

Clarkston Community Council AGM 2021

Wednesday 31st March 2021, 7pm



Attendance

- Rebecca Nicholson - RN (Chair)
- Brian Dillon – BD (Vice Chair)
- Maryam Wasim - MW (Secretary)
- Christopher Kelly - CK (Treasurer),
- Julie Flaherty - JF
- Gillian Cox - GC
- Linda Allan – LA
- Joseph Pakenham – JP
- Linda Dillon – LD

Report By Chairperson – Rebecca Nicholson

**Clarkston Community Council AGM
March 31st 2021**

Chairperson's report

This is of course our very first AGM - and it seems slightly astonishing to now say that we formed the Community Council in 2019 – 18 months on and the world has certainly changed. However, despite having been operational for just a few months before the pandemic hit, I am genuinely proud of how we immediately adapted to the situation and continued with our meetings, holding them online for the last year. It's fair to say we haven't been short of agenda items!

I very much want to thank the community for their support over that time, as a new team we have needed to find our feet – it's been a learning curve and one which will certainly continue as we try and represent the views of local residents on issues that concern them.

Thank you too of course to all the members of the Community Council, who have given up their time to get involved and put their money where their mouth is, so to speak, with the aim of making a difference to the area that we all live in. Particular thanks to all those who have taken on specific areas of responsibility - and we've been pleased to welcome some new co-opted members too.

We've been grateful for the support of some local councillors and I would particularly like to mention Councillor Annette Ireland who has been a stalwart in terms of attendance - and unparalleled in the volume of work she has taken on for us, coming back with prompt and useful responses and connecting us with the right people. I would also like to thank Kirsten Oswald, MP, who has attended many of our meetings and provided helpful input. We have also forged positive working relationships with the team from the Business Improvement District and the local Police - and we have welcomed visitors from various Council departments.

I'll now briefly cover some of the areas we've been involved with since forming.

Communication / Social Media

Having initially created a survey to gather the thoughts of the community on matters of interest, we were somewhat thwarted by storms and then the pandemic in terms of getting out and speaking to residents face to face! However, we also hosted the survey online and did get a level of response which was useful.

We created a Facebook page early on, which has grown steadily to over 1000 members. We have endeavoured to keep this to appropriate CC business, however, it is almost impossible to keep it purely for CC area residents for purposes of consultation. Naturally those who live close by or have businesses here are also interested in our activities. Nevertheless, it's an extremely useful and successful way of getting messages out to lots of people easily and we have shared council and government messages alongside details on our own activities, local initiatives and more.

We're now dipping our toe into using Twitter and Instagram too. We're very much aware that different age ranges will use various social media sites and equally, that we also want to use other methods to reach those who don't use them at all! This has been more challenging in Covid times but is very much on our radar. We also publicise our email address as the central point of contact and this is checked several times a week. I would also thank Southside Magazine who have been proactive in covering some of our work.

Community events

With everyone spending so much time at home during the pandemic and the lack of usual events, the CC decided to suggest some community activities, led by Julie and her wonderfully creative abilities. From Halloween window displays to a Christmas Winter Wonderland that featured several installations, there was a great uptake from local families and lots of positive feedback – they certainly brightened up the daily walk! We have launched Easter baking and miniature garden competitions this month which will hopefully give people something to do, given there is no travel permitted over the break. It's wonderful to see how much talent and creativity there is within the community.

Community Safety

Sadly there have been a number of incidences of antisocial behaviour in the area, to varying degrees over the last year. An understandable source of concern to many, we have engaged with Police plus ERC Community Safety and Youth Work teams to better understand the strategies being deployed and provide useful information to residents on what action to take in the event of an incident. We have also pushed for increased signage denoting the CCTV coverage in the area and promotion of the Community Safety hotline, as well as linking local partners with the Council teams, in the hope that initiatives can be followed up that would give young people more activities / places to go in the area. This is an area that needs more attention and we will keep it on the agenda.

Family Cycling

An initial chat at a meeting about the increase in cycles on the road during the pandemic was followed up by a couple of our members, with the result that Cycling Scotland funded a local 'family cycling' pilot - free sessions to help families feel safer and more knowledgeable when out on the road. There was excellent take up on this and great feedback – hopefully more sessions will follow and the resulting effect of more bikes on the roads could lead to better provision for cyclists generally too.

Planning

We have a statutory right to be consulted on large scale developments in the area and as such, a couple of planning applications have been brought to our attention so far. We have gained some knowledge around assessing these - and have been able to bring them to the community's attention through our Facebook page for individuals to make representations to the Council as wished.

We also had a robust discussion around the appeal regarding refusal of planning application for the site of the existing Station Master's House. From assessment of the plans and community feedback, we agreed it was appropriate to submit concerns to the Edinburgh Recorder and our submission was quoted within the decision notice which upheld the original refusal. The property has been repurchased and we await developments.

Book Swap

Gillian had observed a successful book swap scheme in Eaglesham and put in the work to meet with the person who runs it, picking up lots of tips. The Clarkston CC book swap page is still in its infancy but growing as a community initiative – also bringing lots of positives to the pocket and the planet.

Roads

We had a visit from a Roads representative at our last meeting which provided useful insight into how repairs are prioritised. Councillor Ireland supported us in our request to ERC to widen the pavement on Benview Road at Scotmid, to facilitate an easier road crossing. We continue to raise other road concerns in the area, including road condition, junctions, signage and traffic speed.

We are also engaged in a range of other matters, from the Hydro electric project at Overlee to some Planters by Scotmid that the BID kindly offered us for use. Hopefully in the next few months we'll see some green shoots! We also applied for funding towards the creation of a central community hub in Clarkston – this is something we strongly feel would be so beneficial for the area. Sadly we were unsuccessful but very much hope there will be more opportunities towards this in the future.

It is also worth noting that litter continues to be a problem. A clean up of the town centre took place by the council following our request at the start of the year. It is not yet possible to start group litter picks due to restrictions - but that was our intention pre-Covid and certainly something we'll look to organise when we can.

We have positive plans for the year ahead and I very much hope some more people step forward and join the CC – a bigger team means more input and discussions to get the best solutions. It would be especially good to increase diversity and have further representation from our younger residents.

In closing, let's hope we can all look forward to the ability to see each other in person more in 2021 - and for the CC to get back to face to face meetings in the not-too-distant future.

Thank you again for all your support.

Rebecca Nicholson

Chairperson, Clarkston Community Council

Report By Secretary – Maryam Wasim

As secretary I have facilitated the role by:

- Taking minutes, drafting and sending out for each meeting and passing on to East Renfrewshire Council to upload to our webpage on the website .
- Organising meetings and booking venues, organising online meeting links.
- Invitations to all councillors and key stakeholders to each meeting.
- Forwarding emails for the attention all Clarkston Community Councillors.
- Circulating new member applications.
- Attending to general queries to the Council.
- Liaising with East Renfrewshire Council community council support officer.
- Liaising with Chairperson when inviting ERC and other services, groups and organisations to CCC meetings.
- Supporting the setup of social media accounts, managing the email account and filing on the google drive and hard copy of all CCC meetings information.

Our membership has changed over time but remains around 14 members on average.

Report By Chairperson – Christopher Kelly

- The balance on the accounts at the end of the Financial Year was £1492.17
- We have paid out 5 Zoom payments totalling £71.95 which will be repaid by ERC
- A new grant will be paid to us in May of approximately £400

Office Bearer Elections

Office Bearer Role	Elected CC Member	Proposer	Seconder
Chairperson	Rebecca Nicholson	Maryam Wasim	Lise Fisher
Vice Chairperson	Brian Dillon	Christopher Kelly	Lise Fisher
Secretary	Maryam Wasim	Lise Fisher	Linda Allan
Treasurer	Christopher Kelly	Linda Allan	Lise Fisher

It was decided that the AGM will take place annually in March/April.