

Minutes taken by: Harry Manley

1) **Previous Minutes** Noted. Approved by David Dunlop and John McEvoy

2) **Police Report**

Police Officer reported for 18/8/20 to 16/9/20 the following incidents:

- Theft (1 Theft of Apple ear buds)
- Anti-Social Behaviour (1 breach of the peace)
- Other (1 Fraud/Internet, 1 Fraud/bank account, 1 Fraud/Take out finance, 1 Communications Act-threats over the phone, 1 theft of a motor vehicle,)

3) **School Update**

Colin Johnson and the two School Captains, Calum and Rachel, were representing Gryffe High School. C and R started off by giving a brief overview of the groups they oversee and the committees they are involved in. The Eco-Committee is currently trying to get another electric car charging point near the school, they successfully got one installed last year, they are also planning an October vegetarian week to promote the benefits of vegetarianism. The Charities Committee have just launched their virtual 3K Fun Run where participants are encouraged to run 3K, donate £3, and recruit 3 more people to participate, all money raised will go to Beatson Cancer Charity. The Citizenship Committee is focusing on contacting a Charity called 'The Night Before Christmas' which helps give homeless and poor children in the Renfrewshire area Christmas presents. The Wellbeing Committee is running the 'Find Your Angel' campaign which will contact local business and give them a slogan which people can go into the business and say if they are feeling distressed or have any problems, the businesses will be trained on how to support these people in a very discrete way. The Pupil Voice Committee is trying to get more voices around the School heard and they have just started a Pupil Council which will be starting projects soon. The Communities Committee is campaigning for the cycle track between Gryffe High School and Bridge of Weir, they have also organised litter picking and at least eight Prefects go out every day along two routes, one along South Street and the other by the Co-op.

JF asked if they were aware of machines that give you money back for every empty can you place into them. The pupils were not aware but will report this back to the Eco-Committee.

DD informed those from the School of the Connecting Houston Project and explained the benefits it would bring to the School and its pupils. They were very receptive of the idea and expressed their desire to help in any way possible.

CJ further expanded on the litter picking and explained that they are doing much more this year than they have ever done before. He also complimented the pupils for their efforts in keeping the school a safe and clean place following the restrictions due to Covid-19 and briefly went over the measures they are taking to ensure the safety of the Staff and pupils.

4) **Councillors' Reports**

The report from Councillor Audrey Doig is as follows:

I have had a large number of enquiries about the biodiversity project across Renfrewshire, which the administration is piloting. There is currently a consultation which the Council is running concerning which areas should be selected for biodiversity projects. As this should be ultimately determined by the wider community, in each area, I strongly encourage all members of the Houston Community Council to participate and help shape how biodiversity will happen in Houston, and in which areas you feel it is most appropriate.

I have examined the projects contained within the Houston Community Council's four-year plan, and I think they all have great merit. As one of the longer-serving Councillors in the ward I am very aware of the importance of listening to constituents, first and foremost, and I will do anything I can to progress these agreed projects if the Community Council wish me to.

I have just been informed this evening that a pupil from Gryffe High has tested positive for Covid 19. But I have also been assured that the genesis of the problem did not arise within Gryffe High itself but is connected to another pupil who attends Johnstone High. We must all be so careful these days but as someone who loves to meet and chat to people I find I am really missing the various community events which are popular in Houston, particularly the outstanding fundraising breakfasts provided at Kilallan Kirk, where people often share their concerns and worries with me. Such events are, however understandably prohibited at the moment, nonetheless, still a loss to us all.

No other Councillors were present or submitted reports

5) Treasurer's Report

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

6) Chairman's Report

- 1) I will be attending the next meeting of the Villages Local Partnership on Thursday 17th September, this will be held online.
- 2) I attended a meeting on Thursday 20th August arranged by Cllr Jim Sheridan at Gryffe High School to discuss the recent youth gatherings/disturbances in the village. In attendance were Colin Johnson, Cllr Sheridan, Anna Newman of Elderslie Estates, Police Scotland, Sharon Waterson a Renfrewshire Council Youth Officer and 2 local residents. It was confirmed that the most recent gathering was by far the largest with c170 youths in attendance. The numbers were swelled by attendees sharing the location on social media. The Police confirmed that they had received c12 complaints from local residents regarding the youths gathering. It was deemed intimidating for residents living nearby and damage was caused to Elderslie Estates property.

Police Scotland confirmed it was the minority of attendees that had caused a disturbance/nuisance but agreed that gatherings of this type/size could not go unchecked. Elderslie Estates are powerless to stop the youth's gathering on their land. Colin Johnson agreed to keep Police Scotland informed of any planned gatherings the school is made aware of and Police Scotland agreed to increase their presence in the village.

- 3) The following local resident issues have been taken up with Renfrewshire Council:
 - a. A request was made to Renfrewshire Council to cut the hedgerows on Barrochan road and Houston Road between Kirk road and the play park as they'd overgrown the path causing pedestrians to have to walk in the road. The hedge cutting was carried out swiftly, but a lot of debris was left on the footpaths. I put in a complaint to Renfrewshire Council and the debris has now been uplifted.
 - b. I have chased Renfrewshire Council regarding the lowering of kerbs for wheelchair access adjacent to the metal bridge in Ardgyffe Park, I am awaiting a response.

- c. I contacted Renfrewshire Council at the request of a local resident about the condition/safety of the Kilallan Kirk walls around the graveyard. The resident had supplied photo's showing large areas of the wall having disintegrated and this potentially making the wall unsafe. Renfrewshire Council have responded saying that Under the Property & Endowment Act 1925 they are responsible for the Kilallan Kirk perimeter wall and grounds and have completed an inspection. They will be erecting safety barriers to prevent the public getting close to the damaged walls and will arrange for maintenance to be carried out.

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 will be meeting Peter Leslie on Friday 26th September on Zoom to find out how Peter has got on with his initial discussions with the various landowners. DD mentioned that most of the public consultation will have to be done online but there is the possibility of doing something more directly with Gryffe High School if they can find a large enough safe space so that they can collaborate more with the Pupils and find out what they want. DD will also ask Peter Leslie about formal acceptance of the grant. JMC, IA, JC, NH and Mark Arthur will form a sub-committee to meet with Peter Leslie and Sustrans.

9) Walk Around Houston Update

JF contacted Ian Jackson after last month's meeting and gave them the route for the walk. The Houston Historical Society then had a Zoom meeting to discuss the route and to allocate members specific areas of interest to research. JF will also circulate the route to all members of Houston Community Council.

10) Bee Happy Update

GW sought approval for £750 to be spent on plant bulbs for Bee Happy to plant around the village. Everyone approved. GW will give the invoice to the treasurer when it arrives.

NH will contact Michael Fowles at Renfrewshire Council and ask him to come and look at the village to see where the best place to plant the tree saplings that we currently have would be.

11) HCC Four Year Plan

NH asked members to read the Four Year Plan and then next month members will discuss it and update it.

12) A.O.C.B.

KM informed those present that she had contacted St. Fillan's Primary School about helping them with redesigning the underpass, but she has had no response.

DD mentioned that Inverclyde Council had been taken to the Court of Sessions by a consortium of developers who argued that the Council had not allocated enough housing land. DD said that we must watch this carefully because if Renfrewshire Council were to be taken to court for the same reason, it is likely that areas around Houston would be under increased pressure to be developed into housing.

NH was contacted by a local resident who was concerned about Renfrewshire Council's biodiversity consultation. RC are planning not to cut the grass in identified areas, one of these being along Magnus Road. The resident was concerned that it would block the line of sight for cars pulling out of junctions, look untidy,

and collect litter. He suggested other areas to grow the grass out rather than along the main road. GW disagreed with the resident and mentioned that Renfrewshire Council had already mown a perimeter around the grass and that the grass had been high all summer and no accidents had happened. GR mentioned that it was not a case of Renfrewshire Council not being bothered to cut the grass, but it was to take positive action and plant wildflowers which will make the Village look nicer. GW then asked if the Council was just doing this to save money and reduce maintenance costs. DD said that it was a win-win as Renfrewshire Council would save money, but it will also support biodiversity as well. DD further mentioned that he thought the best way to increase biodiversity was to build out from areas that are already biodiverse, such as Manse Field and along the edge of the River Gryffe. Members had already had the opportunity to comment to RC on their biodiversity plan. It was noted that RC's consultation period had now ended..

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Date of next meeting: 21st October 2020.