

Kirkcowan Community Council Meeting – 21st Feb. 2022

at 7.30pm, in the Village Hall

Draft Minutes

Present: Charles McEwan (Chair), Hazel McWhirter (Treasurer), Mary Harkness (Secretary), Hazel Johnston, Andrew Gladstone, Kevin Dean, Tricia Veevers, Mary Mackenzie (Minutes), John Drysdale, Richard Marsh, Catherine Gray, Lynne Melville, Joe Wright, Robert Drysdale, Mary Murdoch, Olive Hall, John Hall, L Campbell, Kath Gooze, Janice Sommerville, Mark Godfrey

1. **Chair, Charles McEwan**, opened the meeting and stated that he had informed the committee on 2nd February of his intention to resign as Chair and as a Community Councillor as of 22nd February. The other members had therefore held a Zoom meeting to decide who would replace him, and had voted for Hazel Johnston. She had agreed to take the post until the AGM, which has been rescheduled for 16th May this year. Charles then commended her to the meeting as an excellent choice and duly stepped down. Hazel then assumed chairmanship of the meeting and thanked Charles for all his hard work and commitment as Chair over the past 18 months.
2. **Apologies:** Cllr J McCamon, Cllr J McColm
3. **Minutes of December meeting (20/12/21):**
Accepted: proposed by Mary H, and seconded by Kevin D
Matters arising: KD questioned the section about the Christmas tree lights, and also what was meant in the CREPL grant section about the 3 objectors coming up with a project for next year's grant? This was to allow different priorities for projects to be put forward.
4. **Census Presentation** by Gary Brady. No contact had been established prior to the meeting.
5. **Police Matters:** No Police present and no report.
6. **Treasurers Report:** H McWhirter
Account no.1 has £11.30 | Account no.2 has £68,000

Outgoings since December meeting: £819.94 spent –£162 for annual defibrillator support ; £100.44 relating to generator; £132.50 grant money for hall fees for Tai Chi, Knitting & Badminton groups; £425.10 to A Kirsch for tree felling on railway line path.

Income since December meeting: £474.50 discretionary budget from DGC; £577.50 from KCDT for knitting & badminton; £58,438.82 from KCDT for footpaths (*to be paid out as works are completed*)

7. **Correspondence:** M Harkness
An email was received from Councillor Jackie McCamon:
"It was brought to my attention last week by concerned parents that an individual was outside of the school distributing booklet/leaflet to parents regarding a particular subject. I contacted Dumfries and Galloway Council, and Head of Education responded with the following:
'I contacted the Headteacher who has reassured me that she has spoken to three senior officers for advice on this matter and a message will go out in this week's school newsletter. The Headteacher also confirmed that the book was given out to parents and not to children however it remains concerning but I am confident that the Headteacher has taken all appropriate steps'. Jackie McCamon

8. Local Planning Applications: None locally

9. KCDT Meetings: H Johnston

10/01/2022: Discussed the Park and the need to move on with the project. Still hoping to begin works this spring. Also discussed Christmas lights, and printing a newsletter, which could go out with one from KCC.

Emergency meeting in response to Development Officer, Katrina Dick's resignation. The Board met to discuss arrangements for a replacement, and try to organise the handover, but unable to contact KD. Met with Machars Action, writing a job description. Carol taking Katrina's work on temporarily. This will be discussed again at the next meeting on Thursday 24th.

10. Park Steering Group: M Mackenzie

There have been no meetings since December. As Katrina, who was co-ordinating the Park project, has left KCDT, Martin Marsh will lead in the meantime.

11. Amey Road Signs on A75: M Harkness

Transport Scotland has responded to enquiries about replacing the 2 signs, which had incorrect information and have since been blown down. Kirkcowan is not entitled to brown Tourist Board signs as there aren't all the required facilities in the village: fuel, parking, refreshments and toilets. There is the possibility of the pub reopening, but there is a requirement for minimum opening hours. Mary H will check exact wording. TS would erect standard black & white signs with 'Local Services' instead, if eligible, and this was agreed to be the best option.

12. CREPL Grant Funding: M Mackenzie

MM apologised for not yet having produced the draft design for this project. It was previously voted to spend the grant on improving the corner garden at the top of Church Street with new paving, walling and benches. Some questions were raised about spending money on DGC property, but the Council are understood to be happy for communities to take on this kind of project. This will have to be confirmed with Asset Manager, Robert Lowther, whose authority is also required in regard to other projects in the village. MM will provide design by the end of week for discussion with the rest of KCC. The grant is being held over from last year, so needs to be applied for very soon, as we can't apply for this year's grant until work completed, and this will be an annual sum of approx. £2,500 for community benefit.

13. Queen's Green Canopy Tree: A Gladstone

In celebration of the Platinum Jubilee, the community are to plant a commemorative tree in the village. The choice of where to plant it was discussed and it was confirmed that the area behind the war memorial would be best, as previously agreed. AG will contact the Church Board for their agreement. Failing that, there is space in the Rest Garden, which belongs to AG, so there would be no holdups waiting for permission.

What kind of tree? One that is decorative and not too big. Several suggestions were made, and Hazel J proposed holding an online Facebook poll to find out what the wider population would choose, with a closing date of the 28th February. Forms would also be available in the PO. Where do we get the tree from and what cost? Possibly free from QGC, or Woodland Trust? AG will check. Commemorative plaque costs £140, perhaps source a cheaper one locally.

14. Jubilee Events: H Johnson

Discuss what the community can organise for the Jubilee weekend, Thurs. 2nd – Sun. 5th June. Beacon will be lit on Thursday evening at 9.45. HJ proposing a lantern-making workshop followed by an evening parade.

MH – Village Hall will hold Afternoon Teas on the Saturday, along with an exhibition of 1950s memorabilia, photos etc which will be open Saturday & Sunday. Any contributions / memories from local long-term residents would be much appreciated.

Other suggestions included a party in the Park; dressing up in 50s costumes; teddy bears' picnic; barbeque; decorated windows; traditional games; food to share; marquee hire, etc

It was agreed to ask on Facebook pages for ideas and volunteers from the wider community to form an organising group. Also need to investigate possible grant funding.

15. Balgreen Football Grounds and Pavillion:

MH – KCC acquired nominal ownership of the grounds when Tarff Rovers closed down, and there are now likely to be rates to pay, which previously qualified for 100% relief. Could cost £800 per annum. Waiting for an Assessor's report and planning decision on liability. Does KCC want to keep the grounds for sports or let it return to agricultural use?

JW - There is no chance of restarting a football team, could it be a site for a MUGA?

Parents feel it is too far from the village for children, and installation & maintenance would be very expensive. Other sports or activities are possible.

AG - The building is in need of urgent repairs to prevent further deterioration and to secure it from further vandalism. The alternative is to demolish it. Given the long history and tradition of Tarff Rovers, it would be good to keep the site functioning and viable for sports use. May be able to apply for a KCDT grant for essential repairs. AG will try to get quotes before next meeting.

AOCB:

Does anyone present want to make any comments or ask questions?

Dog Fouling: L Melville – this is particularly bad in the village now, what can be done?

The dog warden can issue fixed penalty notice if offender caught. There needs to be 2 witnesses to any incident for the authorities to take action. Dog mess can be bagged and put into any refuse bin. Dogs cannot be banned from the Park, but must be under control, and kept on leads when walking in fields.

Traffic Speeding on Main Street: K Googe – a number of cars are going too fast on Main Street and endangering pedestrians, dogs and children. Speed bumps have been investigated in the past but are not a viable solution. The speed signs at the entrances to the village don't seem to deter fast drivers. There is a possibility of 20mph limits being imposed in towns and villages nationally in the future. Individuals can report incidents directly to the police.

Footpaths: J Wright – the paths that are being created around the village should be accessible for everyone, not just able-bodied. It would have been better to create one path that was all-abilities rather than 3 restricted ones all at once. The Disability Act (1995?) stated that all new services must include disabled access. H Johnson – the KCC all discussed & majority agreed to the project as it is, but no-one dismissed the possibility of upgrading in the future. Are footpaths a service? A Gladstone - there would be very significant costs involved both in the creation & maintenance of hard, wide paths (£65 per linear metre for tarmac, and £45 for whin dust), raising the 'value for money' issue. The existing project will mean that the majority of residents and visitors will be able to more easily and safely walk in the countryside around Kirkcowan. The current works on the railway line are progressing well. The undergrowth has been removed, fences and gates will be installed soon and the surface is good for walking. Some parts of each path will be hard-core surfaced. A suggestion was made to use mesh to reinforce and stabilise grass paths.

Coast2Coast Rally, 7th May: R Drysdale - Road closures will affect local farming operations. Need to contact organisers Machars Car Club to find out about times and dates.

Warning Signs for Squirrels: M Godfrey - Can we get road signs similar to deer warning ones to alert motorists to squirrels on the road?

Request for information/ artefacts: M Harkness – for the exhibition of 1950s life & times, looking for 75s+ interested in sharing memories, newspaper cuttings, books, posters, photos, comics, food adverts etc. Contact KCC with offers, suggestions or contact details of willing participants.

School Noticeboard: P Veevers – Acknowledgement and many thanks to Bill Harkness for the excellent repairs and renovation of the school noticeboard.

KCC Vacancies: K Dean - Are the KCC planning to make arrangements to fill the 2 vacancies created by the resignations of Charles McEwan and Joe Wright?
Not immediately, it was felt that the committee needed to settle for a while with the 2 most recently elected members before more changes were made.
KD – Any response to last Thursday’s incident at the primary school?
Not to do with KCC, no breach of Code of Conduct.

Easter Egg Hunt: L Melville – is there going to be an event for Easter weekend?
Make/decorate Easter eggs, then hide them around the village.

Well Done to Hazel Johnson, on the smooth running of her first meeting as the new Chairperson.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm

The next meeting of KCC will be on Monday 21st March 2022 at 7.30pm

KCDT Grant Applications:

From the Hall Board for cleaning public toilets: £2,340
As Covid precautions ease, the Board is reducing the number of times the toilets are cleaned in a week, but still require funding to cover the cost.

3 members abstained from voting, but agreed by 5 – 1.

Mary Mackenzie (Minutes Secretary)