

HOWWOOD COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN HOWWOOD VILLAGE HALL ON TUESDAY 1 OCTOBER 2002

PRESENT

Bill David (Chair), Nick Walker (Minutes), Andrew Wilson (Secretary), Ken Macdonald (Treasurer), Brian Young (Vice Chair), David McKie, Rosee Macdonald, David Bottomley, Craig Crawford, Evelyn Currie, Tom Currie, Norma David, Fergie Phillips, Robert Scarsbrook, Christine Scarsbrook, Gordon Weir, Grace Weir, Millar Leon, Amish Amin.

APOLOGIES

Linda Smith, Danny McAlister.

A MINUTES OF PREVIOUS GENERAL MEETING 18.12.2001

Accepted (prop. Grace Weir, sec. Robert Scarsbrook). No matters arose.

B CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The first year of the new CC system, although not a complete year, has been busy. The CC has a maximum membership of 21 and sadly Jean Mitchell's recent death and the demands on people's time leading to a small number of resignations allowed the people who withdrew their nominations last year to be offered co-opted membership. Even so, there are currently two vacancies on the CC.

In keeping with the ethos of the new CC scheme, communication with and involvement of the community and other groups has increased and will continue to do so; this has included the development of a village web site with a large CC component (www.Howwood.com) and a CC Newsletter which is due for circulation later this autumn. Financially the year has been a success, with the Fete raising a fair amount in spite of fewer people being available to help than the CC hoped meaning that four CC stalls could not be run. The Pensioners' Scottish Evening was well-attended and enjoyed even more than usual.

Roads have dominated as a source of ongoing concern, but major resurfacing work underway at present in Station Road and Main Street is addressing some problems and the traffic calming measures in Bowfield Road installed in the summer have been removed because of major safety concerns. The CC has a Roads Liaison Officer (David McKie) who will handle complaints and be our link person to the Renfrewshire Council Roads Dept.

Planning issues have been prominent recently and a Working Group was formed to consider planning across the village on behalf of the CC. The Howwood Playground Project was set up following discussion at the CC and a CC arranged Public Meeting; the group has charitable status and aims to identify funding to relocate and upgrade the play area in the public park to improve facilities and make them safer and more suitable. The Badminton Group, the Sports and Hobbies Group, and Howwood Wildlife and Woodlands have all continued to grow and develop, as independent community groups with ongoing support from the CC.

C SECRETARY'S REPORT

Initially responsible for both correspondence and minutes, the secretary's post is a busy one, inundated with documents from Renfrewshire Council and many other sources. Appointing a Minute Secretary to share these duties has been helpful. Much of the correspondence is of interest and importance, and the CC Office Bearers have tried to respond to consultations and other issues on behalf of the CC when time scales have precluded a full CC discussion. For example, Andrew Wilson attended the Paisley meeting of the Scottish Parliament Local Government Committee which was taking evidence on engaging local communities in the democratic process. Communication with the Council is eased by the CC Liaison Officer, Alex Hewetson who is happy to forward our concerns, etc. to the most appropriate person, and to pursue a response when that is necessary.

The CC Forum gives an opportunity to share experiences and ideas, and to provide mutual support to other CCs. The year's highlights have been CC facilitation of community groups such as the Howwood Playground Project and Howwood Wildlife and Woodlands, demonstrating community commitment and spirit alive and well in Howwood.

D TREASURER'S REPORT

Audited accounts were presented for the part year from December 2001 to 31.8.2002, and a summary sheet was circulated. Copies are available from Ken Macdonald. Fund raising income of £2670.04 was mainly from the Fete and fund raising expenditure represented the costs of running the Fete and the Scottish Evening. Final payments have been made since the end of the reporting period, making the net income from fund raising slightly less than it would appear from these accounts.

Miscellaneous payments include support to the Playgroup and the Howwood Playground Project, and a regular donation to the Rights of Way Society. The balance at 31.8.2002 was £5560.36.

Since 31.8.2002, the CC has agreed grants to the Kirk Summer Children's Group, the Howwood Guides and the Margaret Fraser Memorial Garden at Howwood Primary School, totalling almost £1000. The CC received a grant (some years ago) of £3000 to renovate the Lesser Hall, but that work was then done by the Council. The status of this money remains unclear despite seeking clarification after the 2001 AGM. It was agreed to seek clarification again, from Councillor Nimmo or failing him Alex Hewetson.

There was discussion about what balance would be appropriate to allow grants and costs to be covered without accumulating funds unnecessarily; it was agreed that £1500 to £2500 would be fair, and the current balance would be of this order except for the £3000 Hall renovation grant.

E OFFICE BEARERS & MEMBERSHIP

Office bearers have a renewable one year term. The current office bearers are: Bill David (Chair), Brian Young (Vice-chair), Andrew Wilson (Secretary), Ken Macdonald (Treasurer) and Nick Walker (Minute Secretary). All are willing to continue in post. Other nominations for office were invited; none arose. The current officers were declared re-elected unopposed.

The maximum membership of the CC is 21, but there are currently 2 vacancies. Renfrewshire Council is keen to open such vacancies to formal public nomination and election, though there were concerns about the expense of setting up a secret ballot. It was agreed to advertise the vacancies, seeking expressions of interest and nomination to Andrew Wilson, with a deadline of 31.10.2002. Advertisements will appear in the local paper and on the village web site as well as by posters around the village. A decision on formal election would be deferred to the next CC meeting which will follow the closing date for expressions of interest.

F OTHER BUSINESS

None.

G NEXT MEETING

The proposed date for the next Annual General Meeting is Tuesday 14 October 2003, but confirmation will be made nearer the time.