

Milton of Campsie Community Council Minutes of Meeting

Monday 18/01/2022 at 7.30pm
Meeting held over ZOOM

1. Record of Attendance

Alex Buist (AC)– Chair, Vicky Jarvis (VJ)– Treasurer, Brian McFall (BM)– Secretary,
Agnes Raybould (AR) Jim Crawford (JM) Andy Mackenzie (AM) Cllr Gary Pews.
9 members of the public.

Apologies

Alan Gall.
Cllr Ferretti.
Strathclyde Police

Previous minutes

Proposed by Agnes Raybould, seconded by Alex Buist.

2. Matters arising from previous minutes

3-ITEM 1C. - Erosion of banks of River Glazert - BM reported we now know the land is still owned by Springfield Homes. BM to contact re erosion. **Action – BM**

3-AGM of 6/5/2019.

Item relating to Battlefield Park was not discussed at this meeting due to urgency of other matters. Item will be raised at next meeting **Action BM**

3-ITEM 7 A – Allotments – BM has raised additional FOI requests to EDC regarding the allotments, still no response from EDC. BM to try and obtain information again.
Action - BM

ITEM 4 – Speeding – The roads department were due to carry out a survey of the junction at Milton Cross, late October / early November. BM has had no response or any reports from EDC roads, Scottish Police, or any other agency. **Action BM**

ITEM 5 – Dog Fouling – EDC previously told Cllr Ferretti that bags were available in the library in Kirintilloch and we would not be receiving any in Milton for free issue. It has since come to light that Torrance have free bags issued by the chemist and before that the post office. Cllr Pews will action this. **Action BM**

ITEM 8 - Village Newsletter – slow progress with this item. **Action – VJ**

ITEM 11a – Broken bank of Burn at Alloch Dam – no further update available on this matter presently. We need someone to take a walk up and see what is happening. **Action All**

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ITEM 10f – the increase in the fence height at the village primary school football area is progressing internally with EDC. Cllr Pews will ask about this issue.

Standing agenda items

General Comment - The request to the public regarding their primary concerns for and within the village were collated by AG and a report was put onto Facebook. There were 75 comments with a large variety of points raised with the top three clearly being 1. Speeding and condition of roads, 2 Dog fouling and 3. Drugs. These three items will now become standing agenda items until hopefully we have dealt with them and the next on the list of concerns will move onto the standing items. This is not to say that we will not try and deal with the other issues mentioned when possible. It was agreed to publicise these 3 main issues in all electronic forms available to us. We now require the villagers to provide evidence, photographs, sightings relating to any of the issues to be sent to the Community Council.

3. Roads (speeding, conditions, crossing points, pavements)

- a) BM is still waiting for information from EDC about cutting back and cleaning the spoil from the pavement between Birdston and the nursing home EDC have contacted the landowner and there is a disputed over who owns the land. BM will chase this up again and hopefully have the area tidied up before spring / summer. **Action BM**

4. Dog Fouling

As noted earlier, Cllr Pews will speak to EDC as they appear to be available in Torrance, we will continue to request more bins. **Action BM**

5. Drugs

Nothing to report currently. **Action AB**

6. Village paths.

- a) VJ has gathered grants and funding and we now require organising work parties to undertake the repairs Mr Skeddeski from the village is happy to assist with the organising and supervision of the work party.
BM has spoken with John Thompson and he is very happy and grateful for the bridge to be repaired. This should be the first project. **Action ALL**
- b) A member of the public confirmed that Lord Stirling owns all the land around the wells and that previously Charles Kennedy had obtained assistance from the Countryside Commission to install the original paths.
BM will try and obtain information regarding the countryside commission and see if they can assist. **Action BM**

7. Broadband Provision

- a) Open Reach refused to admit that the installation of poles and high wire was the cheap option and refused to change any of their work. A meeting on site took place and their chief engineer stated categorically that they had informed EDC planning department of every pole to be erected. EDC planning state they received no notifications. Basically, out of the two organisations that should have had the

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common decency to inform the villages of Milton and Lennoxton, one of them is lying when questioned. **Action BM**

- b) A member of the public raised the issue of a telegraph pole appearing 1m from his front garden, we informed him that he can complain but given what's happening all over the village he may not be successful.
- c) A further discussion took place about the ease of burying cables etc and BM confirmed that all raised objections / solutions had already been put to Open Reach and refused. Simply, it's a cost and speed issue.
- d) One member of the public who lives down Antermony Road noted to the meeting that his broadband is extremely poor and that the outer realms of villages are being forgotten about. BM to look into this.

e) Chair's update.

Anything to report has already been discussed during the actions from previous minutes section.

f) Treasurer's update.

- a) VJ previously noted that we require landowners' permission to work on the paths on their land. BM noted that he is trying to get in touch with Bellway. **Action BM**
- b) Data protection Policy still to be actioned. **Action All**
- c) Safeguarding Policy still to be actioned. **Action All**
- d) VJ noted that we do not have an inventory of items that have been bought previously. A former CC member noted that previous purchases included a lawnmower, a strimmer, and a leaf blower but had no idea where they were. BM noted there is also a set of tennis nets. VJ will speak to two former members of the CC to ascertain if they have any knowledge of the items.
- e) VJ informed the meeting of the current financial balances of the accounts and noted the agreed expenditure to replace the defibrillator pads after recent use.
- f) VJ noted that the hall will be booked for the next meeting.
- g) VJ asked if there were any more nominations for the Charles Kennedy cup.

g) Planning applications.

- a) No planning applications have been made that affect the village in any manner.

h) Police report.

- a) Police report was circulated to all members, only issue for the village was kids / teenagers throwing eggs somewhere on Craighead Road.

i) Any other business

BIRDSTON COUP

- The meeting came to the main order on business everyone wanted to discuss, namely the opening and operation of some form of business on the old Birdston coup site. This was a very interactive discussion and as such the points of interest views offered etc will generally not be attached to a name or member of the public unless it is easily identifiable at the time.
- BM asked Morag Campbell to outline the issue for those not already involved. MC noted as follows.
 - A company began works on the coup last year.
 - A small group of people have been writing to MP's and MSP's but getting nowhere in trying to get a full explanation of what is taking place.

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- The situation is getting worse and the fear is an environmental one.
 - It has been confirmed that waste products from Northern Ireland have been brought to the site and the company running it actually state that they have taken material from the highly contaminated site at Southbank Road / Donaldson Street.
 - Before any real regulation was in place the original owner took in toxic liquid waste, asbestos and nuclear waste from Faslane and Rosyth.
 - Once better regulations came in the couple was capped and closed.
 - It now looks like the cap has been breached which is serious as they appear to be digging holes to bury new waste coming to site.
 - They have deliberately and wilfully destroyed the right of way along the side of the coup and started to rip out all the vegetation, they think they can just move the path onto the adjacent farmland.
 - They even destroyed the farmers fence and started to fill in a drainage ditch.
 - There has been no action from SEPA or EDC despite all the information sent to them.
 - MC asked that all elected officials should be doing more to represent us in this matter.
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- AB noted that a lot of people in the village is aware of the coup being open but perhaps don't know how to object.
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- BM explained to the meeting that he had been regularly sending e-mails with photographs and technical information relating to the products sitting on site along with copies of e-mails from the manufacturers of the products, with particular reference to the Irish company who confirmed that they had employed a company in Ireland to remove and deal with their waste product. Unsurprisingly the company employed has the same directors as the company managing the site currently.
 - BM confirmed to the meeting that the company Birdston Management Ltd were registered in England and were only formed in June of 2021 with a nature of business recorded as Remediation activities and other waste management services. Even with this information put to SEPA and EDC neither of them seem to be interested in investigating further.
 - BM noted that the company LinkedIn page clearly shows that rather than importing soil to redevelop the land for agriculture they are sifting soil and look to be selling it on, in our eyes this is clearly a waste management and treatment business.
 - BM expressed concern that this company will operate their business until they have made the money they want or run out of area to dump and bury waste and then close down and disappear. The question has to be asked why two businessmen from England and Ireland form and register a company in England to operate in Scotland unless you intend to shut it down at short notice and avoid Scottish Law, leaving us with an environmental issue on our hands.
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- A member of the Birdston residents group explained what she had been doing as follows.
 - She had been in contact with both EDC and SEPA.
 - It appears there is some form of planning loophole which has allowed this company to work on the site.

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- She first contacted SEPA by logging an event on their web site, she was contacted by David Walker 2 weeks ago by telephone when she explained to him that she believed the cap had been breached.
 - He informed her that the company had two exemptions to allow material to be brought onto site to form a haul road through the site and to bring the site back into agricultural use.
 - When asked about some of the products identified on site, he agreed that this was unusual as this was expected to be a low event site, he agreed that he would visit the site.
 - He also confirmed that he had been notified by a colleague that the company running the site were advertising on LinkedIn as running a waste disposal business from the site. He called them and told them that was not allowed, no more. It appears SEPA can only look at what is being done in relation to the exemptions, it was mentioned to him that they should have transfer notes and paperwork for every delivery to site, SEPA requested this paperwork on 9th Dec last year with a deadline of 7th January this year.
 - She spoke to him a few days later again on the telephone and he was very defensive and uncooperative, it seems SEPA had granted them a two-week extension as the owner was having difficulties due to personal reasons. A lame excuse.
 - Materials identified as coming from Ireland and confirmed by the manufacturer as waste product was identified by workforce on site as product for the haul road which SEPA seem to believe.
 - The SEPA officer said if it was going to be dumped why would it be on pallets.
 - A lot of this material has disappeared, and new materials have now arrived on site. SEPA still have no paperwork and are being very unhelpful.
- Andy MacKenzie who previously worked in the waste industry for local authorities gave some explanation into the exemptions and the workings of and the waste industry in general.
 - The company on site must have a staff member who is a COTC holder.
 - SEPA officer in general do not like to be questioned and often focus on the local authority waste sites leaving the private ones alone for whatever reason.
 - Having walked past the site numerous times and again last December he feels that the site should never have been granted the exemptions.
 - He has tried to obtain copies of the applications for the site but they are not available and may be part of the cyber attack damage that SEPA suffered.
 - There should have been numerous environmental surveys carried out prior to any application being granted, again these are not available if even done.
 - Currently the materials seen on site are old slag, marshy soils and clays which are not useful for returning any land to agricultural use.
 - Any materials leaving site, which he has been informed to have been witnessed by members of the public, must have an EWC code and a waste transfer note and if it is soil, the composition of the soil must be known.
 - Under the exemptions some soil with minor contamination can be used on the site.
 - It is highly unlikely that any product coming from the old Nickle works site previously mentioned will have very little contamination.

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- Under the exemptions 9 and 19 which have been granted treatment of waste on site is not allowed. In his opinion there are currently 15 breaches of the Exemptions.
 - To carry out any form of waste treatment they would need to apply for planning permission, there have been no applications for a change of use to the site for this purpose.
 - Both SEPA and EDC appear to have breached their obligations to control activity within their regions properly and don't seem to be doing much about it.
 - He also noted that the site sits on the edge of the local flood plain and all waste and water from the site will run into the flood plain and then into the Rivers Glazert and Kelvin.
 - AM finished by noting that they are not allowed to raise the level of the land and that a full topographical survey should have been carried out and be available for inspection.
 - AM feels that a full meeting with SEPA and EDC should be requested, and that all information should be available prior to this meeting.
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- A member of the public added that they have broken into all surrounding burns and drains, obviously to let the water on site run off.
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- A member of the public who works alongside the Forestry commission offered assistance and noted he would be able to find out who is the head of SEPA and their e-mail address, he also has environmental contacts. He also suggested that if this company has any accreditations from associations or other bodies, we should complain to them.
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- A member of the public reported that he has also been in touch with SEPA.
 - He has sent photographic evidence and was told that there was an officer dealing with it who would be visiting site and he was told that dumping on the site was categorically forbidden.
 - He also noted that the Cats Walk which runs along the north side of the Coup is now flooded to a height greater than there ever has been.
 - He also informed the meeting that he has at some point passed by at night and they were operating with floodlights. Very strange unless you are trying to hide what's going on.
 - His final point was to agree that if this company were to fold and shut up shop it will fall on EDC and the taxpayers to deal with what is left.
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- A member of the public noted to the meeting that landfill tax regulations extend to non-registered sites and not just registered sites.
 - The rate for inert non-hazardous waste is in the region of £3 per ton and other waste is in the region of £95 per ton.
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- MC asked the only councillor in attendance what he could do on our behalf, everyone agreed that we want it investigated and closed.
 - Councillor Pews stated that he understands that all agencies will be visiting this week.

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- General conversation took place about organising a working group to tackle the issue as it seemed that there was a fair amount of expertise available locally, it was agreed that this would happen with BM, MC and a representative of Birdston residents coordinating this.
- Another member of the public spoke and stated that he has also been in contact With SEPA as he was unaware of the background work being done and has had conversations with David Walker of SEPA also who assured him that they cannot treat waste on site. He also raised the issue of concrete culverts being formed from the site to drain it locally.
- AM stated that a full habitat survey should have been carried out on the site and signed off by an environmental expert before any exemptions were granted, where is this report.
- Members of the public stated that there have been at least two sites in Scotland which were ignored until it was too late, and it cost millions to clean them up.
- Councillor Pews noted that he would be asking questions of the relevant departments in EDC tomorrow.

Additional Business

VJ noted that the EDC Facebook page reported that there will be culvert diversion works taking place shortly at Cottonmill drive at its junction with Campsie Drive and the housing development access road for approximately 8 weeks starting on 24th January.

BT will be working at Milton Cross cleaning blocked ducts and Scottish water are working at Redmoss Road and Linden Lea repairing burst pipes.

A member of the public asked if the CC have adequate funds to produce a newsletter as there is a lack of advertising in the village for the local festivals which take place regularly, the CC confirmed that we are currently in the process of creating one and hope to have it in production soon.

Councillor Gary Pews informed the meeting that the asset transfer of Antermoney Loch whilst initially was being recommended for refusal has been overturned after intervention by himself. The asset transfer has now been approved.

Morag Campbell informed the meeting that the defibrillator will be up and running the next day once the pads arrive, she noted that it has been used 3 times in the last year successfully. It was unable to be traced recently as it had been left at Kirkintilloch health centre, we have it back again.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was proposed to be the 21st February 2022 at 7.30pm in the village hall.
The meeting ended at 9.30pm.