

Minutes of the Meeting of Giffnock Community Council

Venue: Giffnock Library

Date: Monday 19th November 2018

Present: Douglas Lawson (DL – Chair), Jack Powell(JP), Maureen Powell(MP), Payal Debroy(PD), Bill Crawford (BC), Janey Floyd (JF), Richard Louden (RL), Alex Mackie (AM)

In attendance: Cllr Jim Fletcher, Cllr Colm Merrick, Cllr Gordon Wallace; Sixteen members of the public.

Apologies for absence: Jim McCann, Ian Lang

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the meeting on 15th October 2018 were approved by Richard Louden and Alex Mackie.

Matters arising from Minutes

Bus stop at Merryton Ave:

Cllr Wallace has raised this matter with Strathclyde Transport who have no intention of moving the bus stop.

Fly-tipping in Parkgrove Avenue

Cllr Wallace has emailed the Environment Department, but no reply has been received.

Chair's opening

DL welcomed the members of the public to the meeting.

Police report

PC Julianne Mathieson attended the meeting. A police report for the period 11th October to 11th November had previously been circulated.

CW expressed concern about the number of break-ins and asked whether there could be additional foot patrols.

DL expressed concern about the incidents of violent crime involving teenagers, possibly alcohol related, which seemed to be increasing. PC Mathieson stated that the police are seeking to engage with local youth groups to try and tackle the issue.

Drink drive campaign – the police traffic section will be doing a programme of random vehicle/breathalysing cheques over the festive period. They are also encouraging the public to report any incidents they witness (dial 999). Any dashcam evidence is also welcomed.

Chairs report

DL stated that an ad hoc meeting of community council members had been held on 13th November to discuss the recent developments regarding Braidbar Quarry and the Leisure Centre. These issues would be the main focus for this meeting.

Secretary's report

JP reported that the community room in the library has been booked for community council meetings for 2019 – third Monday of each month, excluding July and August.

Treasurer's report

Treasurer not present.

Braidbar Quarry

DL outlined the recent development – at the full ERC Council meeting on 31st October the Council had given approval to enter into discussions and negotiations with Advance Construction (Scotland) with regard to the remediation of Braidbar and that a report would be submitted to the Council in due course. The Council also approved spending of £120,000 to improve the security fencing around the area. While remediation was the immediate focus, the preamble in the Council papers clearly showed that development of the site by building houses was the longer term aim.

There followed considerable discussion, involving both community council members and members of the public, in which a number of concerns were expressed:-

Lack of transparency on the part of ERC

Behind the scenes discussions have been going on between ERC and ACS since early 2016. However, when questions have been asked at community council meetings, the mantra has been ‘no formal planning application has been received’. Paul Drury, a resident, submitted freedom of information requests in March and again in October to which the response was that there was no significant information regarding the quarry. Serious concerns were expressed by a number of people about the lack of openness on the part of ERC and their unwillingness to engage with the community on such an important local issue.

Due diligence

ACS have received two final warning letters from SEPA concerning illegal waste dumping potential. Concerns expressed on their suitability as a company to carry out remedial work on the quarry, and about ERC’s competence to ensure due diligence. In a housing development in Barrhead the Council disregarded contamination reports and allowed the development to go ahead. Vigilance thus needs to be exercised that corners are not cut to facilitate development.

Questions were also asked as to why only ACS is being used by ERC to carry out this investigation. Should it not be put out to tender?

Condition of the quarry and costs of remediation

In their draft proposal of 2017 ACS spent over £250,000 surveying the condition of the quarry, what did they find? The report included in the Council Papers for the full Council meeting is 20 years old and indicated evidence of some ceiling areas collapsing and that the stone columns supporting the very substantial caverns will deteriorate over time and collapse at some unspecified moment in the future. Was the decision to spend £120,000 on new fencing based on hard evidence of deterioration in the site?

The costs of remediation will be substantial. ERC’s view is that such costs can only be met by allowing substantial housing development by a private developer like ACS. Questions were asked, however, if this was the only option – could the Scottish Government have a role to play – should the MSP be written to? Cllr Fletcher stated that Scotland was riddled with mining works and that the Scottish Government would not become involved as it would have significant implications elsewhere.

Extent of any remediation and development

In the Council paper for the full Council meeting it is stated that ‘Huntly Park requires to be protected and/or improved.’ What exactly is the extent of Huntly Park, will areas of the park that might be liable to subsidence be attended to, and will the houses that are blighted in Forres Avenue be dealt with? Significant areas of the park are owned by Fields in Trust – will they be willing to co-operate with any proposals for the site?

In their draft proposal document of 2017 ACS showed the development as including most of the Huntly Park area. Concerns were expressed that ACS might seek to encroach on areas of the park and assurances were thus sought that Huntly Park would indeed be protected and improved.

It was agreed that this matter should be carried over to the next meeting, and that various interested parties would bring suggestions/proposals regarding possible action to be taken.

Eastwood Leisure Centre

DL outlined the current development.

At the full Council meeting on 31st October, ERC agreed to undertake the master planning of Eastwood Park which will specifically explore the feasibility of a new build leisure centre in the park. However, at the meeting a further proposal was adopted which states, '... any sites which may become available will be investigated'.

A discussion then took place in which a number of concerns were expressed:-

While the master plan will look at a new build leisure centre in the park, the additional proposal, and the rejection of a proposal by Cllr Wallace that only Eastwood Park should be considered for the leisure centre, indicates that ERC is still looking at other possible sites. DL reported that he had attended a public meeting organised by Broom Community Council which was well attended and showed strong opposition to the leisure centre being built on Shawwood Park, which was the preferred site in the previous consultants' report. General concern was expressed that the potential loss of the leisure centre would be a severe loss of amenity in Giffnock. Along with the potential development of Braidbar Quarry, this would turn Giffnock into a dormitory suburb with no local amenities.

The master plan is taking account of two recent factors – the potential demolition of the current ERC HQ building and the need for a new denominational school, taking the pressure off the need to extend St Ninians. Where would the new school be, and what is the timescale for building it? RL expressed the view that there would be continued pressure on St Ninians as a result of placing requests even if the role fell below 100%. Cllr Merrick stated that any continued pressure on the school would be met by providing temporary accommodation.

The proposals for the leisure centre include a 50 metre swimming pool. DL asked why this size of pool was felt to be required for an essentially local facility. Cllr Fletcher replied that no decision had been taken regarding the size of the pool.

As with the quarry development, strong concerns expressed about the lack of community involvement regarding this major local issue. Any future consultation process should actively include the community in general and the community council in particular.

Planning issues.

Pre-planning notification regarding the development of former Eastwoodhill Care Home.

Notification of a pre-planning consultation by Westpoint Homes Ltd. on 22nd November in the Redhurst Hotel has been received. Some members of the community council will attend, and the matter will be carried forward to the next meeting.

AOCB

There was no other business

The meeting ended at 8.55 p. m.

Date of next meeting

Monday 17th December 2018