

HOWWOOD COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2002

PRESENT:

David Bottomley, Ken Macdonald, Rosee Macdonald, Jean Mitchell, John Anderson, Gordon Weir, Linda Smith, Robert Scarsbrook, Brian Young, Bill David, Nick Walker, Andrew Wilson, Danny McAlister, Millar Leon.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Alex Hewetson, Amish Amin, Norma David, Marie Phillips, Michael Koetsier, Elizabeth Dempster, Fergie Phillips.

APOLOGIES:

David McKie, Grace Weir, Susanne O'Brien, Tom Currie, Evelyn Currie.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

The Minutes of the 8.1.2002 meeting were accepted (pro. Ken Macdonald, sec. Robert Scarsbrook) but P.C. Stewart Russell had indicated that he would wish to question the minute of his Police Report; in his absence it was agreed to accept the Minutes and raise the issue again at the next meeting if necessary.

POLICE REPORT:

In P.C. Russell's absence there was no report and no issues were raised to be passed on to him.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES:

3.1 Howwood Wildlife and Woodlands

David Bottomley reported that the Howwood Wildlife and Woodlands Public Meeting on 29.1.2002 had been successful with an attendance of about 40. The tentative plan for the group is threefold: to maintain contact with the Community through Newsletters, web site and so forth; to provide educational meetings with invited speakers and Guided Walks; and to look into the conservation-based management of local sites. Others who had attended the Public Meeting agreed that it had been an excellent event.

3.2 Roads

Councillor Nimmo explained at the previous meeting that the road at the triangle (outside "The Cottage") had been repaired and should not flood. However, during two storms since the last meeting the road has flooded. There are also concerns about the extremely poor surface of the back roads to Kilbarchan and Lochwinnoch. It was agreed to write to Cllr Nimmo to express concern about these ongoing issues, and seek information about when they might be addressed. It was noted that work to reinforce the narrow bridge has begun.

3.3 Play Park

Andrew Wilson reported having met with Marie Phillips and Elizabeth Dempster to discuss setting up a Play Park Group. Forms for Grant Applications, received from Cllr Nimmo, have been passed on to Marie and Elizabeth, but before setting up the Play Park Group it was agreed that a Public Meeting should be organised to gauge local interest. Marie agreed to contact Play Group, Mothers & Toddlers Group and School. Andrew agreed to organise a date for the Village Hall and to draft a circular to advertise the Public Meeting. Norma David and Andrew agreed to be the CC representatives on the Play Park Group when it is convened.

3.4 History of Howwood

John Anderson and Danny McAlister have contacted John Gray who is happy to talk on the history of Howwood, perhaps as an evening event during Fete Week. John, Danny and Bill David agreed to lead a sub group of the CC to look into arranging this and the possibility of developing a Village History Booklet. They plan to co-opt other relevant people. Alex Hewetson mentioned that Awards for All may be a source of funding under the heritage criterion. Alan McNiven at Renfrewshire Council has experience of making applications to the Awards for All Programme and can advise local groups.

3.5 *Newsletter*

Rosee Macdonald circulated the first draft newsletter. She has already organised a number of CC Members and others to assist. It was agreed that CC Members and their contact details (with their consent) should be included in the Newsletter as part of public information. Anyone with comments, information or suggestions should contact Rosee directly.

3.6 *Web Site*

David McKie is organising a domain name through the Communities Internet Project and will require information to put on the web site. It was agreed the Newsletter would be a useful beginning, as well as contact information for members of the CC. Robert Scarsbrook agreed to be deputise for David.

Alex Hewetson indicated that Renfrewshire Council's Computer Initiative is expected to include Community Councils and is likely to involve the provision to each CC of a laptop computer, printer and related equipment, as well as technical support and training. Formal details of the project will be circulated within the next few weeks.

4. CONSTITUTION AND FINANCIAL RULES:

We had a long discussion on the Constitution, led by Alex Hewetson, who is Renfrewshire Council's Community Council Liaison Officer. He had received suggested amendments to the constitution following our last meeting.

An additional clause stating that Community Council Members who failed to attend three consecutive meetings without apologies or six consecutive meetings even with apologies should be contacted to establish the reason for absence from meetings and to discuss their continued membership of the CC. In the absence of an adequate explanation, the CC may terminate membership. Alex indicated that Renfrewshire Council would agree to this amendment.

Regarding membership, Alex indicated that ambiguity in Renfrewshire Council's Scheme for Community Councils and Draft Constitution regarding "total membership" would be formally clarified. The Council is not prepared to revise the total maximum membership allowed for each CC, which was agreed following a long period of consultation which ended in summer 2001. He reminded the CC that it is possible to co-opt people indefinitely for specific reasons (such as a representing a church, group, etc.) and that these co-optees could raise the number above the maximum formal membership of the CC, but would be ineligible to vote. Sub-Committees and Working Groups of the CC may likewise co-opt members and for those purposes, co-optees would have voting rights but not on the full CC. Community Councillors expressed concern that we are unable to alter our maximum membership given the interest in Howwood in belonging to the CC but acknowledged that the opportunity to influence this decision had passed. We agreed to write to formally request consideration of raising the maximum membership of Howwood Community Council when Renfrewshire Council next reviews the Community Council Scheme.

Alex raised a number of other issues. The CC will receive 12 free hall lets in each year; these may be used for a full CC, Sub-Committee or Working Group but any meetings in excess of 12 must be paid for at the usual rate. We were reminded also that meetings of the full CC and Sub-Committees (although not Working Groups) must be open to and held in public, which has implications for venue and notice of meetings. The possibility was raised of using a room in the Village Hall (such as the lounge) at no cost when other activities were on in other parts of the hall which would be open anyway. Alex was unable to give a decision on this issue.

Regarding the antique table and chairs, Alex reminded the CC that Community Councillors are jointly and severally liable. Therefore activities put on by the CC require public liability insurance and assets such as the table and chairs require specific insurance. Bill David reminded the meeting that public liability insurance is taken out by the CC during the Fete but Alex suggested that we consider joining the Association of Scottish Community Councils, membership of which includes a limited public liability insurance which is extensible for specific purposes on the payment of a small extra fee. We agreed to look into this issue. It was also agreed to clarify the insurance situation with the Kirk, which has custody of the table and chairs.

Renfrewshire Council can provide training and development on a number of issues, such as the work of Committees and the planning application challenge system. They can provide contact with other agencies such as West of Scotland Water. They can advise on grant funding, such as the Awards for All Programme. In the first instance Alex would be the point of contact.