

HOUSTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Title: Houston Community Council Meeting
August 2018

Location: Carrick Centre, Main, St Houston

Time: 7:30pm

Ref: HCC/08/2018

Date: 15/08/18

Sheet: 1 of 6

Present

John McEvoy (jmc)
David Dunlop (dd)
John Chambers (jc)
Sharon Chambers (sc)
Mark Arthur (ma)
Janet Mason (jm)
Kathy McFall
Elizabeth Dalgetty
Jake Fulton (jf)
Gordon Wright (gw)

Representing

Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council

HCC position

Chair
Vice-Chair
Treasurer

In Attendance

Jill Jack (jj)
S Campbell
Cllr James Sheridan (js)
Cllr Audrey Doig (ad)
PC Martin Norwood
PC Brian Dick
Representatives from SPT
and Cllr McGurk

Representing

Houston Community Council Secretary
SGN
Renfrewshire Council (RC)
Renfrewshire Council (RC)
Police Scotland
Police Scotland

Apologies

Cllr Scott Kerr (sk)
Helen Parker (hp)
Carol Murray (cm)
Nigel Hobbs (nh)
Gavin Newlands

Representing

Renfrewshire Council (RC)
Houston Community Council (HCC)
Houston Community Council (HCC)
Houston Community Council (HCC)
MSP

Distribution: HCC members and uploaded onto HCC website and issued to Renfrewshire Council

Minutes taken by: Jill Jack

Meeting chaired by: John McEvoy

1.0 Apologies

Apologies noted by the people above.

2.0 Approval of Previous Minutes

David Dunlop approved June's minutes and seconded by Gordon Wright.

3.0 Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

Refer to HCC action log.

4.0 Police Report

4.1 PC Dick and Norwood left the meeting after police report given.

4.2 5 offences with 2 detected during period 18/07 to 14/08. Summary:

1 x theft of tools from lockup in Whirlie Rd

1 x theft of cash stolen from house

1 x serious assault in public house

1 x common assault outside shop

1 x road traffic offence of disqualified driver and other offences

4.3 Several instances of egg throwing at houses. On one occasion 12 eggs hit a window. The Houston Co-op have moved eggs to back of store. Police are pursuing culprits and have CCTV.

4.4 Resident raised speeding on Crosslee Rd (near fireworks factory). Police advised they will monitor and get traffic police involved.

4.5 Community Police organising football tournament on Friday 28/09 between 10am and 8pm. Requested representative from HCC to attend at 1.15pm.

5.0 Gas Mains Replacement Works on Barochan Road – Update by Project Manager S Campbell

5.1 Main St completed on 02/08.

5.2 Old Schoolhouse Lane and Cricketfield Lane will take 4 weeks mainly consisting of footpaths and private gardens. This will be followed by Haggart Lane with full completion due by October which is well ahead of schedule.

5.3 Houston Inn and Fox n Hounds happy with how works have gone and there have been no enquires or complaints to date. John McEvoy complimented SGN on excellent works so far.

6.0 Discussion of Local Bus Service Issues with SPT - Houston to Paisley Service.

6.1 Houston residents in attendance along with SPT and Cllr McGurk.

6.2 Janet Mason advised that the bus service is non-existent from Houston to Paisley.

Linking up with other routes and connections especially for elderly residents getting to RAH (3 buses) is causing a huge inconvenience, taking an hour and a half to get there. Residents feel virtually cut off and discriminating against those who don't have cars.

6.3 SPT advised they cannot over subsidise a bus service and travel over a commercial bus journey. McGills withdrew due to low usage and wasn't making money. You have Johnstone for access for interchange for rail and bus services.

6.4 SPT were asked if they audit McGills? SPT advised they have sight of ticket machine data analysis which they can't disprove. Commercial companies do not need to disclose accounts. EU procurement allows anyone to bid for a route which runs during the day and

another contract can be issued for a night service with potentially different ticket systems in operation.

6.5 Resident asked if a Houston to Paisley service could operate not stopping in Linwood and then no overlap of service. Cllr Doig suggested Georgetown Rd as a viable route into Paisley which would not overlap other services. McGills have roughshod other smaller companies off the road and villages are suffering with students and young people also affected by the lack of bus service.

6.6 Residents are having to rise very early due to 3 buses to connect with, also involving taxis and lifts. People have lost jobs as cannot get to work on time and local companies have difficulty in recruiting. People depend on this service.

6.7 SPT advised no influence over commercial operations (McGills) and passengers declining nationally.

6.8 Cllr Sheridan asked what has changed regarding concerns raised at last meeting? How many tendering contracts have been awarded? SPT advised one, probably due to cost and those choosing not to apply. Emails are sent to all operators inviting to apply. Cllr Sheridan advised this is due to monopoly that McGills have.

6.9 SPT have £10m to cover West of Scotland services and only £148K left of budget. Need to make sure effective use of money. If possible connect another bus service and lobby politicians to receive a better service to Houston.

6.10 Cllr McGurk advised if you override another bus service you could be sued. There has been no strategic delivery for several years. "My bus service" is a rural service for smaller communities and is being looked at. Need to provide a basic bus service for young workers, students and the elderly. Single operator monopoly McGills runs the structure. It is our job to make up the slack. The transport bill will take many years to progress and go through consultation. Could a group of individuals form a travel club? – Yes, although concessionary travel would not apply.

6.11 SPT agreed to look at the options for a service from Houston to Paisley via Georgetown Rd.

6.12 Cllr McGurk also advised that The Board still to meet re car parking charges in Johnstone with indication that charges will be abandoned.

7.0 Houston House/Elderslie Estates Padlocked Gates

7.1 Resident asked re ownership of Houston House and Elderslie Estates as gates padlocked restricting access for rights to roam. John McEvoy confirmed owned separately.

7.2 Suggested gates potentially locked due to dog fouling and items being stolen.

7.3 Resident had previously contacted Jamie McKay who was the local access officer but is no longer in post.

7.4 Mark Arthur agreed to approach nursery and Elderslie Estates as a resident to find out why gates locked and feedback to resident.

8.0 Councillors Reports

Cllr Jim Sheridan

8.1 Carparking charges in Johnstone hopefully not proceeding.

8.2 Citizens Advice Bureau set to close in Paisley. Do not want to lose this facility. Negotiations ongoing to try and save.

8.3 Successful in securing a new bus shelter opposite GHS on Bridge of Weir Rd through Drew McNab.

Cllr Audrey Doig

8.4 School littering – Strathclyde Police agreed to send letters to guardians/parents for any child caught littering. This is being taken to Community Policing.

8.5 Winter entertainment – commitment from the Events Team to take to the wider community. Great to see rural events in local villages.

9.0 Treasurers Report

9.1 Income and expenditure covered for period 20/06 – 15/08. Opening balance £5743. Income £547 which includes Houston Show and HMRC VAT return. Expenditure £1004 including Secretary, insurance, hall hire, McLarens, ICO fee, Grants, plants/materials. Closing balance £5285.

Bee Happy balance to date £479.

9.2 Not included in balance above LAC Grants Christmas lights/gardening £15,000, LAC Grant Micro Hydro Scheme £4123, Bee Happy Kirk Carnival £152, McLarens -£137 and Grants -£250.

9.3 Outstanding signature for LAC grant being actioned.

9.4 £100 from Rotary Club handed into Village Shop to be included in report.

10.0 Secretary Report

10.1 Paisley & Gryffe Transport Forum. Summary of Response from Brian Turner:

Surprised at HCCs arguments not to support. Advised the integrity of the "cycle track" would be preserved. The presence of the railway, with the small sacrifice of the occasional train, would take the pressure off dangerous and inadequate roads.

Appreciate the problem on "how to improve access to the cycle track. The restoration would provide "park and ride" at points along its length. Relevant sites being Sandholes Rd/Merchiston areas of Brookfield, the eastern or western ends of Bridge of Weir or the car park near Tesco Linwood.

Re costs - finance is available at present to Renfrewshire Council under the "Greater Glasgow City Deal Plan" for improving its transport infrastructure. It is up to localities to press where it should best be spent.

Re "greener options", this is a significant factor in influencing our proposals. Not all are able to use a bicycle. Trains represent less pollution than a car. We envisage trains introduced would be electric or hybrid diesel/battery operated.

The forum is concerned about the long-term future of the area. With more houses being built (all with car-dependent householders), overcrowded schools and medical services, something must be done to anticipate and curb the future trends. Sorry that HCC is not prepared to support, though grateful for offer to publicise "any communication on HCC Facebook page. They will continue to exploit the opportunities which now exist to improve the situation for the future.

10.2 Correspondence from Maurice Golden MSP

The Great British High St Awards 2018, offering High Streets across UK the chance of winning up to £10k for their local community.

There will be 2 categories of winner in Scotland: Champion High St and Rising Star High St. The former will recognise the overall best High St while the latter will focus on the High St that is most ambitious in adapting and diversifying. In addition, there will also be an overall UK winner.

Nominated High Streets will also benefit from a visit from official teams who will carry out promotional work and organise activities for local shoppers and businesses.

I would encourage you to nominate your local High St and get as many residents as possible involved in supporting the bid.

Nominations are open until 22/08 and you can submit entries and read more about awards at www.thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk

11.0 Chair Report

11.1 Renfrewshire Council replied to my FOI request of 7 June, saying that they were taking no action against Barratt Homes, but did write to them telling them to sell no more homes on their development on the site of the former Merchiston Hospital until after the associated road works had been completed.

Because they didn't tell what sanctions were available to them I had to ask for an internal review which referred me to the Town and Country Planning Act (Scotland) 1997 and I was also sent a link to the Council's Planning Enforcement Charter. The Act explained that the Council could have issued a Planning Contravention Notice or an Enforcement Notice and that failure to comply with either of these would be an offence. The Council, however, chose to do neither of these, despite Barratt Homes blatantly acting in defiance of terms of their planning consent.

11.2 Wrote to Elderslie Estates with suggested dates to meet to discuss establishing a cycle path and inviting them to suggest alternative dates and am currently awaiting their reply.

11.3 Forwarded emails dating from October 2017 about white lines on B789 Barrochan Road/Barochan Road to Councillor Sheridan as requested and received a response from Renfrewshire Council saying that the white lining work the B789\B790 had been completed. Since this is obviously untrue I have written to the Council again, pointing this out and asking for the work to be carried out. I also reminded them that I first asked for the white lining to be renewed in October 2017.

11.4 Wrote to Mary McElhinney of Linwood Community Council clarifying our position that we had no criticism of the work being done by our elected Renfrewshire Councillors.

11.5 Invited Councillor Iain Nicolson, Renfrewshire Council Leader and Sandra Black, Renfrewshire Council Chief Executive to attend our meeting in either September or October. Councillor Nicolson has responded saying that he can attend the October meeting.

11.6 The Co-op Local Community Team has acknowledged our application for funding and advised that we will learn in October if we have been successful. They may be in touch before then to ask for further details.

11.7 Renfrewshire Council has told us that we, in common with other community groups and individuals, can "opt in" to receive notification of proposed public processions, so that we can have our say or raise concerns. I posted this on our Facebook Page, but we should agree a view on whether we would like to opt in. HCC agreed to "opt in" to receive notifications.

11.8 The Neilston Development Trust has written to us asking us to support and become involved in a project to create a Renfrewshire tapestry. We need to agree a view on the extent of any support or involvement that we commit to. HCC agreed to support.

12.0 Update on Tree and Flower Planting Programme for approval and Benches Purchase Update

12.1 Subcommittee met to discuss projects following £7500 LAC grant. Mark Faichey RC offered an annual lease at no cost to land beside Houston Primary School and at Mansefield behind the roundabout sign. This may also stop future developments. There is potential for a Community orchard in both locations with woodland planting. Land and roads all indicate council land for both sites. Will check that liability is held with the Council. All agreed to take this over.

12.2 Budget spend:

£2150 orchard planting of fruit trees and small trees from Woodland Trust. John Hancock will support with correct positioning of plants/trees. RC have no issues with maintaining the ground.

£1800 additional planters

£1400 shrubs including borders and spring planting

£750 – 10,000 bulbs

£500 - gardening tools

£900 – additional two benches, with location to be agreed

13.0 HCC Christmas Light Display and Community Switch On 01/12/18

13.1 £7500 awarded through LAC funding.

13.2 Winter lights will remain on until the start of Spring 2019.

13.3 Mark has drawn up a detailed activity schedule and the subcommittee will meet to discuss including closure of roads on the day.

13.4 A cost estimate was also presented for the purchase of new lights, allowing display to extend to Crosslee.

13.5 Mark Arthur will email report to HCC members.

14.0 Update on Progress with Micro-Hydro Electricity Generating Project

14.1 Full report will be provided at next meeting. John McEvoy asked Mark if he had established who owns the potential site. Potential sites owned by Elderslie Estates. Also, opportunity to have community charging points for cars. This needs to be in by March 2019 to export to grid. Heat and transportation are key for the project.

15.0 Bee Happy Update

15.1 Spend of £522 has been on 3 main items:

£160 on plants for St Fillans

£145 watercarts and hoes

£106 rakes, forks and spades

Meeting closed at 9:35pm. Next meeting to be held on Wednesday 19 September at 7:30pm in the Carrick Centre.

