



**Minutes taken by:** Harry Manley

1) **Previous Minutes** Noted. Approved by Kathy McFall and Ian Anderson

2) **Police Report**

Police Officer reported for 17/6/20 to 18/8/20 the following incidents:

- Common Assault (1 in house)
- Theft (2 bicycles, 1 attempt to vehicle)
- Anti-Social Behaviour (1 damage to a fence)
- Drug Offences (1 possession)
- Road Traffic Offences (1 dangerous driving and various other offences)
- Other (2 fraud, 1 communications offence)

3) **School Update**

Colin Johnson was representing Gryffe High School. CJ started off by informing those present that on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> of August a large number of young people (about 150) had gathered in the Houston neighbourhood. He is meeting with the Police, Councillor Sheridan and some local residents to discuss the details of what happened and possible ways they can try and predict where events like this may happen in the future in order to prevent them. CJ explained the ways the school was complying with the Government Guidelines on Covid-19 now that the pupils are back to school. He also spoke about the SQA exam results, they have made improvements in every area since last year. CJ mentioned about Her Majesty's Inspection Report, the School was inspected at the end of February and the statement was due to be released during lockdown, however CJ asked that they postponed the result until the end of the lockdown. The report was therefore published last week and the School was the first school in Scotland to receive an Excellent from the new method of inspection introduced in 2017. The School got an Excellent in Attainment and Achievement and a Very Good for Learning and Teaching, no School in Scotland has received a report better than that, and Gryffe High now sits with one of the best reports in Scotland.

NH congratulated CJ and asked him whether the pupils were still going from one class to another or was there some kind of 'bubble' of 30 pupils who stayed in one classroom. CJ responded by saying that the pupils in the lower school of 1<sup>st</sup> year and 2<sup>nd</sup> year stay in one group throughout the day and travel to classes together and they sit in the same seats with a seating plan, if an individual tests positive, they know who they have been sitting next to and can then proceed with the Government and Local Authority's guidelines to get them to self-isolate.

DD asked if the school was doing anything for those students who struggle the most with learning after they leave school and if they can try to help them find employment opportunities. CJ assured DD that they look after all the students in the school and help them to achieve the best results they can, he said that the Excellent on the School Report highlights this.

CJ informed those present that the school roll was now 983, JMc asked if the school was at 100% capacity, CJ answered that the highest it had ever been before was 963 so they have a long waiting list and are using all the space they currently have.

4) **Councillors' Reports**

The report from Councillor Audrey Doig is as follows:

I would like to extend my congratulations to Mr Colin Johnson, the Headteacher of Gryffe High and his staff team, the Gryffe High Parent Council, and all the pupils of the school, for being the first secondary school in Scotland to achieve an Excellent grading from Education Scotland. One of the key aspects which led to that excellent grading was the strong and effective leadership shown by the whole school community. This is an outstanding national as well as local achievement and I am proud to have such a superb school in my ward.

I would echo the comments of other council colleagues from Bridge of Weir that the new cycle lane, Between Houston and Bridge of Weir, which Houston Community Council and Sustrans have been working on, will undoubtedly provide a green and health dividend for all members of the two communities as well as school pupils at Gryffe High. And as the mother of a former Gryffe High Head Boy, I know that the staff will be as likely to welcome this new cycle path as much as the pupils as this would allow more staff to cycle to Gryffe High too.

I was first contacted by parents who were constituents of mine in the Houston area, who have all been cycling as families during the lockdown, who wanted a new cycle lane to allow their children to continue to cycle safely to Gryffe High and beyond to Bridge of Weir. I gave this idea 100% support and I would like to congratulate Houston Community Council for their successful campaign to get this cycle path introduced.

We may be at the beginning of the end of the Lockdown, and council boards are beginning once again, albeit by social media, for the first time since March when Lockdown was declared. It is estimated we may not be fully back to physical board and council meetings at least until the end of the year. I very much welcome the normal resumption of council business and hope we get there as soon as possible, whilst still observing safety measures.

#### **5) Treasurer's Report**

NH tabled an update on income and expenditure for the previous two months. A copy of this is available on request.

#### **6) Chairman's Report**

- I. There is little information coming our way from Renfrewshire Council and with the Community Council Forum meetings still suspended I can't see that changing in the near future.
- II. The next meeting of the Villages Local Partnership has been postponed from August until Thursday 17th September and will now be held online.
- III. St Fillan's have contacted us to say that they (and Houston Primary) have reached their funding target (with the help of the Co-op) to transform the underpass. They are looking for suggestions for someone to help lead the project. KM suggested Steve Blackmore, a local mural artist. KM will contact him and inform him of the project.
- IV. Brian Dick of Police Scotland and Cllr Sheridan have both contacted me regarding the recent disturbances in the village by youths. The Police inform me that last Saturday night there were two gatherings in the village of c150 youths. An increased Police presence is planned over the coming weekends along with Police on

horseback. Cllr Sheridan has organised a 'Face to Face' meeting between concerned local residents and the Police tomorrow evening, I will also be attending.

- V. The following local resident issues have been taken up with Renfrewshire Council:
- a. I've had a number of requests from a local residents and Jake regarding the lowering of kerbs for wheelchair access on Ardgryfe Crescent near the metal bridge, Renfrewshire Council are still looking into a solution for this.
  - b. Jake has also raised the state of repair of the railing fence on the main road by the Crosslee play park. Renfrewshire Council have said they've no budget for the repair and painting of the fence and have pointed us in the direction of the Greenspaces Fund which they believe was put in place for this type of village enhancement. KM asked if residents would be allowed to paint the fence themselves. JF said that while they would be allowed to paint the fence, the state of the fence and the length of it would require a large amount of work. NH suggested that we wait until the fence is repaired, possibly through grant money, before attempting to paint it.
  - c. Requests have been made to Renfrewshire Council to cut the hedgerows on Barrochan road and Houston Road between Kirk road and the play park as they have overgrown the path causing pedestrians to have to walk on the road. Renfrewshire Council have confirmed that they will inspect the pathways and take the appropriate action.

#### 7) Action Log

NH took the group through the Action Log which will be updated for the next meeting. All projects were progressing successfully.

#### 8) Connecting Houston Update

DD informed those present that he has had a number of meetings with Peter Leslie. Peter Leslie has said that Connecting Houston has been successful in obtaining £50,000 to progress the project. DD said that the focus for the upcoming month will be to try and progress the link between Bridge of Weir and Houston. They have engaged the Landowner to the North of Houston Road and have planned a meeting with Councillor Don to discuss how to move the project forward and get Bridge of Weir involved in the project. He is trying to meet the various Landowners by the end of August and assess their position on making land available for the project. Part of the £50,000 will be spent on the actual delivery of the project if they can secure larger funding, the money will mainly be focused on the feasibility work of the project.

NH asked DD how he planned to deal with public consultation due to the current situation. DD responded by suggesting that they focus on using a virtual platform to connect with places such as Gryffe High School and local churches to discuss ideas with them. He also suggested that they can use their Facebook page to promote the project and get as many people involved as possible.

NH asked if there was a time limit on the money given. DD said that they should have completed the public consultation and the feasibility study by the end of the year.

JMC asked if it was possible to go through the MSPs or using some of the £50,000 given to fund a consultation by post to ensure that residents who do not have access to internet can give their views on the project. DD said that he would ask Peter Leslie if this was a feasible idea. JMC also asked if they could tie this in with MA's hydroelectric project. MA suggested that they have to establish what they are legally required to consult the community on and then build on that to add items they believe the community should know.

#### **9) Social Media**

KM informed those present that she will be stepping down from the social media page and intends to spend more time focusing on the HCC website and leave it to the rest of the administration team.

NH thanked Kathy for the years she has spent running the page and suggested that they should use this opportunity to promote HCC better by using the website. KM agreed and suggested that the minutes from the meeting be circulated throughout HCC to be ratified and then posted to the HCC Facebook page so that more people can access and view them. NH agreed and asked if anybody had any objections. No one did.

NH then asked the remaining administrators if they need a fourth person to replace KM. They said that they did not feel the need at the moment.

#### **10) Walk Around Houston Update**

JF said that the Houston Historical Society members have all been assigned specific areas to research and are currently doing that. JF will check up on them soon to see what progress they are making.

#### **11) A.O.C.B.**

NH said that all the paperwork required to get a Public Entertainment License for the Houston Light Switch-On has been completed but must be submitted by the end of August. He asked those present if they think they should go ahead with the Light Switch-On due to Covid-19. MA said that even if they wanted to put it on, they might not be able to due to the insurance policy which would likely not cover an event of 1,000 people during a pandemic. All members agreed that it would be too risky to host the event. KM asked if they would continue with Kids competition to design Christmas lights as they were running out of storage space and in danger of having too many Christmas lights. MA responded by saying that the lights only have a life expectancy of 5-6 years so storage would not be too much of an issue as the old ones start to be replaced by the new; he also said that the kids love the competition and so he believes that it should carry on. MA will draft a statement to inform residents that the Light Switch-On will not carry on, but the competition will.

NH said that the Carrick Centre is open again and should current guidelines change, he asked if those present thought they should move back to physical meetings. Those present agreed that they should move back as soon as it is safe to do so and will wait for future updates.

BH asked if HCC had been made aware of the new mobile coffee shop that has been set-up outside of the Doctors Surgery. NH said that they had not been made aware of it but he would update if any news came through.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Date of next meeting: 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020.