

HOUSTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Title: Houston Community Council Meeting

Ref: HCC/21/10/2020

Location: Virtual meeting using Zoom

Date: 21/10/20

Time: 7:30pm

Sheet: 1 of 6

Present

David Dunlop (dd)
John Chambers (jc)
Kathy McFall (km)
Sharon Chambers (sc)
Ian Andrew (ia)
Carol Ann Murray (cm)
Graeme Richardson (gr)
John McEvoy (jmc)
Bill Haddow (bh)
Gordon Wright (gw)
Harry Manley (hm)

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
Minutes Secretary

Ex-Officio

Representing

In Attendance

Representing

Apologies

Debbie Hobbs
Cllr Jim Sheridan
Cllr Audrey Doig
Janet Mason
Nigel Hobbs

Representing

Houston Community Council
Renfrewshire Council
Renfrewshire Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council

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

Minutes taken by: Harry Manley

- 1) **Previous Minutes** Noted. Approved by Ian Andrew and John McEvoy
- 2) **Police Report**

Police Officer reported for 16/9/20 to 21/10/20 the following incidents:

- Theft by Housebreaking (1 Attempt)
- Theft (1 personal goods, 1 cash, 2 bins, 1 CCTV Cameras)
- Common Assault (1 in open area)
- Anti-Social Behaviour (1 damage to a tyre)
- Road Traffic Offences (1 no insurance, 1 failure to stop at a red light, 1 hit & run)
- Other (2 Fraud)

3) **School Update**

No representatives from Gryffe High School were present at the meeting

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**

- I attended the online Villages Local Partnership meeting on Thursday 17th September, HCC's application for grant funding was discussed along with many other applications. There was some discussion around Christmas Light Switch On events being cancelled and thus no funding should be allocated, but I explained that in our case, expenditure would still be incurred with primary school competitions etc. The maximum grant being awarded was 70% of the requested amount and I'm pleased to say that of our application for £3,650, we received the full 70% (£2,555).
- The following local resident issues have been taken up with Renfrewshire Council:
 - i. A resident contacted me about the policy decision for over 65's to have to travel to Paisley for their flu vaccinations. The resident was concerned that due to covid, car sharing was not an option for those not within a single household and public transport meant 3 buses had to be taken. Given current guideline to avoid the use of public transport unless absolutely necessary she felt that a number of elderly residents would not get their flu vaccinations this year.

I spoke to the Houston Practise Manager who explained that they only had vaccinations for under 65's (it's a different vaccination) and that it was a HSCP policy decision to centralise over 65's vaccinations in Paisley this year. I pointed out that the 'duty of care' still sat with the GP and that if the policy wasn't fit for purpose then it was the GP's responsibility to challenge it. The practise Manager confirmed that they were unhappy with the policy and that they had raised the issue with their Clinical Director.

- ii. I have also raised with Renfrewshire Council whether it is possible for them to mark out bays in the Bogstonhill Road car park to help alleviate the issue of EV's not being able to access the charging points in the car park due to non EV's being parked long term adjacent to the EV charging points.
- iii. I am pleased to report that Renfrewshire Council have completed the lowering of the kerbs for wheelchair access adjacent to the metal bridge in Ardgyffe Park.
- iv. Renfrewshire Council have the following outstanding requests in that I have chased for updates:
 - Identifying additional areas where Bee Happy can plant bulbs/shrubs/trees, including an additional request to plant up the roundabout near the Co-p
 - Repairs on the roundabout to signage and illuminated bollards.
 - Walking access through Gryffe Manor Nursery.

7) **Action Log**

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

8) **Christmas Competition/Lighting/Projector Update**

A vote was held and it was decided that the Angel with a facemask from Houston Primary and the Santa from St. Fillans would be chosen.

MA proposed buying a projector to project the designs onto a suitable wall in the village instead of having them made into lights for £2000. He said that we cannot continue to manufacture the motifs each year and we cannot expect to be given £1500 from the Council every year nor ask the pubs for money each year to produce the lights. He also mentioned that other people would be able to use the projector for things such as Village Fêtes, so it is not just an asset for the Community Council but for the Community as a whole. It would be able to be used in future years and could be made available to the local community if they required it. JMC asked if we are going to be projecting the images instead of fabricating them, does that mean we are not limited to picking only two winners from the schools. MA responded by saying that we are limited to two as it costs £190 per custom image for the projector. JC asked if it was possible for someone with the relevant skills to make their own custom images for the projector so that the local community does not have to pay £190 if they want to use their own custom images. MA said that once we get the projector and know how it works, it would probably be possible to make our own. KM asked if we are getting costs from several different suppliers. MA said that he could look at different pricings, but we have used the supplier in the past and the projector is

a very professional and useful asset to the community. DD then asked how the projector would be able to be mounted outside and in such a way that nobody would be able to easily steal it. MA said that he has taken a look at various locations around the village and the easiest one would be at the Church Hall as it is a flat wall and there is already a power supply near there. He said that it would be possible to spike the projector into the ground and chain it to a nearby tree which would prevent from being easily stolen. JC suggested the best approach would be to take a look at the projector when it arrives and see what the best way of securing it is. Everyone present agreed to the purchase. MA said that he would speak to the Council about the Conservation and also the Traffic rules about closing down the street for the Christmas Light Show.

9) Connecting Houston Update

A subgroup has been formed involving Peter Leslie, John Chambers, John McEvoy, Ian Andrew, Nigel Hobbs and David Dunlop to progress the Connecting Houston Project. DD informed those present of the "Connecting Pollokshaws" project, which is very similar to Houston's own and suggested that we could learn a few lessons from them. Peter Leslie has had some successful discussions with the landowners between Houston & Bridge of Weir and they are generally supportive of the idea. It was decided at the last Connecting Houston subgroup meeting that it would be much quicker and easier if they were to issue a tender to consultants to work things up, this could also include public consultation. This would allow us to stand back, delegate more and then evaluate what the consultants bring into us. Peter Leslie has produced a draft tender invitation and he is inviting member's comments on it. Once it is agreed upon, the invitation will be sent out and hopefully create interest in what we are trying to achieve. DD will share the draft with all members. It was also agreed that most of the work would be focused on the connection between Houston and Bridge of Weir, however an element of the budget would go towards inviting the consultants to look at the connectivity around Houston more generally and provide a series of recommendations that we could hopefully take forward with Renfrewshire Council in the next few years. DD also mentioned that there is already a Spaces for People program which has been rolled out between Houston and Bridge of Weir and around the Schools, however, he said that these are designed as temporary measures and that we looking for more permanent measures that Sustrans can deliver on. In terms of public consultation, DD said that the majority of footfall on the stretch between Houston and Bridge of Weir would be from Gryffe High School and so he suggested that Gryffe High would be one of the key groups to talk with. Then we could identify Churches, Community Groups and local businesses to help with a poster campaign. DD mentioned that Connecting Pollokshaws have set up a website, Twitter feed and a Facebook page to try and get feedback from the wider community.

10) HCC Four Year Plan

DD asked if anyone had any suggestions to add or refine the Four Year plan.

SC mentioned that we have a lot issues to focus on currently and so we should focus on what we are doing now instead of adding anything on to it.

JMC said that last month he took it as an action point to find out what other local authorities had done across Scotland in the past three years about 20 mph speed limits. He said that he has submitted Freedom of Information requests to the eleven local authorities that were the same as Renfrewshire in that they did not have any 20 mph speed limits, and two others that only had one or two 20 mph areas. He has not heard back from them yet but will inform the Community Council when he hears from them. He also mentioned that the Borders local authority had made all residential streets 20 mph zones. He said that one of the main arguments from Renfrewshire Council

against doing that here was the very high cost of repainting all the signs, however he heard that in the borders they are just putting a 20 mph sticker over the existing 30 mph signs which would cost a fraction of painting the signs. DD asked of one of the issues could be that Renfrewshire Council have to embark on a formal traffic regulation order because they are changing the existing rules within particular areas which could be an issue from the Council's perspective. JMC said that this was not raised by Renfrewshire Council back in 2017 when the 20 mph issue was first raised.

DD asked MA about the latest updates on the micro hydro project. MA said that all of his emails were going into David Telford's spam inbox and David only recovered them recently. MA said that he has a meeting with David on the 6th November, Covid-19 permitting, as they just have to finish the SEPA application and then discuss how they can take it forward with community consultation. He said one of the first things they would do before having a community consultation would be to have a catch-up with Houston Farms who own the land, they have been kept in the loop and they have been sent the environmental report and study that David Telford did two years ago. He also said that it ties in with the Church as they were interested in using the Woodlands as a Car Park.

MA also said that he will take another look at the Houston Fields Dam and he has previously spoken with Houston Farms who own the land and they were willing to talk about it. He said that we would have to weigh up the pros and cons of the project, especially as houses have now been built near the Tennis Club.

MA said in regards to the wall at the St. Fillans roundabout that there is already a hole in the wall but it is right on the corner and there is a power pole there meaning you cannot get into it, he suggested using the stone that we will take down and fill the gap up and this would open up the space.

11) A.O.C.B

DD mentioned that a couple of weeks ago Nigel circulated an invitation from the reporter Morag Smith for further comments from Houston Community Council and other Local Authorities about Renfrewshire Council's Local Development Plan for the area. DD has drafted a response which he will circulate, the deadline for submitting is the 26th October.

CM informed those present that she had spoken with Janet Mason who said that the sign at the Yew Tree has been damaged. JMC said that he had seen the sign a couple of weeks ago and it was in pretty bad condition, but it could be repaired with roofing felt. JMC and IA will take a look at the sign and see if they can make any repairs

JMC mentioned that the area around the Yew Tree was also looking to be in poor shape and was wondering if there was anything that could be done to make it look better and bring it to its full potential. IA agreed and suggested that one reason could be that so many people are walking through the area and close to the tree which could be damaging, he suggested putting up a small fence to discourage people from walking too close to the tree. KM suggested looking at a tidy-up in Spring as it would be much harder to do outdoor work during the winter. IA also mentioned that the tree is under Cunningham Garden's area of responsibility as a resident's area and they have been taking interest recently in performing some work on the tree. IA will contact them and see if they are planning on doing anything with the tree.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Date of next meeting: 18th November 2020.