

HOUSTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Title: Houston Community Council Meeting
October 2019

Location: Carrick Centre, Main, St Houston

Time: 7:30pm

Ref: HCC/16/10/2019

Date: 16/10/19

Sheet: 1 of 4

Present

Nigel Hobbs (nh)

David Dunlop (dd)

John Chambers (jc)

Sharon Chambers (sc)

John McEvoy (jmc)

Carol Murray (cm)

Janet Mason (jm)

Mark Arthur (ma)

Gordon Wright (gw)

Marion McEvoy (mm)

Pauline Purcell (pp)

Debbie Hobbs (dh)

Ian Andrew (ia)

Bill Haddow (bh)

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

Houston Community Council

Houston Community Council

Houston Community Council

Houston Community Council

HCC position

Chair

Vice Chair

Treasurer

Ex Officio

Cllr Jim Sheridan (js)

Cllr Audrey Doig (ad)

Representing

Renfrewshire Council (rc)

Renfrewshire Council (rc)

In Attendance

PC Brian Dick

PC Martin Norwood

Representing

Police Scotland (ps)

Police Scotland (ps)

Apologies

Mark Arthur

Kathy McFall

Cllr Allison Dowling (ald)

Representing

Houston Community Council

Houston Community Council

Renfrewshire Council (rc)

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

Minutes taken by: John McEvoy

1) Previous Minutes Approved by Gordon Wright and Janet Mason

2) Chairman's Welcome

Chairman Nigel Hobbs thanked John McEvoy for his leadership and all the office bearers for their hard work over the last 4 years, thanked the returning council members for standing for election again, and welcomed the newly elected members to the community council. He went on to say

“Thank you for giving me the opportunity to chair this community council. I will certainly do my best to steer us in a direction that best benefits the local community of Houston. I’m happy to run meeting and represent the community council at wider forums, but I’m not doing all the work here! We’re a team and if we’re going to succeed and have a positive influence within the local and wider community then I need every one of you to step up and contribute to overcoming the challenges that will lie ahead of us.

I would like to think the reason we’ve all stood to be members of this community council is because we have a passion for our local community.

We want to protect and enhance the area we live in.

John has already outlined the positive contribution that the Houston Community Council has made over the last 4 years and I’d like to think that as a team we can continue to have a positive impact on our community.

It’s important that we use our time wisely and choose to campaign for causes and projects that benefit the community and those that we can influence and add value to.

I think it’s important that we map out what we wish to achieve over the next 4 years and evaluate those ideas and prioritise. Can I ask that you all give this some thought and bring your ideas along to the next Community Council meeting in November.”

3) Summary of Work of Previous Community Council

Chairman NH invited outgoing Chairman JMc to give a summary report of the work done by the last community council. This appears as an appendix to these minutes.

4) School Update

Due to the October holiday there was no school update.

5) Police Report

Between 18 September and 16 October there were 7 recorded crimes, two of which had been detected.

1 x theft of red diesel, 1 theft of a valuable bicycle

1 x domestic assault and communications offence, 1 x broken window, 1x use of car to damage a property, 1 x hit and run, 1 x speeding

Constable Brian Dick confirmed that they would attend the Christmas light switch-on event on 1 December.

6) Councillors Reports

Cllr Audrey Doig.

Had been contacted by senior pupils at Gryffe High School re position of electric vehicle charging points. This has strong support among staff and pupils and the site will be surveyed.

Because these points had to be on Council-owned land the first proposal was the car park in North Street but the cost of the installation and lighting the area was prohibitive.

Plans for the building of the new Houston nursery and the demolition of the old one are advanced. It looks “amazing” and will provide an increased number of places for children.

The new Transport Bill has been passed by the Scottish Parliament and parking on pavements will become illegal unless the local Council determines otherwise for a specific area. Residents can request that the Council allows pavement parking in their area.

Spoke to the tenant farmer at Gryffe Wraes Farm and he was supportive of the new cycle path going through his land, should that be the route chosen for it.

Cllr. James Sheridan

The ban on pavement parking was introduced with good intentions but could have unintended consequences.

Many residents are concerned about cars speeding in Houston.

A survey of school crossing patrols has been conducted and Houston might get an additional one.

He had met with representatives of Cala Homes and reiterated the strong local feelings re another proposed development.

Cala couldn't provide a figure for how much an affordable house would cost.

Cllr. Sheridan reminded them of the situation in Linwood where there was no demand for 4 and 5 bed roomed houses. He also pointed out that there was a lack of accommodation for the elderly.

He repeated his view that Houston had already “done its bit” for providing houses.

Cala homes had invited Houston Community Council to meet with them and it was agreed to invite representatives of Cala homes to the November meeting to give a presentation.

NH asked JS if the work on the metal bridge had been completed. JS told the group that the workmen were removing the trees and killing the roots to stop them undermining the bridge.

JS left the meeting after giving his report.

7) Treasurers Report

The Treasurer's report had been given at the AGM, which immediately preceded the ordinary meeting.

8) Former Chairman's Report

1. Outgoing Chairman JMc thanked everyone for their hard work over the last four years, saying thanks to you all, Houston is a significantly better place now than it was four years ago.

2. Submitted Public Entertainment Licence application for Christmas lights switch-on to Renfrewshire Council and posted Display Notice on Main Street

3. Purchased 600 Santa hats for free distribution at Switch-on

4. As agreed, submitted an objection on behalf of Houston Community Council to Planning Application 19/0626/PP by Cala Homes and DM Hall to build residential development on

land south of Woodend House and posted notice on our Facebook page inviting residents to do the same.

5. Received email from Pentland Communications on behalf of Cala Homes asking to meet us to keep us up to date with the progress of the above application. Pentland's website tell us that they pride themselves on their political know how and their ability to deliver hard hitting results for their clients. Gave our agreed response that we were currently stood down and that we would decide about meeting them after our AGM. Asked that in the meantime they kept us up to date using HCC email address.

6. Renfrewshire Council emailed to say that the Royal British Legion Remembrance Day wreath laying ceremony would be at 10.00 am at the War Memorial.

7. Councillor Scott Kerr forwarded an email from Renfrewshire Council saying that interim works on the metal footbridge at Ardgryffe Crescent were being carried out following the removal of several trees. This included preventative measures to stop the drainage issue at the south side and additional fencing.

Renfrewshire Council are still awaiting further information from Taylor Wimpey on any proposals for the permanent bridge repairs/ replacement. They will continue to keep you updated as this matter develops.

8. The Coop Community Team emailed inviting us to publicise our cause on social media, encouraging residents to elect to have their funds allocated to us.

9) Action Log

Metal Bridge NH raised the action point re the metal bridge with JS before he left the meeting.

Benches GW reported that the benches were ready and were awaiting installation. The company responsible for this had agreed to contact GW but had not yet done so.

Micro-hydro Project The services of a company to carry out an ecology report had been secured.

Second Defibrillator SC reported that there had been no further progress to date and that this would be a slow process

Community Speed Watch NH reported that the Police Area Commander had approved Houston to be a pilot area and would provide the equipment and speed-measuring device. The police will determine where the speed monitoring will be conducted, will provide training and are looking for 6 volunteers. The pilot project will start at the end of March 2020 and could only be carried out in daylight. Since it takes two to three months for volunteers to be vetted by the police, anyone interested should apply now/

10) Christmas Lights & Festive Event

MA had apologised for the meeting so there was no report. Subcommittee members confirmed that plans for the event were progressing well.

11) AOCB

Further discussion took place re meeting with Cala Homes and it was agreed to invite them to give a presentation at our November meeting. PP suggested we take the opportunity to ask for conditions and tell us what they are prepared to do for the village in the event that any development went ahead

Meeting closed at 8.50 pm. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 20th November 2019 at 7.30pm in the Carrick Centre.

Appendix

Houston Community Summary Report Council 2015-2019

I would like to thank all those Community Councillors who, over the last four years, have worked enormously hard to make Houston an even better place to live. This is a summary of what we got up to during that time.

We started the Houston Community Council Facebook page which has contributed significantly to us fulfilling our primary statutory purpose of ascertaining, co-ordinating and reflecting the views of our community and then expressing those views to Renfrewshire Council and other public bodies.

We have raised well over £50,000 in grants and sponsorship, and all of this has gone to improving life in Houston.

Much of this was spent on our Christmas lights displays and switch-on events which have proved to be highly popular and have contributed significantly to promoting a sense of community in Houston.

An approximately equal amount has been used to support the work of the volunteers of Bee Happy Houston who have done a marvellous job of making Houston so beautiful.

We have also supported the work of the Houston Litter Crew, who do so much to keep our village looking wonderful.

We became VAT registered, allowing us to reclaim thousands of pounds of tax and using these funds to help us improve Houston even further.

We led a successful campaign to reverse the Local Government Boundaries Commission (Scotland's) decision to split Houston between two electoral wards, under which the village centre and Crosslee would have been put into a separate ward from Craigends. The support of our residents was critical to this outcome with 995 of them submitting comments to the LGBC opposed to the change.

We also successfully challenged the Westminster Parliamentary Boundaries Commission proposal to place us in a new constituency with places like Largs, Millport and West Kilbride. Houston will now be in a much more rational constituency along with our neighbouring villages with whom we have close links.

We lobbied our MSPs to conduct surveys of residents' views on reducing the speed limit on our residential streets to 20 mph. Both surveys showed strong support for this and Renfrewshire Council is currently considering what action to take and we remain hopeful that this change will be implemented.

We worked with other community councils to ensure that Renfrewshire Council reversed its decision to downgrade our local amenity sites. They were restored shortly afterwards. We engaged a firm of tree surgeons to carry out much needed remedial work on and around the historic Craighends Yew and we have paid for the path leading to it from Gryfebank Avenue to be upgraded. In 2016, thanks to strong support from Houston residents, the tree came second in the Woodland Trust Tree of the Year Competition. We also had a plinth erected on site detailing the history of the tree.

We made strong representations to Renfrewshire Council on their 2017 Main Issues Report and their 2019 Proposed Local Development Plan opposing inappropriate and unnecessary local developments that would put unacceptable strains on our resources and infrastructure. One notable success was the refusal of the planning application by Gladman Developments for a large housing development on Crosslee Road close to Barrochan Road.

We commissioned a feasibility study for a pico-hydro electricity generating scheme on the Houston Burn. The scheme will have environmental and educational benefits in addition to generating funds that can be used for the benefit of the community. This project has now moved on to an assessment of its environmental impact. When this has been completed we will be in a position to put the proposal to a public consultation with our residents.

We worked with the Johnstone Business Consortium, Johnstone Community Council and others to oppose Renfrewshire Council's proposal to introduce car parking charges in Johnstone. These plans were abandoned.

We have applied to Sustrans for funding to construct a cycle path between Houston and Bridge of Weir. This will improve the opportunity for sustainable travel between the two villages, allow schoolchildren from Bridge of Weir to cycle safely to school in Houston and provide access for our residents to the National Cycle Network.

We have installed a community defibrillator in the village centre, which has the potential to save lives, and plans for a second defibrillator to be sited in Crosslee are at an advanced stage.

We have secured the support of Police Scotland to initiate a Community Speed Watch Campaign.