

HOUSTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Title: Houston Community Council Meeting

Ref: HCC/19/5/2021

Location: Virtual meeting using Zoom

Date: 19/5/21

Time: 7:30pm

Sheet: 1 of 7

Present

Nigel Hobbs (nh)
David Dunlop (dd)
Janet Mason (jm)
Kathy McFall (km)
Graeme Richardson (gr)
Ian Andrew
Jake Fulton
Harry Manley (hm)

Representing

Houston Community Council (chair)
Houston Community Council (vice chair)
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

Colin Johnson (cj)
Frankie Greenwood (fgG)

Representing

Gryffe High School
Houston & Killellan Kirk

Apologies

Debbie Hobbs
John McEvoy
Mark Arthur
John Chambers
Sharon Chambers
Bill Haddow
Councillor Doig
Councillor Kerr
Councillor Sheridan

Representing

Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council (treasurer)
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: Kathy McFall

1) **Previous Minutes** Noted. Approved by David Dunlop and Graeme Richardson.

2) **Police Report**

Police Officer reported for 22/4/21 to 19/5/21 the following incidents:

- 1 common assault
- 1 drug offence
- 4 Anti-social behaviour (street drinking, breach of peace, damage to car, street disorder)
- 2 Road Traffic Offences (hit & run, failing to stop at red light)

Community Police Report - primary school football tournament, HCC agreed to sponsor the event as per previous years.

3) **School Update**

Pupils S6 Pupil Management Team - Mark and Skye reported on behalf of the team.

The pupils updated on the activities of each of the various committees, which includes Achievements, Eco, Charities, Wellbeing, Citizenship, and Communities. Online meetings have continued, supported by social media updates, as the teams round off the school year, and put plans in place for 21/22. It is hoped there can be an in-school event for the S6 leavers this year, plans underway.

The highlight of the report was the news that Gryffe High School (GHS) came second equal in the Scottish League Table, with 80% of pupils achieving 5 highers: this was 11% more than previous year.

Head Teacher Colin Johnson noted that GHS is actually the top performing state school, having achieved 80% (with St. Ninian's having achieved 79.86%). Jordanhill was in first place, but it is not a state-funded school. GHS also holds the State School of the Year title, and no other school has achieved this. Colin congratulated the students, staff, parents and carers, and said the school was in a very positive place, with the infrastructure in place to maintain this level going forward.

The Times had reported that Houston is the most sought after area in Scotland, with a predicted premium of 41% in house prices. NH asked Mr Johnson about the 120+ new homes over next 2-3 years, and if GHS had capacity to support additional pupils. CJ said there was no capacity to expand the numbers, but said projections would have been done as part of the planning, and that there may be conditions that state that the new homes have no links with GHS. He said there were no current plans for a new school or any extensions.

DD thanked Mr Johnson and his team for working so hard, and acknowledged how the school has embraced and worked with the local community. He also suggested a mentoring programme, where current pupils could be put in touch with former pupils who are now working across all industries; other schools have done this through LinkedIn.

IA also thanked all the pupils that have attended the HCC meetings throughout the year and congratulated them on their presentation skills at such a young age.

4) **Community Mental Health Awareness**

Frankie Greenwood started her role as community development worker at HKK in January 2020, focussing on how she can support the community in the four areas of dementia, bereavement,

loneliness and mental health, as identified in the Kirk Conversation Café. During the past year, Frankie has been instrumental in setting up a dementia inclusive singing group, virtual coffee mornings, mental health awareness training, and has been working alongside community groups such as Bee Happy and LikeMinds (a local peer support group aimed to reduce the stigma of mental health) and local businesses. She hopes to build on the already to build on the already strong community spirit within Houston, and was at the meeting to engage with the HCC team. A long-term goal is to develop a therapeutic community garden and to making Houston a positive, more inclusive mental health community, by earning the dementia friendly village status.

NH thanked Frankie for attending the meeting, and HCC offered their support for any future initiatives and would happily advise as and when sources of funding grants are available.

5) Councillors' Reports

One report was received, from Councillor Audrey Doig is as follows:

The Communities, Planning, and Housing Board this week decided to ignore the sixty objectors, and Houston Community Council, who rightly opposed the proposal from Cala Homes to build seventy-one houses on the site of Woodend House, Houston Road, Houston. Sadly, the final decision was ten votes to approve, and five against.

Also at the same Board meeting there was more positive news for Houston with an award of £70,000 from the Green Spaces and Village Investment Fund to Houston Play Park Improvement Group for a new play area, seating, and planters at the very popular Helicopter Park. I am delighted at this level of award from the Council and in the coming months, with Covid restrictions hopefully declining, that all Houston residents of all ages can come together to appreciate our outdoor spaces more, both for our physical and mental health.

I am delighted that Gryffe High has been rated the second top state school in Scotland for exam results by the Sunday Times this year. Mr Johnson and his team are excellent ambassadors for the school and whilst last year Gryffe was eighth they have now moved up near the top. I must commend all teachers, pupils, and the Parent Council at Gryffe for all their hard work in making the school the great advertisement for Renfrewshire that it is.

6) Treasurer's Report

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

7) Chairman's Report

1. Earlier in the month David circulated a newspaper article celebrating some bespoke housing schemes that were up for recognition at the Herald Property Awards. I forwarded the article to Cala homes and suggested given the content of the article that they consider building houses that blend well with our local heritage and building type and above all add positively to the village rather than building the same 'boxes' that they build on all their sites regardless of location. Cala responded with the following comment:

CALA do take design and placemaking very seriously, and the proposals for the site by Woodend House have been carefully created using CALA's standard housetypes that have been designed for the Scottish housing market and have won. We do believe that the resultant development will make a positive contribution to the village.

As you may be aware, earlier today, Renfrewshire Council's Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board unanimously recommended approval of CALA's and Acorn Developments proposals for the site by Woodend House.

Please be assured that CALA believes that it is a privilege to be allowed to build our houses and takes our obligations as a responsible developer and good neighbour very seriously. We wish to keep working with you throughout the process from now until the site is completed, and would welcome your thoughts on how best to do so.

Any opportunities that there are for CALA to help or support the community will also happily be considered to ensure the maximum benefits are realised over the next few years and beyond.

Discussion took place around what support CALA could offer to the community, and it was agreed that we try to arrange a face-to-face with the developers in due course. NH to add to agenda for next meeting when more community councillors would be in attendance.

2. I have contacted Renfrewshire Council to express our support for the temporary active travel route between Houston and Bridge of Weir. I also expressed our disappointment that the route terminates at the park in Bridge of Weir rather than finishing at the junction with Kilmacolm road as was proposed. RC replied saying that they understand our disappointment but it was a compromise to see the project progress; they encountered resistance to certain details and would like to demonstrate hopefully good usage to reinforce extending the route in the future.

3. I received an email from Mark Crichton Maitland of Houston Estates, who had been giving some thought our Connecting Houston project and areas of the village where safety improvements could be made. Mark commented:

North of the village on the Langbank Road between the cross roads with Kilmacolm Road and Greenhill is a very nasty narrow stretch of road with a blind corner at the Houston end. If a footway and cycle track could be made on the west side of the road it would immensely improve things and make it much safer. We would need to take care over the water main, but I am sure that could be managed.

East of the village on the Georgetown there is a stretch between the end of the pavement where the policy wall finishes and the start of the core path at North Mains. If a footpath could be put on the north side of the burn (there are bridges at either end) it would fill in the missing link.

In both cases Houston Farms would facilitate the land take.

8) Action Log

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

Action 63.0 – MA reported no further progress to date, should have an update for June meeting following a meeting with SEPA.

Action 97.0 – Telephone box; awaiting availability of electrician.

Action 106.0 – Taylor Wimpey bridge restorations – agreed final maintenance works on Crosslee bridge, once completed RC will adopt. Work due to start soon.

Action 143.0 – NH has had request from RC for more information on the tree planting near cemetery; JF will respond on behalf of Bee Happy.

Action 146.0 – NH had emailed RC for a progress report on water flow on Barrochan Road; it is believed work has been done in that area.

All other actions progressing or completed.

9) HCC Website

NH had received some unsolicited quotes from website hosting companies, given the new regulations around accessibility and compliance for council websites. The costs will be shared and reviewed in time for next meeting.

10) Connecting Houston Update

DD informed those present that the team are continuing to work on the project. The consultancy group has produced a substantive draft report based on the feedback received from the consultation (runs to 90pp); a briefer priorities document has been requested that will be circulated in due course. The report will be shared with RC as it is essential to get their buy-in and support for the project. The consultants will be invited to share their reports with residents at a future planning event, either over Teams or face-to-face if possible.

DD also discussed the possibility of developing a place plan for Houston, with the detail from the Connection Houston documentation being a good starting point for that.

A.O.C.B.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.

Date of next meeting: 16th June 2021.