

Neilston Community Council

Meeting of Tuesday 29 October 2024

MINUTES

In attendance:

Malcolm Briggs, Julie Cloherty, Janice Connery (Vice Chair), Margaret Currie (Treasurer), Rowena Johnstone, Margaret Pettigrew, Gail Squires (Secretary & minutes), Donna Strathearn, Cllr Buchanan, Cllr O'Donnell

Visitors: Ian Davidson

1. Welcome

Acting Chair, Janice Connery, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were tabled from Kenny McKenzie, Cllr Morrison and Police Scotland

Resignation of Kenny McKenzie was noted with regret.

Previous meeting's minutes: Proposed – Margaret Pettigrew; Seconded – Margaret Currie

Co-option of new member, Ian Davidson: proposed by Janice Connery, seconded by Margaret Currie

2. Police Report

The police were unable to attend and no monthly report had been received.

Report to be requested again (Action: GS)

3. Visitors' Issues

ERC Budget Proposals 2025/26 (Ian Davidson)

The councillors were asked about the process and if there would be consultations with the community. Cllr O'Donnell explained the process, i.e. the ERC budget would be impacted by the Westminster budget on 30 November and subsequently the Scottish Government budget in December. Allocations to local authorities were expected to be confirmed prior to Christmas. ERC are expecting a £15million deficit and although this may change, there is little chance of any significant reduction. The ERC budget will be discussed and refined during January/February and finally set at the end of February for implementation from April. 2025 will be the hardest in the current 3 year period and is compounded by budget allocations being on a yearly basis which makes forward planning short term and difficult. They stated that all services are benchmarked annually and ERC outperforms the other Scottish local authorities on these. Consultations with the public are only held for new issues and none are expected this year.

Brown Bins

There was discussion on the change to this service and concerns raised about how it would impact residents. councillors confirmed that:

- ERC had agreed the motion to impose collection of brown bins from weekly to once every two weeks
- the collection of garden waste was not a statutory obligation on local authorities
- an agency do the collections so there will be no redundancies amongst council staff
- a great deal of planning for the change and for communicating this to residents is required
- Expected to start from 1 May.

While there was no agreement on next steps for NCC on this, and it was acknowledged that the decision had already been made by ERC, there was nonetheless discussion of the problems this move would certainly cause and a range of concerns including smell and hygiene unpleasantness during hot weather from food waste lying for two weeks instead of one and the probability of an increase in fly-tipping, amongst others. Unfortunately, there is no opportunity for NCC to canvas opinion on what issues this will cause in the community as ERC have closed the door on that by voting in the decision without a public consultation first.

4. Matters Arising

Basketball Nets at Kingston Park

Cllr Buchanan has been in touch with the Environment Dept about getting the nets replaced.

Manse Road

Margaret Pettigrew reported that the land outside the manse and the manse wall are both owned by ERC Housing Dept. It was also confirmed that there was a meeting on 29 October to look for a solution to the grass cutting issue at this spot.

Community Wardens

Further to previous meetings, there was discussion on various issues impacted by the service:

- the advent of pavement parking ban may require more wardens
- the councillors confirmed that tickets have been issued for parking violations in Neilston recently
- the councillors confirmed that there are no plans to extend the drop off area opposite the campus, however it was also agreed that there was a need for signage here to make it clear that it is *not* a car parking area, just a pick up/drop off point at school start/finish times
- Duncarnock Crescent continues to suffer from inconsiderate and illegal parking practices and drivers are undeterred by legislation or yellow lines. They are regularly causing obstructions which impact on residents' access and could potentially hinder emergency vehicles needing access
- the designated parking area between Station Road and Dundonald Place causes havoc in terms of visibility especially for vehicles emerging from Dundonald Place.

Sadly, it was noted that school staff and community wardens suffer uncalled for abuse from some drivers when asked to adhere to legislation. It was agreed that this is unacceptable and shameful behaviour by adults who are showing no concern for the safety of pedestrians and particularly children. The schools send regular communication to parents to highlight the problems but these appear to have little or no impact.

NCC had emailed the councillors, on their advice, to express the need for an increase in Community Warden staff. The email had included a request for an increase in warden activity at school start/finish times and for feedback at subsequent meetings on the impact of this. This request seemed to have been missed and the email will be re-sent highlighting this text and the issue will be revisited at following meeting. (Action: GS) There was also a request to consult with the other ERC CCs in the hope of influencing allocation of funding when the next budget is set.

Wind Turbines

A number of issues arose from discussion on this:

- when a missed item is added later to the relevant weekly ERC planning list, it does not get re-sent to CCs and so can get missed
- the influx of new turbines one-by-one could negate a planning decision, as looks possible at the Nether Carswell area
- as planning decisions are only applicable for 3 years, there is a question about how planning decisions can be adhered to after this period has elapsed.

Planning in general was discussed and it was agreed that all members of the CC should be responsible for checking over the incoming weekly planning lists for items relevant to Neilston. However, it was acknowledged that scrutinising planning applications is a complex and very time-consuming business and a big ask for volunteers. It was agreed to find out how far back it is possible to go to access previous planning applications and Cllr Buchanan agreed to make enquiries. (Action: Cllr Buchanan)

Electronic Noticeboard

Julie Cloherty updated that the funding application to re-site this, to face the street and not the sidewall of the chemist, had been submitted to the Neilston Windfarm Legacy Fund and a request for further information was being dealt with. Further update at next meeting. (Action: Julie Cloherty)

5. Treasurer's Report

Margaret Currie advised that the change of signatories for the TSB bank account was still underway but progress was being made.

The current status of funds are:

Bank of Scotland account: £1,192.49; TSB account: £1,449.25; Cash in hand: £9.72

Julie Cloherty agreed to be the third signatory.

6. **Communications Update**

Problems that some members are having with accessing the NCC Outlook email were discussed and Malcolm explained a few of the issues and how access works. It was agreed to resend the instructions for this and an updated contact list for the members. (Action: GS)

7. **Standing Items**

- *Parking and yellow lines*

The lines opposite Robb's Garage and around the Kirkstyle Lane area will be repainted on completion of the work at the school campus. Parking in Duncarnock Crescent at school start/finish times continues to be inconsiderate, illegal and dangerous (see 4: Community Wardens).

- *Expansion of CCTV*

This is under review and is supported by Police Scotland and others. Discussion also focused on incidents of serious anti-social behaviour by incomers to the village by train and bus. It was acknowledged that Police Scotland may not have info on these when the train is involved as this is British Transport Police territory. Contact to be made with BTP to gather more information. (Action: GS)

- *Status and use of former St. Thomas's school site*

Demolition nearly completed. Expected use of site is council housing, however no decision is yet known.

- *Swimming Pool and Library*

no update available on plans or timescale for the rebuilding work.

8. **AGM**

The issues with the bank account signatories, due to change of treasurer, have been lengthy and an audit cannot be carried out until both accounts can be fully accessed. It was therefore agreed to defer the AGM til April/May 2025 to be in line with other CCs going forward.

9. **AOCB**

- *Kirkstyle Lane:*

It was noted that the lane is in a poor state. It is expected this will improve when school campus work is completed.

- *Lane behind the Killoch:*

Badly affected by overhanging branches. ERC are limited in what they can do as the gardens on either side are privately owned.

- *Litter:*

The Litter Pickers are finding the process for contacting ERC to arrange for rubbish collections to be difficult. The rota for emptying bins/collecting rubbish is not yet available online.

- *East Ren Community Councils' Chairs Group:*

The group have indicated that a representative was welcome in lieu of a permanent Chair. Ian Davidson offered to attend and this was agreed. (Action: ID) Meeting minutes, contact info etc will be forwarded. (Action: GS)

- *Laptop:*

It was proposed and agreed to purchase a laptop for the secretary's use. This could then be passed on to future incumbents so that they have access to all historical and current data and documents. After some discussion, including the need for cloud storage access and as big a memory as possible, it was agreed that 3 quotes for a laptop, printer, relevant software and virus protection bundle would be sought in the approximate cost range of £500-800 maximum, and brought to the next meeting for discussion/approval. (Action: GS)

12. **Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 26 November 2024