**BONNYRIGG AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2025, at Lasswade Library**

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

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| **ITEM** | **1** | **Chair’s opening remarks** |  |
| Noted | (i) | As AR was ill, GN chaired the meeting, welcomed everyone and appealed for more community councillors, with new ideas. Anyone interested should email BDCC. The three new visitors were welcomed. Gordon was from Edinburgh and was interested to see how BDCC meetings operated; Marek wished to raise an issue about Poltonhall Industrial Estate; Karen wanted to see what went on in the community. Apologies were noted, as above. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **2** | **Minutes and matters arising from 14 November meeting** |  |
| Noted | (i) | As the internet was down at Lasswade Library, GN was unable to project the minutes on the screen. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | JA confirmed the refund for remembrance wreaths had been made. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | SR had spoken to the new Access Officer about the Cast and he would investigate its condition. |  |
| Noted | (iv) | DV had spoken to the Council’s Road Safety Officer, about a crossing on Polton Road and he would consider the request. |  |
| Noted | (v) | The motion to approve the February 2025 draft minutes was proposed by FW and seconded by DH. The minutes were adopted as an accurate reflection of the February meeting. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **3** | **Police report** |  |
| Received | (i) | The February police report had been circulated. PC Cunningham was unable to attend the meeting. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | FW agreed to pass her printed copy of the report to AC. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **4** | **Treasurer’s report** |  |
| Noted | (i) | FW had contacted Royal Bank of Scotland about the new account. 24 months of free banking would be provided. The last 3 months of previous bank statements had to be presented and 3 signatories would be nominated. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | The application for funding for Community Councils from Midlothian Council had to be made by 6 April. DW explained this was up to £350 for small projects and administrative costs. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | JA confirmed the account had a balance of £3,294.55. The payment to Plexus Media for the website was usually made in January. FW had the invoice for this and would arrange payment as soon as possible. |  |
| Noted | (iv) | LMacD asked what happened after the 2 years of free banking. FW replied it would be around £0.35 per transaction. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **5** | **Secretary’s report** |  |
| Noted | (i) | SR reminded everyone the A7 Sustainable Transport Study had a public consultation meeting on Thursday 20 March in Lasswade Library from 4.00-6.30 pm, encouraged good attendance at this and completion of the online survey which closed on 30 March. DW said all the information on the consultation had been added to the BDCC website. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | SR also mentioned the Parking in Midlothian Survey to be completed by 30 March. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | SR had signed up to OpenLearn, which offered free courses available to anyone, via the Open University, including ones specifically for community councillors. |  |
| Noted | (iv) | She had attended the three Met Office events, previously communicated by email, and had signed up for video recordings of the three Mackay Hannah conferences. |  |
| Noted | (v) | SR had attended an open day at the Glencorse Centre at Auchendinny and met volunteers who had recently started the Glencorse Community Garden. She was keen to get one established in Bonnyrigg for growing fruit and vegetables. She felt it would help bring people together in the community. Bonnyrigg had grown so much recently that there wasn’t the same community spirit there used to be. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **6** | **Report from Midlothian Councillors** |  |
| Received | (i) | Verbal update from DM. |  |
| Noted | (i) | DM remarked there was a garden at Bonnyrigg Primary School and Bonnyrigg Development Trust had one behind the carpark at Campview Road, plus the Guerilla Gardeners maintained the flower beds on Polton Street. DV added the Cyrenians had a community garden at Midlothian Community Hospital and there was scope for more development there. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | The care facility and supported accommodation at the former St Mary’s Primary School was progressing well and it was hoped it would be in use by 2026. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | He provided an update on the Council budget settlement. The amount received from Westminster was more than expected, but there were still issues to be addressed. 20% of services were paid for via council tax, while the remaining 80% were paid for via Scottish and Westminster Government funding. There was increased demand on the Integrated Joint Board, of Lothian Health Board and Midlothian Council, due to the growing population and people living longer with complex medical conditions. The IJB was still over spending its budget. |  |
| Noted | (iv) | He referred to negative publicity around substantial pay increases given to senior councillors at the same time as the 10% increase in council tax was announced. The rise followed a review of councillor payments carried out nationally by the Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee last year and was not set by the councillors themselves. Also, the pay increase was not funded by council tax but from the Scottish Government budget. |  |
| Noted | (v) | DM was still lobbying Lothian Buses to improve the 46 bus service to Rosewell and was pleased he had negotiated two extra buses to Polton Mill on a Sunday. |  |
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| Received | (i) | Verbal update from DV |  |
| Noted | (i) | DV agreed the settlement was more generous than expected, but was still not enough. The 1% NI increase was not included. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | The work on the pavements at Bonnyrigg Toll coincided with the gas roadworks at Golf Course Road, which were nothing to do with Midlothian Council, but resulted in substantial traffic delays. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | He was keen to encourage the Council to be more forward thinking about increasing revenue, which would help cover reduced funding. He hoped income proposals would be made when the next budget was set in February 2026, to mitigate potential cuts. |  |
| Noted | (iv) | He commented the Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee wanted to encourage people from across the community to be represented on local councils. With added pay came added responsibility for productivity. Performance would be monitored. There were 18 councillors in Midlothian, representing a population of 100,000. DW commented the 56% salary increase for senior Midlothian councillors had been reported by all the national press. DM said the reporting had been inaccurate and a complaint would be made to the Independent Press Standards Organisation. |  |
|  |  | DV said the Council Leader, Kelly Parry, had had no say over her salary, but had received much unpleasant abuse. She had responsibility for a £300m budget, yet was earning less than a newly qualified teacher. SR pointed out the timing of the pay rise announcement was bad, as it coincided with setting the council tax increase. |  |
| Noted | (v) | FW queried why there was a CCTV camera at the bottom of Polton Road and Polton Avenue Road. DV said it was probably because of anti-social behaviour. The police were using mobile cameras in conjunction with the Council and this had been mentioned in previous police reports. He added the camera at Cameron Crescent had been installed because of trouble with youths on the buses. |  |
| Noted | (vi) | FW asked about the proposed parking area opposite Gigi’s. The restaurant had put in the highest bid to lease the land and had already obtained planning permission, but final agreement was not yet in place. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **7** | **BDCC Groups and Associated Member reports:** |  |
|  | **a** | **MFCC** |  |
| Received | (i) | Verbal update from SR on the recent meeting. |  |
| Noted | (i) | Funding had been acquired from Scottish Water for a Mine Water Treatment Scheme to extract iron ore from the water going into the Esk. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | The proposals for building work at Pentland were still under consideration, as more investigation work was being done. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | Gorebridge & District CC had submitted a FoI request to Midlothian Council on school role projections. The Council replied they had the data, but were not making it publicly available because of commercial considerations. DV explained this related to the need for builders to tender for schools. A high school for Gorebridge was on the capital plan, but low down the plan. |  |
| Noted | (iv) | Roslin & Bilston CC were looking for ways to improve their library, to keep it open, or move it elsewhere and were working with the Development Trust on this. |  |
| Noted | (v) | Galleries to Calories Research had done some exploratory bore holes at Gowkley Moss in February. They are a low carbon energy project, who want to use old mines to store and move heat. |  |
| Noted | (vi) | Dalkeith Arts Centre & Library would probably move into Midlothian House after its refurbishment. It was felt communication from the Council about the project had been poor and a letter would be sent on behalf of MFCC, expressing concerns. |  |
| Noted | (vii) | MFCC would also send a letter to the Council about planning information. It was believed that information relating to developer proposals was not being shared with the community councils. |  |
| Noted | (viii) | Danderhall & District CC reported the local community in Shawfair were worried that there was very little information about where their children would go to secondary school. Other facilities were lacking too, such as GPs, with residents having to go to Newbattle Practice in Mayfield to see a GP. |  |
| Noted | (ix) | Land at Crawlees had been sold by the developer to Barratt Housing. It was unclear if there would be a change to the agreed plan or not. |  |
| Noted | (x) | Battery storage in the Dalkeith area was still a concern for residents. |  |
| Noted | (xi) | Data protection notice had to be registered on behalf of each CC with the Information Commissioner’s Office and a fee of £35 paid. |  |
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|  | **b** | **MTRaP** |  |
| Received | (i) | Verbal update from SR. |  |
| Noted | (i) | The A7 Sustainable Transport Study and the Parking Strategy surveys were promoted at the meeting and the need for as many people as possible to complete the surveys stressed. JA asked should BDCC submit one on behalf of the CC. DV said it wouldn’t carry any more weight and would be better if individuals completed the surveys. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | SR advised the Council had not yet employed a Flood Protection Officer. The job had been advertised without successful recruitment. Someone may need to be transferred internally. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **8** | **AOCB** |  |
| Noted | (i) | The Health Service – JC had asked that the continuing problems of access to medical appointments be discussed. As he was not present, it was agreed to carry this forward to the April meeting. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | Deterioration of buildings at Bonnyrigg Toll – the old Spar building in Polton Street was very dilapidated, as was the canopy over the travel agent and other shops in the High Street. A broken window had not been repaired for months. It was the same owner from the Spar to the bank. The alleyway from the bank to the carpark had disgusting graffiti. DM explained if a building is a danger the Council can take action, but not if it is just shabby. DM and DV agreed to raise concerns about the buildings with Council officials. |  |
| **ACTION** | **(i)** | **DM and DV to alert Council staff to the condition of these buildings.** | **DM/DV** |
| Noted | (iii) | Burnbrae Primary School – There was no lollipop person at the school and excess speeding made the crossing very dangerous. A pedestrian crossing would help. |  |
| **ACTION** | **(ii)** | **DV to raise this issue with the Council’s Road Safety Officer.** | **DV** |
| Noted | (iv) | Rubbish bin was needed on Rosewell Road by the opening to Dalhousie Chesters. |  |
| **ACTION** | **(iii)** | **DM agreed to pursue this.** | **DM** |
| Noted | (v) | A bag it and bin it campaign was needed because of the amount of unresponsible dog owners. DV suggested BDCC should apply for a small grant for this and that Catherine Duns from CLLE at the Council could help. FW suggested getting the schools involved too. |  |
| Noted | (vi) | Mavisbank House – The Landmark Trust was involved in work to restore Mavisbank. A new access road was to be created. The proposals would be on display at Loanhead Library on 19 March from 4-6 pm. SR encouraged community councillors to attend. DM was particularly concerned the access road would spoil the whole area. It was to be a 3m wide tarmac road, with Heras fencing all along. In trying to save a ruin the valley, which had been protected for years, could be destroyed. |  |
| Noted | (vii) | Marek Short had come to the meeting to complain about the overnight noise generated at Poltonhall Industrial Estate, with deliveries, beepers from vehicles reversing etc. SR suggested Environmental Health could be asked to investigate. JA recommended keeping a diary of activity and said that businesses had to comply with noise abatement. Marek was also concerned that rubbish was causing vermin. SR agreed to email Environmental Health. |  |
| **ACTION** | **(iv)** | **SR to contact Environmental Health about issues at Poltonhall industrial Estate.** | **SR** |
| Noted | (viii) | LMacD described an incident when a defibrillator was unavailable from Bonnyrigg Primary School and suggested one should be fitted to the new store in Hopefield. DV advised her to contact Danny Burnett, who had responsibility for First Aid at Lasswade High School. |  |
| ACTION | (v) | **LMacD to email Danny Burnett about defibrillators.** | **LMacD** |
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| **ITEM** | **9** | **Planning** |  |
| Noted | (i) | A lot of documents have been added to the Council Planning Portal relating to Hopefield 2. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **10** | **Date of next meeting** |  |  | Thursday 13 April at 7 pm in Lasswade Library. |
|  |  | Thursday 10 April 2025 in Lasswade Library at 7 pm. |  |  |  |