**BONNYRIGG AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 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, James Cameron, Ann Cunningham, Bill MacDonald, Ruth Scott, Stuart Young. |
| In attendance: | Cllr Dianne Alexander, Cllr Derek Milligan, PC Owen Wilson, Billy Innes, Stefan Garbowski, Flora Kenny. |
| Apologies: | Cllr David Virgo, David Hally, Avril Ramsay, Joan Sumner. |

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| **ITEM** | **1** | **Chair’s opening remarks** |  |
| Noted | (i) | As AR was absent, GN chaired the meeting. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **2** | **Police report** |  |
| Received | (i) | The police report for March had been circulated. |  |
| Noted | (i) | PC Owen Wilson, Community Police Officer from Danderhall, delivered the report, since PC Cunningham was on holiday. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | There had been a lot of calls about youths causing disturbance in and around Bonnyrigg High St. Bins had been set on fire at Burnbrae Primary School. Recycled cardboard was set on fire at the back of the Co-op. While the police were in attendance at this, two teenage girls from Edinburgh were caught stealing from the Co-op. 3 youngsters were caught setting fire to woodland near Dobbies. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | Off road bikes were another problem, especially with the longer days. DA asked about electric scooters. OW explained kids can have them but they should only be used on private land. They should not be on the road, as they can’t be insured. If they are caught, they can be charged with driving without insurance. FW commented she had been almost knocked down by one on the High St. BI added electric bikes going at speed were another danger, often displaying anti-social behaviour. OW asked if people could provide information, such as evidence of youngsters going in and out of their home, it would be helpful. |  |
| Noted | (iv) | GN noted the amount of youth crime across Midlothian. OW said the police worked with 3rd sector organisations to promote activities to engage them better. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **3** | **Minutes and matters arising from 13 March meeting** |  |
| Noted | (i) | DM reported that the mess under the canopies at the Toll and above the tanning shop would be cleared and work done to deter pigeons. The windows above the old Royal Bank of Scotland building had still not been replaced, as the owner was not taking responsibility and neither were the people who owned the old Spar. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | As DV was not present, there was no update on the safety issues outside Burnbrae Primary School, where excess speeding made the crossing very dangerous. This would be carried over to the next meeting. |  |
| **ACTION** | **(i)** | **DV to raise this issue with the Council’s Road Safety Officer.** | **DV** |
| Noted | (iii) | SR had emailed Midlothian Council about a bag and bin it campaign. We, as BDCC, should alert the Council to the need for stickers to be put on specific lamp posts. |  |
| Noted | (iv) | SR had contacted Environmental Health about the noise and rubbish at Polton Hall Industrial Estate and they would investigate this. |  |
| Noted | (v) | The motion to approve the March 2025 draft minutes was proposed by FW and seconded by JB. The minutes were adopted as an accurate reflection of the March meeting. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **4** | **Treasurer’s report** |  |
| Noted | (i) | FW reported that all the required paper work for the new bank account was with the Royal Bank of Scotland. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | She had applied for the annual £350 administration grant for community councils from Midlothian Council and also for a £1,000 small grant for a community allotment on open land at Moffat Ave, which was approximately 28m x 17m. This land belonged to Melville Housing Association, but is maintained by Midlothian Council. SR will meet with a representative from Melville Housing and was hoping to agree a low rent and long-term agreement. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | JA suggested the community payback people could help with the allotment preparation. SR confirmed the crops would be free, on donation. FW was keen to have raised beds to make it easier for volunteers and wanted nursery school children to be involved. |  |
| Noted | (iv) | JA reported the cheque book was still with DE. The balance was the same as last month, namely £3,294.55. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **5** | **Secretary’s report** |  |
| Noted | (i) | SR reported her main activity had been investigating possibilities for the Community Vegetable Garden. She explained that if people were charged for the produce, it would have to be a charity and get charitable status. JC suggested the goods could be sold via the Bonnyrigg charity shop or offered to food banks. He asked was this to be a BDCC venture and SR confirmed she hoped it would be. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **6** | **Report from Midlothian Councillors** |  |
| Received | (i) | Written update from DA had been circulated. |  |
| Noted | (i) | LMacD queried the 8,841 new houses DA had mentioned and the lack of required infrastructure. DA explained it was the Scottish Government who agreed the housing target for each local authority. She didn’t anticipate they would all be built and agreed there was an impact on infrastructure. The Council would look at different ways to provide infrastructure such as active travel, encouraging people to walk or wheel. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | AC queried the continued lack of crossing for school pupils on Polton Road. She believed DA had agreed to a crossing, but DA said she had agreed to investigate via the safe routes to school initiative, which she would pursue. |  |
| **ACTION** | **(i)** | **DA to raise this issue with the Council’s Road Safety Officer.** | **DA** |
| Noted | (iii) | New public bins were to be installed, all looking the same and being seagull proof. |  |
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| Received | (i) | Verbal update from DM |  |
| Noted | (i) | DM had written to Lothian Buses thanking them for putting on an extra 31 to Polton Mill on Sundays. He was still keen to get a later evening 31 to Polton Mill. He also mentioned the service to/from Bonnyrigg Toll was every 15 minutes, not 10, as it had been before Covid. He had suggested a circular route around Bonnyrigg, including Hopefield. He would meet with the bus company soon. |  |
| Noted | (ii) | Bus drivers were not keen on going through some housing estates. The ban on pavement parking meant it was harder for them to get along narrow roads. He wanted a bus service for the new houses at HS12. They would be subsidised for the first 3 years and then had to be commercial going forwards. |  |
| Noted | (iii) | He had received complaints about George V Park looking untidy. It was necessary to identify who was responsible for the containers at the back of the pavilion. The 5-aside football pitch fence needed reinstated and the whole park needed a spring clean. The wall at the back of the Co-op onto the park had been damaged in the January storm and it was up to the Co-op to fix it. |  |
| Noted | (iv) | People had asked for the rat runs at Douglas Cresent/Rae’s Gardens to be shut in one direction, but this suggestion was not supported by Midlothian Council, as it would cause other problems. |  |
| Noted | (v) | The narrowing of the High St at the Toll made it hard for buses turning right and turning left from Polton St on to the High St. The developer contribution could be used to sort out this pinch point. It would require a public consultation, as it would mean the pavement would be narrowed and walking over the crossing would take longer. |  |
| Noted | (vi) | SY was concerned that changes to the route of the 46 bus could mean it no longer served ERI, but DM assured him this wouldn’t happen. JB asked if the 31 from Polton Mill could be earlier on a Sunday, for those working in Edinburgh. |  |
| Noted | (vii) | GN commented on repairs needed at Lasswade and Hawthornden Primary Schools. He asked why these had not been carried out and instead money was to be spent on a replacement for Beeslack High School. DM agreed he was not keen on the replacement for Beeslack and especially the money to be spent on a swimming pool. DM had done a tour of Lasswade Primary with the headteacher to see all the work required. He believed Midlothian Council had not been given the full information on work needed on schools across the authority. GN reiterated that it was sad the primary schools were in such a poor state. DA agreed the primary schools needed repair but said that a replacement for Beeslack was much needed too. Lasswade High School was full and pupils from Loanhead were coming to Lasswade when they could go to the new Beeslack. She said Lasswade Primary should have been rebuilt years ago. The schools had not kept up with repairs required. Also, the huge rise in the population had had an impact. DA said if funds were available, she would advocate for a replacement of Lasswade Primary, but inflation had had a big impact and the money just wasn’t there. GN commented if there is no money, she should be lobbying for more. DW queried the need of a swimming pool at the new Beeslack. DA said not building it would still not solve all the problems. DM explained a replacement site for Lasswade Primary had been identified 8 years ago, near the Community Hospital, but the Scottish Reporter had said houses were to be built, without the need for a primary school. DA added the Beeslack replacement was a pilot project with the Scottish Government, would be a STEM school and had to be attached to the University of Edinburgh, which would bring benefits from interaction between the school and the university. |  |
| Noted | (viii) | GN asked if Bonnyrigg was included in the Heritage Regeneration Project, which Dalkeith and Penicuik had benefitted from? DM did not know, but agreed to find out. |  |
| **ACTION** | **(i)** | **DM to query if Bonnyrigg could benefit from the Heritage Regeneration Project.** | **DM** |
| Noted | (ix) | GN said the road drains needed to be checked. Some were blocked by grass growing out. DM agreed gully motors were needed, especially in flood risk areas. DA explained there were 2 gully machines available and she hoped that all the gullies could be cleaned. The Environmental Team had been reorganised to improve efficiencies. GN agreed to send DA details of gullies, identifying them by lamp post numbers. |  |
| **ACTION** | **(ii)** | **GN to provide DA with details of gullies to be cleaned.** | **GN** |
| Noted | (x) | GN said there were rumours circulating that Developers’ Contributions had been made to Bonnyrigg Rose to help fund the pitch improvement. The money was meant to enhance the town centre. Both DM and DA explained that the football club was very beneficial to the town, pubs and shop keepers, when there was a home game. It would be a big loss to the local economy if the club were to be relegated. The contribution could not be announced as Bonnyrigg Rose had been involved in a fundraising campaign and been trying to get money from the SFA. |  |
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| **ITEM** | **7** | **BDCC Groups and Associated Member reports:** |  |
|  | **a** | **MTRaP** |  |
| Noted | (i) | SR said nothing of relevance to BDCC had been raised and the next meeting was on Monday 14 April. |  |
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|  | **b** | **MFCC** |  |
| Noted | (i) | SR said she was unable to provide a report until current discussions had been completed. The next meeting was on Wednesday 16 April. |  |
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| **Draft** | **8** | **AOCB** |  |
| Noted | (i) | The Health Service – JC outlined the issue from May 2024 when a Facebook post from Strathesk Medical Practice about cuts to GP services had been deemed too political by the previous BDCC office bearers and taken down from the Residents’ Forum. This led to nasty comments to the administrators and ultimately the closure of the Residents’ Forum. He felt it was very sad that instead of defending the GPs, we found ourselves defending a Facebook group. He believed the funding needs of Health and Social Care should be stressed to councillors and MSPs, especially when GP reception desks were open fewer hours, appointment waiting times had increased and some practices couldn’t afford to hire new GPs. He and JA had worked together to produce a draft public statement for the BDCC website, noticeboards and social media, in support of the local GPs and template letters BDCC members and residents could send to their local MSPs. They produced a motion stating:  “This Bonnyrigg and District Community Council:  **Acknowledges** that GP services in Midlothian are under severe pressure due to inadequate funding and policy delays.  **Commits** to standing in support of our local medical practices by:   * Issuing a public statement urging the Scottish Government to increase GP funding. * Writing to all Lothian list and local MSPs on behalf of the BDCC requesting urgent intervention. * Sharing accurate, non-partisan information with the public via our social media, website and noticeboards.   **Encourages** residents to contact their MSPs and speak out in support of local health services.”  This motion was proposed by JC and seconded by JA. Those present agreed unanimously. LMacD asked what would happen next. JC said digital versions of the documents would be sent to the office bearers for action. |  |
| **ACTION** | **(i)** | **Office bearers to publicise the reaffirmation of BDCC support for local GP services and public health access.** | **SR/DW** |
| Noted | (ii) | Defibrillators – LMacD reported there were 10 defibrillators in the Bonnyrigg area, but none south of Bonnyrigg and Burnbrae Primary schools. She had contacted Danny Burnett, Operations Manager, Sport & Leisure at Midlothian Council, who confirmed a new defibrillator would cost £1,300 with a 10-year life and a refurbished one £950 with a 6-year guarantee. A wall cabinet to hold the defibrillator would cost £400 and a nearby electrical point was required. She felt a defibrillator should be made available 24 hours a day in Hopefield, possibly outside the new Morrisons store. She queried the possibility of funding from Midlothian Council. DM said that was the sort of project the small grant application was for, but it had already been submitted for the proposed community garden. FW agreed to contact Catherine Duns to see if there were any other funding possibilities, even a half or quarter contribution. LMacD suggested Morrisons themselves or the house builders near Cockpen Church could be approached. JA added the Bonnyrigg Centre Trust contribution to the former Bonnyrigg and Lasswade Community Council, ring fenced money intended for the community, could be used. BI offered to ask his fellow members of “The Buffs” for a contribution. |  |
| **ACTION** | **(i)** | **FW to contact Catherine Duns re potential funding towards the defibrillator in the first instance.** | **FW** |
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| **ITEM** | **9** | **Planning** |  |
| Noted | (i) | DW said there was nothing of significance to report |  |
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| **ITEM** | **10** | **Date of next meeting** |  |  | Thursday 13 April at 7 pm in Lasswade Library. |
|  |  | Thursday 8 May 2025 in Lasswade Library at 7 pm. |  |  |  |