

Biggar Community Council
Minutes of the meeting held at 7:00pm on 16/12/19
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)
Al Stewart (Cornet's Club) – Associate Member

Ex Officio

Cllr Ian McAllan

In Attendance

Mark Richardson (Police Scotland)
Melitta Pllu (Police Scotland)

2 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

Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Janet and seconded by Jimmy.

3.1 Matters Arising

Actions outstanding: Cllr McAllan to make enquiries re designating Park Place as an emergency route, with appropriate signage

Gil still to publish police advice on calling 101 on website

Printed matter necessary for meetings: We are trying to avoid unnecessary paper; for this meeting reports were available on the website, via social media and at the library; Lesley ensured that CC members more comfortable with paper had all the relevant documents.

Thelma expressed the view that members of the public attending meetings should have copies of reports made available to them. Jerry indicated that as the above documents were only “for noting” (and were not the subject of any debate and decision at the meeting) the measures we had taken-for this meeting were sufficient.

4. Police Report

Crimes recorded in the Biggar area since 15th November:

- Theft of a numberplate from a vehicle parked in the Coop car park.
- 3 instances of shoplifting at the Coop, all involving alcohol.
- 4 instances of housebreaking, two at domestic properties, one at Brownlies and one at Campsies. Evidence gathered from the CCTV footage from Brownlies has established that those responsible were not from this area, but are part of a team operating in a much wider area. Enquiries are ongoing.
- Disturbance on a bus
- More break ins at rural premises in the surrounding area

The police advised that, to enhance security, property owners should ensure there are lights on at the front and back of the premises. Advice about security is available from the Police Scotland website. Lighting is important because a lack of lighting indicates that no-one is at home.

Thelma reported that she had recently called Police Scotland, dialing 999 and had received a positive response. Members of the public can phone 999 if they think something suspicious is happening, otherwise they should phone 101.

We will publish information about security on our website and Facebook page, with the advice to “lock it and light it”, and to phone 101, or 999 where it is felt that an individual is in personal danger, or a break in (or similar) is underway.

5. Hogmanay Celebrations Update

There has been a recent site visit at which Scottish Gas networks (SGN) and others from the Events Safety Advisory Group were present . This is a new multi-agency group set up by SLC.

The organisers were called to a meeting with them in Hamilton and were asked about most aspects of the bonfire. The Safety Advisory Group's only experience of the Biggar Bonfire was via video clips.

According to Scottish Gas, there is a gas pipe underneath the site of the fire. It is thought to be approximately 750mm under the ground. This has cropped up before. As a result, the bonfire had to be moved and 40 tons of additional gravel laid. The terms of the insurance that has been arranged dictate that the bonfire has to be 10m from the nearest building (Corn Exchange) and that spectators should not be allowed within 11 m of the base of the fire after it is lit, and until the end of the event. Therefore there will be a double row of barriers this year to ensure these distances are complied with. The outer row will be removed when the A702 road is re-opened. With these changes in place, the bonfire is on course. The cornets will meet with South Lanarkshire in the New Year to review this year's arrangements and will ask for the exact location of the gas pipe to be clarified, by digging if necessary. Thelma asked for clarification about arrangements for procession and the torches.

5. Hogmanay Celebrations Update (cont.)

The Cornets will be sharing information and instructions. The Cornets will as usual be supervising placing of the torches on the bonfire and placing them if necessary. Members of the public will be asked to respect these instructions. Members of the Advisory Group are expected to be present.

The cornets are still struggling to recruit marshalls for the event, so publicity should continue. 40 are needed. Al Stewart and the Cornets were thanked for their work on this.

6. Secretary's Report (correspondence)

Jan had received:

- a number of questions for the hustings
- another request from Gavin Stirling to bring his funfair to Biggar. We are not the right people to talk to and he has already been informed about this so we agreed there was no need to reply again
- two micro-grant applications had been received

7. Digital Correspondence

Gil provided a summary of digital correspondence received since the last meeting. A copy of this is available on our website <https://biggarcc.weebly.com>, or at the Library. We agreed there was no need for printed copies of this report to be made available at the meeting, in future.

8. Specific matters brought to meeting by public

There were none.

9. Treasurer's Report

Balance figures

given are correct at 16/12/19

<u>Business account balance</u>	£236.42
<u>Incentive account balance</u>	£1144.95
(Glenkerie Windfarm balance £541.12, Incentive fund balance £603.83.)	
<u>Clyde Windfarm account balance</u>	£2750.50

Fixed assets are a Canon printer. Jimmy sold the filing cabinet for £20. When the money has been received, it will be paid into the Incentive Fund.

Thelma asked the CC to approve an expense claim submitted by her for a year's printing ink for the amount of £53.35. This was approved. We felt that Thelma's expenditure on printer ink, necessary because of her visual disability, could possibly be reimbursed from an accessibility budget held by SLC. Gil will make enquiries, and try to find out what other Ccs do.

9. Treasurer's Report (cont.)

It may be necessary to reimburse the Scottish Government with some of the grant they gave us to host the Climate Conversation, although Janet has presented an argument to try and retain this to cover other expenses not specified in the grant application. She is waiting to hear whether we are required to pay money back or not. If we get to keep the money, we will transfer it to the Incentive Fund.

10. SLC Councillors Reports

A702 Safety Issues

Cllr McAllan reported that he had met with Amey, Jerry, Thelma and two members of the public to look at the safety issues at the bottom of the town . Amey will undertake a study looking at the feasibility and value of a pedestrian crossing and will report back to him in the New Year.

Break in at Campsies

Councillor Mcallan reported that he had visited both Campsies and Brownlies after the recent break-ins. He has since liaised with the local Police Inspector and received assurances regarding investigations and additional police patrols.

Loanindale

Cllr McAllan praised the new facilities at Loanindale and urged the CC to visit, or invite Sean Paul O'Hare to the next meeting. There is a need for a pedestrian link to Loanindale House. The organisation is keen to work with the community. We agreed to invite the coordinator to the next meeting, and to the Community Fair.

Clydesdale Close

This needs an upgrade and Cllr McAllan is pursuing this.

101 bus

Cllr McAllan reported that there are still an unacceptable level of cancellations due to buses breaking down .People are not travelling because they are afraid they will not get back home. Cllr McAllan will write again to SPT.

Thelma reported that she has compiled a list of who dissatisfied customers should complain to. This includes SPT, Bus Users Scotland, Traffic Commissioners, Borders Council and Midlothian Council. She is advising members of the public of this and will continue to collect and report bus 101 bus users views.

11. Agenda Items

11.1 SLC proposed spending cuts

The context is that these are proposed cuts only, generated by council officials. As result of a General Election late in the Financial Year, it is unlikely that budget plans will be finalised until March 2020.

11.1 SLC proposed spending cuts (cont.)

Janet identified a number of areas in these proposals that could impact on Biggar:

- Not mowing sloping areas of grass
- Not maintaining land which does not belong to SLC
- Reduction in hedge cutting
- Reduction in opening hours at the Sports Centre
- Reduction in budget for classroom materials
- Increase in P1 class size
- Reduction in staffing complement for minor infrastructure works
- Reduction in day services for vulnerable people

SLC's timescale for public consultation on these proposals is very short. All that is possible is to continue to publicise the consultation, and invite the folk of Biggar to respond to it, on our website and Facebook Page.

We were unsure about whether we received notification from SLC about this important public consultation. Cllr McAllan will check. Jan will also check SLC emails we have received.

11.2 Community Transport

Lesley reported that Thelma had discovered an organisation called Better Together, based in Shotts who offer hospital transport to people over 65 who do not qualify for patient transport. They cover both North and South Lanarkshire and receive funding from various sources including NHS Lanarkshire and North Lanarkshire Council. South Lanarkshire presently does not fund them. Lesley plans to contact them to see if there is a possibility of linking with them to provide a resource for people living in Biggar and surrounding areas. They link with the Rural Development Trust. Lesley asked that further discussion be postponed until she has had a chance to contact them. This was agreed.

11.3 Community Action Planning

The CC noted the report of the meeting of the working group with Gregor Leishman, Community Empowerment and Participation Officer with SLC. The working group reported that it had been a positive meeting. Lesley stressed that the plan had to be the community's plan. Janet stressed the likely timescales involved. Given the necessary liaison with multiple agencies, a target to consult with a minimum of 40% of the Biggar Community and the general complexities in pulling a detailed and agreed plan, the expectation is that a final published Community Action Plan is unlikely to be published until Autumn 2021. The working group will meet early in the New Year. Jerry has asked that the Community Action Planning workgroup provide a

11.3 Community Action Planning (cont.)

“Road Map” or “Plan for a Plan” that identifies key milestones that show the progress towards completing the publication of the final document in Autumn 2021.

11.4 Resilience Community and BCC

As a result of an enquiry received by Janet from Upper Tweeddale CC, Thelma was asked by BCC at our last meeting to look into this, as all local authorities are encouraged to develop their links with communities when developing resilience strategies. Borders Council have several website pages. Most of their community council areas have plans and have, or are forming resilience groups. These are groups of volunteers who draw up Community Emergency Plans, and recruit and organise a group of volunteers able to respond during emergency situations.

Thelma reported that finding the relevant support in SLC has not been easy, but she was finally pointed in the right direction by Gregor Leishman and has made contact with the SLC Resilience Advisor, who will contact Thelma again in the New Year with more information about SLC's approach.

It being winter and with ice having been a problem already, Thelma is checking all the grit bins in Biggar, to check locations and see if they contain salt.

Lesley highlighted the vulnerability of Greenhills residents in the event of an emergency which prevented travel because they use a lot of agency staff who travel to work from all over central Scotland. Thelma will ask SLC how they would respond to the situation where there were not enough staff to care for residents. Jerry asked that, as Thelma was currently progressing this on her own, does she wish another BCC member to become involved. Thelma would welcome such assistance.

Gil requested a report from Thelma in a form which can be published on the website, social media and Mailchimp. Thelma agreed to provide this.

11.5 Meetings with Neighbouring Ccs

We decided to propose a date of 21st March for the meeting. Janet will organise a venue. It was felt to be very important that BCC was not seeking to steer or drive any such event, merely to facilitate. Janet will ensure that the decision on venue and agenda for the meeting is made in an inclusive way.

11.6 Micro-grant Applications

11.6.1 Application to Clyde Windfarm Fund from BCC for banners for promotional material at the community fair and beyond. Jerry had checked with SLC prior to the meeting that the application was appropriate. An amount of £400 was agreed, proposed by Jerry, seconded by Jimmy. Gil stressed the importance of branding. We agreed on the strapline “Listening to our community”.

11.6 Micro-grant Applications (cont.)

11.6.2 Application from Alex Saunders to Clyde Windfarm Fund for a grant of £490 to support Movement and Exercise Classes at Greenhills Care Home. This was agreed by majority.

11.7 Community Fair Update

Date 22nd February. The Municipal Hall is booked from 12 to 6, giving us from 12-2 to set up. We need to pay a £100 deposit, which may need to be paid in cash. The total cost of the hire is £141.60, which will come from the Business Account. 8 stall holders have confirmed so far and Gil will now approach those on our reserve list. The Guides are unable to provide refreshments. Jerry will ask other groups. The Fiddle and Accordion Club have agreed to fill an entertainment slot, and Tai Chi. Gil will arrange a working group meeting early in the New Year to finalise details. Gil asked everyone to send any visual images of Biggar they may have, to help with the designing of the banner.

11.8 Representation from BCC for election of cornet

Gil agreed to do this.

11.9 Invitation from Cambuslang CC to attend discussions with SLC planning

Janet and/or Janet and Thelma will go. Janet will clarify if more than one person can attend per CC.

11.10 Request to support the Local Electricity Bill

This would appear to be an approach from a lobbying group south of the border, seeking to lobby Westminster seeking introduction of new legislation. Janet will find out more about this and we will discuss it after that.

12. AOCB

- a) Thelma thanked SLC, SPT, and Amey who all helped to get much better bus shelters installed that day in Edinburgh Rd. They now have seats, more sides and light at night.
- b) Janet commented that she felt the hustings was a success. There is a recording of the event on our website. We felt that perhaps all questions having to be submitted beforehand was a bit restrictive, and that some questions from the floor should be allowed, which is what in fact happened.
- c) The salt bin in South Back Road has arrived but needs filled.
- d) Jimmy, on behalf of the cornets, invited Jerry and Cllr McAllan to be torch bearers in the bonfire procession. They both agreed.

Date of Next Meeting 20th January 2020

ACTIONS TABLE 16/12/19

Arrange meeting with other CCs	Janet Moxley Ongoing
Make enquiries re designating Park Place as an emergency route and the possibility of signage	Councillor McAllan Ongoing
Publicise information from Police Scotland about current rural crime on website	Gil Dunn
Advertise for marshalls for Bonfire on website and via social media	Janet Moxley Gil Dunn
Explore winter resilience planning	Thelma Ingram
Publicise police advice on website Publicise police advice on Facebook Page	Gil Dunn Janet Moxley
Make enquirires about SLC accessibility fund	Gil Dunn
Invite Loanindale Coordinator to next meeting and Community Fair	Gil Dunn Jan Currie
Write to SPT re 101 bus service	Cllr McAllan
Publicise information about SLC proposed budget cuts and consultation on Facebook and the website	Janet Moxley Gil Dunn
Contact Better Together	Lesley Craise
Contact SLC about vulnerability of residents at Greenhills in an emergency involving the breakdown of transport.	Thelma Ingram
Organise meeting with neighbouring Ccs	Janet Moxley
Contact othe groups re catering at community fair	Jerry Sumpster
Organise meeting of Community Fair Working Group	Gil Dunn
Send visual imagesof Biggar to Jerry	All
Find out about local electricity bill	Janet Moxley
Produce report on resilience planning in a form which can be published on website, social media and Mailchimp	Thelma Ingram