

Draft Minute of Biggar Community Council Zoom Meeting on 15th February 2021

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, Al Stewart, Associate Member.

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

Invited speaker – David Chalmers, Chairman of Biggar and District Community Heritage Trust.

8 members of the public also attended.

1. **Welcome.**
2. **Apologies** – Cllr Eric Holford, Aileen Campbell MSP.
3. Declaration of A.O.C.B.
4. **Biggar to Symington Cycle Path Project.** David Chalmers, Chairman of Biggar and District Community Heritage Trust(BDCH), explained the background to this project. Various routes had been considered, including the old Symington to Biggar railway line, but the best option appeared to be an alignment alongside the A72 from Symington to Wolfclyde. From there the route will follow Lindsaylands Road into Biggar.

The path would be suitable for cycles, wheelchairs and, hopefully, equestrian users. It would be a Safe Route to School for Tinto Primary School and Biggar High School, and is supported by Symington CC. The approximate cost would be £200-400k with a feasibility study likely to cost £10,000. The route is an aspirational path in the SLC Core Path Plan, and in their Cycling Development plan.

Biggar CC agreed to support the project.

5. Adoption of last meeting's minutes. Proposed by Janet, seconded by Peter.
6. Matters Arising from minutes –
Resilience Plan – Neil updated the meeting on two issues – that houses in Pentland Reach are not directly connected to the Scottish Power energy network but are instead still connected to GTC, who are an independent utility provider who installed the gas and electricity networks in Pentland Reach.
He also reported that SLC have agreed to add the path from Clydesdale Close to the Co-op to the accessibility gritting routes, but not the precautionary routes as requested. This means it will be cleared within two days of a snowfall and then as necessary, rather than being gritted overnight when frost is forecast. Neil proposed approaching SLC at the end of the winter to discuss possible changes to gritting and snow clearing procedure and routes.

Meeting with neighbouring Community Councils – Janet has agreed a provisional date of 1 March with Duneaton CC, which she has offered to Quothquan and Thankerton CC and Symington CC.

Offer of Land from Story Homes – following discussion at the January meeting, the Community Growing Group led by John Riley has expressed an interest in taking on the land. He explained that he is looking to start a local food growing project. He is looking for a larger site in Biggar to develop this, but the Story Homes site would provide a suitable place to start. BDCH would be prepared to take on ownership of the land, subject to the group providing assurances regarding the long-term sustainability of their project, and Story Homes have indicated that they are willing in principle to hand over the land to another community group. They are looking for a decision within 4-6 weeks. After discussion about community growing projects, Lesley agreed to write to Story Homes saying that BDCH are interested in taking over the land, and asking them about electricity and water connections.

7. **Police Report** – No report has been received prior to the meeting, but PS Cameron Paton subsequently sent a brief report. He confirmed that rural crime continues to be a problem, but dog thefts are not common despite extensive coverage on social media.

8. **Matters raised by members of public**

Station Road junction – several members of the public have raised the continuing deterioration of the surface of Station Road near its junction with the A702. Despite further repatching the surface is getting worse as a result of recent snow and ice. It was agreed that Lesley would write to SLC pointing out that the surface was now very badly worn and could not be adequately patched, and that this was a worse area of road surface than some of those recently relayed.

Outdoor Gym equipment – Janet had recently discussed this with several residents who were keen to see such equipment installed in Biggar Public Park near the caravan park.

9. Community Action Plan.

Lesley told the meeting that there have so far been responses from 27 groups, who have nominated 28 individuals – some have been nominated by more than one group. She proposed that an initial meeting should involve all these people, who should be invited to form a Reference Group and set up a Steering Group of about 12 people. She suggested a date of 22 March for the meeting.

10. SLC Councillors' Reports

Draft Minute of Biggar Community Council Zoom Meeting on 15th February 2021

Cllr AA – the main issue has been bin collections which have been further delayed by a shortage of crews due to Coronavirus. The Burgundy bin collection will next happen in two weeks time. The budget exercise is being taken forward with a further meeting on 24 February.

Cllr IMcA – Speeding on Lindsaylands Road –Traffic Division of Police Scotland have been to the site but not detected any speeding vehicles. There is currently only one community PC as the other on is on a course for 3 months. Both Councillors have spoken to the Inspector about the problems this causes.

A702 Crossing – BEAR have proposed an informal crossing point with dropped kerbs near the Station Road junction. I McA will take this forward to get it implemented as soon as possible. Thelma stated she felt that the provision of crossings on Biggar High Street was unacceptable those with disabilities and she would be taking advice from organisations such as the RNIB to get their advice on what should be provided.

Use of Glyphosate – at a recent meeting SLC decided to carry out a further review of the appropriate use of glyphosate weedkiller in public areas.

Bonfire – there has been no response yet from SLC regarding insurance for the Hogmanay Bonfire.

11. **Treasurer's report**

Banking arrangements .Bank of Scotland are still not to accepting new applications for their Treasurer's Account which has dual authorisation online banking, however dual signature cheque banking continues to work well. BoS have now resumed taking new applications for other types of business account, so hopefully they will be able to accept applications for new Treasurer's Accounts soon. They continue to state that they will do this as soon as possible.

There has been no expenditure on any accounts since the last meeting.

Business Account Final balance £347.08. This account is due to be topped up in April. If we don't use the balance up, the next top-up pay from SLC will be reduced. This account could fund any equipment, stationary or other items that we need or subscriptions to IT systems such as Zoom, Survey Monkey etc.

Clyde Windfarm Account Final balance £3465.02. This is a healthy balance, and applications to this fund are encouraged.

Incentive Account. Final balance £4702.63. There are four funds within this account:

Draft Minute of Biggar Community Council Zoom Meeting on 15th February 2021

1. **Glenkerie Windfarm Microgrant Fund.** Final balance £143.92.
2. **BCC Incentive Fund.** Final balance £758.44.
3. **Clyde Extension COVID fund.** Final balance £2300.27.
4. **Glenkerie COVID fund.** Final balance £1500.

The Glenkerie fund is due to be topped up in March, so it would be good if we could get an application for the remaining amount in this fund before then.

The Clyde Extension and COVID funds have healthy balances - it is possible that we will get more applications to these funds as we come out of lockdown.

Asset register No change since last meeting.

Expenditure. Janet suggested buying a commercial version of Survey Monkey which will be needed to carry out the main survey for the Action Plan. This was agreed.

12. Grant Applications/ Administration of Grants
Two applications to the Clyde Microgrants Fund were approved – a grant of £500 to Jim Duncan to produce two music videos performed by local children, and £500 to the Biggar Cornets' Club to undertake investigations of the area outside the Corn Exchange for underground pipework.
13. 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. She also described the level of support for Community Councillors, particularly those who have disabilities, as disgraceful. She confirmed that she was now standing down as Secretary and intends to resign from the Community Council at the AGM in March.
14. Planning Report – Many people in Biggar have been circulated with details of the proposed windfarm at Grayside near Coulter. There are online presentations about this on Wednesday 24 and Thursday 25 February. A planning application is not likely to be submitted until autumn 2021. BCC agreed to consult the community about this proposal once an application is submitted, and respond in a way that reflects community feeling.
15. Resignation. Thelma confirmed that she is resigning as Secretary at this meeting. Lesley thanked her wholeheartedly for the contribution in difficult circumstances. This was supported by all other councillors and a former councillor.
16. Vacancies. As a result of the advertising of vacancies, at least three potential candidates are known to have come forward. Nominations

Draft Minute of Biggar Community Council Zoom Meeting on 15th February 2021

close on 26 February. Two new Associate members have come forward, Robin Laing and Ben Waine. Formal adoption of the new associate members and election of new full members will take place at the EGM on 15 Mar.

17. A.O.C.B.- Lesley explained the background to the proposal to fund improved lighting between Campsies' steps and the Boghall estate. Bob Brownlie has suggested to SLC that this could be funded from the Biggar Common Good Fund, as SLC say they are unable to fund it from their general resources. There was a discussion of the relevance of using the Common Good Fund for things which are within the responsibilities of SLC. It was decided to consult the community via an online survey asking for their views on funding extra lighting on this path from the Common Good Fund. In addition, paper copies will be delivered to residents in Boghall, Moss Side and Causewayend areas. All respondents will be asked to indicate their postcode to give a better understanding of how different areas of the town feel about the proposal.
18. Date of next meeting – 15 March 2021. The postponed AGM and an EGM to appoint new members will also be held on this date.

Minute prepared by Thelma Ingram.