

Biggar Community Council
Minutes of the meeting held at 7:00pm on 17th February 2020
in Biggar Library Meeting Room

Present:

Community Council

Jerry Sumpster (Chair), Jan Currie (Secretary), Gil Dunn, Thelma Ingram, Jimmy Ritchie, Laura Shirley, Janet Moxley, Lesley Craise (Minute Taker)

Ex Officio

Cllr Ian McAllan, Cllr Alex Allison

3 members of the public

1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

2. Chair's Opening Remarks

Jerry welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 20/01/20 were agreed as correct. Proposed by Gil and seconded by Janet.

3.1 Matters Arising

No matters arising were raised.

3.2 Actions Table Update

- Enquiries re designating Park Place as an emergency route with designated signage- covered in SLC Councillors' report.
- We have established that SLC does not have an Accessibility Fund. Thelma intends to pursue this on an individual basis.
- There has been no response from Walkers Carpets about the Clydesdale Close. Janet has raised the issue of the graffiti in the Clydesdale Close with SLC and this has been entered on the BCC Infrastructure Log.
- SLC will not give us a free let of the Muncipal for the Community Fair as part of our entitlement to 12 lets per year as these are only for rooms for BCC meetings.
- A meeting has been arranged with Claudia Beamish on Monday 24th February about the 101/102 bus service. Laura, Thelma and Janet will attend. Barry Knock from Thankerton CC will also be there.

3.2 Actions Table Update (cont.)

- Jerry still to organise a date for members of BCC to visit the Men's Shed. It will be a Thursday.
- Amey are proposing to make some alterations to the lighting at the steps near Campsies. Jimmy will continue to liaise with Amey about this.

All other actions complete.

4. Police Report

Police Scotland had sent Jan a report outlining crimes and incidents in the Biggar area between 16/01/20 and 12/2/20. A summary follows.

- Theft from caravans
- Attempted theft of caravans
- Theft of cigarettes and lighter
- Assault involving school pupils. No injury.
- Theft of growing flowers from plant pots
- Theft of laptops and sound equipment from portacabin
- Attempted theft of a bottle of vodka
- Breach of Dogs Act 1993. Dog bit pedestrian. Slight injury.
- Damage to garden gate
- Theft of a bottle of wine

5. Chair's Report

There was nothing Jerry wanted to comment on.

6. Secretary's Report

Jan had received correspondence from:

- Kilbride Hospice in East Kilbride who are keen to publicise their work
- Lanarkshire Cancer Care Trust who were keen to have a table at the Community Fair in order to raise awareness of their services. Members of the community council had been consulted about this by email and felt that, given the lack of table space available, any remaining space should be allocated to local groups.

7. Treasurers Report

Balance figures given are correct at 17/02/20

<u>Business account balance</u>	£27.07
<u>Incentive account balance</u>	£1125.35

(Glenkerie Windfarm balance £349.52, Incentive fund balance £775.83)

<u>Clyde Windfarm account balance</u>	£1860.50
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One fixed asset - a Canon printer. £20 for filing cabinet has been received.

7. Treasurers Report (cont.)

The balance in the Business Account is very low. For the rest of this financial year, we will need to ensure that expenditure is made only from the Incentive Fund. We are due to submit our accounts and request for the next year's Admin Grant at the year-end (31st March). However, the Admin Grant is not likely to be received until June. We agreed that Gil should email SLC asking if a cash advance might be available in the circumstances.

8. Specific Matters brought to meeting by public

We welcomed Lucy Duffin, new Manager at Greenhills Care Home to the meeting.

Bob Brownlie raised two issues:

1) He had become aware that the Borders Council CCTV network in town centres was becoming unsustainable due to keeping up with costs of repairs and replacement cameras. In response to this, Selkirk is developing its own scheme which will operate a bit differently. For instance it does not use a control centre and it may be possible for Police Scotland to interrogate the cameras using handheld devices. The outlay for the scheme is estimated at £25k for eight cameras. There are still questions about ongoing maintenance costs and whether Borders Council will pick these up. The funding for the scheme will come from the Common Good Fund and BIDS. BIDS are business improvement districts. Where they are in place, all businesses have to pay into them. They have been established in Lanark and Carluke and their introduction has been controversial. Janet will do a briefing note for the CC on BIDS.

We felt that, if we were to organise a meeting looking at the possibility of the installation of CCTV in Biggar, we should invite a wider group of people, including businesses, to the meeting.

Castletown and Hawick have expressed interest in the system, and it has been installed in Alloa.

Bob suggested that we talk to Ross Leggate, SLC Community Safety Officer, who would be willing to come to a CC meeting.

We decided that in the first instance we should contact Selkirk CC for more information. Jerry will do this. Bob will pass his contacts onto Jerry.

2) In the context of our resilience strategy, Bob advised that, in the event of a prolonged power cut, it would be hard to find somewhere which could provide hot food. Most gas fired systems are now dependent on electricity, including the one in the Gillespie Centre, which has been used in the past for this purpose. The Bield Retirement Housing complex has no backup generator so residents would be left without heat, hot water and cooking facilities. Greenhills Care Home does have backup systems. These issues will be considered as part of our Resilience Plan, which is being developed.

9. SLC Councillors Reports

Park Place and Emergency Signage

Councillor McAllan has been advised that emergency signage cannot be erected because this would be in contravention of the Traffic Sign Manual. However, a report from the Ambulance Service has been requested and Cllr McAllan will feed back when this is received.

A702 Safety Issues/Crossing at Wynd

Cllr McAllan is still waiting to hear from Amey. If he has had no reply, he will chase this up next week.

Work on accessibility of pavements

Cllr McAllan reported that the work, being carried out by Amey, has begun. Gil expressed concern about the area outside the Corn Exchange being used to store materials for this project. This restricts parking at the Corn Exchange, and it appears that the Trustees of the Corn Exchange were not informed that this would be happening. Cllr McAllan will find out how long the work is scheduled to take.

101/102 Bus Service

Cllr McAllan had received a standard response from SPT, having raised concerns with them on a number of occasions.

Death

Cllr McAllan advised that the chairperson of Carstairs CC, Jim Burt, had passed away. Jan will write to Carstairs CC expressing condolences.

Potholes

Cllr McAllan reported that, although the potholes in Station Road and Biggar Mill Road have had temporary repairs, there are as yet no plans to resurface these areas. The potholes and worn surface immediately outside the Municipal are to be re-laid by SLC in the new financial year.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points

Cllr Allison advised that two more charging points are going to be installed outside the Chemist. He is hoping to get two charging points installed in the new car park being built by Story Homes for the town on North Back Road.

Transport

A meeting is being arranged between SPT and a range of interested parties in the area.

Signage

Cllr McAllan noted that Amey will not allow us to erect Fair Trade Town signage in the High Street. Janet noted that other options to mark Biggar's FT Town status are being explored by the FT Town group.

10. Agenda Items

10.1 Community Fair

26 organisations are having stalls. 16 are sharing tables. Two organisations are providing entertainment. The CC has two tables. There is a shortage of power sockets. Janet will bring three extension cables. The hall will be open between 12 and 6, although Thelma indicated that she will be arriving before midday. The Community Fair is open to the public from 2 until 5.

Ricky Duncan, from the Cool Cats Vinyl Club, will supply some music. Gil will print 20 grant information leaflets. The school Himalayan/Indian trip will supply tea, coffee and cakes and also baking to take away.

We will publicise the event widely on social media this week and Thelma will ask participating groups to publish the details on their own websites and social media, where these exist. Jimmy will move the banner from the bank to the Municipal Hall on the morning of the 22nd.

10.2 Inter Community Council Meeting

The proposed date is 14th March from 2 to 5 in the Gillespie Centre. 12 CCs have expressed an interest. The cost will be £45, and the Gillespie Centre requires a cheque for £200 as a guarantee. We decided to ask for a contribution of £5 from each participating CC.

10.3 Community Action Planning

Lesley presented the briefing paper which had previously been circulated, along with the proposed timeline drafted by the working group. All CC briefing papers are available on our website <https://biggarcc.weebly.com/> and in the Library. The timeline runs until 2024, recognising that Community Action Planning is a cyclical process. That said, it should be possible to produce a report about the themes which have emerged and any quick actions we have been able to take by December 2021.

The first step of the process is community mapping and we have still to complete this. Thelma noted that this work will be useful in other contexts e.g. Resilience Planning.

The CC agreed:

- That we should use the questions suggested by SLC, with some amendments suggested by Jan.
- We should pilot the questions with a small number of people to see if they need any changes
- That the draft timeline proposed by the Working Group could be used
- That it would be appropriate for the Working Group to produce a budget covering anticipated costs, with a view to making a grant application

Jerry has joined the Working Group. The next meeting of the Working Group will focus on community mapping.

10.4 Microgrants

10.4.1 Applications from Biggar Life Well Lived to run a “Singing for Health” series of sessions. Applications to the Clyde Windfarm Fund for £500 and the Glenkerie Windfarm Fund for £250 were approved. Proposed by Jan and seconded by Gil.

10.4.2 An application for £350 from the Clyde Windfarm Fund submitted by Friends of the Burnbraes for some of the costs of their annual Park Day was approved. Proposed by Lesley and seconded by Gil. Janet, Laura and Thelma abstained from this vote as they are members of Friends of the Burn Braes.

10.5 Health and Social Care Update

Lesley presented a briefing paper which had been circulated previously. All BCC briefing papers are available on our website and at the Library. She highlighted the need for different organisations to come together and work together.

Significant changes since the last update include:

- The emergence of a new organisation “Biggar Life Well Lived” which has similar aims to the Biggar Wee Oasis Group, with the exception of the latter’s interest in the Bield Day Care building. These two groups have begun a dialogue
- Clarity about SLC’s intentions re the Health and Social Care “spoke” in Biggar has emerged. It is initially likely to consist of a series of small pilot initiatives. The Hub and Spoke model has to be achieved on zero budget. Their preferred option seems to be to operate from a building which already has community footfall, leaving the Gillespie Centre as possibly the only option. I have spoken to the Gillespie Centre and passed on their contact details to Maureen Dearie (Locality Manager for Clydesdale).
- A strong tenants committee has emerged at the Bield Retirement Housing Complex and their intention is to approach Bield management for permission to use the ex-Day Care building. The CC agreed that if Bield write back to us following our approach to them, we will direct them towards the tenants committee as a first port of call.
- The planned meeting with Getting Better Together from Shotts to look at possible ways forward with transport issues, both for hospital visits and local community activities like the “Singing for Health” initiative. This meeting had to be rescheduled because of the snow and is now due to take place on 24th February. There will be representatives from the CC (myself and Laura), Biggar Wee Oasis and Biggar Life Better Lived.

We discussed how best to use the trishaw based at Greenhills. One impediment to its use may be the lack of suitable routes around Greenhills. John Riley had suggested that maybe the speed bumps on the road to the golf course could be

10.5 Health and Social Care Update (cont.)

removed. This might cause speeding traffic and the road is owned by the Godfrey family. The trishaw will be at the Community Fair, weather permitting.

10.6 Common Good Assets

The briefing paper for this, presented by Janet, is on our website and at the Library. Common Good assets are certain types of property which was acquired by the former Burgh of Biggar to benefit the town. In 1975, when Burgh Councils were abolished, ownership transferred to local authorities. If a Local Authority disposes of CG assets, or generates income from them, that money should be ring-fenced for the community concerned and not go into the Local Authority's Central fund. SLC record no heritable or moveable CG (Common Good) assets for Biggar, although they do record cash held in the CG fund. No interest is recorded as having been accrued on this amount since 2010. Cllr Allison advised that SLC's policy is to only allow investment in Banks and other funds rated AAA, which have only yielded around ½ % since 2008. Nonetheless we felt that there should have been some interest on the cash amount. Janet has done some initial research using old records at Lanark Library and it looks possible that the Public Park, the Corn Exchange, the Burn Braes and the Ruins of Boghall Castle are Common Good Assets. There are also a number of potential moveable assets including the chain of office of the Provost of Biggar, the town drum and the Whipman Society Books and Whip. Janet has identified a range of other possible Common Good assets. More research is needed, and Janet will undertake this. Given that no investment income has been recorded since 2010, there are serious questions to be answered about whether SLC has managed the CG funds in the best interests of the former Burghs.

10.7 Unrealistic timescales from SLC departments for responses to consultations and unrealistic notice being given of meetings

There have been a few examples of really poor practice, with impossible deadlines for community consultation and only a few days' notice given about a meeting about SLC's community empowerment strategy. Cllr McAllan will follow up with relevant SLC departments.

11. AOCB

- a) Work on the accessibility of pavements on the A702 has started at the top of the town.
- b) Thelma has spoken to Amey about the temporary traffic light on Pentland Reach, after reports of problems. It is now working fine.
- c) The need for a grit bin in Westercrofts Gardens has been logged. Quite a few of the residents are elderly.
- d) We noted the concerns that had been expressed about flooding at Boat Bridge in Thankerton, but this is outwith BCC's area and remit.

11. AOCB (cont.)

- e) We noted public concerns about the lack of gritting in Clydesdale Close. This had been logged with SLC.

Date of Next Meeting 16th March 2020 in the Library Meeting Room

ACTIONS TABLE 17/02/20

Make enquiries re designating Park Place as an emergency route and the possibility of signage. Ambulance Service report awaited.	Councillor McAllan Ongoing
Contact SLC about vulnerability of residents at Greenhills in an emergency involving the breakdown of transport.	Thelma Ingram Waiting for reply
Organise CC visit to Men's Shed	Jerry Sumpster
Email SLC about possibility of cash advance	Gil Dunn
Contact Selkirk CC about their CCTV scheme	Jerry Sumpster
Prepare briefing note about BIDS	Janet Moxley
Chase up Amey re crossing at Wynd	Cllr McAllan
Find out how long accessibility work on pavements will take	Cllr McAllan
Write to Carstairs CC	Jan Currie
Continue to research Common Good Assets	Janet Moxley
Follow up re unrealistic SLC timescales for community consultation and inadequate notice of meetings	Cllr McAllan
Continue to liaise with Amey about the lighting at the steps near Campsies	Jimmy Ritchie