***MEARNS COMMUNITY COUNCIL***

Note of Meeting 456 on 25th September 2023

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| **Item** |  | **Action** |
| 1.. | In attendance: J Stuart (Chairperson); C Medlock; S Brown (Sec); J Anderson; D Stewart; A Lawson; A Shiach; K Williams; R Salvan; C Rushbridge  Ex Officio: Cllr Carnie; Cllr Carr; Cllr Evison  Visitors: S Boyd; G Morrison; T Stephen  Apologies: P Green; A Buchan; A MacDonald; J Lovell; K Todd |  |
|  | JS advised members of the death of Michael Robson on Sunday 24th September. Mike was a true “Man of the Mearns” and contributed much to the community. He participated in many groups during his lifetime including Villages in Control; Laurencekirk Development Trust; Laurencekirk Scout Group; Howe of the Mearns Heritage Society and of course, the Community Council until illness made it impossible for him to attend. Our thoughts are with Marion and the family at this sad time. |  |
|  | Ken Williams was co-opted on to the Community Council as the representative for Edzell Woods. This agreed unanimously by members. |  |
| 2 | Approval of minute of August 2023– Proposed C Medlock; Seconded A Lawson |  |
| 3 | Declarations of Interest – None |  |
| 4 | Matters Arising: - None not an agenda. |  |
| 5 | Police   1. Police reports circulated as received. |  |
| 6 | Correspondence – circulated as received.   1. Democracy Matters Webinar – JS to attend. 2. Common Good Register – Disappointed to note that only the St Laurence Hall and the Memorial Parks feature as common good assets belonging to the former burgh. The sassine register has record of much more property that should be in the register. It was also noted that Aberdeenshire Council have not been diligent in paying rent and keeping leases alive. Has appropriate rent been paid to the common good fund then the community could take over the running of various properties in Laurencekirk. It is widely agreed that he community campus does not meet the needs of the community and it is imperative that the community have premises for and run by the community. The site of the former academy would be the ideal location for a community building. It could incorporate changing rooms for the adjacent playing fields and contain a community garden. 3. Email circulated regarding the Stirling Directive. Members agreed that this is political and therefore CC should not be making comment. |  |
| 7 | Roads Issues   1. Road Closure Notices sent out as received. 2. A90/A937 flyover – The Scottish Government Minister for Transport has advised the CC that they are committed to fulfilling the completion of the flyover. There are currently objections from Aberdeenshire Council and two landowners. It is hoped these can be resolved without the need for a public enquiry. 3. There had been a rumour that Laurencekirk north junction was to be closed. Transport Scotland advise that this is not the case. 4. Shakin’ Bridge – needs maintenance work. This a joint responsibility between Aberdeenshire and Angus Council. Roads have been advised.  * Abbeyton Bridge – Work ongoing re design but no detailed time frame as yet. As it is likely that Oatyhill will also need to be replaced it might be that it cheaper to do both at the same time. * Market Road – Mearns CC has always had concern about the width of the pavement which significantly decreases the width of the road. At harvest time many tractors with trailers are using the road meaning they have to go onto the pavement to allow passing. The solution would be to reduce the pavement to the original 1.8m width. * Drains at north end of Laurencekirk High Street – some six years ago the Council were to write to householders advising that they were responsible for keeping the drains in the High Street clear. This did not happen. It is a concern that the Council think it appropriate for householders to have to put their hands into a drain which might contain needles of other unsavoury items. A solution would be to replace the original open angled drains which can be easily cleared with a piece of wire. Before these drains were “improved” there was no flooding on the High Street. |  |
| 9 | Planning   1. Weekly planning lists circulated as received. 2. APP/2023/1567 – Former community centre. Mearns Community Council will object to this retrospective application on the following grounds:  * Drawing submitted with the application poor. * Area known to flood. * Directly opposite Garvocklea entrance which serves multiple properties. * Visibility splays not adequate.  1. APP/2023/1472 – Demolition of Marymill Steading. CC to request that certain historical parts of the building be retained for the community. These include the stone marking flood height. Also, that the hedge be planted elsewhere if appropriate. 2. APP/2016/3434 – Plot 4 Nether Tulloch. CC to advise enforcement officer of an unauthorised building having been built on site. 3. Street Naming for site of new development off Garvocklea Gardens. The suggestion is Anderson something which would be in keeping with the recent practice of naming streets after former medical practitioners in the village. CC to request that only one street be named Anderson to avoid the confusion caused by the multiple streets named Lyall in Laurencekirk. 4. Tim Stephen, Area Manager spoke about concern that planning in Laurencekirk and the Mearns was being constrained in favour of Chapelton. Tim advised that this was not policy. It is unclear why the applicants for 247 houses (previously approved by Scottish Government) on site OP3 have been advised that they need to reapply. The knock-on effect of this is that the people who hope to build on Beech Road (plots with outline planning permission) are expected to contribute significantly to the required footpath, street lighting and drainage required. The LDP needs to be reviewed and all officers involved in planning need to sing from the same song sheet and ensure a formal strategy is adopted to ensure that development is not controlled by large scale developers and allows for organic growth in this area. 5. SSEN – no update re meeting. Details of an online seminar was circulated to members. This will be available to see online following the event. 6. Concern in Auchenblae re a building project taking so long to be completed. Is there any time limit? CR to ask enforcement officer. | **CR**  **CR**  **CR**  **CR** |
| 10 | Landscape Services   1. No agreement has been reached re the site for a memorial tree to be planted by the Rotary Club. 2. Wild Planting – the area at Kinnear Square is unsightly. Cllr Evison to speak to landscape services. |  |
| 11 | Waste services   1. SB to send a copy of the survey to waste services as removal of booking systems to be addresses later this year. 2. Concern that Aberdeenshire Council might follow the policy being introduced in Angus which will mean yet another change to recycling for householders. Given that the SUEZ plant in Aberdeen is running at strength Aberdeenshire must ensure best value return on recycling. Current figures show £90K income from recycling with £1.2m cost to deliver service. |  |
| 12 | Settlements:  Auchenblae:   1. Dog fouling becoming a problem again as darkness falling earlier. Will report through FmS.   Fettercairn – No Report  Fordoun   1. Traffic Lights out again at the weekend. 2. Repairs made to the exit to the A90 for northbound traffic. Still and issue with the junction for traffic coming from the north turning into Fordoun. Amey to be advised.   Glenbervie – No Report  Laurencekirk:   1. There has been a policy change with regards to sheds storing hazardous materials. Is the Council aware of this and if so, what action will they take? Cllr Evison to seek response from officers. 2. Mearns Youth Club is to hold an event later in the year. Anyone wishing to attend should contact RS.   Luthermuir:   1. Pothole in pavement reported following last meeting was repaired very quickly. Unfortunately, the root cause of the problem was not addressed – this being that work done previously on a drain was not sealed off meaning water leaking and making the hole in the pavement. Luthermuir reps to monitor meantime. 2. Park Close –. Aberdeenshire Council has a duty to ensure access to public spaces is kept clear. Currently, emergency services will be unable to access the park or the hall. A quote from the deed detailing the gifting of the park to the community includes the line “With access to the subjects hereby disponed by a strip of ground twelve feet wide belonging to me leading from the road through Caldhame Feu to Caldhame plantation.” CC to use the feedback process to detail their concerns before contacting the ombudsman if necessary. The outdoor access officer is aware of the issue and will be in touch ASAP.   Marykirk   1. Concern about no bus service on a Sunday. The number nine service which covers Marykirk is run by Angus Council. It was noted that no Mearns settlements have any bus service at the weekend, and some have no bus service at any time. 2. CR advised that the property developers involved in the recent housebuilding in Marykirk were required to provide a shop unit. So far, no shop has opened. |  |
| 13 | Treasurers Report:   1. Balance in account is £9671.08. 2. Concern that Aberdeenshire Council refuse to accept a cheque from the CC in part payment towards the cost of work on the Dr Buchan Memorial. AS to resolve. 3. Cheque written for data protection annual payment. |  |
| 14 | AOCB   1. Memorial Park Group application for asset transfer of shed at the Burgh Buildings site. CC would prefer to see the entire site taken on by a committee comprising representatives of various community groups. 2. Fred Olsen has confirmed that Mearns CC will be invited to be involved in future discussion around future community benefit from proposed extension to wind farm. 3. Two members have signed up for induction training. This will be a hybrid event. |  |
|  | DONM – Monday 30th October 2023 – Mearns Community Centre 7.00pm. |  |