**BONNYRIGG AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2024, at Lasswade Library**

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| Present: | Suzanne Ross (Secretary), Fiona Warner (Treasurer), Dougie West (Media), Liz MacDonald (Minutes), John Aitchison, Joyce Bernard, James Cameron, Diane Easton, Bill MacDonald, George Nicol, Avril Ramsay, Ruth Scott, Stuart Young. |
| In attendance: | Cllr David Virgo, PC Cunningham, PC Wilson, Billy Innes, Flora Kenny. |
| Apologies: | Cllr Derek Milligan, David Hally, Joan Sumner, Alison Thomson. |

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| **ITEM** | **1** | **Election of Chair, Vice Chair roles** |  |
| Noted | (i) | In the absence of a chair, DW welcomed everyone to the November meeting. The AGM in October had failed to appoint a chair. DW asked was anyone prepared to take on the role. As no-one volunteered, DW agreed to be the interim chair for this one meeting. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | JA said he proposed AR for chair. This was seconded by GN. AT had been suggested to co-chair with AR, but was not well enough to take this on. JA would provide support and guidance to AR. DW stated he was not happy with JA acting as a mentor to the chair. JA was either chair or a community councillor, but couldn’t be both. If he had wanted to be chair, he should have put his name forward. DW had sought guidance about the situation from CLLE. They had agreed they would provide training for a new chair. LMacD asked DW to clarify why JA could not be a mentor. DW repeated his assertion that JA would have to be the chair or a community councillor, but could not have a mentoring role. As JA had not been permitted to mentor AR, he asked if DW would be prepared to help her. DW agreed to do so. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | LMacD queried what was happening about a vice chair. DW explained that according to CLLE it was not necessary to have one. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **2** | **Chair’s opening remarks** |  |
| Noted | (i) | DW continued to take the chair, with AR sitting beside him to observe. DW congratulated AR, SR and FW in their new roles, respectively as Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and said there would be plenty of support given to them. He also welcomed the two visitors to the meeting. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **3** | **Police report** |  |
| Received | (i) | Police report had been received. As the police had limited time to attend the meeting, their contribution was moved up the agenda. PC Cunningham outlined some of the 303 incidents reported during October, including cardboard set alight at Tesco Express, continued thefts from the Co-op and Tesco Express, drivers without licences and insurance and youth disturbances in the run up to Hallowe’en and Bonfire Night. |  |
| Noted | (i) | DE queried the situation with cars in driveways which stuck out onto pavements. PC Cunningham advised her to report such incidents to the police. They would speak with the owner, advising them this was now illegal. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | BMacD described an incident outside the Family Shopper on Dundas Street where a car was parked on the double yellow line. A child on a bicycle coming down from the Toll had to swerve out to pass the vehicle. He was almost hit by a car coming up the road. This could have resulted in a fatality. PC Cunningham said they were unable to intervene, as parking on double lines had been decriminalised. She advised him to alert Midlothian Council. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | JB described another situation with pavement parking, which obstructed a woman trying to get a double buggy through. JB was advised to liaise with the traffic warden about this. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **4** | **Minutes and matters arising from September meeting** |  |
| Noted | (i) | As no regular meeting had been held in October, just the AGM, the minutes from the September meeting still had to be approved. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | The Residents’ Forum Facebook page was still suspended, as BDCC was unable to close it down. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | The motion to approve the 12 September draft minutes was proposed by GN and seconded by FW. The minutes were adopted as an accurate reflection of the September meeting. |  |
| Noted | (iv) | The minutes of the AGM held on 10 October were given notional approval, proposed by JC and seconded by AR. These minutes would receive official approval at the next AGM, in October 2025. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **5** | **Treasurer’s report** |  |
| Noted | (i) | FW reported no income or expenditure had been recorded in October and the bank balance was £3,393.55. She proposed the account with Bank of Scotland be closed, as it would soon be implementing charges for accounts. Instead, a treasurer’s account should be opened with the Royal Bank of Scotland. This was accepted by the community councillors. As DE was still a signatory, she will accompany FW to the bank to get the bank authorities sorted. |  |
| **ACTION** | **(i)** | **FW and DE to visit the banks to move BDCC account from BoS to RBS.** | **FW/DE** |
| Noted | (ii) | DW said there had been expenditure, as JA had purchased poppy wreaths for the Remembrance Services. He will forward receipts to FW. AT also had invoices to give to FW. |  |
| ACTION | (ii) | **FW to reimburse JA and arrange payment of other outstanding invoices, as soon she had access to the bank account.** | **FW** |
| **ITEM** | **6** | **Secretary’s report** |  |
| Noted | (i) | No report was provided. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **7** | **Report from Midlothian Councillors** |  |
| Received | (i) | Verbal update from DV. |  |
| Noted | (i) | DV reported some good news to start with. There had been a special meeting of Midlothian Council on Tuesday 12 November to progress the Community Council Standing Orders. These will go out to public consultation shortly. He added that BDCC represented 16,000 residents and had 20 councillors. Penicuik CC had similar figures, while Damhead CC also had 20 community councillors, yet represented only 201 residents. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | He noted the 2nd quarter reports had been presented to Midlothian Council, showing an overspend of £1.5m. An overspend often occurs in the 2nd quarter and is usually rectified by the end of the financial year. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | He reminded councillors that the public consultation on potential budgetary cuts was still open and urged them to complete it. He said it contained a lot of detail about the challenges faced by the Council. The £9.4m funding gap included a proposed 5% council tax rise. |  |
| Noted | (iv) | The National Insurance increase would mean an extra £5m was required, as the Council was Midlothian’s largest employer. He hoped this increase would be funded by the Scottish Government. |  |
| Noted | (v) | He outlined various ways of addressing the deficit: - cut/reduce services, increase income generation, transform/streamline back- office work. Information from the consultation will help inform the decisions on what people want retained. £1.85m could be saved by cutting each school lesson by 5 minutes. He admitted they had to plan for pain. Midlothian suffers more because it is the largest growing area in Scotland and the Council can’t keep up with building the necessary infrastructure. The Council will lobby both the Scottish and UK Governments about the budgetary problems. There are so many competing demands, education, social care, roads, grass cutting etc. The solution might be a “chunky” council tax increase. The council tax raises £66m, yet £85m alone goes on teachers’ salaries. £145m is spent on education and £66m on health and social care. £30m goes to servicing debt, as the Council borrows for capital projects, speculatively, when interest rates are low. £60m is spent on the environment for community policing, roads, bins, grass etc, all things that make a real difference and are noticeable. Decisions can’t be made until the local government settlement from the Scottish Government is announced on 4 Dec. |  |
| Noted | (vi) | JC commented that so many things are ring fenced, that it means there is very little to play with and potential cuts would have a very obvious impact. DV added that some services can be outsourced to the private sector, but the Council loses control and may have to pay even more. |  |
| Noted | (vii) | GN queried if Midlothian put up the council tax would it effect the amount received from the Scottish Government? DV said it would not happen immediately, but could impact subsequent years. A 15% increase would generate £9.5m and solve the problem. |  |
| Noted | (ix) | SR asked if COSLA had out of date figures for Midlothian. DV replied they were less out of date than they had been. She then asked if money was ring fenced because of statutory obligations? DV admitted there were a lot of statutory responsibilities, but not always the finance for them. She queried why there was no longer an Access Officer. DV believed the role was now tied up in someone else’s job, covering safety and footpaths. He advised her to contact him directly on this. |  |
| Noted | (x) | DE was concerned about the state of the parks, with lack of grass cutting, especially in Waverley Park. The number of cuts each year had been reduced, with the result the weeds and thistles were chest high and the wild flower seeds had been drowned out by weeds. DV said this was all down to lack of money and non-use of glyphosate. He suggested DE send him photos of the bad areas. JC commented that if glyphosate is banned, there has to be a plan B, as the increased weeds had an effect on roads and drainage. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **8** | **BDCC Groups and Associated Member reports:** |  |
|  | **a** | **MFCC** |  |
| Noted | (i) | DE had attended the last meeting of the Midlothian Federation of Community Council (MFCC). There had been a lot of talk about the community council consultation exercise and discussion on how community councils used social media. One community council had used a picture on its website, which was in copyright, and they had to pay a fine for not obtaining permission first. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | The next meeting is on Wednesday 20 November in person, to include the AGM. Meetings are usually via zoom. |  |
|  | **b** | **MTRaP** |  |
| Noted | (i) | MTRaP was a sub group pf MFCC. Members met with the Council’s roads’ officials to discuss the capital works programme. It was planned to resurface Cockpen Road in two stages in January 2025, from Waverley Terrace to the primary school and from the school to the entrance to Baird’s Way. Waverley Crescent to Pendreich Avenue was planned for February 2025, followed by the council garage on the High Street to Viewpark Gardens. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | Every two years the roads’ official ask community councils to nominate 1 road and 2 pathways needing attention. DW asked everyone to consider this. Ideas have to be received by 12 January 2025. The officials will then decide which roads receive repair. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **9** | **AOCB** |  |
| Noted | (i) | DW reminded councillors there was usually a donation from BDCC to the Bonnyrigg Events Committee for the Christmas lights switch on. GN proposed £300 be provided. JC seconded the proposal. |  |
| **ACTION** | **(i)** | **FW to arrange transfer of £300 to the Bonnyrigg Events Committee.** | **FW** |
| Noted | (ii) | DW explained that due to Data Protection legislation BDCC had to advise people what data the community council held on individuals. A privacy notice was required for this purpose. One had been drafted by Rosewell Community Council and circulated to BDCC members. He asked everyone to read it and be prepared to discuss at the December meeting. |  |
| **ACTION** | **(ii)** | **All community councillors to read the previously circulated privacy notice by 12 December.** | **ALL** |
| Noted | (iii) | FW said there was normally a donation of £200 from BDCC to the Gala Day in June. It had not been paid this year. DW replied the banking situation would need to be sorted as soon as possible and then the £200 could be handed over. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **10** | **Planning** |  |
| Noted | (i) | Planning permission for a car park for up to 9 cars had been granted for Gigi’s at Waverley Crescent. The land is owned by the Council, so Gigi’s will have to rent it. DE commented it was ironic the Council had maintained this land well, in comparison with Waverley Park, yet were prepared to lose it. The space would probably be used by Gigi’s staff and it would be a loss of amenity land. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | The Local Review Board had agreed to extend permission for the temporary marquee at Melville Castle, but refused permission to move the marquee to the other side of the Castle. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | Scottish Fire and Rescue proposed building a new fire station at Sheriffhall South, to replace Dalkeith Fire Station. It was outwith BDCC area and there was no reason to object to this. |  |
| Noted | (iv) | Planning permission for the 11 golf lodges near the Premier Inn had been refused. It will be discussed at the next Review Board. BDCC still maintained its objection and would reiterate this. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **10** | **Date of next meeting** |  |  | Thursday 13 April at 7 pm in Lasswade Library. |
|  |  | Thursday 12 December 2024 in Lasswade Library at 7 pm. |  |  |  |