

HOUSTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Title: Houston Community Council Meeting

Ref: HCC/19/1/2022

Location: Virtual meeting using Zoom

Date: 19/1/22

Time: 7:30pm

Sheet: 1 of 10

Present

Barry Walker (bw)
David Dunlop (dd)
Ian Andrew (ia)
Carol Murray (cm)
John McEvoy (jmc)
Jake Fulton (jf)
Kathy McFall (km)
Mark Arthur (ma)
John McEvoy (jmc)
Graeme Richardson (gr)

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

Ex-Officio

Councillor Alison Dowling

Representing

Renfrewshire Council

In Attendance

Kevin Christie
Harry Manley
Peter Leslie

Representing

Gryffe High School
Minutes Secretary
Sustrans

Apologies

Janet Mason
Councillor Audrey Doig
Councillor James Sheridan
PC Brian Dick

Representing

Houston Community Council
Renfrewshire Council
Renfrewshire Council
Police Scotland

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

Minutes taken by: Harry Manley

1) Previous Minutes

John McEvoy requested changes be made to the minutes of last month's meetings:

Item 4- Councillor Doig reported that the Boundary Commission looking at allocating seats to the Westminster Parliament was recommending that the Houston Community Council area be split in half, with Craighends falling into a different constituency to Houston Village and Craighends. She asked that as many people as possible write to the Boundary Commission for Scotland asking for the split not to happen. I said that I had looked at the proposal and that the suggested boundary ran along Craighends Road, so Craighends would actually be in the same constituency as the rest of the community council area. I asked Councillor Doig to confirm the situation.

Item 7- The meeting on 18th January will not be with Renfrewshire Council. It is the RC Board meeting that will decide on the Green Spaces grant to fund the gym. The onsite meeting with local residents was not just with Nicola Drummond. I was also there along with Matt Delaney of the Great Outdoor Gym Company and Louis Jeffrey of Houston United. We agreed an alternative location within Ardgriffe Park which suited everybody and was technically possible from the gym supplier's perspective.

Item 10- I didn't say "keep cameras in the style of the village" I said that any traffic calming should be appropriate to the nature of the village. I also suggested that we ask Cala Homes to pay for street lighting on Kirk Road between Houston Road and the kirk and from the Georgetown Road to the existing street lighting on Houston Road. This has not been included in the minutes. I also suggested that we ask RC to improve surface on Barrochan Road from Crosslee to the Deafhillock Roundabout including indentations and flooding problem. This was also left out of the minutes.

All changes were accepted by members present. The updated minutes were approved by John McEvoy and Kathy McFall,

2) Police Report

No police report sent to Minute Secretary.

3) School Report

Kevin Christie was present at the meeting and gave a report on Gryffe High School. He reported that attendance for pupils was over 90%, it is normally around 94%, and the school are reasonably happy with it considering the pandemic. S5 and S6 are currently doing their prelims the School will look at results of the students and try to put in place plans to help them for the final examinations in May. He pointed out that there has been an impact of the pandemic on education and there is a skills gap in many young people. He said that it is up to the School to help minimise that gap for the students and as such they will be having an Easter school this year, targeting those who need help and preparing them for final examinations. The School's digital newsletter will be published soon every supposed to be published at the start of the month but Covid interrupted. All the school's extracurricular activities are running again, which has been a real positive for the pupils. The school show is being planned for June and this year it will be We Will Rock You. They hoped to put on three shows and also that they will be able to have a live audience. The school are hoping to run a coffee morning at the first available opportunity alongside the PTA and they are ready to go with that as soon as a risk assessment allows it. Next month Kevin Christie hopes to bring along a couple of senior pupils from the school to help give the report. Louis Jeffrey the chairman of Houston United

football club has approached the school looking at a joint venture to resurface the school's Astroturf pitch. The project is in its very early stages, but the SFA is looking to help local community clubs and schools too pay for the resurfacing of their pitches. Both Louis Jeffrey and Kevin Christie are very keen to pursue the project, as well as Renfrewshire Council's education secretary Councillor Paterson. Kevin Christie reported that he has been out X lunchtime's recently to check on the litter situation, he feels it is much better than it has been he would like the opinions of council members, he also reported that younger students PSE classes have been going out litter picking. BW said that it was great that the kids are getting out to litter pick themselves showing them the impact of littering the community.

BW asked Kevin Christie whether the council were still looking at upgrading the blaes pitch. Kevin Christie answered saying he had not heard anything about upgrading the blaes pitches he mentioned there was talk of making a second Astroturf pitch where the current blaes pitch is, but the current priority is getting the main Astroturf pitch resurfaced, she's estimated to cost around £200,000.

DD mentioned a fund called ENV2 which is a levy on development projects by local authorities if there's insufficient play space, he suggested that CALA may be willing to contribute to the fund. KM agreed with the idea and mentioned that CALA have already started work on building houses at Woodend House, she also asked Councillor Dowling to comment on this.

Councillor Dowling said KM was entirely correct CALA have now acquired the site at Woodend house and are in the process of enabling works to start. She mentioned that she is not currently aware of any community benefit plans by CALA how long the lines of what DD was suggesting, but she would be happy to take it up with CALA. She also mentioned that from previous conversations with Houston United changing the blaes pitch into an Astroturf pitch would be quite challenging from a financial point of view given the substantial shortfall from the councils funding the additional costs of the Covid pandemic to the council's funds. As such, she suggested the resurfacing of the Astroturf pitch in partnership with the SFA has a greater possibility of getting support from Renfrewshire Council. Councillor Dowling mentioned that she was going to be in correspondence with CALA around issues such as the tree plan for the new site and she would be very happy to bring up this issue with CALA as well.

DD mentioned that CALA was supposed to meet with members of the community council to discuss possible improvements CALA could make to the local community alongside their current building project and mentioned that CALA should give back to the community due to their disruption of the local wildlife. Councillor Dowling said that CALA are currently in the process of reaching out to the local representatives in the community to give site visits and enter into further discussions. She mentioned that it will likely be elected representatives asked to discussions first, but she would be keen for the local community too give feedback first-hand. she mentioned that she will ask Cala to get Houston Community Council involved in discussions as soon as possible.

DD said that developers focusing on areas of Renfrewshire outside of Paisley will not help in its regeneration. JMC agreed and said that since Paisley's bid for City of Culture nothing has been done to help regenerate it. Councillor Dowling said that some of the points raised about Paisley were valid and she would be happy to pass them on I have a she mentioned that there are substantial regeneration projects underway in Paisley, knowledge of which has maybe not filtered through to Houston, for example the north end of the Piazza Centre and the multistorey car-park have been earmarked for demolition and residential accommodation will be built in its place, as well as transforming the Paisley Centre and introducing new residential developments in the surrounding areas. The rejuvenation of Paisley has cross-party council support.

MA thanked Gryffe High School for their help in decorating the Carrick Centre for Christmas.

4) Councillors' Reports

The report from Councillor Audrey Doig is as follows:

I would like to update the HCC on issues arising from the last meeting in November. The lighting column fault at the roundabout entrance to Houston, just past St Fillans School, has been repaired, and so too have the blocked gullies on Main Street, and the potholes on Barochan Road. The renewal of the Give Way markings on Fleming Road and South Street, have been put out to tender, and are waiting for good weather to proceed. I am also in negotiations with the Environmental council officers about gritting the underpass pathway up to Houston Primary when necessary.

I have also been very active on the issue of the blind summit at Magnus Road, and Environmental council officers will put new signage up on either side of the junction to make it safer by alerting drivers. Finally, I am happy to report that the floodlight problem at Ardgryffe Park is being investigated.

At the time of writing the Council administration's Safe Rural Walking Route Initiative, which was approved at the Council's 2021/22 Budget, is investigating how to improve safe walking and to cut down speeding in three of our villages. Kilbarchan and Howwood have been chosen, and I successfully pushed for Houston to be the third village as part of the pilot study. Kilbarchan and Howwood Community Councils have already had meetings with the consultants, SWECO, along with local ward Councillors. I expect Houston CC to be contacted very soon to undergo a similar meeting. Up until the final report in June SWECO will undertake a radical process of consultation with the wider Houston community, before deciding on making recommendations to council officers. For once, this is policy made in Houston and delivered to Paisley rather than the other way around.

JMC mentioned that the potholes on Barochan were still there when he drove past them today and they were still there. BW suggested that it maybe they have just been given permission to start work and they are waiting for the weather to permit work. CM mentioned that there was a sign up saying the road will be closed tomorrow and that could be to fix the potholes. GR said that it was not, the road closure was for bridge work over the cycle path near the new houses.

Councillor Alison Dowling was present and gave a report. The report from Councillor Dowling is as follows:

HOUSTON CONSERVATION VILLAGE STATUS

I have contacted Council Officers requesting a virtual meeting with HCC representatives to discuss issues relating to conservation village status. I'll get back to you once I have a response and potential dates to finalise the meeting arrangements.

CALA HOMES MEETING

I've requested a virtual meeting between CALA Homes and HCC representatives to discuss the issues raised during the HCC meeting. I'm awaiting a response and will get back to you. Prior to the HCC meeting on Wednesday I had already agreed to a site visit to Woodend House being organised for elected officials. I am pushing for an additional meeting with HCC, so hopefully they'll agree in a timely manner and we can look at a suitable time.

MAGNUS ROAD TELECOMS MAST

An appeal has been lodged with the Scottish Government Reporter to overturn Renfrewshire Council's refusal of a 2nd telecoms mast in Magnus Road. If upheld, mobile operator H3G can install the mast despite the local objections to its visual impact on nearby homes (within 20m of the proposed location). The main objection to the location of the proposed 2nd telecoms mast on Magnus Rd is the visual impact on local homes. The existing telecoms mast is already seen as an eyesore by many residents.

Here are the links to the appeal the developer has lodged with the Scottish Government Reporter. The public is entitled to send in their thoughts on the issue.

Email your views to the Reporter at: Audrey.Devoy@gov.scot

Quote reference: PAC-350-1 (Prior Approval Consent Appeal)

URL for appeal case details:

<https://www.dpea.scotland.gov.uk/CaseDetails.aspx?id=121980>

In my response to the Reporter I have requested a meeting at the proposed site to see the visual impact of the existing mast and to see how close the proposed 2nd mast will be to homes in the area. If the Reporter agrees to a site visit I'll let you know.

MOBILE POST OFFICE

The temporary Houston Post Office Mobile service will commence at The Old Smithy Car Park, North Street, Houston on 14th February 2022. The van will be operated by the postmaster from Johnstone Post Office, stopping in various locations including Houston.

Opening times Monday 15:00 – 16:15 Friday 12:15 – 13:15

A range of Post Office products and services will be available.

Access - there is a step into the Mobile vehicle with an electronic tailgate available to facilitate easy access for wheelchair users and those with disabilities.

Parking is available close to where the Mobile van will be parked.

This Post Office service will be located outside the previous Houston Post Office branch.

Councillor Dowling also reported that the Morrisons garden centre application has been refused, the main argument against it was the already difficult road congestion around area. She also mentioned that there was another application for housing development in Bridge of Weir at Station Road which was also refused. It was refused as the plans for the development would build over the old railway line and it was decided to keep the railway line unobstructed in case it was ever reopened to help with climate change targets. With regards to the proposed telecoms mast on Magnus Road and type remove application which rejected before Christmas on the grounds of loss of visual amenity. The developers have submitted an appeal to the Scottish Government reporter. Councillor Dowling will share links on how individuals can give feedback to the reporter. CM asked Councillor Dowling if an alternative site was put forward. Councillor Dowling responded saying there was not an alternative site put forward, she also mentioned the developers were not disputing the council's objection on the grounds of what it looks like and how close it is to houses, they are arguing the technological benefits it brings to the community in regard to 4G and 5G communication enhancements should outweigh the loss of visual amenity. The appeal is set to be heard at the beginning of March they are asking for public feedback although all previous feedback given to the Renfrewshire Council has

been automatically forwarded to the reporter. Councillor Dowling mentioned that if the developers win the appeal they will automatically be able to put up the mast, however, if they lose the appeal they will likely submit a full planning application to Renfrewshire Council.

Councillor Dowling also reported that the Renfrewshire Water Safety Policy Committee has been convened at Renfrewshire Council and work is now underway with her number of local stakeholders to improve water safety along the River Gryffe and all other waterways within Renfrewshire.

Councillor Dowling also reported that from the 14th of February Johnstone postmaster has agreed to run a mobile Post Office along all the areas inside Renfrewshire and some just outside the constituency some temporary Post Office services. Houston has been identified as an area that needs the service and it will run two times a week, Monday 15:00-16:15 and Friday 12:15-13:25, and it will be located outside the previous Post Office branch.

Councillor Dowling also reported that Houston now has the oldest living UK resident, who has turned 109 years old. Councillor Dowling has been in contact with the local press who want to get in contact with the Marian Dawson. KM suggested Councillor Dowling contact Reverend Gary Noonan who is in close contact with the family, KM will send Councillor Dowling his contact details.

MA mentioned that he was keen to gain an understanding of how the Council gave Houston conservation status fifty years ago and asked if Councillor Dowling if she could find someone for MA to talk to about it. MA believes it will be a useful tool to prevent further development in the village. Councillor Dowling said she would arrange a meeting with the correct personnel for MA and DD to help get an understanding of how the conservation status came about and an overall understanding of what the conservation status entails. DD mentioned that the village was designated conservation status in 1968 and one of the flaws with the first CALA development was that they had red roof tiles which were completely out of character with the village.

No other Councillors were present or submitted reports.

5) Treasurer's Report

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

6) Outdoor Gym Update

JMC gave an update on the outdoor gym. He reported that the board meeting took place which granted us the main funding for the outdoor gym and so the project will definitely go ahead. In addition to that, ten local companies have said they will sponsor it, eight of which have already submitted the money required, one company has claimed they have paid but no money has entered HCC accounts, the final company has said that they are interested in sponsoring it. JMC has sent out a follow-up letter to the two companies who have not replied. CALA Homes have also agreed to sponsor the gym, paying £2000, which will make a substantial difference to what we are able to purchase.

BW asked what JMC was expecting from the sponsorship of these various companies. JMC said that he expected roughly 50% of those companies he asked to agree to the sponsorship and that is roughly where we are now.

JMC said that we will soon have to go ahead and make the purchase with the Great Outdoor Gym Company.

BW asked when JMC would expect the gym to be installed. JMC said that he spoke to the Great Outdoor Gym Company about this, and they had a lead time of three months from the placing of the order.

MA asked if HCC were able to place the order now. JMC said that Nicola Drummond will send over some paperwork to be signed by the office bearers confirming what HCC intend to do with the money first.

JMC expressed his very sincere thanks to Nicola Drummond and Graham Ternent of Renfrewshire Council because the support HCC received from them was fantastic. JMC also thanked KM keeping him apprised of what was going on financially, especially with the confusion of what was happening with one of the companies that claimed to have already paid the money to HCC when HCC did not receive the funds.

7) **Connecting Houston Update**

DD and Peter Leslie gave an update on Connecting Houston. DD reported that the consultants are in the final stages of producing the plan for Connecting Houston. We asked them to produce some graphic work to help underline some of the potential projects in and around the community and identify a series of examples that can help show the benefits to the conservation area and potential connecting points on some of the busier roads in Houston. DD also reported that we are getting close to starting phase 2 of the project in the year ahead.

Peter Leslie suggested to Kevin Christie that the pitch could look to increase its funding by looking into becoming a 3D rugby pitch. Kevin Christie thanked him for his suggestion.

Peter Leslie took those present through the consultants planning document for the Connecting Houston project. A copy of this is available on request.

DD said that one of the important things would be bringing Gryffe High School into the project as one of the things they were keen to see with the project was a safe route to School from places like Bridge of Weir. DD also suggested that HCC could do more PR and having a project that is 'oven-ready' for the Council and for future funding streams would be good. CM suggested that putting the concept designs on Facebook would be a publicity act in and of itself. DD said that was one of the reasons why we wanted the consultants to give us visual representations of what is involved in the projects. CM asked if we could use the £2600 to get these images. Peter Leslie said that we could use the money to buy more images, however, we are already spending £6000 to get three visualisations. Peter Leslie also mentioned that the project is in two stages, the area wide project is still strategic and going into concept design whereas the route to Bridge of Weir is already at concept design. Peter Leslie suggested using the £2600 to help get Connecting Houston as a community group rather than just individual member's ideas and those of the consultants. KM mentioned that the bike repair events are popular in her place of work and suggested doing one in the village and linking in the schools. Peter Leslie said that the idea was to do it on a weekend and then engage the school to let them use the playground, he hopes to engage Bridge of Weir and the schools as well as Sustrans and Cycling Scotland to get a stand set up where people can get their bike maintained for free and also be taught how to maintain their bike themselves. He said the issue was maintaining people's interest and involvement in the project. DD said the purpose of the project goes beyond just getting people to cycle but trying to change their mindset on active travel.

BW asked people to think about the plan and if they have any ideas to suggest them at the next meeting where they will be discussed and a plan for moving forward decided.

8) Queens Jubilee

BW reported that himself, JMC, and DD met with Mark from Elderslie Estates. One item they discussed was whether it was possible to have a bonfire on Bogston Hill and to look at planting a circle of Oak trees there to celebrate the Jubilee. Mark agreed to everything they suggested and also agreed to fund it all. Mark will put together an outline of where they will plant the trees on the side of Bogston Hill which will be visible from the park and road, they will pay and plant for the trees. He would also look at putting in a stile to allow people to access the trees.

BW also reported that they suggested adding a nuttery alongside the orchard in Manse field and also adding more trees near the orchard also commemorating the Queen's Jubilee. This would be funded by HCC.

MA was contacted by the Fox and Hounds and the Houston Inn who plan to have their Beer Festival on the Saturday of the Jubilee and also have celebrations on the Friday which would involve shutting Main Street on the Friday and Saturday. They asked if HCC would be willing to support them. In particular they would like HCC to apply for the road closure, but MA suggested that HCC should be reluctant to do that as it would make HCC liable for the event for insurance purposes. MA suggested HCC take a supporting role more than a lead. BW agreed with MA suggesting taking on the handling of the road closure is a big task for HCC and that the two pubs should handle it themselves. MA said that the two pubs are happy to deal with the road closure themselves and handle the beer festival on the Saturday but would appreciate HCC support and ideas for the Friday. CM said it would be a good idea to support the event and would help the community after all this time. JMC also agreed with MA saying HCC should support the event while letting the licensed premises deal with the road closures. JMC also mentioned that there could be some kickback from members of the community who will oppose the road closing for two days, and as the two pubs will be benefiting from it, it should fall to them to arrange the closure. MA suggested that we could tie in the bonfire lighting, which will take place at 9:45pm on the Friday, with the pubs and they could provide catering and direct people towards the bonfire. MA said he was happy to take the lead and liaise with the pubs on behalf of HCC. Everyone present was in favour of working with the Fox and Hounds and the Houston Inn.

9) St. Fillans Light Donation

MA reported that St. Fillans Church have started doing a Christmas light display and suggested making a donation to the church to help with the costs of the lights. KM agreed with the idea but suggested instead of making a donation retrospectively that HCC should try and work with St. Fillans in the future. BW asked if St. Fillans had the facilities to put in mains powered lights instead of the battery-operated lights they currently have and suggested that HCC could help upgrade the lighting. MA said that we could as we currently have spare Christmas lights. JMC asked how much it would cost if HCC offered to fund the Christmas lights for this year. MA said it cost St. Fillans in total around £1300 last year and so would be roughly the same for next year. KM said that she was not opposed to giving them a donation and suggested HCC could look to expand the Christmas light display to other buildings around Houston. MA said that the display is already there and there would be no need to supplement it as it is already of high quality and it would be a nice gesture to give a donation for the cost of the lights. JF said that St. Fillans display was wonderful and that they also work hard keeping their gardens looking very good, which increases the appeal of the village and so was very supportive of giving them a donation.

BW proposed giving a donation of £300 to St. Fillans Church at the present time with the view to help them in the coming year with any spare lights HCC have. All present agreed to give the donation. JMC mentioned that they will likely need most help with funding for the batteries for the lights. MA said that they could use this donation to help cover the costs for next year. He also mentioned that HCC could not include St. Fillans in our application to the Council as HCC do not own any of the assets. KM raised the concern of supporting the use of disposable batteries and suggested HCC should think about taking a greener approach. MA agreed with KM and will send her the details of St. Fillans to pay the donation.

10) Action Log

Hydro project- MA reported that he was in contact with the individual who owns the land that used to be the sewage treatment works who asked if HCC would be willing to sell the Weir where the hydro project is to be located. MA said that HCC do not own the land, Houston Farms do. The individual said he had been approached by the Church who inquired about buying a plot of land from him to build a garden. MA mentioned that the land was supposed to be turned into a carpark which he did not think was a good idea as it required destroying local woodland. MA said that he thinks the Church will be interested in having a look at the project and Houston Farms said they would be willing to support it if the Church were willing to support it. MA will now speak to the Minister.

Houston Pathways Leaflet- JF reported that work was ongoing with the leaflet.

Bee Happy tree planting at the back of the cemetery- Work will start on Friday 21st.

11) A.O.C.B.

KM said that she has received receipts from Caroline Morrison who runs the Houston Primary School gardens to the total of around £180. KM asked whether the money was coming from HCC or Bee Happy. JF mentioned that HCC agreed to fund the gardening club. Everyone present approved the payment.

KM said that Janet Mason had asked her to pass on with regards to the pathway around the Houston yew tree. Janet Mason has been in touch with Archie, involved with the Community Payback scheme, who are starting work again and will include the pathway in their scheme. JF asked KM to confirm it was the Community Payback team who did the work on the pathway around the Yew tree. IA confirmed it was and also mentioned that the pathway was part of the Connecting Houston project and asked if any work was going to be duplicated. DD said it will be part of what will be a series of connections and moving the pathways forward is definitely part of the Connecting Houston project. DD said we need to determine if we are planning for something more substantial than the current pathway or whether we are keeping it as a walking pathway. IA said the path has become a bog and needs work done sooner or later.

BW said that a number of funding application deadlines are due. JMC offered to help BW in applying for them. MA mentioned that it will likely be a full application HCC put in this year for the Christmas Light Switch-On which he is happy to apply for. MA will also work with JF to handle Bee Happy's applications. JMC asked if the 2021 funding for Bee Happy got knocked back along with the outdoor gym money to the Green Spaces grant. MA said that it did and he will speak to Nicola Drummond about it. JMC said Nicola Drummond will inform MA about whether the gardening money will be given through the Green Spaces grant or the Local Partnerships grant. If it is through the Local

Partnerships grant there is a time deadline to apply by the middle of March, if it is through Green Spaces, it will be more flexible. JMC said that if anyone has any ideas for projects that need funding then they should bring them along to the February meeting. BW asked if there were any other projects we applied for funding for on a regular basis other than Bee Happy and the Christmas lights. MA said no. DD suggested looking at the Four Year plan for projects that could use funding.

JMC spoke to a representative from CALA Homes asking if they could do a press release, with a photograph, about their sponsorship of the outdoor gym. KM asked how much money they had given. JMC answered saying £2000 plus V.A.T. KM said she was not in favour of it as HCC should oppose CALA's developments in the village. JMC mentioned that the press release was not a condition of the £2000. MA said that if we agree we are more likely to be able to get extra positive developments from CALA in the future. CM suggested saying we support the idea in principle and wait for them to take the lead. JMC asked what the downsides were to letting them have a press release. DD said that other people are contributing towards the project and CALA have given their funding relatively late on, letting them discuss their £2000 donation could invalidate some of the smaller contributors. JMC agreed with DD. MA asked if CALA were getting their name on the sponsorship board. JMC said yes. IA suggested getting a photograph with all the sponsors. Everyone present agreed with IA. JMC said he will get back to CALA and give them a summary of what DD and IA had said. KM said that we should make sure HCC do not have to do organise the press release. JMC said once the gym is installed HCC could invite all the sponsors for a photoshoot.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

Date of next meeting: 16th February 2022.