

Draft Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Biggar Community Council held on 10/12/18 at 7:00p.m. in the meeting room in Biggar Library

Present

Community Council

Thelma Ingram (joint minute taker and vice chair)
James Ritchie
George Cunningham
Gil Dunn (chairperson)
Jan Currie (secretary)
Jerry Sumpster (treasurer)
Janet Moxley
Lesley Craise (joint minute taker)
Laura Shirley

Ex officio

Councillor Ian McAllan

Members of the public in attendance

Mike Fleming
Neil Ingram
James Softley

Apologies

None received

Adoption of Minutes of October Meeting

Proposed James Ritchie
Seconded Thelma Ingram

Adoption of Minutes of November Meeting

Proposed Gil Dunn
Seconded Jan Currie

There were no opening remarks from the chair as this had already been covered at the AGM held prior to this meeting. Gil was congratulated on her appointment as chairperson.

Secretary's Report

Jan had received a letter from a school student looking for financial help towards a trip to the Himalayas in 2020. It was noted that the awarding of money from the Incentive Fund needs fuller discussion Guidelines are needed. We also need evidence that the funding has been used for the stated purpose.

With regard to the specific request, it was noted that the school student lives in Thankerton and should therefore be advised to apply to Thankerton Community Council.

Treasurer's Report

Having taken over the role of Treasurer, Jerry Sumpster reported that all financial records had been reconciled with the bank statements currently to hand.

No new micro-grants had been awarded over the period since the last Ordinary Meeting. On the Clyde Windfarm an entry in with the commentary "Mrs. Peacock's fence" was clarified. The application related to the erection of a fence adjacent to a public footpath.

Jerry stressed the importance of transparency in how we award grant money and stated that he intends review the physical grant applications make amendments in the narratives, to make the purpose grant totally clear.

In order to receive a new grant from the Clyde Windfarm Central Fund we will need to spend the remaining money (£591). For the Glenkerie Account (£18.80 remaining) it will be necessary to submit a detailed list of the relevant micro-grants in order to seek a further £1000 funding. These moneys are normally passed to the CC in January each year.

There was some discussion as to whether the CC should "hold back" approving micro-grants to equally spread over the year, but it was felt that worthy applications should be approved on a first come first served basis, and in the event that all of the grant moneys were used up early in the year, then the BCC should approach Clyde/Glenkerie for further funding

When Jerry reconciled the accounts with the bank statements, he found a long-standing discrepancy of 0.02p. To deal with this, he has made an income entry of 0.02p and noted this in his commentary on the accounts.

Usual Reports

Jimmy Ritchie asked for the usual reports from South Lanarkshire, the police and individual community council members.

Report from Councillor McAllan

Councillor McAllan reported that the area's councillors had been involved in a range of issues affecting Biggar e.g. speeding and road safety; negotiating 3 million pounds for a replacement bridge at Pettinain; distribution of salt; flooding; liaising about local bus services. The work on the bridge at Pettinain will take around two years.

SLC will provide training for Community Councillors including on grants, planning, funding and participatory budgeting. SLC will be producing a draft budget which Community Councils will be invited to comment on.

Police Report

There was no representative from the police and no report had been received. David Wesencraft is our Liaison Officer for Biggar and his boss Inspector McCallum is based in Lanark. Jimmy Ritchie has found it hard to meet with him in the past. Jan will try and arrange a meeting with him.

[An email apology was sent by PC Wesencraft and received just after the meeting]

Individual Members' Reports

It has previously been the custom for individual community council members to feed back on their activities on behalf of the community council since the previous meeting. The new community council does not want to continue this practice, believing that items for discussion should be submitted before the meeting to allow for adequate preparation. It was noted that some things e.g. reporting potholes can be done outwith meetings.

Agenda Items

1. Proposed changes to the Constitution (Gil Dunn)

Gil withdrew this agenda item because of the need to give 10 days notice of any such proposed change.

2. Distribution of correspondence amongst members (Gil Dunn)

There was some discussion about how correspondence should be distributed, perhaps in line with people's expressed area/s of interest. Lesley Craise, Jimmy Ritchie and George Cunningham do not want copies of planning applications. They will be sent to everyone else.

Jimmy Ritchie undertook to pass any correspondence he receives to Jan Currie.

3. Members of BCC on Clyde Windfarm, Microgrant Applications and Glenkerie microgrants

Lesley Craise volunteered to join Jimmy Ritchie on the panel that looks at the larger Clyde Windfarm grants. This committee is independent and does not need to reflect the views of individual community councils.

There was considerable debate about the process for BCC awarding the small grants for which it is responsible. Any process needs to be open and transparent. Sub committees of BCC as well as full BCC meetings must be open to the public, to comply with Clause 12(a) of the constitution of BCC.

A small group consisting of Jimmy, Jan, Jerry and Thelma will screen micro grant applications and all applications will go to all community council members. The final decisions will be made at the next ordinary meeting. It was noted that other community councils have tried to decide on grant applications in a public forum and had moved away from this, in response to problems. It was agreed to try and adjust this process if necessary.

For a fuller explanation of agenda items 4-8 see Janet Moxley's background briefing paper which is appended to this minute

4. Fairtrade Town Letter of Support (Janet Moxley)

Biggar Fairtrade Town Steering Group has been working to achieve Fair Trade Town status for Biggar since 2016. Janet asked BCC to write a formal letter of support for the Biggar Fair Trade Town bid and send it to Heather Graeme, Head Teacher, Biggar Primary School for inclusion in the evidence dossier for the Fairtrade Town bid. This was agreed and Jan will send a letter of support.

5. South Lanarkshire Council's new grass mowing regime (Janet Moxley)

Janet had supplied BCC with background information prior to the meeting (see briefing paper). Essentially, SLC are planning not to cut grassy slopes and this could affect the Burn Braes.

BCC noted that grass cutting in the Burn Braes, in particular the slope opposite Rowhead Terrace, has been a contentious issue in the past.

BCC noted the proposed change and Councillor McAllan undertook to clarify how the proposed change will affect the Burn Braes. Once it has received clarification, BCC will consider the need for public consultation on the issue.

6. Revisions to 101/102 bus timetable (Janet Moxley)

Various changes have been made to the 101/102 bus timetable, effective from 7th January 2019. Janet asked BCC to note the changes. The last bus from Edinburgh to Biggar will be later and connections with the 191/91 Lanark service will improve. It was suggested that we should post the revised timetable on our Facebook page and website.

7. Coulter Bridge Traffic Light Proposals (Janet Moxley)

Janet outlined the proposals which involve a three way traffic signals located at either side of the bridge on the 702 and on Birthwood Road. Janet asked whether BCC wished to comment on these proposals. Thelma advised that she is attending a meeting at Coulter Mill on 11/12/18 and will give BCC feedback from this meeting. See briefing paper for more detailed information.

8. SLC policy on planting memorial trees (Janet Moxley)

Janet explained that current SLC policy prevents the planting of memorial trees on SLC land other than cemeteries, and also bans memorial benches. There have been several recent examples of people in Biggar wishing to donate trees e.g. to Friends of Burnbraes and being refused permission. At the same time, the resources available within SLC to fund tree planting and bench provision in public places is diminishing. The reason the council give is that in other parts of South Lanarkshire memorials have turned into sectarian shrines. Councillor McAllan undertook to clarify the council's position on this issue.

9. Forging new links with the cornets

The situation re insurance for the bonfire is still unclear, although it seems it is arranged by SLC. Jimmy will pass relevant contact details to Gil and Gerry.

Bank Accounts

At the meeting of Biggar Community Council and the Biggar Incentive Group, on 10th December 2018 it was resolved that

- the banking relationship should continue to be maintained with RBS
- all existing authorised signatories on the Biggar Community Council and the Biggar Incentive Group accounts should be removed
- three new signatories should be added; Chairperson – Gillian Dunn, Secretary – Janice Curry and Treasurer – Jeremy Sumpster

The individuals identified as authorised signatories may, in accordance with the signing rules, sign cheques and give instructions for Standing Orders, Direct Debits, Electronic Payments, Banker's Drafts and other payments on the accounts even if it causes the account to be overdrawn or exceed any limit.

Any authorised signatory may give other instructions or requests for information to the Bank in relation to the accounts; opening accounts with the same signing rules and authorised signatories; closing accounts; or other banking services or products.

The Bank may accept instructions that do not have an original written authorised signature provided the Bank is satisfied that the instruction is genuine and subject to any other agreement the Bank may require for those instructions

A.O.C.B.

Planning Two Applications concerning conservatories have been applied for in Biggar. Both appear straight forward and no comment was required. The Biggar Institute, also known as the Legion Hall, application had been withdrawn and then reapplied for. It was agreed not to comment.

Road Markings and signage in Station Road. George drew attention to worn speed markings and confusing signage on the High St on the bridge which shows different speeds. There are no yellow lines in Station Road near the bridge corner. There is also confusing speed signage at Boghall Avenue, and going to and from the Biggar Rugby Club. One sign is turned round near the rugby club. Councillor McAllan undertook to pursue these issues.

Salt Bins These should be at View Park Road, Market Road, Station Rd, top of Golf Course, Leafield Rd and Station Rd. The Station Road bin needs replaced as it is very damaged.

Amey and the A702. It was decided to write to Amey to ask when the work on the A702 near and in Biggar and the lay-bys in the High Street is going to start. Jimmy will give relevant contact details to Jan.

GDPR After signing the General Data Protection Regulation forms for SLC it was decided to check what BCC might need to do. Jerry will check this.

Sunday Parking Kirkstyle and North Back Road Jerry reported members of the public are concerned that emergency vehicles would not be able to get access on these streets and those connected on Sundays. Gil will email Mike Fucella to express these concerns.

Peter Rae It was agreed that a gift be given in recognition of Peter Rae's contribution to BCC in the past. If this is not allowed from funds the members of the Council would contribute. Jerry will check the position with the SLC liaison officer.

Lanark Gazette Janet queried whether the AGM advert was published as she had not seen it. Jan had had an invoice which was paid. Action Jan to check position and ask for refund if it was not published.

Gala Day Committee The gala day committee would like to meet with the new community council. Secretary is CJ Broon.

Dropbox Access Janet will remove Peter Rae from the Community Council's Dropbox access

Patient Liaison Group George Cunningham attends the Patient Group at the Health Centre. It meets every couple of months. George will forward minutes by email.

Youth Project Board of Management Janet Moxley agreed to represent the community council on the Youth Project's Board of Management.

Gill thanked all for coming and closed the Meeting.

Date of Next Meeting 21st January 2019