

Airth Parish Community Council

Minutes of Meeting held in Airth Community Centre on Wednesday 20th June 2018

Members Present : **Jon Anslow (Convenor)**
 Aileen Amos (Secretary / Treasurer)
 Robert Smith (Assistant Secretary)
 James Toal (Vice Convenor)
 Stephen Sloper (Community Councillor)
 Murat Dilek (Community Councillor)

Also Present : **Jacqueline Drew, Co-opted Member (Airth Parish Church)**
 Cllr. Laura Murtagh; Cllr. Joan Coombes; George Russell;
 Tom Sloper; PC Matt Newall; (for first part of meeting);
 Jane Rae (Minute Taker)

1. Apologies : **Councillor Jim Flynn.**

2. Police Report

On behalf of PC Christopher Morrison, PC Matt Newall presented the latest report.

The period covered was from 16th May to 20th June 2018 and identified 7 reported crimes / offences in the area. These included drink driving, drug driving, threatening and abusive behaviour, possession of cannabis, fraud and theft. There had been 86 calls to Police from Airth in this period. The majority of these related to road traffic matters and also to antisocial behaviour, missing persons, trees on the road and suspect persons.

During May 2018 Police Scotland ran Operation Monarda to raise awareness and tackle doorstep crime. Of note, the fraud mentioned above relates to an incident whereby the victim received a phonecall pretending to be from BT. The victim was convinced to allow remote access to her laptop and resulted in £18000 being transferred from her bank account. PC Newall urged caution and advised those present to highlight this threat to as many people as they can.

From the previous meeting, the incident of fly tipping at Higginsneuk has resulted in a crime report being raised and a named suspect identified. Enquiries are ongoing.

PC Newall brought to attention the Firearms Surrender Campaign which will commence at 7am on Monday 18th June and run for 2 weeks until 11.59pm on Sunday 1st July. The purpose of the campaign is to remove firearms from criminal availability, thereby reducing the risk of harm to the public and our communities. Anyone possessing firearms, including shotguns and ammunition, for which they do not hold a valid certificate, can surrender these to the police. Replica firearms, BB guns, imitation firearms etc. can also be surrendered.

Police have been informed of various incidents of antisocial behaviour at Abbeytown Bridge between Letham and Airth. This area has been added to patrol plan and will be checked routinely. Stephen Sloper updated the meeting on his observations of damage to bridge and interaction with youngsters at the bridge.

PC Morrison delivered a school assembly to Airth Primary School, talking to the children about "Stranger Danger". He also attended Airth Nursery and spoke to the children about being a Police Officer.

During May and June there had been 4 incidents of anti-social behaviour involving youths at Cemetery Brae. This is part of the patrol plan and is patrolled regularly.

PC Newall spoke about an incident of possession of cannabis within a car on Higginsneuk Road and the regularity of such incidents. Police have powers to stop and search where there is any suspicion of such a crime occurring.

Any intelligence relating to drug misuse in the area should be reported to Police.

Stephen Sloper highlighted an accident which happened at Lightbodys Corner and there followed a short discussion regarding the speed limits and boundaries at entrance and exit to village.

PC Newall was thanked for his report and information provided. He left the meeting.

3. Previous Minutes :

The previous minute of 16/5/18 was accepted as correct and approved by Aileen Amos, seconded by Jon Anslow.

4. Matters Arising

- **Stretch of Road between Airth and Dunmore** : Road repairs were carried out yesterday. Murat Dilek added however that these repairs had still not been sealed properly. The pothole at bus stop in Airth has also been repaired.
- **Public meeting in Avonbridge regarding the Impact of Sewage Sludge** : Both Aileen Amos and James Toal attended. Most of the residents appeared to be

complaining about SEPA's role in this. It was noted that currently this is not being used so much in this area, although it had been previously. Contractor has now changed so may be more incidents in the future. George Russell has some knowledge of this in the area and his opinion is that if used correctly and sparingly it is a good fertiliser and is cost effective but plays havoc with drainage system. If it's over-used it can be counter-productive.

- **Village Well, Dunmore** : Aileen Amos had made a request to Development Services of Falkirk Council to ascertain whether the Village Well could be painted and refreshed at the expense of the Council. A promise has been made by the Council to cost the works and keep us updated.
- **Graham Terrace, Airth** : still nothing been done to clear this up. Cllr Murtagh reiterated that there is no legal means to enforce this on owner. Robert Smith will attempt to speak to owner again.

5. Correspondence :

- email from Angus MacDonald, MSP, to Robert - glad to hear that funding has been allocated to the Community Council by Falkirk Council (not yet happened).
- Community Safety Team report 1st to 31st May. Monitoring of various issues.
- email inviting those interested to next meeting of the Scottish Flood Forum Community Networking event (was 2/6/18 in Perth Community Fire Station). Robert was unable to go.
- email from Maria Montinaro re Planning Bill. It was decided that Airth Community Council would decline the invitation to join in support of this.
- email from Cllr Coombes highlighting a public meeting (Pre Determination Hearing) being held on 29th May regarding application by Ineos for erection of new energy plant and associated works.
- email from Brian Pirie highlighting grants available to hold local events for people to have their say on Scotland's public services : Democracy Matters Conversation (joint venture between Scottish Government and COSLA). Last date for applying is today.
- email from Scottish Water, highlighting their presence at Royal Highland Show and their country-side consultation, Shaping the Future, which ends on 31st August
- email from Robert Smith to Angus MacDonald updating him on additional funding available to community councils from Falkirk Council, which can be used for anything needed, not necessarily for a laptop. Thanking Angus for his interest /intervention.

- email from Brian Pirie regarding Community Council Survey - to be completed by today (20/6/18).
- email from Stephen Sloper regarding additional agenda item - Sea Wall Defence.

6. Round the Parish :

South Alloa : Jon reported that public telephone box had been removed, without prior notice. Now thinks this would be an ideal site for noticeboard.

Letham : nothing to report.

Airth : George Russell updated regarding the drainage ditch on the access road to the Pineapple. SGN still carrying out their survey but almost done and once this is finished the flagging of the ditch will take place. George will keep the meeting updated on progress.

Murat Dilek mentioned the corridor of trees between South Green Drive and Kennedy Way and asked whether anyone had knowledge of who had responsibility. There followed a short discussion on the history of these trees and that responsibility probably lies with certain of the phases of Kennedy Way. There appears to be ongoing dispute / conversation with factor but as yet no conclusion has been reached. Murat was concerned regarding safety, particularly for children, but Cllr Murtagh felt there was no danger posed by trees. Investigation will continue.

Dunmore : With regard to the bridge in Dunmore, James Toal informed the meeting that a Dunmore resident had paid to have the survey done and had come back with a seemingly inexpensive way to fix it. The resident with responsibility for the bridge declined to have anyone from Falkirk Council involved and wished it to be deemed a private matter.

James had phoned Angus Duncan (Falkirk Council Countryside Access Officer) regarding a part of the right of way in a resident's garden which has made it awkward to access. There is also a hedge on the property and Dunmore is supposed to have a flat curtilage. Someone will be sent out to have a look.

7. Treasurer's Report :

Aileen Amos informed the meeting that there is approx £22 in the admin account as, thus far, no yearly admin money has been received from Falkirk Council. The funding of £500 has been applied for and is awaited. There is no need to spend this on a laptop. The annual insurance bill of £79.80 is overdue and awaiting payment. £2856.24 is in the Christmas Lights account, and still no further bill received from Lightways.

8. Planning Issues :

(a) Housing Development, Escarpment, Airth : Aileen has been in touch with John Milne of Falkirk Council and it seems that this development is up and running again. A final plan of the scheme has been submitted and there will be a Roads meeting next Tuesday. Now planning for 108 houses and all the relevant agencies will be contacted again because of the length of time since original application. Because there will now be less houses built there will be an effect on ratios of affordable housing, school fees etc. The community council will be sent a copy of the plans.

(b) Erection of 3 houses on site of Scout Hall, Airth : Looking at the house which is in progress, space looks a bit tight for a further two. Robert suggesting that given the depth which has to be dug down for foundations they may have found a need to bring it out further from the cemetery. There have been no changes made to original application. Await further progress. Steven McClure, Falkirk Council Planning Officer, will visit the site.

(c) Development on Shore Road : Permission has been granted.

(d) Management Realignment at Skinflats (RSPB) : Permission has been granted.

(e) Retrospective planning application for Barn at Letham Farm : CC has no comments to make.

(f) Development of flats at Elphinstone Inn : Permission has been granted. Stephen Sloper mentioned that Robert's letter sent on behalf of CC was not attached to plans. Robert will investigate.

(g) Development at Brackenlees Farm : No decision made on this yet.

(h) Planning Application for development at Greendykes Farm : Robert has had a look at application and has no comments to make, apart from the existence of the two temporary accommodations which don't appear on the plans.

(i) Community Planning Consultation : Cllr Coombes flagged up this consultation by Falkirk Council to identify and assess local community issues and asking for people's views on all public assets / financial restraints / what's working, what's not / the priorities. There will be workshops and focus groups. Exercise will end on 22/7/18.

(j) Regeneration of Crawford Square : Further information needed on this.

9. Sea Wall Defence : Prior to the meeting Stephen Sloper had distributed information to members regarding the flood defence for Airth & Dunmore and the concerns that he had regarding the strengthening of these defences which were made in 2016/17. He was concerned at the materials used and the seemingly important oversight that there was no planning permission for this work or that suitably qualified engineers were involved.

It was pointed out that prior to the repair and upgrading works of the sea wall between Airth and Dunmore being carried out, several meetings had been held involving the Community Council, Falkirk Council, our MSP Angus MacDonald, our Councillors, SEPA, Scottish Water, SNH, and the affected landowners, and agreement had been reached on what could be done.

Robert read out extracts from documents received from SNH answering frequently asked questions about flooding at Airth and the role and responsibilities of Agencies and Authorities.

One of these extracts referred to the earth bunds around Airth as not being officially designated as flood defences. It states that *“The shoreline of the River Forth from Airth to South Alloa lies in private ownership and, as such, the legal responsibility for the maintenance of the earth bunds lies with the landowners. These bunds have been constructed on an ad hoc basis over a long time period. They have been created by farmers to protect their agricultural land but have not been specifically designed to withstand storm events. Therefore their effectiveness as flood defences is limited.”* *“There is a legal obligation on property owners to protect themselves and their property from flooding by taking actions to minimise flood risk and to make their land and property more resilient to flood damage.”*

Robert also stated that he was more concerned about the state of the embankment between the WWTW and the Pow Burn which was not upgraded and has been weakened by past works.

There followed a lengthy discussion regarding Stephen’s concerns, what he wished to happen and the way forward.

After this discussion it was agreed that Robert Smith would write to the Council on behalf of the community council setting out our concerns and asking them to consider whether the process followed was adequate in the circumstances, or whether this issue needs to be reconsidered.

10. Garden Competition : Due to financial restraints this year, Aileen suggested that winner should receive the trophy with 2nd and 3rd places receiving a certificate. There was a discussion around suggestions for a judge this year and it was agreed that Robert would contact Provost Billy Buchanan to ask him whether he would wish to be involved. As in the past, the judging will be carried out in the week before the Highland Games, which will take place on Saturday 28th July.

11. Christmas Lights : By the AGM in September it is hoped that the raffle tickets will be printed. This should leave plenty of time to organise teams of sellers and distribute the tickets ahead of December.

Aileen asked whether it would be beneficial to have a stall at Airth Games to raise funds for the CC. Aileen to ascertain availability and what other local organisations will be stallholders.

12. Mandate to operate Community Council during holidays : This was agreed.

Aileen also suggested that it may be helpful for Robert, Jon and herself to meet once the final plans for the Escarpment Development are received to discuss any issues arising. Aileen will keep everyone updated.

13. AOCB :

- Ineos recently lost appeal re fracking at Court of Session.
- Creation of more lairs at Cemetery : it was agreed that this needs to be brought up with Falkirk Council again.

Jon Anslow concluded that there was no further business and therefore closed the meeting.