**BONNYRIGG AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2023, at Lasswade Library**

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| Present: | Jan Irvine (Chair), Dan Lennie (Secretary), John Aitchison (Treasurer), Liz MacDonald (Minutes), Joyce Bernard, James Cameron, Marnie Crawford, Jammy Gracoeiro, Bill MacDonald, Kirstie Malley, Ruth Scott, Joan Sumner, Fiona Warner, Sandy Waterston, Stuart Young. |
|  | Midlothian Councillors Dianne Alexander, Derek Milligan, David Virgo. |
| In attendance: | PC Chris Howarth, Flora Kenny, Avril Ramsay, Brian Scott. |
| Apologies: | Diane Easton, Owen Proudfoot, Alison Thomson, Dougie West. |

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| **ITEM** |  | **1** | **Chair’s remarks** |  |
| Noted |  | (i) | JI welcomed everyone to the meeting and said she would go through the agenda as quickly as possible, to leave time for discussion of the potential cuts proposed by Midlothian Council. |  |
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| **ITEM** |  | **2** | **Minutes and matters arising from 8 December meeting** |  |
| Noted |  | (i) | The motion to approve the December draft minutes was proposed by JA and seconded by JG. The minutes were adopted as an accurate reflection of the meeting. |  |
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| **ITEM** |  | **3** | **Police report** |  |
| Received |  | (i) | Police reports for December and January had been received. |  |
| Noted |  | (i) | There were a number of house break ins during December. The Community Action Team (CAT) offer crime prevention surveys. If anyone wants one carried out, contact the local community police officers. There had been less youth disorder due to additional input from social work. |  |
| Noted |  | (ii) | More break ins and some anti-social behaviour occurred in January. |  |
| Noted |  | (iii) | The two youths who had broken into the school were charged in front of their parents. |  |
| Noted |  | (iv) | Known local hot spots for trouble were patrolled by the CAT officers, on quad bikes. |  |
| Noted |  | (v | CH commented on the thefts of bikes and electric bikes. Registration of bikes is provided free of charge by the police and was a deterrent. |  |
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| **ITEM** |  | **4** | **Finance report** |  |
| Received |  | (i) | December accounts had been received. |  |
| Noted |  | (i) | JA had not yet got online access to enable production of January accounts. The new card readers, which had been received by BMacD as the previous Treasurer, were handed to JA by LMacD. |  |
| Noted |  | (ii) | A previous audit had advised that any purchases, such as website fees and printing costs made on behalf of the Community Council, should be noted in the Minutes. This will happen henceforth. |  |
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| **ITEM** |  | **5** | **Secretary’s report** |  |
| Noted |  | (i) | DL commented it had been busy recently, with many emails to be forwarded. He was keen to circulates papers in advance of meetings, so community councillors had time to read them. |  |
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| **ITEM** |  | **6** | **MTRaP report** |  |
| Received |  | (i) | Report of the January meeting was circulated. |  |
| Noted |  | (i) | A list of carriageways had been suggested for resurfacing, Bonnyrigg High Street; Cockpen Road; Leyden Place, Leyden Park and Raes Gardens; St Anne’s Avenue, Polton; plus Polton Street footway. There was no guarantee these would be resurfaced, but Midlothian Council had asked for suggestions. |  |
| Noted |  | (ii) | LMacD queried why there was no sound signal from the new traffic lights at Bonnyrigg Toll. Instead, people are expected to look at the green man signal on the light stanchion. [The day following the meeting the sound signal was activated]. |  |
| Noted |  | (iii) | FW commented that the pavements into the Health Centre had been very icy after the recent cold weather and no-one gritted them. She wondered who had the responsibility. DM advised the Factor for the Health Centre should do it, as part of their contract. |  |
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| **ITEM** |  | **7** | **Report from Midlothian Councillors** |  |
| Received |  | (i) | Verbal update from DA. |  |
| Noted |  | (i) | She held the energy portfolio and responsibility for roads and bins. |  |
| Noted |  | (ii) | No word yet on the development at the old St Mary’s building on Lothian Street. | ` |
| Noted |  | (iii) | She had attended a mine water event for district heating. This could be a significant development, with the net zero target and pressure on energy bills. |  |
| Noted |  | (iv) | Budget was the main priority. Scottish Ministers had been alerted to the financial constraints. She hoped the councillors could work together to agree a budget. |  |
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| Received |  | (i) | Verbal update from DV |  |
| Noted |  | (i) | The budget problems were his current main concern. All elected members must work together to get it right for the people of Midlothian. The Council was spending more per year than it gets from council tax and Scottish Government. They need to look at delivering services more efficiently, rather than cuts. |  |
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| Received |  | (i) | Verbal update from DM |  |
| Noted |  | (i) | DM had warned in February 2022 that budget cuts were inevitable, if council tax was not raised. Midlothian was the fastest growing council area in Scotland. 23% of income came from council tax, with 77% from the Scottish Government. There was a lag of at least 3 years between new house completions and additional council tax income. The budget problems were due to reduced funding and the choices made on expenditure. |  |
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|  |  |  | Budget discussion |  |
| Noted |  | (i) | FK was concerned about the lolly pop people being cut and the child road safety implications. |  |
| Noted |  | (ii) | DA pointed out the cuts have not yet been decided. |  |
| Noted |  | (iii) | DM was not even sure there were sufficient funds to deliver statutory services. If early years are a priority of the Scottish Government, they need to fund it. |  |
| Noted |  | (iv) | DA said early years support and the young people’s bus passes were projects that are necessary to take people out of poverty. |  |
| Noted |  | (v) | JC suggested the free young people’s bus pass didn’t have to go up to age 23, but 18 was sufficient. |  |
| Noted |  | (vi) | DA attributed the budget problems to underfunding from Westminster, while JC said if it weren’t for Westminster, Scotland would be bankrupt. |  |
| Noted |  | (vii) | BMacD interjected that the budget debate was going beyond the remit of a Community Council. JA agreed. |  |
| Noted |  | (viii) | DL was disappointed at the tone of the elected representatives at the Midlothian Council meeting on 31 January. The Federation of Community Councils had worked together to provide a response and be as non-political as possible. It was not the place of Community Councils to make suggestions on cuts. |  |
| Noted |  | (ix) | JG had been in local government in Portugal for 25 years. He believed the core of democracy was local government, as it was closest to the people. Regardless of party politics, there were financial problems. Jobs and investment need to be attracted into the community. |  |
| Noted |  | (x) | DM noted £50m was raised in council tax and the teachers’ salaries alone accounted for £50m. The council needed to get a proper share of funding from the Scottish Government. Ring fencing certain budgets caused additional problems. Community services would be decimated in the next 3 years if the funding package wasn’t improved. |  |
| Noted |  | (xi) | DV stated there was no value attributing blame for the problems. Instead, solutions have to be sought, working with COSLA, Scottish and Westminster Governments. |  |
| Noted |  | (xii) | DM explained the Christmas lights will stay up all year, to save money erecting and dismantling them. JA advised the lights would be subject to damage from vibration and wind and it would better long term for them to be stored. The lights were owned by the Bonnyrigg Events Committee and any replacements would have to be paid for by the Committee. DM said the lights will switched on in September to test them. |  |
| Noted |  | (xiii) | JI thanked the 3 councillors for their input and taking questions. |  |
| Noted |  | (xiv) | DL outlined the protests and petitions against the cuts, a day of action outside Midlothian House on 15 February, with local and national press in attendance. The Council meeting to set the budget was at 11 am on Tuesday 21 February, with a demonstration outside at 10.30 am. |  |
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| **ITEM** |  | **8** | **AOCB** |  |
| Noted |  | (i) | DL suggested a laptop should be bought for community council business, to bring us in line with other community councils. MC commented there wasn’t a paper archive, so it was important to have all the documentation in one place. JA agreed this was necessary to conform with GDPR. He pointed out that software, virus protection and insurance were also required. JS said DE still had the printer and it was important the two were compatible. DL agreed to investigate options and produce a paper with costs for the next meeting. |  |
| **ACTION** |  | **(i)** | **DL to write laptop purchase proposal.** | **DL** |
| Noted |  | (ii) | BMacD provided an update on the Doddie Weir Memorial Duck Race, held on 22 January and run by Lasswade Rugby Club. £1,727 had been raised and split between My Name’5 Doddie Foundation, Children 1st and Lasswade Rugby Club. It was a great event and brought out a lot of youngsters. He thanked all those who had contributed. Over the previous 21 years of the event more than £30,000 had been raised, cost free and carbon neutral. |  |
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| **ITEM** |  | **9** | **Planning** |  |
| Received |  | (i) | Verbal update from MC. |  |
| Noted |  | (i) | The creation of a 10-bedroom hotel above a proposed café/restaurant at 76 High Street Bonnyrigg was discussed. Very little information was on the planning website. JA queried what RAMPS was and MC explained it was the system to check planning application updates. |  |
| Noted |  | (ii) | South Melville Farmhouse wanted another new entrance, having already just got one. It was a fragile bit of remaining greenbelt, between Eskbank and Bonnyrigg. BDCC would object, since nothing was specified as to why the extra entrance was required and it would result in loss of greenbelt. |  |
| Noted |  | (iii) | JA queried why there had been an objection to the proposed Sainsbury’s at Cockpen roundabout. MC explained there were traffic concerns with all the new houses, pressure on the roundabout and the proximity of the site to the roundabout. |  |
| Noted |  | (iv) | There was no objection to the proposal from Stuart & Stuart (now Thorntons) to create a flat on the 1st floor. |  |
| Noted |  | (v) | The land beside Deaflawhill Cottage, Carrington Road had not yet been cleared up, despite a Planning Enforcement Order. It takes time for the work to be carried out. MC will email the Enforcement Officer asking for a timescale for this work. |  |
| **ACTION** |  | **(i)** | **MC to contact Midlothian Council Enforcement Officer** | **MC** |
| Noted |  | (vi) | BS was concerned about the amount of rubbish around the town, including the distributor road in particular. JA advised that two men from Midlothian Council have responsibility for litter picking. We can request the councillors speak to the supervisors asking for particular areas be targeted. DL will take photographs as evidence. |  |
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| **ITEM** |  | **10** | **Date of next meeting** |  |
|  |  |  | Thursday 9 March at 7 pm in Lasswade Library. |  |