Location: Mearns Community Campus

Present: Andrew Macdonald (AM), Dave Stewart (DS) Janette Anderson (JA),Chris Rushbridge (CR) Remi Salvan (RS) Carol Medlock Paul Green (PG), Ashley Buchan (AB) Ken Williams (KW),

EX Officio Cllr Carr, Cllr Evison

Observer: Nick Howe

Speakers: Fiona Smith & Kate Matthews ( part of meeting)

Apologies: Kevin Todd (KT) John Lovell (JL) Anne Lawson (AL), Alasdair Shiach (AS)

Date: 27th May 2024

1. **Minutes of Last Meeting**

Circulated and reviewed with no further comment, no matters arising.

Proposed CR, seconded JA

1. **Declarations of Interest**

None

1. **Correspondence from Aberdeenshire Council**

Circulated as received (Correspondence, Road Closures, Planning, Roads and Landscape services).

1. **Correspondence from Residents and Stakeholders**

An email from a Marykirk resident seeking MCC support in reducing through traffic speed was discussed. Elected members advised the likelihood of securing a reduction to 20 mph from Aberdeenshire Council was extremely low to none. After discussion it was agreed that options for a “self delivered” solution would be explored as used in other settlements in Aberdeenshire, eg Blackburn.

**Action**: AM to investigate

Concern was raised that recent meeting minutes were not being posted on the MCC website.

**Action**: AM to investigate

1. **Police Report**

Concern was repeated about the ongoing absence of a representative from Police Scotland. The response from PC Charnley was discussed and members expressed understanding regarding resource constraints but were still very frustrated by the prevailing issue.

**Action:** AM will write to PC Charnley to acknowledge his position and that of Police Scotland but also repeat MCC’s ongoing frustration.

1. **Settlements**

**Auchenblae**

A “sinkhole” has opened in pavement outside 7 Mackenzie Ave, there is concern this could develop into something similar to the present situation at the bottom of Kintore St. where the pavement is collapsing and has been closed.

**Fettercairn**

Nothing reported

**Fordoun**

No solution to the use of flowers to be provided by Aberdeenshire Council.

There is concern that the street lights on Toch Hill Road are being obscured by trees.

**Action**: AM will write to Aberdeenshire Council.

**Edzell Woods**

Still no sign of remedial works to the Shakin’ Brig or the access road being started. This is an ongoing concern and has a direct impact on the safety of pedestrians who are forced to walk on the highway. Given the distances and safety implications involved, people are being forced to use their cars as opposed to their preferred method of travel to Edzell – on foot.

**Glenbervie & Drumlithie**

Nothing reported

**Laurencekirk**

The question was asked as to who took the decision to name streets in Laurencekirk, this is not within the gift of MCC.

The Scouts are going to try to raise funds for a new hut. A discussion followed regarding how MCC may be involved, it was felt the most tangible thing we could do would be to work to seek its inclusion within the forthcoming Local Development plan.

**West Cairnbeg**

Nothing reported

**Luthermuir**

There continues to be some confusion about the status of the right of way at Crosspoles, the new owner of the adjacent property appears to be quite relaxed and cooperative, support from Aberdeenshire would add some much-needed clarity.

**Action:** AM to write to Aberdeenshire Council.

Despite several representations both in person and writing there are a number of private hedges causing obstructions to pavements within Luthermuir.

**Action**: AM to contact Aberdeenshire Council with the support of pictures.

There are concerns about the provision signage at the junction of the B974 and A90.

**Action:** AM will write to Amey to request a survey and installation of appropriate signage.

Exit from the public park on to Main Street is difficult with resident parking on Main Street at the edge of the exit. Aberdeenshire Council do not recognise the exit from public park on to School Road as the line of sight is insufficient, but this is what

vehicles will use when entering and leaving the park for Lutherfest on Saturday 1st June. Should an accident happen when a vehicle is coming out of the park on to School Road, who would be responsible?

**Marykirk**

It was welcomed that reconstruction work has started on the road which was destroyed by flooding, however very serious concern was raised that the works whilst protecting the road will not address the cause of flooding, indeed it is felt that it will act as a dam and exacerbate flooding and the consequential damage. It is felt that the build does not match the published design residents were given to expect.

After the meeting the following was received which states Aberdeenshire Council’s position.

Given all this, why did it take so very long to get round to doing the work?

“Aberdeenshire Council considers that the damage caused to the A937 immediately south of Marykirk during Storm Babet was not caused by the road or its verges acting like a dam. Instead, the bund which has been built along the edge of the River North Esk to allow the surrounding fields to be farmed failed. The hole that formed in the bund during the storm acted as a point discharge for the River North Esk resulting in it being channelled across the field and over the A937 where the verge and embankment supporting the carriageway on the east side were washed away due to hydrodynamic scour. This area is a natural flood plain and had the area been allowed to flood gradually as the river level rose, the extent of damage to the carriageway would have been mitigated.

I understand from Mr Rushbridge’s email that it was the community’s desire for the road to be elevated to allow flood water to pass below. Unfortunately, due to construction complexities, the option for possible culverts under the existing road was not viable. As the cause of the damage was the point failure of the bund, the remedial action considered most appropriate was to reinforce the verge and embankment on the east side of the carriageway with concrete mattresses to mitigate scour in the future should the bund fail again.

The project was completed in four weeks as opposed to the seven weeks originally anticipated. This was not in any way due to a sub-standard design but due to the hard work of WM Donald and our own road maintenance squads who progressed through the works quickly.

It is disappointing to hear that the residents of Marykirk are unhappy with the repairs that have been undertaken. Providing a robust solution and opening the road was our priority which we believe we have achieved.”

As mention in 4 above, there is concern about the inevitable increase in traffic through Marykirk. After so very long without any significant through traffic, children in particular are vulnerable (they have got used to very low traffic volumes). Can Aberdeenshire Council provide protection for pedestrians and alert motorists to the hazards.

**Action**: AM to write to Aberdeenshire Council.

1. **Planning**

No planning applications merited discussion

The forthcoming proposal for bigger turbines at the proposed Crigneil Windfarm was mentioned.

1. **Roads**

There is a very strong perception that Aberdeenshire Council’s Roads Dept ignore the K&M area, the is demonstrated by a general lack of response and a failure to engage in any meaningful way with the Communities.

**Action:** AM to write to Head of Roads and Area Manager.

1. **Landscape Services**

Bedding plants /flowers for settlements are due to be delivered over the coming week.

1. **Cairn O’Mount Car Park Map**

Cllr Carr is to provide contact details for the information board / orientation map designer involved in the Coastal Path project.

1. **Treasurers Report**

£8981.86 in RBS as at 27th May 2024.

AM expressed concern that this was quite a high balance, ( although it included a payment from Scottish Water in excess of £4500), he encouraged members to identify opportunities to invest in appropriate Community initiatives.

1. **Single Election & AGM**

It was agreed that current office bearers would continue in place until after the Inaugural meeting, currently pencilled in for 23rd September.

1. **SSEN and Save Our Mearns**

AM updated the meeting about a joint CC initiative to clearly and firmly state our joint opposition to the planned activities of SSEN, both now and in the future.

Fiona Smith and Kate Matthews gave a verbal update. After a free-flowing discussion, it was agreed that MCC would provide what tangible support it could to support and enable community engagement and information.

1. **AOCB**

Time did not allow for the Councillors present to provide and update on matters pertinent to the Communities which had not already been discussed. Where necessary and appropriate these will be provided by email.

The meeting was closed.