

Neilston Community Council

Meeting of Tuesday 29 April 2025

MINUTES

In attendance

CC Members: Malcolm Briggs, Margaret Currie (Treasurer), Janice Connery (Vice Chair), Rowena Johnstone (Acting Chair), Margaret Pettigrew, Gail Squires (Secretary & minutes).

Councillors: Tony Buchanan, Owen O'Donnell

Visitors (20): Anne Clark, N.Gardner, John Crawford, John Perrie, Val Perrie, Margaret Bryers, Alan Bryers, Anne Barber, Jim Sheriff, Sue Mathers, Susan Lamont, D.Hamilton, C.Hamilton, Sairah Blake, Allan Ogg, Jeff Hattie, Matthew Drennan, Jacqueline Drennan, Rachel Mackie, Alison Findlay, Gareth Fulton

Apologies: None

1. Welcome

Rowena Johnstone (Acting Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the process of meetings.

Jim Sheriff was unanimously co-opted as a new member.

2. Previous meeting's minutes: Proposed – Malcolm Briggs; Seconded – Margaret Currie

3. Police Report

The police had provided the monthly report electronically and this had been distributed to all members in advance of the meeting. No officers were present.

4. Visitors' issues:

Dareduff Quarry lorry traffic

The Chair made a brief statement to update on activity following the March meeting which included:

- Explanation of the mitigations proposed by ERC:
 - 20mph zone on High St/Kingston Rd (already in place)
 - Traffic lights at junction of High St/Main St; Kingston Rd at Kirkton Rd; Kingston Rd at gateway to the village
- Update on meeting with ERC (3 local councillors, Head of Environment and Head of Operations Environment Dept.
- Stressed that the number of lorries in the Transport Management Plan (TMP) was an estimate, no actual number is known.

The discussion was then opened up to the floor and covered a number of points including:

- Money is being paid to ERC by the quarry for maintenance and installing mitigations. There was strong feeling that the quarry should pay for all of this, not the community via their council tax payments.
- Lorry activity through the village is happening earlier than 7am contrary to the TMP
- It was felt that the 20mph zone would be largely ineffective
- Lorry have been seen using side roads (eg Station Rd, Double Hedges Rd)
- Road signage is inconsistent with the type of roads and whole village needs reviewed
- There is an alternative route to Lochlibo Rd from the quarry via Lugton that could be widened and solve the problem
- It is possible but difficult to re-route the lorries
- It was felt that mitigations would only hinder the lorries not stop them coming this way
- If mitigations were to be effective they should discourage the lorries from using the Neilston route. More physical obstacles, particularly chicanes, were the best choice

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- It was felt that the mitigations approach, and its' last minute enforcement was 'fobbing off' the community and no attempt to negotiate a complete re-routing was being made by ERC
- The actual numbers of lorries was needed rather than a percentage which is valueless
- Effective, regular and rigorous monitoring of the traffic is needed that is communicated within the community
- The biggest issue is **safety**. This was referred to numerous times in terms of the danger to pedestrians and particularly children. There is also the fear factor of huge lorries thundering past only a few feet if not inches away from pedestrians, children, prams, bicycles etc.
- The width of the roads are too narrow and this will be exacerbated when ERC enforces the pavement parking ban.
- The objective and the will of the community is for re-routing the lorries
- The 'cycle friendly village' signs should be removed as it is quite the opposite now
- The hours that the TMP specifies for school in/out times is inadequate and doesn't take account of nursery hours or after school activities. Neither does it take any account of the times Eastwood High School pupils are using the railway station particularly at home time when there is increased traffic congestion due to the buses parked there to collect those that have onward journeys. Accidents have happened in the past there at these times.
- Observing the closure at school in/out times is voluntary and not legally enforceable
- It was felt that mitigations now being put in place were needed anyway in the village and should have been installed long before the lorry traffic started moving
- With the quarry plan being known since 2019, why did ERC planning give the go ahead to the new school campus at its current site on the route of the lorries
- The impact of the lorry traffic will be widespread, not just on the route itself. The leisure centre and library are also on the route
- traffic of all kinds are likely to use the side roads to avoid the 20mph zone
- It was agreed that publicity should be ramped up on the issue to pressure those involved to re-route the lorries. Newspapers, television, radio etc were suggested.
- There was anger that ERC are only now trying to sort out a problem that should have been addressed long ago
- Deep disappointment with ERC's handling of the issue was expressed
- It was pointed out that every child in the village is at risk
- The congestion problem in the village can only get worse with the proposed new housing at Holehouse Brae and possibly Kirkton Road (it was reported that Ogilvie Homes have now pulled out) meaning more vehicles in the village at construction stage and the eventual homeowners' cars. Re-routing the lorries would impact positively on this.
- There was anger at the lack of communication with the community throughout the process particularly when the TMP was agreed in May 2024 and no attempt was made to share this in the community. NCC had only discovered its existence by chance through the research of a CC member.
- Understanding what had happened in the past at ERC and why they took the approach they did would help to answer some of the questions that the community will inevitably have
- There was agreement with the councillors that a review of the matter, and the council's poor handling of it, should be undertaken even although a number of key people will no longer be in post. This should result in a proper policy and process for dealing with such planning issues being established that would be followed in the future regardless of changes to council staff throughout. It was strongly felt that this should be an independent review.

A number of questions were also raised including:

- Why did ERC take the decision **not** to object to the routing of lorries through Neilston when they had the opportunity with the original East Ayrshire Council planning application?
- Why did ERC **not** support the NCC attempt to fight the planning application in 2019?
- Why was there no Risk Assessment undertaken?

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- When asked how the money from the quarry was to be used, Cllr O'Donnell stated the it will be used for maintenance of roads and infrastructure; and further stated that the mitigations being put in place are designed to encourage the lorries to use other routes.
- The councillors were asked if ERC had objected to the traffic would they have succeeded? The answer was not legally.
- When asked if ERC would consider even making an attempt to negotiate re-routing with the quarry and EAC, the councillors said that they were in negotiations but did not confirm it was for a new route.
- How will the lorry traffic be monitored? Cllr O'Donnell agreed this was crucial and that lorries passing through the village outwith the scheduled times in the TMP was unacceptable.
- All present were in agreement that chicanes and speed cameras were desperately needed.

The Chair then asked if those present wished there to be a public meeting held on this subject, and all agreed. They also agreed that their signatures on the sign-in sheet could be considered as endorsing that. The date being looked at is **Tuesday 27 May**, and NCC will publicise this as best they can.

Neilston Development Trust offered support with printing leaflets and distribution. A number of those present were happy to help and left their contact phone numbers. [Action: All; GS to liaise with Jacqueline Drennan (NDT)]

Tom Arthur MSP's representative at the meeting, Rachel Mackie, indicated their support for the community on this and would be happy for constituents to contact them with any concerns.

Rachel.Mackie@parliament.scot ; Tom.Arthur.msp@parliament.scot

5. **Matters Arising**

Dareduff Quarry lorry traffic: Addressed at 'Visitors' Issues' above

School Campus: Contact has been made with ERC Education Dept, Joe McCaig, on the Duncarnock neighbours' issues and a reply received. Unfortunately, the fencing issue remains unresolved and it was agreed that a site visit was necessary to assess the issue. This would involve the Duncarnock neighbours, NCC, Joe McCaig, the Councillors and Headteachers. Contact with the Duncarnock neighbours, who could not attend this meeting, will be undertaken to arrange this. [Action: GS]

6. **Treasurer's Report**

The current status of funds are:

Bank of Scotland: £3,456.92 [CC funds: £647.67; Grant: £2814.00; Bank charge: -£4.75]

TSB: £1,449.25

Cash in hand: £7.43

Grand total: £4,913.60

The annual audit will be arranged in time for the AGM which is being planned for first week of June.

7. **Communications Report**

Malcolm explained the difficulties in getting information to all sections of the community given that social media doesn't reach everyone. Keeping younger people in focus was crucial, and perhaps a poster about the public meeting at the railway station would be an idea. Word of mouth works well if everyone speaks to at least one or two others, and they do the same.

NDT offered to add the public meeting details to their flyer about the quarry traffic and NCC will be in touch. [Action: GS]

8. **Standing Items**

- Expansion of CCTV in the village centre: the need for expanded coverage was again discussed and the lack of any action from ERC as yet. NCC had suggested applying for funding from the Windfarm

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Legacy Fund to purchase the equipment was a possibility, but they would need assurances that this would then be absorbed into ERC's system going forward. Cllr Morrison had agreed at a previous meeting to check this out and he will be contacted for an update. [Action: GS]

- Planning issues:
 - Nova Homes will be holding information sessions at The Bank on 12 & 19 June from 3-7pm on their proposed new housing development at Holehouse Brae. These dates to be posted in Facebook [Action: MB]
 - St.Thomas's site is earmarked for social housing but not at planning stage yet.

The councillors were asked if ERC's planning department would take into account the need for expanded facilities such as the capacity at the doctors' surgery, school etc when new housing is being looked at. They said it would, but added that it was not legally enforceable. There was discussion about how GP's are funded and what input ERC are realistically able to have in that.

8. **AOCB**

- The parcel delivery/collection store outside the Main Store is causing a serious issue of noise and disturbance at all hours for the neighbouring residents. It is not known if planning permission was needed or granted for this. Cllr Buchanan is following this up on behalf of the resident.
- AGM: first week in June to be confirmed. [Action: GS]
- Vacant Chairperson role: Rowena Johnstone volunteered for the role and there were no objections.

9. **Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 27 May 2025.