



Minutes of Meeting

Held on Zoom

Wednesday 23 June 2021 at 7:30pm

1. Chair's Welcome

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Present

The following were present:

CCllr Scot Van den Akker, Chair

CCllr Allan Steele, Secretary

CCllr Caroline Wilkinson, Treasurer

CCllr Jack Wells

CCllr Iain Wilkinson

Cllr Colm Merrick

Cllr Gordon Wallace

Mr Vincent McCulloch, East Renfrewshire Council Community Council Liaison Officer

3. Apologies

Apologies were received from:

CCllr Cristina Scheeffler

Provost Jim Fletcher

4. Minutes of Last Meeting

Minutes were not moved for adoption at the meeting, nor were amendments suggested. Matter to be carried forward.

5. Social Media

CCllr I Wilkinson provided a comprehensive update on social media. The intent is to re-establish Facebook and Twitter accounts to ensure that information is shared with the community. Problems were noted in accessing the Community Council's email address. It was suggested that a new account be set up.

The intent is not to re-new the website, but that may be returned to later.

The Chair thanked Cllr I Wilkinson for his ongoing work.

6. Planning

Cllr Cindy Berry provided a helpful overview of the main planning issues in Giffnock at this time. They were:

Davieland Road. Cllr Berry reported on the work being undertaken at Davieland Road. It was noted that this work is part of a 'spaces for people' project.

Academy Road. Cllr Berry provided a summary of the new restrictions at Academy Road.

Braidholm Road. Cllr Berry noted that following community input, Scottish Water amended its proposals at the public grassed area at the foot of Whitton Drive and Graffham Avenue.

It was noted that residents have been active in campaigning on the issue. A Facebook page, Braidholm Grass, has been established. Its effectiveness in corralling local opinion was noted and praised. The importance of individual named members of the community getting involved in such matters was highlighted by Cllr Steele. He pointed out that while the use of names for Facebook pages is very effective at amplifying local concerns (and has achieved significant success in this case), care must be taken to ensure that all individual voices are heard and understood.

A representative from Braidholm Grass is to be invited to the next meeting

- **Action** – Cllr Van den Akker.

Cllr Jack Wells offered his services in representing Community Council interests regarding the Scottish Water project.

Williamwood Shops. Cllr C Wilkinson provided an update on communication with East Renfrewshire Council. She queried how a planning application for a takeaway food shop could be agreed in the face of 33 objections. Cllr C Wilkinson reported that East Renfrewshire Council is not obliged to refuse a licence on the basis of the number of objections alone. There is no appeal process for residents.

Cllr C Wilkinson offered to share the response from East Renfrewshire Council.

- **Action** Cllr C Wilkinson

Eastwood Park Leisure Centre. Cllr Berry raised concerns about the proposals for development. She highlighted concern about the amount of green space due to be sacrificed and the multi million pound cost (£50 million was estimated). Cllr Berry also raised concern about plans to close Giffnock Library and move it to the new complex.

Cllr C Wilkinson expressed an alternative view and voiced support for the proposals and noted that this would provide an excellent facility in the local area.

Cllr Steele shared Cllr Berry's concerns. He raised concerns about threats to the allotment area, which local residents had approached him about. He also raised concern about the loss of green space and the significant expense involved at a time when all local authorities face unprecedented financial pressure.

Cllr Steele confirmed that he is a user of the current facility and whilst he agreed that elements of it were 'tired' and not state of the art, they are adequate and could be improved by an injection of significantly less than £50 million. Cllr Steele also commented on the excellence of the Leisure Trust staff who provide a community feel.

The Chair noted the need for more information before the Community Council could take a view.

Cllr Merrick commented that culture and leisure are important to the people of East Renfrewshire, and ERC has tried to respond to this. Cllr Merrick suggested that the Community Council should collate community responses to the proposals and engage with ERC.

Cllr Wallace stressed the importance of the Community Council getting involved in the consultation and listening to the different views expressed.

Cllr Merrick spoke of the importance of raising concerns with East Renfrewshire Council. Cllr Wallace noted the importance of the issue of allotments being raised.

7. Treasurer's Report

Bank Account. Cllr C Wilkinson confirmed that the Community Council holds two bank accounts. Balances of £2468.07 and £174 were reported.

The smaller account was maintained to support the defibrillator at Giffnock Library. The Chair confirmed that liability for the upkeep of the defibrillator had been passed to East Renfrewshire Council. This followed a previous input from Cllr Steele about the issue of liability. The Chair thanked East Renfrewshire Council for taking this obligation on.

Bank accounts will be transferred into Cllr C Wilkinson's name and new signatories will be appointed.

Grant. Mr McCulloch suggested that the Community Council apply for the annual grant it is entitled to from East Renfrewshire Council once the bank accounts have been updated. This was met with agreement.

8. Picking Up for Giffnock – Litter Collection Project

Cllr Steele provided an update on ongoing efforts throughout Giffnock to address litter problems, which he had previously remarked had become unacceptable.

Cllr Steele had prepared a draft email from the Community Council to send to East Renfrewshire Council. The Chair had not received it and asked for it to be re-sent.

Cllr Steele confirmed that he had been organising various litter collection events in Giffnock. The next one will be at 2pm on Saturday 26 June. He emphasised the dual

need for residents to take direct action, without compromising the service provided by East Renfrewshire Council.

CCllr C Wilkinson suggested that the Community Council should buy a supply of litter pickers.

CCllr Berry commented that East Renfrewshire Council should pay for the litter pickers.

9. Campaign to Reduce Loneliness in Giffnock

CCllr Scheeffer provided a well-received written update on her work in that regard following CCllr Steele highlighting the need to address loneliness at the previous meeting. CCllr C Wilkinson provided a summary.

CCllr Scheeffer's suggestions included gardening initiatives which could be combined with the litter collection work already underway. The formation of community gardening groups was suggested, with the Community Council taking a lead.

CCllr Steele suggested that the activity could be undertaken in local parks, where community gardening could thrive. The planting of meadow flowers in public spaces throughout was an option. CCllr Steele suggested that the planting of poppies wherever possible would be a fitting tribute to the fallen. CCllr C Wilkinson developed this further and mentioned the possibility of 'seed bombs'.

All were in agreement that CCllr Scheeffer's proposals were worth taking forward and her initiative and efforts were praised.

CCllr I Wilkinson spoke to Morrisons in relation to activities geared towards reducing loneliness, but they do not have anything up and coming. They may support suitable initiatives by offering meeting space, but that would be for the future.

10. AOCB

Lateral flow test kit distribution.

The Chair provided an update with CCllr Wells' insightful input. East Renfrewshire Council through their Environmental Health Team is promoting testing for COVID-19 for people without any symptoms. Additional testing sites have been set up across East Renfrewshire. Flyers are available with the test site information that can be dropped off for circulation within the community. Home test kits may also be able to be made available for distribution locally.

Up to date information on the local test sites can be found here:

<https://covid.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3708/Covid-19-testing-centres>

Additionally, Home Test Kits for Lateral Flow Testing can be ordered here:

<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

Defibrillator. The Chair confirmed an earlier point that the defibrillator had been transferred to East Renfrewshire Council.

Recording of Meetings. The Chair raised the issue of whether Community Council meetings can be recorded. This followed a question submitted by CCllr Scheeffer in writing. CCllr Steele, as Secretary advised that community council meetings are public meetings and that everything said in them is in the public forum. He noted how recording of parliaments is permissible. The Secretary advised that there is no legal reason why a community council meeting could not be recorded, but that the decision on whether it should happen was one for the Chair. Should the Chair direct recording of meetings, it would be a valid decision. Equally, should the Chair direct that meetings are not recorded, such direction would require to be followed by all community councillors present and failure to respect the Chair's decision could contravene the Code of Conduct.

Constitution. CCllr Steele, as Secretary confirmed the requirement for the new Community Council to adopt a constitution. A model constitution has helpfully been provided by East Renfrewshire Council. CCllr Steele explained that on re-establishment of the Community Council, a constitution ought to be agreed on and that the model provided would be sufficient. As it is drafted, it requires to be signed and dated. It may simply be a question of the Community Council adopting the model constitution in its entirety, though there is a right to amend as the Community Council sees fit. (Mr McCulloch offered another view, stating that it was not a new community council, as the Community Council was not dis-established).

Mr McCulloch stated that a constitution already exists and indicated that the Community Council cannot deviate from it unless permission has been granted by East Renfrewshire Council. CCllr Steele reminded the meeting that community councils are a tier of government in Scotland therefore must be autonomous from local authorities (but complementary to them). He emphasised that there should be no attempt to act outside the bounds of what is permissible, but for various reasons, to include liability, the Community Council should address the issue to protect itself and its members.

CCllr Steele concluded by confirming that his advice as the Secretary was simply advice and it will always be for the Community Council to decide whether it is to be followed.

Global Warming. Cllr Merrick highlighted that community councils can take action locally to raise awareness and encourage change at a community level.

11. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the Community Council would meet on Wednesday 25 August at 7:30pm. If circumstances allow, it might be in person.

The meeting ended with thanks to the Chair.

Allan Steele WS
Secretary, Giffnock Community Council