**BONNYRIGG & LASSWADE COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Annual General Meeting**

**Thursday 8 April 2021 at 6.45pm**

**Via online Zoom platform**

**In attendance**

Darius Namdaran, Bill MacDonald, Rhona Matthews, Sheila Metcalfe, Owen Paterson, Diane Easton, John Aitchison, Douglas West, Catherine Duns [Midlothian Council Community Liaison and Lifelong Learning]

1. **Welcome**

Catherine Duns, acting as Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. **Apologies**

Jan Irvine [Chair], Marnie Crawford, Ruth Scott, Jackie Thompson.

1. **Minutes of the AGM held on 11 April 2019**

The Community Council reviewed the draft minutes from the 2019 AGM. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, Community Councils were heavily involved in local resilience operations and the rules were relaxed concerning the holding of Community Council AGMs.

Acceptance of the draft minutes was proposed by Sheila Metcalfe and seconded by Diane Easton. The minutes were duly adopted as a true record of the meeting.

1. **Chairperson’s Annual Report**

The Chairperson's Annual Report was provided by the Chairperson and read out by the acting Chair in their absence.

Now that we are tentatively coming out of lockdown and look forward to what will be the new normal. Looking back over the past 18 months, the Community Council has kept on going via Zoom meetings and telephone calls. We would like to pay tribute to all the volunteers who came forward to offer their help at the start of last year's lockdown. Special thanks are due to Kirsty Malley and Diane Easton who worked tirelessly 7 days a week to keep the operation going. Last year we presented Lasswade Rugby Club with monies that were left over from the town's twinning account; this money will be used to help continue their twinning activities. We are looking forward to a bright and better future as we join with Poltonhall and Hopefield Community Council.

1. **Secretary’s Annual Report**

First of all, DE would like to extend warmest thanks to Jackie Thompson, our departing Minute Secretary. Jackie joined the Community Council just over a year ago and has done a great job preparing minutes for each meeting. Jackie introduced our current minute template which has been widely welcomed and will no doubt enhance the image of the Community Council.

The Community Council’s activities over the past year or so have been quite different from usual. Over the past year or so, DE was heavily involved in the community resilience effort during the first major lockdown from March 2020, helping to support volunteers, prepare risk assessments, purchase PPE and card readers for volunteer use, helped prepare organise the distribution of leaflets across Bonnyrigg. DE is currently supporting Community Councillors with preparations for the proposed merger with Poltonhall and Hopefield Community Council. Also looks after the Community Council mailbox, sharing emails containing items of interest and visitor concerns with the wider Community Council. Continues to correspond with colleagues in Midlothian Council and the Communities Liaison and Lifelong Learning Team. Has become a regular contributor at meetings of the Midlothian Federation of Community Councils and its Midlothian Traffic Roads and Paths [MTRaP] sub-group. The range of activities is endless and is just a snapshot of what the Community Council could be doing for the community.

In other local authority areas, for example Edinburgh and Aberdeen, Community Council elections and AGMs are being held during a fixed point in the year. DE proposes that the new Bonnyrigg and District Community Council should do the same next year in line with other Community Councils in Midlothian and advertise as widely as possible. This might help generate a 'buzz' and may encourage more people to become involved.

DE thanked everyone for their support over the past year.

1. **Treasurer’s submission of Balance Sheet and Annual Accounts**

Statement of account received and previously circulated. BM noted the balance on 31 December 2020 was £3798.39 and is now £4125.73. Notable events are listed below.

* Small grant income from Midlothian Council [£385].
* Donation from Bonnyrigg Hub. Funds still have not been allocated and this should be a priority for the Community Council in the coming year.
* The accounts were inspected by Councillor Lay-Douglas and declared satisfactory, although not yet officially signed off.
* The fraud issue which occurred in November 2020 appears to be resolved in so far as the Community Council has been fully refunded by Bank of Scotland. The matter is now the subject of a police investigation with the Bank of Scotland as the complainant.
* The Community Council received £225 compensation from the Bank of Scotland for their mishandling of the transfer of Treasurer details on the bank account.
* The Community Council made a £200 donation to the Kairos group which ran youth activities at Cockpen and Carrington Church Hall. This money has been ring-fenced for youth activities. The group was suspended during lockdown and has not yet resumed operation but the organisers hope to get it started up again soon.

1. **Demit of Community Councillors if term finished and election of new Community Councillors**

Acting Chair noted that the Community Council allows for fifteen elected Community Councillors. Community Councillors remain in post for three years, and office bearers for two years.

It was agreed to not hold office bearer elections unless any challenges had been received.

Six Community Councillor nominations have been received: BM, MC, RS, SM, OP, DE. JI has been unwell and will submit her nomination as soon as possible. RM is still within the three-year term therefore remains in post.

Darius Namdaran advised that he is standing down from the Community Council. Darius offered his support if this was requested. Acting Chair thanked Darius for his service to the community and the Community Council and that he would be greatly missed. Darius noted his appreciation that the town's two Community Councils are proposing to merge. This is a great achievement for the community.

Office bearers. BM agreed to continue as Treasurer if there was no challenger. DE agreed to continue as Secretary for the remaining lifetime of Bonnyrigg and Lasswade Community Council, assuming the merger is completed in the next few months. There was no nomination for Vice-Chairperson. The Chairperson Jan Irvine was absent from the meeting but has indicated her preference to remain in post and there were no challengers.

**Chair's closing remarks**

Chair paid tribute to Community Councillors for all their efforts. The past year has seen unforeseen challenges, for example having to use Zoom for meetings, the fraud from the bank account, putting themselves into resilience mode as well as dealing with the challenges in their personal lives.

On DE's comment that Community Councils need to find ways to encourage people to get involved. CD commented that Aberdeen Community Councils had held various live chat events, for example 'meet your community Councillor', to make it a bit more real for people. This could become an ambition for the new Community Council for next year.

The Chair brought the meeting to a close at 19:23 hours.

1. **Date of next AGM**

Estimated date is likely to be either Wednesday 13 or Thursday 14 April 2022, pending the outcome of discussions on completion of the merger of the Community Councils.