

Airth Parish Community Council

Minutes of Meeting held within Primary School, Airth, on Wednesday 20th November 2019

Members Present : James Toal (Assistant Convenor) - chaired meeting

Aileen Amos (Secretary / Treasurer)

Robert Smith (Assistant Secretary)

Murat Dilek (Comm Councillor)

Stephen Sloper (Comm Councillor)

Also Present : Jacqueline Drew, Co-opted Member (Airth Parish Church)

Cllr Laura Murtagh; PC Pete Dunlop; Ronnie Martin;

Jane Rae (Minute Taker)

The Secretary informed everyone that in relation to the Data Protection rules anyone who does not wish their name to appear in the minutes please let the minute secretary know.

1. Apologies : Jon Anslow and Cllr Jim Flynn.

2. Police Report : Community PC Pete Dunlop attended the meeting and presented his report. He updated on the recent apprehension of cannabis dealer within the village, aided by local intelligence. The community police had been on his trail for quite a while.

PC Dunlop mentioned that there had been a significant increase in road traffic accidents locally, however most had occurred on the motorway. The police team have been particularly busy recently, especially in Stenhousemuir. PC Dunlop reported that there had so far been no issues in connection with the Elphinstone Inn re-opening.

James Toal said he had recently been at a flood reaction seminar when someone announced that community police officers were trained in flood reaction. PC Dunlop said that this wasn't accurate but expressed a keenness to investigate this further and perhaps undertake the training if possible. On this theme Cllr Murtagh mentioned that she had vests etc. in the boot of her car which any member of the community resilience team can use. Looking for somewhere to store the equipment.

Robert Smith said that no report had been received by the community council in relation to a recent bad accident in Moss Rd. PC Dunlop said that a motor-biker had suffered significant injuries but it was hoped he would recover. Aileen Amos added that Robin Murray had cut back the hedges at the corner of the main road with the Moss Road. There was still a diversion in place but apparently drivers continued to use the road.

The discussion moved to parking in and around the school, which PC Dunlop and his colleagues were always monitoring. There appears to be no extra parking around the

health centre since the Dementia Hub team had moved there. Parking at the school remains an issue and despite trying various strategies many drivers continue to ignore the warnings.

PC Dunlop mentioned he had been in discussion with the headmistress regarding children playing at the back of the playground out of hours. The headmistress did not mind this, as long as respect was paid to nearby neighbours in Paul Drive and Airthrey Care.

PC Dunlop and a colleague will attend on the evening of the Xmas Night Switch On and would be more than willing to come along early and help out in any way required.

James Toal thanked PC Dunlop for his contribution, he then left the meeting.

3. Matters Arising :

- Nursery Places : Robert still to write the letter to Falkirk Council outlining the problems of not enough spaces at Airth Nursery. He had held back from writing the letter because he was unsure how to tackle the issue - what angle should he concentrate on. Aileen suggested that he should write generally but citing the one case that we know about, i.e. Glynis Williamson and her daughter-in-law attended last month's meeting. There was a general consensus that the problem can only get worse with more houses being built in the village and there not being space at the school to expand. Robert will draft the letter and let members read it before sending it out.
- Steps at Cemetery : Cllr Flynn has taken this on. The Council denied responsibility but the Church Board are adamant this is not the case. Cllr Murtagh awaiting correspondence to clarify the situation.
- Problems with drains near the Parsonage : Aileen thinks that work may have started on this. Still confusion over who has ultimate responsibility.
- Bus Stakeholders meeting : Robert attended this recent meeting on 24/10 and gave an update on issues raised. Council looking to bid to make the area an investment zone and there are draft plans to renovate the railway station extending to incorporate a bus station for Falkirk. Investment will need to be sought. Several strategies suggested, not least is encouraging more people to use the bus service. Suggestion to restore authority to the Council to run bus services instead of using private companies. Conversely, Bo'ness is apparently having a success in running 3 15-seater buses in the town. The next meeting will be in the new year.

4. Correspondence :

- receipt of payment of annual fee of £20 under Gambling Act 2005

- email from David Graham of Living Streets - inviting CC to comment on walking promotion / activities in Falkirk
- Community Safety Team report, 1/10 to 31/10/19. Continuing to monitor for fly tipping, dog fouling etc.
- email from Ginny Sutherland - she has generously paid £42 for wreath laid on Remembrance Sunday by CC
- email between Aileen and Murat regarding Remembrance Day event. Aileen had to apply for tickets this year, not automatic. Also due to cutbacks no buffet on offer either. Unfortunately Murat and his wife were unable to attend.
- email with Stephen Sloper's comments on Robert's letter in relation to George Russell's application.
- email regarding removal of red phone box at Dunmore. Copy given to James Toal.
- email from Robert appealing for raffle prizes for the Christmas Lights Draw.
- email from Ineos regarding commissioning activities beginning on Sunday 17 November and associated spells of controlled elevated flaring.
- email from Zurich Insurance regarding information available in event of flooding.
- email from Jon with apologies for absence from tonight's meeting.
- email from Jacqueline Drew regarding the works required to the steps and edgings at the rear of the church and her communication with Cllr Flynn. Await outcome.
- notice of Community Council Forum to be held on 27/11 to discuss medium term financial report and officers' saving options for 2020/21. To be led by Bryan Smail, Chief Finance Officer. Aileen will go and Stephen will let her know if he can also attend. Cllr Murtagh added that due to the General Election in December the Westminster financial settlement is behind schedule, and therefore Scottish Government cannot set their budget either.
- Addendum to UOG : Submissions from Community Councils re Fracking.
- poster - Santa Sleigh visiting Airth on Friday 13/12. Aileen, Robert and Jacqueline will all go along to help, beginning in Letham at 6.30, proceeding to Airth from 7 - 9pm
- poster - Airth Christmas Lights Switch On - Friday 6th December from 6pm
- notice of parking restriction at top of Elphinstone Crescent
- notice of disabled parking revocation on High Street
- notice of disabled parking restriction on Paul Drive

- Police (Scotland) - report for tonight's meeting.
- email from Aileen to Cllr Murtagh regarding Laura organising the choir for the Xmas Lights Switch On following on her great success of last year. She has agreed once again to do this.
- email from Sarah at Site Sealants kindly wishing to make a donation to Xmas Lights event. Robert will contact her.

5. Treasurer's Report :

Aileen reported there is £755.55 in the Admin a/c and £3,155.34 in the Xmas Lights a/c, although money still to come off. CC had received an anonymous £100 donation and Ginny Sutherland has covered the £42 expense for the poppy wreath.

6. Round the Parish : this item had been left off agenda but was dealt with quickly at the end of the meeting.

Airth :

- Speed limits and traffic calming : Stephen suggested that this item should be revisited at next meeting. Cllr Murtagh still wading through huge amount of data collected and will be asking for comparable stats to get a better sense of the information. Robert pointed out that the majority of drivers did respect the speed limit. May still ask Police Scotland to consider speed cameras at some point.
- Trees in belt between South Green Drive and Kennedy Way : This will be revisited at next meeting also.

Letham : nothing to report

Dunmore: James Toal updated on what was previously Joined Up Dunmore, now under the auspices of Falkirk Community Trust. A consultant has now been appointed. More information to be shared as progress is made.

South Alloa : nothing to report

7. Planning Issues :

(a) Application for 4 houses at Westerwood, Dunmore by Margaret Ferns :

previously had been an application for 7 houses which did not materialise. Queried whether previous planning permission is transferable. Cllr Murtagh confirmed that this would not be the case. Robert to put together a letter citing the concerns of the CC as follows:- school places consideration; isolation for any children living there; long walk to main road and no footpath etc. Robert will draft the letter and members will comment.

- (b) Erection of 3 Agricultural Sheds (part retrospective)** : this is on land NW of Fairfields, owned by Gilvear & Son. Robert has contacted an officer at Falkirk Council for an explanation. The material stored was brought in as hardstanding and not to be stored there. Gilvears are livestock farmers and the store is intended for normal agricultural purposes. The residents of nearby Fairfields have in the past been very vocal and active with any objections raised and Robert thought that on the basis that the CC had not heard from them in relation to this issue it could be presumed (rightly or wrongly) that they had no problems with it.
- (c) Public meeting regarding George Russell's planning application** : Robert apologised that he had not had an opportunity to read Stephen Sloper's email regarding this before writing the letter on behalf of the CC but hoped that his comments covered Stephen's concerns.
- (d)** James Toal wished to highlight a delicate issue regarding Dunmore. Mrs Sutherland's house "Wheatfields" is up for sale and she has started using the road which runs past Pytree Cottages and through Dunmore village to access the house, rather than the road which comes from the Dunmore Home Farm. There is a gate on the road at the boundary of her property and this is currently unlocked allowing access over the stretch of unmade road leading into Dunmore village. Recently residents have counted 10 cars driving past in the course of one day. The Council has been contacted for clarification but local residents are concerned with the amount of traffic and also the state of the road and the responsibility for maintaining it. Because the road is privately owned and the Community Council would not be involved in a legal dispute, it may ultimately be up to the legal representatives of the various parties to argue the case. Stephen suggested that sight of the original planning application could be helpful. Cllr Murtagh will pursue this. Robert stated that it was his recollection that the gate was installed as a temporary measure to prevent construction traffic from accessing the house site and was a condition of the planning approval.

8. Responses to Questions Regarding Airth & District Flood Defences Study :

Robert read out various extracts of the response the CC had received in relation to this issue. Much of the evidence has been based on a 2014 survey which means it is seriously out of date. The calculations of the probability of incidents was based on what is now much worsened outcomes. Robert outlined various observations of embankments, 90% of which were apparently in good Grade 2 Condition. However at the time vegetation was heavy which could of course mask any failures. The study also predated work done by local landowners so cannot be an up to date conclusion. It seems that, in common with most things nowadays, economics is paramount. Prevention is much more expensive than having to fix specific incidents. The conclusion appears to be that existing embankments are sufficient - there is no significant danger to

life / limb or properties. A positive indicator may be that insurance companies are not refusing cover. Aileen thought that insurance companies were not allowed to refuse cover at an affordable price for flooding - this was something that had been discussed at a previous Flood Forum she had attended.

Robert felt that this issue was one that was worthwhile continuing to push for improvements. Cllr Murtagh added that the extreme weather events, be it heavy rain, flooding, fires etc., that some areas were experiencing in an increasing pattern were difficult to mitigate against, i.e. there is a limit to what can be done. Robert suggested, and everyone agreed, that he should write again to Ms Agnew at Falkirk Council and keep this issue live and on the agenda.

9. Xmas Lights Switch On : Aileen said that everything is going smoothly with the arrangements so far. As previously, a pupil from Airth Primary will be chosen to switch on the lights. Another 3 lights have been bought and this completes the village from end to end - an amazing achievement. Fund raising must continue though, as it costs a minimum of £2.5K per annum to service and erect the lights. They will be erected by the end of November. Aileen reiterated the plea for raffle prizes.

13. AOCB :

- Robert updated the meeting on the change of management of the post office and shop again and had been told that the post office licence expires at end of November.
- He had also heard that Bowtrees may be for sale.
- High tides : 26 - 28 November.
- Everyone agreed that the Janitor should receive his usual Christmas bottle from the CC as a thank you for staying to cover our meeting once a month.
- Robert has to be commended for his inspiration and setting up of the poo bag milk bottles - they have (mostly) been a great success.
- Ronnie Martin of Bothkennar updated the meeting on the situation regarding the possibility of breaching and flooding near his home. It seems that Ms Agnew of Falkirk Council has now seen the situation first hand after 2 years of Ronnie attempting to convince the Council of the seriousness of the issue and was shocked at what she saw. A valve within a manhole is faulty and needs to be fixed. The Council have now agreed that this area cannot be flooded and Ronnie is a bit more optimistic (for now) that his concerns are being taken seriously.

James Toal concluded that there was no further business and therefore closed the meeting.