**BONNYRIGG AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2024, at Lasswade Library**

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| Present: | Dan Lennie (Chair), Diane Easton (Secretary), Alison Thomson (Treasurer), Liz MacDonald (Minutes), John Aitchison, Joyce Bernard, Ann Cunningham, David Hally, Bill MacDonald, Kirstie Malley, George Nicol, Avril Ramsay, Ruth Scott, Fiona Warner, Stuart Young. |
| In attendance: | Cllr Dianne Alexander, Cllr David Virgo, Flora Kenny, PC Euan Lennox, Suzanne Ross. |
| Apologies: | James Cameron, Cllr Derek Milligan, Joan Sumner, Sandy Waterston, Dougie West. |

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| **ITEM** | **1** | **Chair’s remarks** |  |
| Noted | (i) | DL welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2024. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | DL introduced a visitor, Susanne Ross, who was involved with a group called Horse Riders Midlothian. The group was sending a representative to all the community council meetings, to express concern at Midlothian Council’s policy of tarring over many of the bridal paths. This will be discussed later in the meeting. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **2** | **Minutes and matters arising from November meeting** |  |
| Noted | (i) | The £55.64 unexpected payment from Midlothian Council had not yet been returned. |  |
| **ACTION** | **(i)** | **AT to arrange repayment of £55.64 to Midlothian Council.** | **AT** |
| Noted | (ii) | There had been very low usage of the warm space hub at Lasswade Library. Hopefully this meant people were warm enough at home, or elsewhere. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | DA had retrieved information on what details had been given to Midlothian Cabinet by the council officers prior to the decision to double yellow line Lothian Street and handed it to DL. |  |
| Noted | (iv) | DL had not yet contacted Midlothian Council about the status of the carpark behind Polton Street and off Campview Road, who enforced it, and misuse of the disabled and electric charging spaces. |  |
| **ACTION** |  | **DL to contact Midlothian Council about the carpark opposite Campview Road.** | **DL** |
| Noted | (v) | The trees that had been cut down opposite the Melville Inn will be replaced as part of the planning conditions. |  |
| Noted | (vi) | The motion to approve the 14 December draft minutes was proposed by GN and seconded by AR. The minutes were adopted as an accurate reflection of the December meeting. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **3** | **Police report** |  |
| Noted | (i) | EL had been on leave, so had not yet produced the police report. He would collate and send it as soon as possible. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | He commented there had been a number of youth issues, including fire raising at King George V Park and in Burnbrae. Several motor bikes had been stolen. They had not been chained securely. Car windscreens had been smashed to steal blue parking badges. Further speed checks were to be carried out in Bonnyrigg, during the week of 12 February. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | DA said there had been complaints to her about dirt bikes doing wheelies near Andy Kelly View. EL said they needed a good description of any incidents and photographs to investigate further. Also, the police can’t pursue anyone doing wheelies, as that could result in accidents and the young people know this. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **4** | **Treasurer’s report** |  |
| Noted | (i) | AT confirmed she still did not have online access to the bank account, but the matter was in progress. The old Poltonhall account would be moved into the BDCC one, making just one account to manage. Old signatories were to be removed. There had been no expenditure during the month. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **5** | **Secretary’s report** |  |
| Noted | (i) | DE said she had nothing to report, apart from a planning item, which would be discussed later. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **6** | **Report from Midlothian Councillors** |  |
| Received | (i) | Verbal update from DA. |  |
| Noted | (i) | She reported the Scottish Government had fully funded the council tax freeze for Midlothian at 4.8%. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | There had been a change in the funding floor, meaning for the first time we have a positive funding floor. This was as a result of the 2022 census, plus lobbying at COSLA and Holyrood. Kelly Parry, Leader of Midlothian Council, was already lobbying for next year’s financial settlement. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | There was still pressure on the capital budget, since the economy crashed in 2022 and the increased costs of repairs to schools, roads etc. |  |
| Noted | (iv) | The budget was not yet finalised, but it looks better than it did at the beginning of the 2023/24 financial year. Some money had been retrieved from VAT and other pockets had been found, but these were one offs and not recurring. |  |
| Noted | (v) | Digital software was being used to create new routes for the bin lorries, due to all the new houses. Investigating if money can be made from recycling, as it was currently costing to recycle material. |  |
| Noted | (vi) | She read out a summary of what was put to Cabinet about Lothian Street by council officers, stressing the need to improve traffic flow and safety for pedestrians. It was not just opinions of the officers, but AECOM, an infrastructure consulting firm, had done a design review of the proposals, to highlight road safety issues for all road users. |  |
| Noted | (vii) | Speed checks would be carried out before and after the double yellow lines were laid, to see if speed had increased and if any further action were needed. |  |
| Noted | (viii) | DE asked if there was an update on work commencing at the old St Mary’s site. DA said work was due to start soon with completion expected in early 2026. |  |
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| Received | (i) | Verbal update from DV. |  |
| Noted | (i) | DV said the parties were working together to help set the budget. The local government grant was not sufficient to meet all the needs. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | The funding floor was not positive, but less negative than it had been. We pay money to shrinking councils, but cannot destabilise our own budget to support them. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | We spend more than we get in. Fortunately, we still have some reserves and COVID money. The local government pension fund is overfunded, due to inflation. The payment is reviewed every 3 years. If we use the reserves, we won’t be addressing the problem of spending more than we take in. All the saving proposals that were put forward last year will be reviewed again. |  |
| Noted | (iv) | Savings are being made by secondary schools aligning their curriculum and start/finish times. Increased use of digital learning will also help. These policies should result in saving £1.5m, but there will still be a £7-8m annual deficit. |  |
| Noted | (v) | The projection for loan cost repayments on capital projects was not as high as expected, because we have not yet started any big school projects. |  |
| Noted | (vi) | Things were more positive, but the problems were still masked. Efficiencies rather than cuts were being sought. |  |
| Noted | (vii) | The asset transfer of Poltonhall Sport Complex to Bonnyrigg Rose Community Football Club had been approved by Midlothian Council. Checks and balances were in place to ensure it is kept for the people of Bonnyrigg and cannot be sold to developers. |  |
| Noted | (viii) | JB said the increase to £40 for brown bin collection was a steep rise for those on a low income. DA confirmed an option for monthly payment was being investigated, but was not available for the 2024/25 year. |  |
| Noted | (ix) | BMacD queried how much had been spent on the AECOM consultation for Lothian Street. He also asked if Midlothian Council had considered rejecting the council tax freeze, as some other councils were contemplating. DA explained if we rejected the freeze, we would have to give £2.8m back to the Scottish Government. DV said expert opinion had been sought from AECOM and agreed to find out the cost. |  |
| **ACTION** | **(i)** | **DV to get the AECOM consultation cost from Midlothian Council.** | **DV** |
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| Received | (i) | Environmental Health Officer Report |  |
| Noted | (i) | DA introduced Victor, who was not a council employee, but had a focus on fly tipping and littering across Midlothian. 171 fines had already been issued, ranging from £80-£500. He hoped to re-educate people about littering and dog fouling. Children can’t be fined, but he aimed to go into the schools and arrange sponsored litter picks. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | DA suggested that the government put a levy on the fast-food industry, with large outlets paying more proportionally, to help pay for the clean-up. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | FK complained there were no bins for dog mess. She will alert DA to the need for bins. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **7** | **BDCC Groups and Associated Member reports:** |  |
|  | **a** | **Local place plans (LPP) working group update** |  |
| Noted | (i) | The draft LPP will be sent out on 9 Feb to all interested parties. DL was unaware of any other organisation in Bonnyrigg producing a place plan. It was 17 pages long, covering the next 5-10 years, looking at development of existing sites and if any more houses were needed. The community council area is large and covers up to Sheriffhall and across to Straiton. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | The draft plan will be put out for public consultation, on the Residents’ Forum, noticeboards and in Lasswade Library. It has to be finalised and submitted by 31 March. DL paid tribute to DW for all his hard work on the plan. |  |
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|  | **b** | **MTRaP** |  |
| Noted | (i) | The next meeting would be on 4 March. |  |
|  | (ii) | GN reported there were no white lines, slow signs or give way signs at Tesco Express on Eskdale Drive. Also, the gullies around Bonnyrigg were blocked, due to lack of cleaning. DL asked GN to email him the details and he would alert Midlothian Council. |  |
| **ACTION** | **(i)** | **DL to contact the Council about issues raised by GN.** | **DL** |
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|  | **c** | **Midlothian Federation of Community Councils** |  |
| Noted | (i) | DE had not been at the last meeting and the next one was on 14 February. |  |
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|  | **d** | **Residents’ Forum** |  |
| Noted | (i) | There had been a complaint about communication relating to a planning application. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | Discussion about recent posts on non-delivery of mail. People were trying to help find the designated recipient, but there was concern about data protection issues. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | A query was made about speculative posts on accidents and it was agreed they should not be permitted. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **8** | **AOCB** |  |
| Noted | (i) | DL reminded everyone about the training event for community councillors on 23 March and recommended we sign up for it. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | It was queried why Midlothian Council were hiring McSense carers when they had their own carers. There was also concern about their training and capabilities. DV said the problem was there were not enough carers in Midlothian. He suggested a complaint be filed directly with the company, if there were performance concerns. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | The Zurich Insurance cover was due shortly and it was necessary to check if the cover was sufficient. |  |
| Noted | (iv) | JA believed if you are hosting an event, you can get cover for it via the Community Council’s insurance, though this should be confirmed with Zurich. |  |
| Noted | (v) | JA had heard radio advertising for the Trust a Trader Scheme in East Lothian, Fife and Edinburgh and wondered why Midlothian was not involved. DA was concerned, as she wanted to ensure local businesses get support and work. DV agreed to find out more about the scheme and report back. |  |
| **ACTION** | **(i)** | **DV to investigate potential creation of a Trust a Trader Scheme, specifically for Midlothian.** | **DV** |
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| **ITEM** | **9** | **Planning** |  |
| Noted | (i) | An application had been made just before Christmas for replacement of a telephone mast near Lothian Glass. It was still at pre-planning and will come to us at some stage. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | An application had been made by Gigi’s to use the area on the corner of Waverley Crescent and Lothian Street for parking 9 cars. It was believed this raised more questions than it solved. The entrance to the space at Waverley Crescent was too close to Lothian Street for safe car entry/exit. DE said it was public land and shouldn’t be used for parking. It was agreed that BDCC would object to Gigi’s application. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | As the yellow lines had now been laid on Lothian Street, there were questions about their enforcement. JA suggested we petition the Council each month to carry out enforcement. |  |
| Noted | (iv) | JA queried if there had been any progress with a supermarket in Hopefield. No-one was aware of any further news on this. The building appeared to be almost finished, but was not yet occupied. |  |
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| **ITEM 10** |  | **Visitor matters** |  |
| Noted | (i) | Suzanne Ross outlined the background to Horse Riders Midlothian and their concerns about tarmacking of paths. A canter route at Rosslynlee, which had been used for over 60 years had recently been tarred. Instead of tarmac she was keen that the Council use a different surface, more suitable for horses. She wanted this to be drawn to the attention of MTraP and wasn’t sure of the best way to achieve this. It was suggested a combined approach from MTRaP or MFCC, representing all the community councils may be possible. JA pointed out there could be differing opinions on this, as cyclists probably preferred the tarmac. He suggested the paths be multi-use and of a different surface, believing runners find the tarmac harder for running on. DL asked her if she had a document outlining their objections. She agreed to come back in March and the matter will be put to a vote to see if we support her request or not. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **11** | **Date of next meeting** |  |  | Thursday 13 April at 7 pm in Lasswade Library. |
|  |  | Thursday 14 March 2024 in Lasswade Library. |  |  |  |