email Aileen Amos who in turn will respond to Greggs. As a bonus, cakes will be on offer!

#### **10. Community Resilience Project :**

This was an issue that was being dealt with in 2016 but unfortunately had to be halted due to a tragic accident in the village. Malcolm Wilson and Margaret Lees, Falkirk Council employees, were both involved but have since retired. Fiona McLuckie now taking this on. She has contacted Robert Smith to ascertain whether we still wished to be involved. Some sort of trial run needs to be organised, possibly during the summer, which may merely be a paper exercise (or indeed electronic). Laura Murtagh pointed out how quickly word can get round locally if something out of the ordinary happens, for instance via social media.

**At this point the two Police Constables joined the meeting (see their report on p1-2 of these minutes)**

## **11. Edinburgh Airport :**

Robert Smith had contacted Edinburgh Airport regarding the possibility of organising a public meeting within Airth. This was not possible but Robert attended one that was organised in Falkirk on 18/4/17. Robert had several queries which he felt were adequately answered. For planes flying northwards, by the time they were over Airth they would already be too high in order to clear the Ochils for there to be any noise impact. He asked about the implications of terrorist hijacking or hacking into aircraft onboard computers, especially with Grangemouth as a potential target. He was astounded to be told that there is no “no fly zone” over Grangemouth, airplanes are only prevented from flying over submarine bases and military bases. He was told that “in theory” hacking by terrorists can’t happen.

He also brought up the fact that there is a lot of helicopter and light aircraft activity from Cumbernauld airport but was told this was outwith the control of Edinburgh Airport. They are concerned only with anything flying over 3,000 feet. He was also informed that only within the vicinity of the airport do any measures exist for over-wintering birds. There is a potential hazard for aircraft within the local area from flocks of geese and it was agreed that this issue should be highlighted to Edinburgh Airport Consultation exercise. At the moment Edinburgh Airport can handle one plane every 2 minutes but the changed flight paths could potentially mean one plane every 1 minute. Individual responses can be made but it was agreed that a community response would also be formulated and put forward, particularly in relation to the birds and the potentially dangerous situation should Grangemouth be targeted, or hit.

## **12. Fracking :**

Robert Smith and Aileen Amos attended the public meeting in Bonnybridge on behalf of the Community Council regarding this issue. They both felt it was not what they had expected. Aileen also felt some of the residents from Bonnybridge were quite preoccupied by the historic events of ReChem and felt this current issue might incur a re-run of promises made at the time by the developer that turned out to be empty. This also reminded the Community Council of the difficulties over the coal extraction at Letham and the promises made to the community over reinstatement of that area.

Aileen and Bob, on behalf of the Community Council, had been trying for some considerable time to find a neutral body who could carry out a workshop in the parish to discuss the Scottish Government’s consultation on Unconventional Gas Extraction (Fracking). This has proved to be difficult but other Community Councils had managed to arrange for a neutral group to present the consultation to their groups so it was felt that they should be approached, Jon asked Aileen and Bob to pursue this option.

Robert Smith stated that he had written to the coal authority regarding the impact of drilling through redundant mines but the response he had received was not really relevant to Scotland. There are still many unanswered questions and Ginny Sutherland felt that SEPA were neutral and seemed to have very few powers to deal with this new situation.

**Councillor Craig Martin joined the meeting during the discussion of this item.**

### **13. Airth Cemetery :**

It was the opinion of the meeting that the cemetery requires to be expanded. Craig Martin was able to inform meeting that expansion is going ahead as part of Falkirk Council's 10 year plan. It is also now possible to purchase new lairs as moratorium on this has been lifted. New ground for burial takes up to 10 years to prepare. The new footpath / wheelchair path has been installed and this is part of on the ongoing upgrade, along with new paths between graves so that it is unnecessary to walk over plots. Falkirk Council organised a Policy Panel which came up with a huge list of recommendations. Changes to Falkirk Crematorium were also discussed and Craig informed that two brand new cremators were being installed.

### **14. Any Other Competent Business :**

In recognition of Craig Martin's 20+ years' association with the Community Council and his impending retiral as a Councillor, a presentation was made to him on behalf of the Community Council by Aileen and Robert. Craig recalled various projects he had been involved in which had had major and positive impacts on the local area and stated that over £25M had been invested in these initiatives, such as the water treatment plant / overhead line improvement / and he was proud to have been involved in the fight to have the Alloa Bridge sited further away from the village. He felt that it has been a privilege to have worked with the community council, which many times had made his job much easier. He concluded by thanking the community council for all the work they had undertaken and for having stuck with it when things were not so easy.

**Jon Anslow concluded that there was no further business and therefore closed the meeting.**