

Woodhill Residents Group

Minutes of Meeting held at St Ninian's High School

Monday 15 June 2009

PRESENT (Alphabetical order)

Charlie Griffiths

Councillor Gordan Low

Donald Macdonald (Chairman)

Councillor Alan Moir

Anne Mullin

Jackie Mullin (Vice Chairman)

Dominic Notarangelo

Tom Russell

Jack Scott

Wilma Scott

APOLOGIES (Alphabetical order)

No apologies

Welcome

Donald opened the meeting by welcoming those present.

Minutes

Acceptance of the previous minutes was proposed by Tom and seconded by Jack.

Before commencing Chair's Report, Donald asked if there were any items to be raised under AOCB. These were as follows, (a) lets for 2009-2010 (b) extension of 20 mph speed restriction on Wester Cleddens Road and (c) vehicle activity speed sign on Menteith Avenue. It was suggested that item (b) could be included under the item 3 on the agenda and this was agreed. The remaining items were noted.

Chair's Report

Donald reported that Anne, Jack, Jackie, Wilma and himself had attended the Fire Station Open Day which had been held on Saturday 13 June. Although the numbers attending the event were down on last year, the day had been very enjoyable. As last year Donald had provided music and announcements throughout. The Group had sold drinks and sweets etc along with a wide variety of toys.

Donald referred to the press coverage which had included his comments in connection with the contravention, yet again, of one of the planning conditions imposed on the academy site. He referred in particular to the noise audible at the boundary of the site over the period of a weekend.

Treasurer's Report

Wilma reported that despite a fall in the attendance at the Fire Station Open Day, a modest profit had been made on the items sold. The stock remaining, none of which was perishable, was now in hand to be used at the forthcoming Family Fun Day due to be held in September. There was no other income/expenditure on the Group's account since last the last meeting.

Bishopbriggs Academy – Update

It was agreed to deal with several items under this heading.

Drainage: Wilma indicated that since the last meeting some positive progress had been made on bringing this matter to a satisfactory conclusion. However, in view of the on-going nature of the matter she did not wish to comment further and this wish was respected by the rest of the Group. Whilst respecting Wilma's comments, Councillor Moir added that this matter was receiving his attention and that of other officers within the Council and agreed that it was hoped to have a conclusion to this matter to the mutual satisfaction of all parties.

Pedestrian Crossing - Extension of 20 mph: Dominic referred to a comment from the Roads Department which indicated that the all weather football pitch currently situated in St Helen's Primary School was "temporary" and as a consequence of this the pedestrian crossing planned for the top of Pentland Road was also "temporary". As far as Councillor Moir was aware this was not the case. Dominic felt that it was unacceptable that the designing of the crossing and the extension of the 20 mph speed limit had been based on a "temporary" situation. He continued by providing scenarios which he envisaged occurring as a result of this crossing at the top of Pentland Road.

Councillor Moir agreed to take on board his comments and to raise them at a meeting which he would be attending in the very near future.

Travel Plan: Donald intimated that finally he had received a copy of the proposed Travel Plan and that this now appears on the Group's website. He felt that it was not so much a "plan" as a list of good intentions. A brief discussion took place on the viability of cycling to schools and various possible "safe" routes were discussed. However, it was concluded that the location of the Academy would inevitably make considerable changes in the travel times and arrangements of everyone within the community and it was a case of "wait and see" how this would be played out when the school opened later in the year.

Concluding discussion on this Councillor Moir indicated that it was his hope that SPT would be able to provide assistance in this regard.

Contravention of Planning Conditions: This subject had been briefly touched on in the Chair's Report. Donald explained in greater detail the situation which had resulted in his comments in the press. He had recently been informed that there is an Enforcement Officer whose duties it is to check on conditions being broken and to ensure that these are not repeated. Despite this, there still seems no will within the Council to take on any complaints. Donald concluded by saying that there seemed little point in the community taking part in a planning hearing if any ensuing conditions are subsequently broken and no effort is made to enforce them.

Considering how unpopular the decision had been to relocate the Academy within the Thomas Muir Campus, Councillor Moir expressed his surprise that the builders had not made more of an effort to keep the local residents on side. This had patently not been the case and he expressed his disappointment in this regard.

Boundary Fence – Torr Road: Donald referred to the proposal to construct the boundary fence at the rear of the new Academy inside the fence which currently exists against the properties in Torr Road. The ownership of this "space" appears to be in question and although narrow it will nevertheless require to be maintained and by whom. Councillor Moir confirmed that he was aware of this situation has it had been raised by residents in Torr Road prior to the election. Along with other matters pertaining to the grounds of the new Academy, it was his intention to raise this matter at a site meeting which is due to take place shortly.

Amphitheatre: Donald reported on the proposal to reposition the proposed amphitheatre for the new Academy which originally had been sited behind properties in Torr Road. This was now considered to be "too close to the rear gardens of houses". As a consequence of a condition which had been imposed, a revision "relocated the amphitheatre to a location next to a hammerhead as far as possible from neighbouring gardens". There can be no doubt that this revised location is also close to houses, but now at the end of Clair Road. Although the original site for the amphitheatre had been its need to be adjacent to the Music Department, there appears to be no moves to relocate this department.

With regard to the use of this facility after school hours, it has been confirmed by Connect Services that the amphitheatre does not form part of facilities available outwith school hours. However, it may be on an odd occasions that the school may wish to use this facilities, but it is not anticipated that this will be a frequent occurrence.

Donald concluded discussion on this item by intimating that Connect Services also confirmed that the school gates will be locked after community users have left the building.

Bus Turning Circle: It would appear as a consequence of a recent meeting that detailed planning permission had not yet been granted for the building of properties on the site of the current bus turning circle. However, as yet no alternative location for the turning circle has been forthcoming. Donald reminded the Group that it had been conditional for the houses being built, that prior to approval being granted, an alternative site was to be confirmed.

A long discussion then ensued with several alternative sites suggested including a site adjacent to Norwich Union on Westerhill Road. Whilst the logic of this seemed sound it was anticipated that SPT would have problems with this site on financial grounds.

At the end of the discussion Donald endorsed his hoped that the excellent bus service current enjoyed by local residents would continue and that SPT/EDC would find a solution which mutually beneficial to SPT, EDC and the Woodhill community.

Junction Woodhill/Auchinairn Roads

Following the last meeting Donald had, once more, made contact with Derek Cunningham, Director – Development and Infrastructure of East Dunbartonshire Council (EDC) and was pleased to report that he had now received an e-mailed reply from Derek Cunningham.

It would appear that recent reports have highlighted an issue with sheltered parking on one side of Auchinairn Road. Within this parking zone there is a "courtesy" disabled parking space which will soon become "enforceable" under the Disabled Persons' Parking Place (Scotland) Act of 2009. To improve this junction would require the removal of this space which would be unacceptable both to the residents and to Glasgow City Council (GCC) and since the junction itself falls within EDC and GCC boundaries any works would require to be acceptable to both councils. To underline his comments Mr

Cunningham had indicated that improvements would **only** be undertaken on safety grounds and to date there was no evidence to substantiate this.

Councillor Gordan Low entered the meeting at this point.

A brief discussion took place during which Dominic suggested that there should be a mandatory left hand turn onto Auchinairn Road with one roundabout to facilitate cars/buses wishing to head towards Auchinairn.

Councillors Low and Moir both suggested lobbying SPT on this matter and agreed to provide Donald with the name of the EDC councillor who will be able to do this on behalf of the Group. Some reshuffle of committees etc will take place shortly at which time this information will be available.

Town Centre/Sports Hall

Dominic was able to report that Muse Development had viewed favourably the business plan drawn up by Ruth Box for the retention of the Sports Hall within the new planned town centre. Despite this they wished an “independent” eye to be cast over the plan and indicated their willingness to meet the cost of doing so. This was now in hand and it was hoped to report further on this at the next meeting.

Donald reiterated that to retain the Sports Hall, a considerable amount of regular funding would be required. It was, therefore, up to the community to play its part in this. In this regard he felt that Muse Developments had been rather astute in that if the Sports Hall was not retained it would be the community itself who had “raised it to the ground” metaphorically speaking by lack of financial support.

Councillor Moir suggested that Ms Box might benefit from speaking with Sandra Sutton, Chair of the recently established Healthy Living Centre in Twechar. Dominic/Donald agreed to pass on this information.

Lowmoss Prison

Donald was pleased to confirm that the proposed new prison would be called Lowmoss. He also confirmed his intention to shred the various letters of protest which had been collected by the Group in this connection. He would also look into the removal of the e-petition. He thanks all those who had helped to make this “right” decision.

History Project

Following the extremely negative and unhelpful response to his “pre application” for a Heritage grant, Donald had decided not to pursue the idea of a History Project within EDC. Dominic suggested making an approach to CVS for assistance in completing an application. This suggestion was left with Donald to pursue if he so wished.

Family Fun Day – 20 September 2009

Donald confirmed that he was still awaiting the result of the application for funding made to the Community Grant Scheme. Councillors Low and Moir indicated that a grant of £500.00 had been approved in principle. It would, however, still have to go before Policy and Resources, but it was not anticipated that it would not be approved. Since it was hoped to extend the activities for the Family Fun Day, it was intended also to make an application Big Lottery “Awards for All”.

It was essential to have as many helpers as possible on the day and Donald asked that members of the Group begin now to “recruit” friends to run bouncy castles, etc.

Annual Report – 2008-09

It was decided that distribution of the Annual Report which will carry an advertisement for the Family Fun Day should take place late August early September in order to keep the date in the minds of local residents.

Wilma noted the names of those willing to distribute the report.

Menteith Play Park

Councillor Low confirmed that discussion on the naming of this park had taken place some weeks back and at the time the name Etive had been recommended and this forms part of a report on the matter which will be reviewed after the forthcoming recess.

Following a suggestion by Jackie that the park should be called Woodhill, Councillor Low indicated that a Woodhill Park already existed in the green space on the other side of Menteith Avenue. He agreed, however, that to call both areas Woodhill was a possibility. A brief discussion took place with regard to a name change to Provost Park or Provost Hannah

Park and although both councillors indicated that this could be considered it was stressed that the late Councillor Alex Hannah had wanted the park to be called Etive. Councillors Low and Moir hoped to report further on this at a later date.

In the meantime Councillor Moir referred to the problems encountered with the safety surface within the play area but was happy to report that the surface was now "fit for purpose". He was, however, disappointed to report that inconsiderate individual(s) were taking their dog(s) into the fenced area of the park.

Charlie asked what other plans were envisaged for the park, particularly with regard to the appointing of a design team as had been suggested by Lesley Scott, Greenspace Officer within EDC several months back. Wilma agreed to contact Lesley in this regard and to report at the next meeting.

Boundary Issue

Donald confirmed that a representative for the residents of Princes Gate would be attending the meeting of the Community Council due to take place the following evening. It was their intention to ask the Community Council to support their cause by sending a letter to the Boundary Commission. Councillor Moir indicated that, along with fellow councillors and David Whitton MSP he would be attending a meeting with the Boundary Commission on 25 June at which it was hoped to put forward in the strongest terms the views of the Council in this regard. He also indicated that the residents had a website on which they had placed templates which they asked fellow residents to complete showing their support to their cause.

Councillor Low spoke briefly on how the process works. Although he indicated that the Boundary Commission may choose not to enter into discussion on the matter, he stressed the importance of using every means available to support the residents of Princes Gate.

Fire Station Event

This item has already been dealt with under Chair and Treasurer Reports.

Lets – 2009-2010

Wilma reported to the Group that she had received a Let Application from EDC for the forthcoming session. Following a brief discussion it was decided that the Group should continue to meeting on the third Monday of every month. Wilma would inform the Group of all dates when they had been confirmed by EDC.

Vehicle Activity Speed Sign

Charlie raised two points regarding the above sign recently located on Menteith Avenue. Firstly he felt that in its current position motorists would be slowing down any way and, in his opinion, it was not in the correct position to reflect the speeds encountered on this avenue. It may be useful, therefore, for the sign to be relocated. Secondly he wished to know if the speeds were recorded and checked, say, at the end of each week as he would be interested to view this kind of information.

Councillor Low did not think that such records were available, but he would enquire and report back to the Group. When asked he indicated that it had not been found practical to move the signs around as they were easily broken and it was, therefore, now intended to place the signs in permanent positions thus allowing them to be tied into the lighting system. However, he concluded by saying that this would be reviewed after six months.

Resignation

The Group noted with regret the resignation of Robert Lowe. Along with his involvement in the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation and despite occasional ill health, Robert has always given his full support to the activities undertaken by the Group. However, it is now his intention to devote more of his time to the Foundation and whilst sorry to see him leave the Group, all members present acknowledged that the Group's loss was indeed the Foundation's gain.

Next Meeting

It was anticipated that the next meeting of the Group would be held in the new Bishopbriggs Academy on Monday 21 September. This would be confirmed in due course.

The meeting ended at 9.10 pm.