

Minutes of Meldrum Bourtie & Daviot Community Council Meeting

Tuesday 22nd September 2020

7.00pm

Online Zoom Meeting

CC Members Present: - Shona Presly, Jan Chalmers, Willie Sinclair, John Pirie, Lloyd Duncan, James Milton, Simon Kilkerr, Stuart Singer and Yvonne Oliver

Apologies: - Jeff Goodhall, David Clare, Nick Forbes and Nicola Currie

Members of Public: - Andrew McCartney, Gordon Duncan, Gary Oliver, Kaye Cowie and Richard Elliott

Councillors: Cllr Hassan, Cllr Johnston, Cllr Gifford and Cllr Adam

Police: None

Minutes of August 2020

John advised he was missed as being someone who received an email from Aberdeenshire Council re Meldrum House access issues. Jan will amend the minutes to show this.

Proposed: Simon Kilkerr

Seconded: John Pirie

Declarations of Interest

None

Matters Arising

Jan went through all matters arising from the previous minutes. She advised a number had been dealt with but was still waiting on updates for the following items:

- Mill Road Wall Ownership
- Update from Ian Jackson on the procedures for let holders and fire safety from Robertsons
- Finger Post signage

Jan will endeavour to get updates on these points for the next meeting.

We did get a response from Area Office regarding the questions John Pirie asked at the last meeting. The questions asked and answers are as follows:

Q. Can the Community Council include the number of people voting for and against in our minutes and in representations and do we need to wait until an AGM to make changes to our constitution or can that be done at any time ?

A. This is something that the Community Council can agree at a regular meeting and it can be actioned with immediate effect, it would not require to go in the constitution.

Q. Should a Community Councilor declare an interest, leave the discussion and not take part in the vote if they make a personal representation on any item and can this be added to our constitution?

A. Schedule 5 of the Scheme of Governance (the Code of Conduct) covers Declarations of Interest and puts the onus on each member to determine whether their interest prevents them from taking part in any discussions or voting. It's not really something that can go into the constitution as it would be on a case by case basis. If a member has made a representation, they need to consider whether they can continue to be involved in their capacity as Community Councillor, or if their personal representation might cloud their judgement. They should also consider the public perception and whether it could be perceived that they are not acting impartially. The member should disclose this information at the start of the meeting and either advise that they will not take part, or justify clearly why they are in a position to continue.

Q. We have decided we would like to offer the secretary a monetary sum each year for the work they do. We think this used to be done and would like to offer it again. Can we add this to our Constitution so the secretary Can either accept or refuse the money each year but they have the option?

A. This is already in the currently constitution at section 6.1.e:

- e. The Community Councillor(s) of the Community Council appointed as Secretary or Treasurer or Secretary/Treasurer shall not be entitled to remuneration, but the Community Council may, at its discretion, award honoraria to such Community Councillors together with expenses actually incurred and supported by receipts or vouchers. The Community Council may pay appropriate remuneration to a Secretary and Treasurer or Secretary/Treasurer appointed out with its own membership.

The Community Council can agree to act on this now.

Shona then asked the members present to vote if they wished the numbers of people voting for and against to be noted in the minutes and representations going forward. 7 members voted for and 2 against so this will now be standard practice within our Community Council.

Richard Elliott – Website Discussion

Richard advised he started doing the website several years ago. He has made some changes along the way and it is now jointly run with Cllr Johnston. He states there are no politics or comments allowed on the page, it is purely for posting information for Meldrum and the surrounding area.

Richard advised the website has a big reach and the posts regularly reach 2k people.

Shona advised the CC has discussed trying to set up a newsletter again and wondered if Richard thought the website could be used for this. Richard and the members present thought this was a good idea.

ACTION SHONA/RICHARD

Shona asked Stuart to give some info on his idea for “Friendly Meldrum” Stuart said he was thinking we could list the things that are going on in Meldrum and the surrounding area on the website, show the shops that we have available with photos and also set up a business directory. All members present agreed this was a good idea. Stuart and Richard will discuss this further and report back to us.

ACTION STUART/RICHARD

Gordon Duncan stated he felt it was important for the community council to have an active facebook page.

Richard asked if we could check our accounts to see when he last invoiced us and he would arrange for an invoice to be sent to us for the website hosting. Willie and Jan will then sign a cheque and post to Richard.

ACTION WILLIE/JAN

Statement of Outstanding Business

Jan advised there was nothing new to report from the statement.

Police Report

None

Members of the public

Gordon Duncan raised the issue of speeding on the A947 (directly above the South Road) Jan will email PC Donald regarding this.

ACTION JAN

Reports from Elected Members

Cllr Hassan's points will be covered in AOCB and the MAIG report.

Cllr Gifford advised us all to keep listening to the updates that are coming from the Government and the Local Authority regarding Covid-19. He also advised car parking charges will be restarting shortly.

Cllr Johnston advised he had contact Trevor Morgan regarding the town halls repairs. He confirmed again the Council is responsible for external repairs and Making Meldrum Better for internal repairs. He advised Making Meldrum Better and the Council Estates Team are still in communication regarding the items but he will continue to follow up and will report back to us at the next meeting with any update.

ACTION CLLR JOHNSTON

Cllr Johnston advised the best protocol for problems with litter or broken glass etc to report it to the Council on their website or via email and send to the Cllr's to follow up.

Cllr Johnston gave a brief overview on the Town Centre Regeneration Group. He advised there is a short timescale to get the proposals in but he is liaising with Jan with make sure it happens.

ACTION CLLR JOHNSTON/JAN

Kaye advised there is still broken glass in Baker Street Car Park. Cllr Johnston will follow this up again.

ACTION CLLR JOHNSTON

MAIG

Andrew McCartney emailed the following report to all members prior to the meeting:

MAIG Report to MB&D CC September 2020

Our team of lady volunteers continue their weekly maintenance of the summer displays which have given much pleasure to the residents and

visitors to the town. Regrettably some of the displays are beginning to die off and the team will shortly be removing the containers in readiness for the winter/spring displays.

We take delivery of the winter/spring plants this week and they will be planted out into pots to grow on in the Polytunnel before being planted out into the containers.

As a result the volunteer team will be kept busy over the coming weeks removing the summer displays, drying and storing the Begonia Tubers for next years plantings, and clearing the Urquhart Rd. display bed in readiness for the spring plantings.

As per our last report the Christmas Illuminations will have to be heavily curtailed as the present Covaid 19 rules will restrict our ability to carry out our usual display and I can confirm that our public switch on event will not take place however we will be able to locate and decorate the community Christmas tree in front of the Town Hall.

As previously reported we had been expected to take delivery of our eco Electric Utility vehicle way back in April. As the vehicle is manufactured in China the present Pandemic upset these plans and further frustrations due to the container ship breaking down and the container having to be transferred to another ship caused further delays. However, the vehicle arrived with the agents last week and to add further delays we have been informed that part of the vehicle is the wrong spec we will have to wait a further 8 weeks for the replacement unit to be fitted which means it will be closer to the year end before we take delivery. The good news is that all being well will give us time to have it fitted out in time for next summer !!

Further to the concerns raised in our last report regarding the state of weeds and detritus throughout the main thoroughfares of the town our Chairperson has contacted the CC as nothing has been done to rectify the neglected state of the town. It is so disappointing and disheartening for our band of dedicated volunteers who put so much into improving and maintaining the ambiance of the town that Aberdeenshire Council are unable to commit doing the very basics of street cleaning.

The citizens of this town pay the same council tax rates as other towns such as Inverurie, Ellon & Turriff where it is noted that street and kerb maintenance continues to be carried out on a daily basis, we ask that our elected members support our concerns and take issue with relevant department to take immediate action.

Andrew Hassan provided the following update which he received via email:

Update from Sallie Antill (Support Leader – Collections & Cleansing – Central, Aberdeenshire Council):

“I can advise that the situation is the same across the Aberdeenshire from the Waste Service point of view including in terms of street cleansing. Waste Services currently have permission from the Adaptive Service Board for sweeping only the immediate vicinity of academies and Zone 3 areas and if there was an absolute safety critical matter. I would also advise that roadside litter picking, is currently still on hold with a report to restart the service due to the board this week.

For your information, all the areas in Aberdeenshire are zoned in accordance with the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (Scotland) 2018. Most of Oldmeldrum, including the town centre is Zone 4, the Colpy Road, from the A920 roundabout past the academy and up to Eavern Place is Zone 3.

With the above restrictions in place we are therefore unable to carry out any regular sweeping in the town centre. Infrastructure Service have also prioritised the services that are provided, the critical services are waste collections, burials, emergency road repairs and winter maintenance. Street cleansing and other tasks are lower in their priority status. This means that we have to ensure we have sufficient resource for the critical services first before reviewing the next priority level and so on.

Due to the current resource levels, the usual street cleansing staff as well as colleagues from Roads, Landscapes and Construction are required on waste collections (and other critical/high priority services) and therefore we are unable to provide any form of regular resource for the street cleansing.

I can advise however, that mechanical sweepers have been in Oldmeldrum on at least 3 occasions since July. Litter patrol operatives attends Oldmeldrum at least 2 or 3 times during the week and once at the weekend where they will empty the bins and litter pick the area around them.

We are also able to advise that the Litter Prevention Action Plans for communities have restarted which are targeted to the specific local communities aimed at facilitating community, organisation and business engagement.

We fully appreciate that there are issues with street debris and litter and this is frustrating and disappointing, however, due to the pandemic we are unable to provide at the same level of service as pre pandemic.”

Further Update from Anne Buchan (Senior Roads Engineer, Aberdeenshire Council)

“We were unable to carry out the annual spraying earlier due to the restrictions, then it became a resource issue. We did utilise some squads to hand remove weeds in some areas, but it is a time consuming task and we did not manage to cover all areas.

We will not be spraying now as we move into autumn, and the vegetation will be receding anyway.

We appreciate the work the community volunteers carry out and can only hope that this community spirit continues as we, no doubt, face further cuts in service.”

Andrew McCartney said he they were very disappointed with these statements. He said he feels Meldrum has been completely neglected and it is in a dreadful state. A number of members agreed with Andrew McCartney’s thoughts. He asked for some support and help from the Cllrs on this.

Cllr Johnston said unfortunately these decisions are outwith the Cllrs control.

Daviot Community Trust

Willie advised the Trust is still continuing to do maintenance. The rain storm has washed away some of the chestnut path however they are working on repairing it while social distancing.

Parks Group

Jan advised she has had contact with Oldmeldrum Bowling Club and they have sent through an overview of their position which she read out.

From Oldmeldrum Bowling Club:

The Oldmeldrum Bowling Club was set up in 1926 and located in the Pleasure Park for the benefit of the community of Oldmeldrum. A local businessman had earlier donated the area now known as the Pleasure Park for recreational purposes. Ownership of the Bowling Club was vested in

the Committee and membership. Until the earlier part of the 1990s when, by agreement, the ownership of the land was transferred to Aberdeenshire Council who replaced the Club House as part of the transfer deal. From then, the Club has paid a peppercorn rent, now standing at £87.5 twice yearly. No further work has been done by the Council since.

There are three main areas we need to address.

(a) Health and Safety Our current situation does not fully meet the current standards. In particular, disabled access from the clubhouse to the green is unsatisfactory. Access to the green itself needs upgrading; the paths around the green are uneven and the physical route onto the green needs to be made more suitable for wheelchairs. We do not yet have likely costs for this but they are likely to exceed £10,000.

(b) Clubhouse refurbishment The current clubhouse has all the necessary components but there is a need to modernise the toilet areas, including the disabled toilet. The kitchen and food preparation areas are now dated, equipment is serviceable but in need of replacement and entrance and exit doors are in need of strengthening to improve security. Again costs are likely to exceed £10,000.

(c) Green and Equipment The green has not been replaced or significantly refurbished since it was set up. The playing surface is in reasonable condition,, and we are following environmentally beneficial systems for maintenance. Replacing a green is costly. Figures of more than £50,000 are quoted for this. The most immediate need is to replace the ditches around the green and this would cost about £15,000 using prefabricated units. A good green and its surface relies on quality mowers, scarifiers and rollers. Our current stock is nearing the end of its useful life and needs replacement. Second hand replacements are possible. New suitable mowers for example start at around £8,500.

The club is committee run and relies on its own fees and fundraising to remain in business. Over the last 15 years we have received two small grants from the Community Cafe and the Rotary Club but our main income has come from a successful annual Tournament and the efforts of the members themselves. Coronavirus has demonstrated our vulnerability. So far we have only been able to obtain a grant of £490 from Bowls Scotland to help with utilities for the current year. At the present time outside fundraising is not possible.

The members present had a discussion around ways to try and help the Bowling Club.

Stuart suggested they begin a raffle similar to MAIG.

Willie suggested a number of funding opportunities and advised he has a list which he will forward onto Jan to send to the Bowling Club to look over.

ACTION WILLIE

Jan asked if there was any money left in the Formartine Area Budget. Cllr Johnston advised there was a few thousand left and to speak to Linda Henry for further information.

ACTION JAN

Lloyd asked if there was any update on the works to be carried out at the Old Sports Pavilion.

Cllr Johnston advised Aberdeenshire Council cannot get Estimators or Surveyors on site due to Covid-19 however it is on the critical to do list when it is safe to do so. Cllr Johnston advised he would update us on this as information comes forward.

ACTION CLLR JOHNSTON

DAIG

Nicola advised via email they will be organising a socially distanced Halloween and the light switch on had been cancelled but there will still be a tree

Meldrum Paths Group

Gary advised he and Shona met with Sandy Scott regarding possible allotments in Meldrum. Sandy Scott is a retired Council employee who headed up Aberdeen City parks. Sandy has volunteered to act as an advisor for Meldrum Allotments.

Gary stated Sandy felt a growing space idea would fit into the current strategy that was mentioned at Formartine Area Committee today.

Gary felt it would be advantageous if a Cllr was on board with this and the next step was to set up an online meeting to discuss further. Cllr Johnston said he thought all Cllr's would be interested in this.

Stuart asked how the land would be divided and if a group would run it or if individuals would take it on.

Gary replied it would be run by an association and a constitution would be drawn up.

Gary then gave an update from Meldrum Path Group. He advised the survey is in circulation and Meldrum Paths Group is meeting with Udney Paths Group tomorrow night to look at the Oldmeldrum/Pitmedden/Udney link and get some action points drawn up for taking this forward.

He advised they have contacted Huntly Partnership and they are hoping to get a meeting set up to discuss the E Bikes.

Finally Gary advised they still have work to do on the Redhouse track and wanted to do this maintenance before winter however it will cost £800-£900 so they will need to look at funding as they still are unable to get support from the Stephens.

Treasurers Report

Willie Advised the balance as at 22nd September 2020 is £11,949.84 however there are 3 cheques waiting to be cashed namely –
£167.76 for new defib pads
£167.95 for new signage at Barrahill and
£1000 to Aberdeenshire North Foodbank
This brings the figure down to £10,614.13

Shona advised she met with Jan and Willie to discuss the Queens Birthday Money and the defib money. The situation was confirmed as follows:

The defib in the square was vandalised so we filed an insurance claim however just as that money arrived in we received a very generous donation from the MacLeod family in Oldmeldrum to replace the vandalised one. We did this using the MacLeod family money. This left £933 in the defib pot. We have just paid £167.76 for new defib pads so this now brings the defib pot down to £765.24.

The proceeds from the Queens Birthday Tea money are £950.

As there are currently no firm suggestions being put forward for a use for the Queens Birthday Tea money Shona proposed that we combine the defib and Queens Tea pots. This is based on the fact we have 5 potentially 6 defibs to look after under our cc umbrella with pads costing £167.76 and batteries costing £300.

The members present voted on this proposal and all members present agreed to support this. Willie will now show the two pots combined in the accounts.

ACTION WILLIE

Secretarial Report

Jan stated she has done so more work on the lighting for the skatepark. She now she costs for the lights and is awaiting a costing from Electricians. The Developer Obligation pot has £7300 available for sports and recreation so Jan asked for the members presents support in applying for this for the lighting. All members present agreed so Jan will go ahead and do this.

ACTION JAN

Jan advised Barbara Elliott has sent an email on behalf of MAIG regarding the state of the square and asking for the cc's help to sort it. Robin Philip has also approached Jan suggesting we raise £500 and get a group of local volunteers organised to weed and litter pick in the square and surrounding streets. Jan asked for member's approval for this. All members present agreed so Jan will reply to Barbara and Robin and begin work on this. Gary advised the paths group has 3 barrows, grapes and forks that we could borrow.

ACTION JAN

Jan stated she had a call from Samantha Rawlins to ask if Meldrum needs any help ro support with our foodbank. I called Louise from the Legion to ask for her views and she advised there is still a need for a foodbank in Meldrum however now the Legion is open again she doesn't have the space to run it anymore. Samantha Rawlins suggested the cc approaches the church to ask them to run the food bank as this is what is happening in nearly all areas across Aberdeenshire. Jan asked for the members to support asking the church this. All members agreed so Jan and Shona will ask the Church.

ACTION JAN/SHONA

Jan stated the new defib pot will need to be topped up shortly as all defibs will be requiring batteries next year which will cost £1200. Jan suggested the Community Council puts a written request to the church for £5,000 from Sylvester Thomson's legacy to pay for the new defib that will be sited within Bourtie, batteries, pads, installation etc. All members present supported this and Jan will write to the Church.

ACTION JAN

Jan advised Claymore Homes has asked me to ask the Cllr's present if they know why Developer Obligations are very high in Meldrum only. Cllr Johnston advised it is not a standard tax and it depends on what mitigation each development requires. He also confirmed Meldrum does need a major school extension.

Cllr Johnston also wanted to advise that the Town Hall clock has now been classed as a non operational asset and this means the Council

doesn't have to repair the clock if it breaks. It was asked if non operational assets have a pot of money within the Council and Cllr Johnston advised they don't.

The members of the community council that were present as well as the members of the public were all very sad and disappointed to hear this,

Planning Report

John gave a report on the planning applications from March to August 2020.

He advised Meldrum House Estates planning went with 7 elected members voting for and 4 voting against. He also advised there are 32 conditions attached to this approval and one of them is to improve the crossing facilities at MH roundabout.

AOCB

Willie stated he had received correspondence from Ken Gordon who would like our cc to accept him providing us with information on means of alleviating fuel poverty in Aberdeenshire. The members present listened to the proposal and agreed to listen to Ken's updates as and when he has any.

Willie will email Ken Gordon to let him know.

ACTION WILLIE

Stuart asked if we can ask for the bollard at the corner of Kirk Brae and Albert Road to be reinstated as it is very unsafe and a pedestrian could be knocked down. The bollard was knocked down by a van one evening.

Jan will contact Ian Daniels about this.

ACTION JAN

Date and time of next meeting

24th November 2020 at 7.00pm online via Zoom