

HOUSTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Title: Houston Community Council Meeting

Ref: HCC/17/3/2021

Location: Virtual meeting using Zoom

Date: 17/3/21

Time: 7:30pm

Sheet: 1 of 7

Present

David Dunlop (dd)
Jake Fulton (jf)
John McEvoy (jmc)
John Chambers (jc)
Sharon Chambers (sc)
Kathy McFall (km)
Ian Andrew (ia)
Gordon Wright (gw)
Bill Haddow (bh)
Mark Arthur (ma)
Graeme Richardson (gr)
Colin Johnson (cj)
Rachael (r)
Alice (a)
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
Gryffe High School
Gryffe High School
Gryffe High School
Minutes Secretary

Ex-Officio

Representing

In Attendance

Representing

Apologies

Debbie Hobbs
Martin Norwood
Janet Mason
Carol Murray
Nigel Hobbs
Councillor Doig
Councillor Kerr
Councillor Sheridan

Representing

Houston Community Council
Police Scotland
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Renfrewshire Council
Renfrewshire Council
Renfrewshire 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 Bill Haddow.

2) **Police Report**

Police Officer reported for 17/2/21 to 17/3/21 the following incidents:

- Common Assault (1 in house)
- Anti-social behaviour (1 damage to window and door, 1 bin fire)
- Other (1 driving with no license or insurance & drink driving, 2 communications offence, 1 internal fraud)

3) **School Update**

Head Teacher Colin Johnson and pupils Rachael and Alice gave a report on the School. They reported that the School Captains have managed to extend the school's prom date, from the start of June to the end of June, but with December as a backup, they have also been organising the school's yearbook and using social media to promote wellbeing in the school. They have been working on videos to promote British Sign Language Week to the school, including a song performed by various staff members and pupils in sign language, they have also made a PowerPoint with some common sign language phrases for pupils to learn.

The heads of pupil voice are working with the school captains to come up with the agenda for the third pupil council meeting, they are going over the results of the online learning survey to work out what they can do better and how they can help pupils who are struggling. They are also working on a canteen focus group with Renfrewshire Council to see what pupils want offered in the School Canteen Menu.

The Communities Committee is working on creating a new rota for litter picking now that pupils are back at school.

The Charities Committee have been discussing possible future events and what to do with the money they received from YPI last year.

The Achievements Committee have continued to hold meetings and are planning on improving and relaunching the Saltire Awards system.

The Citizenship Committee have been posting social media updates during LGBT History Month to promote inclusivity. They have also held their Fairtrade Fortnight which included a variety of activities such as a Fairtrade bake-off.

The Wellbeing Committee have just sent out a survey about self-confidence for girls which had over 400 respondents. They have just finished their Purple Friday event which raised over £340 and are discussing upcoming events.

Colin Johnson said that it has been wonderful seeing pupils back in the school building. He reported that half of fourth, fifth, and sixth-year pupils are in on one day, with the other half in on the next day. First, second, and third-year pupils are only in once a week, determined by house group. There are around 400 pupils in the school on any given day. Furthermore, pupils are no longer allowed to leave the school grounds at lunch time, if a pupil were to leave the school, parents would be contacted immediately. He mentioned that the pupils have been brilliant back at school and are following all the rules without any major issues.

DD asked CJ how the pupils were engaging with the Connecting Houston project. CJ answered saying that they have been planning to get pupils involved and hear their views on the project but the process has not actually started yet.

KM asked about the progress of trying to get a reverse vending machine in the school. CJ said that the application for the machine has gone in but they have not heard back from them yet.

DD asked CJ what the school's plans are for the month ahead. CJ said that the School has a lot re-timetabling to do to plan for all the pupils coming back to the school, they then have to plan the details of assessments for fourth, fifth, and sixth years.

4) Councillors' Reports

The report from Councillor Audrey Doig is as follows:

Last month saw high drama with the eventual adoption of the Administration's Budget for 2021/22 by only two votes. I very much welcome the Rural Safe Walking Initiative contained within the Budget which aims to control and eradicate speeding in and through Renfrewshire's villages, such as Houston, Crosslee, and Brookfield. I know through talking to other village councillors, of all political persuasions, that this is sadly a very live issue across our village communities but it has to be tackled in the name of health and safety. The Initiative will look at the full range of anti speeding measures, from speedbumps to chicanes, and act where appropriate in consultation with the local community.

Another key element to the new Budget is more investment into roads and pavements. We have just gone through another very cold period and unfortunately the frost rips up many of the repairs previously completed, even in the last two years. One notable example which needs attention is the section of Barrochan Road from Crosslee to West Fulton, which has badly broken up. I intend to bring this to the attention of council officers.

I was further pleased that the last full council meeting unanimously passed a motion I submitted on better toilet signage for sufferers from Crones and Colitis. This was raised with me by a Houston constituent who stressed to me how difficult it can be to find public amenities when out and about. She directed me to the Crones and Colitis UK website, and I decided to do all I could to raise this very important issue to improve the quality of life for those who suffer from this debilitating condition.

Councillor Kerr submitted correspondence between him and a local resident regarding the two footbridges being worked on by Taylor Wimpey which he believed would be of interest to HCC. It is as follows:

Response to a recent correspondence requesting an update on Taylor Wimpey's progress on the two footbridges in Houston and Crosslee, below is the current situation:

Crosslee Bridge, timber footbridge. Taylor Wimpey have just undertaken a clean on the full structure and approach ways as requested by Renfrewshire Council. I will be meeting with a representative on site to discuss replacement/repairs of timber and any other work required for adoption, any other work will be minor in nature.

Ardgryffe Bridge, metal footbridge. A meeting between the representatives of both Taylor Wimpey and Renfrewshire Council is arranged for the 23rd March to discuss proposals to repair/replace the structure for our consideration and approval.

I will provide an update on both bridges once these meetings have taken place. I trust this information will be of assistance.

The report from Councillor Ian Nicolson is as follows:

I want to begin by thanking you for the outstanding community spirit you have shown over the past year. It is one that has challenged us all in different ways, but it is clear we wouldn't have got through it without the support of each other. With the vaccination program well underway and community testing being scaled up we are starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel become a little brighter, so let's keep working together to get there.

In line with that we have set the budget for the year ahead which recognises the pressure we are all under, makes investments that will provide valuable for those that most need it and strengthen Renfrewshire's recovery from the pandemic. We are freezing Council Tax to support families during this time of great uncertainty and to provide homes with more security over their finances in the coming year. The pandemic has affected us all but we want to make sure we support those most in need and tackle inequalities which may have deepened during the past year. We have committed £2.7 million to projects which will do this including £250,000 to further support children and young people's mental health, £180,000 to support care experiences of young people and £100,000 for our local Citizens Advice Bureau. It is something that everyone may previously have taken for granted but the great outdoors has become more important than ever and that's why we have committed to a further £1.5 million for new and improved walking and cycling routes and to make improvements to our Council Playparks taking the total investment in the area to £2.3 million. This year's budget also invests another £750,000 in our School's buildings and facilities boosting the total investment to £2.4 million by March 2022 and will ensure our pupils have the environment they need to succeed. Capital investment of more than £440 million pounds has been protected and will continue to bring more jobs to local people, will enhance connectivity, improve roads and pathways, and bring further investment to our schools. We have reaffirmed our support for Renfrewshire Health and Social Care partnership with a further £2.3 million pounds to protect and enhance adult care services. This is a budget that supports Renfrewshire recovery from the pandemic, it will protect and reconnect people, prioritise wellbeing and mental health, positive economic growth, and help for our communities.

No other Councillors were present or submitted reports.

5) Treasurer's Report

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

6) Chairman's Report

No Report for March

7) Action Log

DD took the group through the Action Log which will be updated for the next meeting

Action 63.0 – MA will issue a formal report for next month

Action 139.0- JF is continuing to prepare notes and collect information. JF said that for the best results the leaflet should be prepared in person as it requires a level of coordination that is difficult to achieve remotely.

All other actions were progressing successfully.

8) Local Development Plan Update

DD has made contact with Kevin Dalrymple who is the principal officer for delivering and developing the local development plan for Renfrewshire Council. He explained that RC are going through the reporter's recommendations to try and finalise the plan. They will put this plan in front of the elected members of the council and gather their opinions. He mentioned with regards to North Mound that the new local development plan was much stronger on issues such as placemaking and trying to keep the character of the local villages. He also felt that the new plan gave local communities more say in the developments that affect their village. He said that he was very impressed by what the community in Houston was doing and that he was happy to come and talk to the community about the plan and what to expect. Additionally, DD has been in contact with Mark Maitland who has said that he does not expect anything to be happening soon on North Mound however, Stuart Milne Homes who have the option to develop.

BH asked DD if he had heard anything from Gavin Newlands MP who said he would look into the development plan. DD had not received any news.

Cala have asked Nigel if they could attend our next meeting to talk about their ideas for Woodend House. DD thought it would be worthwhile to have them along to listen to their plans and see if we could suggest any changes that would benefit the community. MA mentioned that if HCC were to decline their request, they could then use that as evidence of HCC being unwilling to negotiate later on which would reduce our chances of getting any changes made to the plan. JC suggested waiting until after lockdowns ended so that they could attend a face-to-face meeting. DD will contact Cala and let them know that HCC are willing to work constructively with Cala to secure a high quality, well considered development that improves the wider community.

9) Connecting Houston Update

The Connecting Houston website has been uploaded onto Facebook and a number of local stakeholders have been identified and contacted by the consultants. The consultants are keen to engage with the schools and have already made some contact with the primary schools and are hoping to get involved with Gryffe to get student's feedback. There has been a good response to the website and so far over 120 comments have been made. Some concerns have been expressed by residents regarding unauthorised intrusions into the grounds, littering and antisocial behaviour. They continue to remain very positive about the wider community efforts to improve the area via the Connecting Houston project. A meeting has been proposed between either NH and DD or Peter Leslie and Mark Maitland with the residents to try and build up relations. Overall, the project is progressing well and a meeting with the consultants has been arranged to talk about the progress made.

IA asked if we could get the consultants in contact with the Resident's Association of Craighends as residents there have been complaining that they are not getting a say in what is being done with the land that they maintain. JC said that he was under the impression that consultation was being done online so that it was not required to deal with so many different entities, he was worried that putting them in contact with a particular resident's association could be viewed as giving special treatment. KM suggested that the consultants could put their contact detail at the end of one of their blogs to allow any stakeholders who feel they are not being engaged with to get involved and make contact. All present agreed with the idea and DD will pass this suggestion along to the consultants.

JMC mentioned that he was having difficulties posting some comments on the website and asked DD if there were any hidden limitations such as a character limit. DD responded saying that there were no hidden limitations but he will check with the consultants to see if JMC's comments made it through.

10) **A.O.C.B.**

NH has sent an email for a training event for community councillors being run by planningdemocracy.org.uk. It is a training workshop for individuals and community groups who want to know more about planning appeals and local development plans. It is being held from 7pm to 8.30pm on Tuesday 30th March. DD will forward information to any interested person. MA said that the local villages need to prepare to try and prevent anymore land being overdeveloped in the local area. MA suggested getting in contact with local villages to work together and raise our concerns as development is only going to increase in the coming years. JMC agreed and said that developers were already looking at building along the road connecting Houston and Bridge of Weir.

SC mentioned that NH received designs for a British soldier silhouette for the War Memorial in Houston. They are made of aluminium and are roughly 4 feet 6 inches tall. SC suggested that it would be a nice and respectful decoration for the memorial. They cost £175 each. KM suggested using a cardboard cut-out before purchasing to make sure that there is a good position for it to be installed in. DD raised the concern that someone could try and steal it and so we would have to ensure that it is installed securely. SC asked if permission would be required to install it. JMC answered saying permission would have to be given. MA said he would take a look at who to contact to get permission. All present agreed it would be a good idea if permission was granted.

IA previously agreed to look at the HCC website and what changes must be made to conform to the accessibility regulations. He found that the website does not currently comply with the regulations but it is not far away from complying with them. If HCC were to hire professionals to update the website to meet regulations it would cost £200-£300. KM asked IA to send her the list of changes that must be made and she would try and make some changes herself.

GR asked if Renfrewshire Council were still planning to designate some areas where they would not cut the grass. JF said that he would find out.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Date of next meeting: 21st April 2021.