***MEARNS COMMUNITY COUNCIL***

***Approved Note of Meeting April 2022***

1. In attendance: C Rushbridge; J Stuart; C Medlock; S Brown (Sec); M Robson; J Anderson; D Stewart; M Stewart; K Williams; A MacDonald

Ex Officio: Cllr G Carr; Cllr J Hutchison

Visitors: Mrs A Evison; S Sweeney

Apologies: A Shiach; A Lawson; J Lovell; K Todd; PC M Camus

1. Approval of minute of March 2022 - Proposed J Stuart; Seconded C Medlock
2. Matters Arising – all on agenda
3. Police
4. Police reports circulated as received.
5. Car abandoned in Luthermuir Hall Car Park, this council land. No tax or MOT. Can it be removed or is this Council?
6. Concern about suspicious activity in and around Fettercairn and question asked as to whether Police patrols have increased in the evenings?
7. Correspondence – circulated as received
8. Query from someone seeking a place to test classic cars and wondering if they could use the former US air Base at Edzell. Referred to Carnegie’s.
9. Request that a member contact the consultants acting for KDP. Jim will contact her as a previous rep on KDP.
10. Suggestion from a member of the Scottish Youth Parliament that the former academy site would be an ideal situation for a community garden. Scottish Government can fund this. Cllrs advised that this area is to be addressed in early in the next Council period and all proposals (including those made previously) will be discussed with the community.
11. Settlements
12. Auchenblae:
13. Question re former public toilets -does the Council have a plan for the building. It was noted that when the toilet closed there was talk locally about the community keeping them open. Sadly, no firm commitment from residents. The cost of the rates is an issue as this responsibility would be transferred to the community. It was also noted that the café in the village might change hands soon and a comfort partnership might be agreed. Cllrs to raise at tomorrows ward forum.
14. Bridge at Burnmouth had been scheduled for repair but nothing. Currently most of the parapet is lying in the burn. To be raised as an urgent issue.
15. West Cairnbeg: No Report
16. Edzell Woods: No Report
17. Fettercairn: See under item 2
18. Fordoun No Report
19. Glenbervie: No Report
20. Laurencekirk
21. Still awaiting quote from Neil Ingram for repair to the Dr Buchan memorial in Kinnear Square.
22. Question re Cameron Trust, held for Laurencekirk by Aberdeenshire Council. Members estimate there should be £78,159.61 in the account. SB to seek confirmation.
23. Common Good – members still waiting for the Council list of monies, land and property held by Aberdeenshire Council. There must have been an inventory made when the transfer happened. It is not acceptable that the Council does not have this information to hand.
24. Former Community Centre – this was transferred to the Catalyst Church last year. Members are advised that the building was given for use as an educational building and should that specific use cease then the solum reverts to the superior. The superior will be seeking an explanation from the Council.
25. St Laurence Hall – there is a willingness in Laurencekirk to have the hall reopened for use by the community. The hall keeper’s house would be integral to making this happen. Mearns CC to check the land registry for detail of ownership. It formerly belonged to Laurencekirk. It is to be hoped that the Council has not acted hastily in taking over the title to the building. Cllrs will seek detail as to the timeline of events at their ward forum tomorrow (26th). This will be used as a test case before action taking over other “mislaid” assets.
26. Complaints about the number of buses being parked on the streets around the business park. Could the vacant Journeycall site be used to park some. These appear to be school contract buses. Businesses are suffering due to the roads being narrowed due to the buses. It is appreciated that this is a public road but, should it be used as a bus park to the detriment of businesses in the locality?
27. Lamp post by Clarence Murray premises on Market Road has been 50% missing for some time. Will report separately to roads.
28. Caravan parked on the road by the man gate to the cemetery. Complaints from nearby householders.
29. Luthermuir
30. Potholes filled which is good news, not a proper repair which is not good news!
31. Marykirk:
32. General scruffiness in the village which should be recognised as a gateway to Aberdeenshire.
33. Roads Issues
34. Closure notices sent out as received.
35. Still awaiting a date for requested meeting with Transport Scotland and BEAR Scotland re A90 concerns and update on promised actions.
36. Tess White, MSP, forwarded a letter from Aberdeenshire Council in response to concerns about road safety in Marykirk. Council proposes to conduct a yet another speed check on the road to allow them to assess whether or not a crossing can be provided. How many times will this be done, can common sense not come into play? On a slightly more positive note, the yellow lines at the school will be repainted as the schedule allows.
37. Planning:
38. All weekly lists circulated.
39. APP/2121/2892 – CC objection was to be withdrawn should the right of way remain as is with no compromise. Drawings do not show this to be the case. KW to remind planning of the CC concerns.
40. APP/2020/0203 – Erection of dwelling house Nether Tulloch. Members heard from one of the current residents re concerns about the number of trees proposed to be felled (28) simply to build this house which sits on a greenfield site. The trees were left following the original development where steadings were demolished, and three dwelling houses built. These trees function as a wind shield to protect the houses from the prevailing winds. The woods also house numerous species of wildlife including bats, badgers, and buzzards. Members agreed by majority to submit an objection.
41. APP/2022/0616 – Extension to holiday park at Dowrieburn. Mearns Community Council OBJECTS to this application as the applicant has made little effort to meet the planning conditions applied to the original application APP/2017/1165 including passing places; Footpath to either Luthermuir or Laurencekirk and tarred car park for sixty vehicles. There are numerous complaints about noise in the evening and beyond. Despite staff chalets being in the original application there are no staff on site after 5.00pm. Police have attended on more than one occasion. Mearns Community Council attended ISC when this permission was granted seeking an assurance that all planning conditions would be enforced. Those attending were given this assurance. These conditions are noted on a legal document provided by the Council to the developer. There appears to have been no Council follow up to check that conditions are being met and no action taken if a breach has been noted. Mearns CC has advised enforcement officer and they will look into some of the breaches.
42. Handling reports on planning applications – these are inaccurate and members question why an independent body is not brought in to conduct these audits.
43. Landscape Services
44. It is noted that there is some clearing up required following the storms earlier in the year. This includes tree roots needing removed.
45. Recycling
46. Members extremely disappointed by the response they received to their concerns.
47. Members and local residents see no need for a booking system in Laurencekirk and hope that this will be reviewed early in the next Council session.
48. Members hear complaints that not all have access on the online booking system. No phone number is displayed at the entrance to the recycling centre.
49. Twinning Request – Chatillon-sur-Indre
50. Members agreed that sadly they did think it appropriate to pursue this at the present time. Laurencekirk is in no state to welcome visitors from abroad and until roads, traffic management and general disrepair of the town are addressed.
51. Hustings:

* Each of the seven candidates will draw a number to determine seating plan
* All questions should relate to Aberdeenshire Council and how candidates might address issues for Ward 19 and not to Holyrood or Westminster.
* A polite reminder that the CC is a non-political body, and all candidates should be treated equally.
* Each candidate will have 2 minutes to introduce themselves to the audience.
* Questions will be taken from the floor.
* Chairman will invite candidates to respond to questions in turn
* Those who have confirmed their attendance are:

Laurie Carnie (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party)

George Carr (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party)

Alison Evison (Independent)

Shona Ewen (Scottish Liberal Democrats)

David Neill (Independent)

Kevin Stelfox (Scottish National Party)

Dave Stewart (Independent)

1. Community Council Elections.
2. Members were given posters and nomination forms to be put up in the various settlements.
3. Nominations open 6th May
4. Members were reminded that all bar four require to seek re-election this year.
5. Complaint against Council
6. Agreed that a draft be sent to members for comment in advance of wider distribution following the elections on 5th May.
7. Platinum Jubilee
8. No further meetings have been held; some events are being organised in various settlements by local groups. CC not directly involved although we will fly the Union flag where appropriate.
9. DONM – 7.00pm on 30th May 2022 at Mearns Community Campus.