

Biggar Community Council
Minutes of the meeting held at 7pm on 17/5/21 via Zoom

Present: BCC Community Councillors Lesley Craise (Chair), Janet Moxley (Secretary), Laura Shirley, Jimmy Ritchie, Caz Alcorn, Roger Curtis, Bobby Colquhoun, Gillian Gardener, Peter Rae.

BCC Associate members: Anne Lindsay, Neil Ingram

Ex Officio Cllrs Ian McAllan and Alex Allison – South Lanarkshire Council (SLC), Mairi McAllan MSP.
4 members of the public.

Apologies: Jerry Sumpster, Fin Laing, Ben Waine

1) Minutes of the Previous Meeting (19 Apr 2021)

Accepted subject to the following amendments:

- i. In Matters Arising Item i) What's on Biggar website should read "... is now active again" (rather than not).
- ii. Treasurer's report. The balance for the Incentive Account should have been £5705.71 not £4605.71 as this omitted two incoming payments. The balances of the budget streams of the Incentive Account were correct.
- iii. Covenanters House sale. BDCS committee members were identified prior to this item during the item on litter picking. Wording to be amended to "Earlier in the meeting under the item on Litter Picking, Janet had stated that Roger, Laura, Neil and herself were members of the BDCS committee" to reflect this, and this declaration of BDCS committee membership noted in the litter picking item.

Proposed (subject to amendments above): Bobby. Seconded: Caz.

2) Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes

- i. Finances Noted that Peter has kindly agreed to waive the reimbursement £6.66 that he was due for telephone expenses.
- ii. Litter Picking Ben is planning to start fortnightly litter picks, and is assembling a group of volunteers. Information on these litter picks will be put on the BCC website and social media once they have been arranged.
- iii. Land Offered by Story Homes As Story are unsure whether they will be able to provide a water supply, John Riley's community growing group feel that this location would not suit them. Rachel McCann has suggested a community orchard and is working with Ian Murray from Biggar and District Community Heritage on this, although there may still be a requirement for water, particularly when trees are young.
- iv. Audiology services Cllr McAllan has contacted in NHS Lanarkshire about difficulties in obtaining replacement hearing aids and has received a helpful reply. Roger felt that practice does not fully reflect this and that alternatives are not well explained.

As far as Cllr McAllan is aware audiology services have been running as usual since March.

Anne has tried to contact the head of support services at NHS Lanarkshire, but has not been successful. Wishaw or Lanark can give appointments to check defective hearing aids. There is a long backlog for new hearing aid appointments, which will be at Stonehouse. Replacement hearing aid batteries can be obtained from the library.

3) Matters raised by members of the public

- i) Flooding outside Charcoal Gray and 100 High St The pavement in this area floods causing problems at these addresses. SLC have cleared the drains in the past, but this only brings temporary respite. The main problem seems to be that the slope of the pavement directs water towards these properties rather than into the drain. BCC have contacted BEAR Scotland and SLC Roads Dept. BEAR have taken photos, but feel that the flooding is SLC's responsibility as it's on the pavement. Cllr Allison stated that householders were responsible for clearing drains from their property. This was not felt to be an issue in this case, as the water is coming from the pavement. Janet asked whether SLC had a liability for damage to property caused by water coming from SLC's land.

Action: Cllr McAllan to take this forward with SLC

- ii) Campsie's steps road accident In recent years there have been a number of accidents in this area which have resulted in vehicles ending up on the footpath below, this has led to concerns about the safety of pedestrians. Crash barriers or bollards might prevent this and were promised by SLC in the past.

Caz noted that the incident tape was not longer in place and people were using the steps although the handrail has not been repaired.

Action: Janet to contact BEAR to ask about improving pedestrian safety and also SLC to suggest that if they need to do work on the steps it might be an opportunity to replace them with a ramp to allow wheelers to use the path.

4) Police report 01/04/21 – 13/05/21

48 Incidents recorded.

5 crime reports raised – 1 x RTA offence, 1 x Theft, 1 x assault, 1 x Breach of Court Order, 1 x Communications Act Offence (Threats via phone)

Extra supervision was given to Market Road area in response to youths causing damage at Bizzyberry Nursery between 16/04 – 18/04. No further incidents have been reported since this date.

On 02/04/21, 04/05/21 and 13/05/21 community officers conducted speed checks on High Street Biggar. No offences detected.

There is nothing to indicate any specific trends that should cause any concerns to the local community.

BCC members expressed surprise that no speeding offences were detected. Suggested that speed checking should be carried out between 6am and 8am and between 6pm and 8pm rather than during the day. It was noted that the presence of a speed camera van inherently slows traffic. Neil suggested that monitoring was needed at the approaches to town, Lindsaylands Rd and Broughton Rd as well as the town centre.

Action: Janet to contact police to ask for speed checking at times and places above.

5) SLC Councillors Reports

Cllr Alex Allison

A leaked South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture review has caused concerns about possible closure of some facilities. A working group of SLC Councillors has been looking at running of SLLC assets. A paper from SLLC officers suggested a number changes, but this paper was unacceptable to councillors on the working group. It is possible that paper will be dropped completely as a result of the leak, which will prevent beneficial changes as well as detrimental ones. Cllr Allison highlighted that upgrades to facilities had also been part of the review.

Neil asked about grass cutting in small areas at the north end of the High St. Cllr Allison stated that there had been no cuts to the budget for grass cutting. He also noted that verge cutting had started even though it had not been warm enough for much grass growth yet. Cllr McAllan stated that COVID had meant some changes to working practices which may be slowing things down.

6) Treasurer's report

There have been no transactions on any accounts since the last meeting.

Account balances

1. Business Account Final balance £0.
2. Clyde Windfarm Account Final balance £2215.02. This includes an uncashed cheque for £500.
3. Incentive Account. Final balance £5705.71. There are four funds within this account:
 - I) Glenkerie Windfarm Microgrant Fund. Final balance £1043.92.
 - ii) BCC Incentive Fund. Final balance £861.52.
 - iii) Clyde Extension COVID fund. Final balance £2300.27.
 - iv) Glenkerie COVID fund. Final balance £1500.

7) Microgrant Applications

- i) Application Process New applications go to Neil who checks them and circulate them to full BCC members who send comments and questions to Neil. Neil then asks the applicant for any additional information and circulates comments, questions and the applicant's responses. Full BCC members then vote on the application.

BCC members are asked to respond to applications in a timely manner. The aim is to have a relatively quick, light touch approach bearing in mind the conditions from the funders which are on the BCC website. Members felt that it was helpful to see other people's comments and questions and that it was worth allowing a bit of time for this. Depending on when applications are received it may be possible to get a decision before the next BCC meeting, but this will not always be possible.

Agreed that unsuccessful applications would be noted, but no details of the application would be given. Unsuccessful applicants will be given an explanation of why they have not been funded, and where possible pointers to potential alternative funders and/or information on things that BCC microgrants might be able to fund will be given.

ii) Decisions on Applications received.

- a. Biggar Men's Shed – £250 from the Glenkerie fund for a publicity leaflet.
- b. Biggar Institute - £630 from Clyde Extension COVID fund for Legion Hall reopening costs.
- c. Womankind – £369.90 from the Clyde fund for printing consumables.

There was one unsuccessful application.

There are two applications in the pipeline.

8) Planning Matters

There were no significant planning applications in the BCC area this month.

9) Adoption of new Associate Member

It was unanimously agreed that Fin Laing, one of the Biggar High School captains should join BCC as an Associate Member. It was also agreed that BCC would approach the High School after the

summer holidays to see whether any of next year's captains or vice-captains would like to become Associates.

10) Conflicts of Interest

Lesley has circulated information based on SLC's guidance to CCs and OSCR's guidance to Charity Trustees. Situations where there is potential for financial gain to a BCC member or their family is clearly a conflict of interest. It is less clear whether there is a conflict of interest if an ordinary member of a community group makes a decision which affects that organisation e.g on a microgrant application. Agreed that committee members of organisations, should not vote on microgrants from that organisation. This would not disbar ordinary members from voting, but there may nevertheless be situations where BCC members who are ordinary members of organisations may not vote wish to vote. People with conflicts of interest should be allowed to answer questions or make comments, but not vote and could be asked to withdraw from meetings where votes are taken.

11) Communication

Clarified that "official" BCC communications will be:

- i. Email sent from the biggarcc@gmail.com email address.
- ii. Items posted on the BCC website
- iii. Letters sent on BCC headed notepaper
- iv. Items posted on Facebook using the Biggar Community Council page identity, either as a post on the page itself, or in a group. (Comments made using the BCC page identity should largely be factual and focused on giving information.) Where a post using the BCC page identity expresses an opinion, this must have been agreed by a majority of members.
- v. Posters and other publicity materials agreed by BCC in a meeting.
- vi. Items sent or posted by a BCC member from their own email address, following agreement by BCC.

When posting as individuals on social media, Community Councillors should be aware that members of the public may not make the distinction between "page identity" and "individual identity". They should therefore ensure that their comments are not liable to be interpreted by members of the public as disrespectful or discriminatory.

Action: Janet to add the explanation of "official" BCC communications to the BCC Facebook page and website.

12) Public Park

Janet has been researching the responsibilities of SLC, SLLC and the Managed Service provider with regard to the Public Park, Caravan Site and Golf Course. A briefing paper has been produced and circulated.

Caravans were first introduced to the Public Park in the 1950s to provide income to subsidise the golf course. Originally there were just three or four. Now there are around 80, but owing to the split of responsibilities between SLC, SLLC and the Managed Service Provider, income from the caravans and other commercial activities such as the café, tennis court and putting green goes to the Managed Service Provider and no longer subsidises the golf course. However SLC have retained responsibility for grass cutting (including greenkeeping) at the golf course, public park and caravan site. In addition, SLLC is responsible for some aspects of building maintenance at the Public Park including some parts of the Club House.

A report produced by consultants for SLC in 2009 indicated that the spread of caravans was reducing the general amenity of the Public Park, and suggested improvements to the layout and

landscaping, as well as opportunities to provide other activities at the Park. However, the report's recommendations have not been implemented.

Over the last few years BCC has been made aware of various concerns about the deterioration of facilities at the public park. This has come to a head recently with suggestions that the office and café are to be replaced by a portacabin and the leaked report of the review of SLLC facilities.

The current contract with the Managed Service Provider is due to expire in 2024 at the latest, and the renewal of this contract may provide an opportunity to reconnect income from the caravan site to help finance the golf course. There could also be an opportunity to secure more investment in the area either from a private contractor or a community group which would be able access grant funding from the windfarms and other sources.

Action: Janet and Bobby to set up a meeting with SLC to discuss the Public Park.

13) Message of support for Biggar, Saskatchewan

It was agreed that we would provide a video of support for Biggar, Saskatchewan's town centre revitalisation project

Action: Peter and Janet to produce a short video for this.

AOCB

- i. Clydesdale Community Initiatives are starting a Gardening for Health Project at the Kello.
- ii. Police reports about the organisation 2019 bonfire have been favourable. However, the Fire Brigade do not support any bonfires. The recent survey by the Cornets has confirmed that there is a gas pipe under the bonfire site. The Cornets have set up a site meeting with Scottish Gas, and would like BCC (and SLC Councillors) to attend.

Action: Peter and Laura will represent BCC. Cllr McAllan will also attend and Jimmy and Al Stewart will represent that Cornets.

- iii. SLC have asked whether BCC would be interested in rolling out its Inside Out App to Biggar. This app promotes town centres and includes space to promote businesses, an events calendar and walking trails. It has been trialled in four towns, but SLC don't have any data yet on how it affects footfall. It was felt that BCC should wait for evidence on the effectiveness from trial towns before pushing for this for Biggar.
- iv. Thorpes closure. The Chest, Heart and Stroke shop has taken over the part nearest to them, but not the rest of the shop. Isa Thorpe will continue to run the plant nursery on North Back Rd.
- v. Mairi McAllan, the newly elected MSP for Clydesdale, introduced herself and expressed her wish to be updated with BCC minutes and agendas.
- vi. Cllr McAllan informed everyone that Eric Carlyle who was, until recently, Chair of Symington CC passed away recently.

Action: Janet to contact Symington CC to express condolences and ask that these be passed to Eric's family.

Date of next meeting Next 21st June 7pm via Zoom.