

Draft Minute of Biggar Community Council Zoom Meeting on 14th December 2020

Present:- Lesley Craise (LC) – Chairperson, Thelma Ingram (TI) – Secretary, Janet Moxley (JM) – Treasurer, Jimmy Ritchie (JR), Laura Shirley (LS), Peter Rae (PR), Neil Ingram (NI) - Associate Member.

Ex- officio Members – Cllr Ian McAllan (Cllr IMcA) and Cllr Alex Allison (Cllr AA).

4 members of the public also attended.

1. **Welcome.**

2. **Apologies** – Al Stewart, Associate Member, Cllr Eric Holford, Aileen Campbell MSP, Claudia Beamish MSP, Bob Brownlie, Colin Angus (Health and Social Care Partnership Forum).

3. Declaration of A.O.C.B.

4. Adoption of last meeting's minutes. Proposed Janet, seconded Laura.

5. Matters Arising from minutes –

Resilience Plan – Neil explained that he was still developing the Winter Resilience Plan which he would bring to the next meeting. This will include a section on the CC website giving emergency contacts and details of available services. Police Scotland have also provided useful advice on searching for missing persons.

Poppy Stones – Lesley thanked Janet for arranging for the Remembrance Day stones to be permanently sited in the garden next to the War Memorial.

Meeting with neighbouring Community Councils – Janet confirmed that the three neighbouring CCs which are involved in the Clyde Extension windfarm fund have been contacted to set up a remote meeting. Neighbouring CCs have indicated that this meeting would be a good idea. Thelma said that contact had been requested by other neighbouring CCs, including those in Scottish Borders. It was agreed to set this up too.

Scheme for Establishment of Community Councils –

The Scheme of Establishment for CCs governs how CCs can operate. SLC's interpretation of the Scheme has meant that since March they have instructed CCs not to meet online and that the Chair + one other CC member should make any urgent decisions, although BCC have received legal advice which questions SLC's view and have met online and involved the full CC in decision-making since May.

In the autumn SLC launched a consultation on revised wording of the Scheme to allow CCs to meet online in some circumstances. BCC responded to the consultation by the deadline of 1 Dec noting that the proposed amendments were far from clear and open to

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misinterpretation. BCC's response also expressed disappointment that SLC were not using the opportunity to carry out a more thoroughgoing review of the Scheme which was written in 1975 and is out of date in several respects. 6 other CCs responded to the consultation.

Cllr McA confirmed that no further review of the Scheme was going to be done early in 2021, as a new Bill may be included in the proposed legislation introduced in the Scottish Parliament after next year's election. This differs from what was said at the November meeting. Cllr AA said that a review of Community Councils was ongoing.

Despite the consultation responses, SLC have tabled an item for a special meeting of SLC Councillors on 16 Dec which recommends adoption of the proposed amendments with minor alterations which were not included in the consultation. [Subsequent to the BCC meeting, SLC councillors voted to adopt the revised Scheme as proposed by SLC.] The CC felt that SLC had not assisted them in continuing to function during the pandemic, and expressed annoyance at the further delay in a full review of the Scheme.

6. SLC Councillors' Reports

Cllr IMcA – the issue of speeding in Lindsaylands Road has been referred to the Traffic Police. He has stressed the lack of footways on this road and asked for a swift response.

Cllr IMcA has assisted local businesses with applications for Covid related grants.

He is still waiting to hear from BEAR about the A702 crossing and from a landowner in relation to Clydesdale Close.

In response to a question from Lesley both councillors agreed to pursue whether there were delays with Social Work assessments.

Cllr AA – regarding access to Bizzyberry, he had contacted the SLC Access Officer and been informed that a local heritage group, BDCH, has put forward plans for improving this route. The ownership of part of the land has changed hands in recent years and this has resulted in the new owner erecting a stile to keep livestock from entering the top of the path. An electric fence had also been in place but this has since been removed. It was hoped that improvement of the path would result in a better stile or gate being installed.

A Council subgroup is looking at parking charges, but so far it has only been considering the reintroduction of charges elsewhere in South Lanarkshire which were suspended earlier this year.

7. Police Report – Thelma read out the following written report received from PC Cameron Paton.

Crime/Incident Report - Between 10/09/20-10/12/20 for Biggar area, including Symington and Thankerton.

“There have been a total of 42 crimes reported, 22 of which are currently detected (someone has been charged) with some enquiries still ongoing. None of the reported crimes are what are classified as 'Serious Crime' - Serious Assault, Attempted Murder, Murder etc.

There have been reported Sexual Offences, Assaults but the most commonly reported crimes are Thefts and Road Traffic matters, most commonly motorists failing to stop after colliding with other vehicles or property. Bear in mind when considering sexual offences, assaults etc., often offences are reported to have happened within households by people known to one another.

There are currently no particular crime trends in the area causing great concern. However, we are always alert due to the nature of Biggar and the wider area, there is the opportunity for rural thefts to become prevalent again and we monitor incidents and crimes regularly to establish if there are any trends.

I hope this information is useful to you and if you have any particular concerns for the area, please let me know and I am happy to discuss things further.”

8. Matters raised by members of public
Church Bells – The Bells at Biggar Kirk will be rung at 6pm on Christmas Eve in line with a nationwide initiative.

9. Community Action Plan.

Lesley explained that CC members had held an online discussion with Gregor Leishman, SLC Community Planning, to consider options for taking forward the development of a Community Action Plan. This will build on the work done before lockdown and could involve the employment of a community worker funded by Clyde Extension Windfarm. The key decision the CC has to make is whether to first form a Working Group and who should draw up the survey questions. After discussion of the options it was decided that the CC would start by compiling a list of organisations and inviting people to join the Steering Group. It was agreed that the Group should decide on the questions,

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based on those used in Argyll and Bute Council. It was pointed out that an outside person would be needed to analyse the data.

10. Treasurer's report

Banking arrangements - Bank of Scotland are still not accepting new applications for their Treasurer's account which has dual authorisation online banking, however dual signature cheque banking continues to work well.

Business Account - Final balance £347.08. No expenditure since last meeting.

Clyde Windfarm Account Final balance £3965.02. No expenditure on this account since last meeting.

Incentive Account. Final balance £5052.63.

1. Glenkerie Windfarm Microgrant Fund. Final balance £493.92. No expenditure from this fund since last meeting.

2. BCC Incentive Fund. Final balance £758.44. No expenditure from this fund since last meeting.

3. Clyde Extension COVID fund. Final balance £2300.27. £330 awarded to BCAG for Christmas Lunches.

4. Glenkerie COVID fund. Final balance £1500 No expenditure from this fund since last meeting.

Please encourage community groups to apply for microgrants either from COVID or standard funds as appropriate.

Asset register No change since last meeting.

11. Grant Applications/ Administration of Grants

An application from Biggar and District Community Heritage for £250 from the Glenkerie Fund towards the printing of a new version of the Town Trail Map was approved.

An application for £600 from Biggar Community Action Group (BCAG) to purchase a mechanical pavement gritter was questioned by several members. In answer to these questions, Jerry Sumpster from BCAG explained that the machine was to be supplied by Cuthbertson's and could easily be moved by two people. It would be used to grit pavements and paths in areas of Biggar with high numbers of elderly residents, and would usually be used on frosty mornings. After further discussion and the production of a picture of the gritter the application was approved. It will be financed using £500 from the Clyde Fund and £100 from the Glenkerie Fund.

12. Secretary's report

Thelma thanked everyone who has helped her undertake the role of secretary. Her eyesight continues to cause problems and will only get worse. BCC have circulated many communications on behalf of SLC, VASLAN, NHS, Scottish Government and various other bodies. Thanks to Bob Brownlie and Neil Ingram for helping to distribute the business survey for CCTV.

Burst Water Main. Thelma reported the leak originally to Scottish Water early afternoon on Tuesday 8th December and monitored it till Scottish Water appeared that evening. It took much longer than expected. JR said there may have been problems with underground electricity cables.

She also tried to keep the community of Biggar informed by Facebook of the phone messages and on the ground information she was receiving from Scottish Water and BEAR. Stopping the leak was more complicated than anticipated. She was told the road will be fully reinstated by Wednesday morning early when the traffic lights will be removed. She will report on things learnt from this exercise when it is complete.

13. Planning Report

The Gladman Appeal to Scottish Government about their application for permission to build on the land off Boghall Rd has been rejected by the Reporter for the Scottish Government. This ends this particular planning application unless they appeal to the Court of Session within six weeks. The Reporter's report details the reasons for rejection.

Two applications, both in Biggar Conservation Area -

P/20/1715 1 Burnside Terrace alteration of windows and and a set of french doors to replace windows.

P/20/1733. The Crown (it is a listed Building) to install fire escape at the rear of the upstairs flat.

For information also, there are two wind farm proposals in the bordering the area of Duneaton CC.

A 27 turbine development (200m tip height) proposed for the Coulter and Lamington hills, being developed by Grayside WF Ltd. A pre-application scoping report for this has been accepted under the Scottish Government Energy Consents process and information can be found at: <https://www.energyconsents.scot/ApplicationDetails.aspx?cr=ECU00002131>

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A larger proposal from Banks Renewable Energy has been announced for the Douglas and Robertson moors, on either side of the M74. This will involve up to 60 turbines, with a tip height of 250m. A pre-application scoping report is due to be submitted. Details can be found at: <https://www.banksgroup.co.uk/projects/renewables/bodinglee-wind-farm/>

14.Update on CCTV

Janet reported that there had been a good response to the online survey which ends on 14 December. Thelma reported that nearly all local businesses had received printed copies, for return by 18 December. The responses will be discussed at the January meeting.

15.Offer of Land from Story Homes

Lesley has been approached by Story Homes in relation to a parcel of land at the Pentland Reach which was intended to be allotments. We have been asked if we would like to take over this land at zero cost for community use.

It was agreed that Lesley should approach SLC to determine under what circumstances BCC could own land, and that there should then be a discussion of possible uses for the land. Mention was also made of the possible need for a water supply and land contamination checks.it was also noted that the social housing presently being built has very little public space around it.

16.A.O.C.B.- none.

Lesley closed the meeting by thanking all those who helped the CC over the year, including SLC and the health services.

17.Date of next meeting – 18 January 2021.

Minute prepared by Thelma Ingram.