***MEARNS COMMUNITY COUNCIL***

Note of Meeting 28th November 2022

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| **Item** |  | **Action**  |
| 1.. | In attendance: C Rushbridge (Chair); C Medlock; S Brown (Sec); J Anderson; D Stewart; K Todd; A Shiach; A MacDonald: A Lawson; J Stuart; M RobsonEx Officio: Cllrs Carr; Evison; Carnie; Stelfox; PC D Charnley Apologies: S Sweeney; J Lovell; K Williams; R Salvan  |  |
| 2 | Approval of minute of October 2022 - Proposed A Shiach, Seconded C Medlock  |  |
| 3 | Matters Arising: All on agenda therefore recorded in the minute.  |  |
| 4 | Police 1. Police reports circulated as received.
2. PC Charnley advised that future Police reports will be more localised although not too specific as to location of crimes.
3. Question re a recent break in at Faulkener Avenue – this now with CID rather than the division.
4. Question re complaints from residents about the bright lights at Dowrieburn. Police advise that even though the lights are bright they would bot be considered too bright. There is a current retrospective planning application regarding the lights.
5. Several cars in the Robson car park have been there for many months – one with a flat tyre. As parking is extremely limited in Laurencekirk this is not ideal. SB to report to Council and Police will make enquiries.
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| 5 | Correspondence – circulated as received |  |
| 6 | Settlements 1. Auchenblae:
2. Further complaints about dog fouling, specifically between the Square and the football pitch.
3. Question as to whether the road between the Square and the football pitch is an adopted road. The road is in extremely poor condition.
4. West Cairnbeg: No Report
5. Edzell Woods: No Report
6. Fettercairn: No Report
7. Fordoun: No Report
8. Glenbervie: No Report
9. Laurencekirk
10. Residents delighted that Gardenstone Street has been resurfaced.
11. Acknowledgement that bin has been sited on Frasers Lane as requested.
12. Luthermuir
13. Cllr Carr advised that a letter of intent to be sent about the issue with the down pipe in the park close. Question as to who will pay for this work, it should not be the Council as the problem lies with a householder.
14. Marykirk: No Report
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| 7 | Roads Issues 1. Road Closure Notices sent out as received
2. Flooding at Marykirk – there have been four floods in the last month. This in the main due to the mill lade being silted up. The most severe flood caused the riverbank to burst in three places. Aberdeenshire Council were to set up a maintenance programme for the mill lade to be dredged every two year – this has not happened. The Council are remiss in not seeking local knowledge regarding locations that flood on a regular basis.
3. Flooding has been an issue at many locations across the Mearns CC area recently: 1) twelve cars abandoned at the junction beside Mains of Haulkerton. The impact to waves generated from vehicles trying to drive through the floods has led to the death of some livestock on the farm. Request that the road be closed as soon as possible with signage erected further back from the actual junction. 2) Questions asked about general lack of maintenance on local roads and the quality of work in certain locations. 3) Question as to whether the amount of polytunnels locally contributes to flooding of roads as rainwater runs onto roads rather than being absorbed into the ground. 4) Crosspoles war memorial was flooded – this can easily be remedied. 5) On a positive note, it was appreciated that the gulleys on Laurencekirk High Street had been cleared and there was little flooding at the north end.
4. Members agreed to circulate a survey seeking support for a 20mph speed limit in all Mearns villages. Cllrs advised that Aberdeenshire had decided to defer any decision on this as it was not compulsory until 2025. SB to circulate survey and post on social media. Members encouraged to share widely.
5. Charging points for electric cars is an issue locally. The fast charger at Laurencekirk does not work, the two other charging points take up to 8 hours to charge a vehicle. Similarly, one of the charging points at Castleton has been out of order for several months. These chargers are not operated or maintained by the Council who hope to change the supplier for charging points on Council sites to a more dependable contractor.
 | **SB****SB****SB**  |
| 8 | Planning1. Weekly planning lists circulated as received.
2. SB to contact A Hogge to arrange a meeting re concerns about the LDP. JS to put together a proposed agenda for circulation to members for comment before it is sent to planning development.
3. Members agreed to submit a comment on APP/2022/2067 for a house at 165 High Street, Laurencekirk. As this is on the route to the primary school members wish to know whether a pavement will be part of the application conditions.
 | **SB/JS****KW** |
| 9 | Landscape Services1. Dr Buchan Memorial – Aberdeenshire Council HAMP team have agreed to implement the work to refurbish the structure. Mearns CC agreed to cover 50% of the cost. JS to function as project manager and ensure the work has been conducted appropriately before payment is made.
2. Memorial Park Lease – Mearns CC supported the lease being given to the Memorial Park Group in 2018. Aberdeenshire Council are now going to court to legalise the lease. Means Community Council take exception to The Council referring to themselves as landlords (by definition owners) when the court documents refer to this as a common good issue, Mearns CC to advise the court that they have serious concerns about this as it will set a precedent for future conversation around common good assets.
 | **JS****SB** |
| 10 | Waste services1. Members extremely disappointed that two elected members opted to vote for retention of the booking system at Laurencekirk recycling centre. The reasoning that having different arrangements at Portlethen, Stonehaven and Laurencekirk would cause confusion was not accepted by members. Mearns CC members have shared feedback from residents of all settlements with elected members at meetings for many months. The cost of removal of the barriers was also a concern – why do they need to be removed, they can simply be raised during opening hours.
2. The staff at Laurencekirk recycling centre can identify traders attempting to use Laurencekirk and will turn them away. There is a local lorry driver who regularly takes trade waste to Montrose on behalf of Laurencekirk traders.
3. It is recognised that there is continuing incidents of fly-tipping in the Mearns area. Open access to the centre will alleviate this issue.
4. It was stated by all four elected members during the hustings held in May that they would listen and take heed of the wishes of the constituents. This clearly not the case for all.
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| 11 | Common Good 1. Members still wish to have a face-to-face meeting with the Area Manager to discuss issues of concern. These have all been discussed at CC meetings with no action taken by officers.
2. A main issue of concern is common good assets belonging to Laurencekirk which have been titled to the Council with no consultation. One example is the roads depot in Laurencekirk which was leased from common good until 2005. Since then, the Council has built a new depot yet paid no rent. Using the approximate cost of Council rent for sites in Laurencekirk the lease should be for £8,000 per annum. Over seventeen years that would amount to £136,000.00.
 | **SB** |
| 12 | Crosspoles right of Way – Deferred  |  |
| 13 | Treasurers Report. 1. Balance in account £9311.30
2. Payment of £1522.00 transferred from Aberdeenshire Council.
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| 14 | AOCB1. Auchenblae Parks Committee Insurance. Zurich advise that as Auchenblae Parks Committee is an entity in their own right they cannot be covered under Mearns CC policy.
2. It is proposed to hold a social event for members and guests in the New Year, probably in February.
3. Remembrance Sunday - members were disappointed to note that the Aberdeenshire Council wreath laid at Crosspoles War Memorial was signed on behalf of the young people of the Mearns. Does the Council not represent everybody?
4. Fettercairn Distillery – members had co comment re the application for variation of licence.
5. Tess White MSP has asked to meet with members of Mearns CC on Friday 2nd December to discuss resilience. CR, JS, CM and SB will attend.
6. Cameron Bequest – this fund was transferred to Aberdeenshire Council by the Charities Commission. Members seek the return of control of this fund to Laurencekirk where it can be distributed as required by local people with local knowledge. The Community Council, Mearns Area Partnership and the Masonic Lodge would be acceptable administrators. A FOI request sent in 2017 advised that the current balance in the fund was £78,159.61. Interest will have accrued since that time. SB to wrote to Karen Wiles, head of legal and governance seeking information as to how Laurencekirk can access these funds for the benefit of Laurencekirk residents.
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| 15 | DONM – Monday 30th January 2023 at Mearns Community Campus.  |  |