

Royal Burgh of Forfar Community Council
Minutes of meeting on 19th Aug 2021 at 7 pm via Zoom.

Present:

Community Councillors: - Linda Clark (LC), Tom O'Brien (Tob), Eleanor Feltham (EF), Graeme Clark (GC), R. Wardhaugh, B. Batson and Jim McMillan (JM)

Apologies: - James Gray -Cheape (JGC), Kathryn Patullo (KP) and Cllr I. McLaren

Minute Secretary: - None

Angus Councillors: - Lynne Devine (LD)

Others; - Jason Penman (JP) Tony Walker (TW)

1. Welcome and Apologies – The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies noted.

2. Minutes from previous Meeting: Proposed by EF Seconded by BB

3. Matters Arising from previous Meeting: GC said water pipes still at lochside car park and Heras fencing still at old pitch and putt and it has been damaged. Proposed to send letter to Scottish water re the ongoing works, all agreed. TOB to draft letter. LC mentioned a lot of reports of vandalism about the town and the fact the cones used for the covid testing centre have been damaged and thrown around the Myre car park. Cllr LD said that PC Anderson community Police officer is off sick at the moment and also Police did not attend the last scrutiny and audit committee. A new chief inspector has just started in post. There is an increase in drug dealing in the town and housing and antisocial team working together to try and do something about this. LC said we may need to speak to the local MP about these issues. TOB said the 24hr defib had been stolen but had been recovered by Police and was back up and running.

4. Chairperson's report: LC said some of the paths around the town had been worked on by the council and they are doing a good job. LC said a vote of thanks should go to the workers who go around with the litter barrows picking up litter and also said about the worker from McDonald's who has also been about picking up litter. RW said that as part of Rotary he was picking up litter in and around Kingsmuir.

LC mentioned the government scheme to encourage more cyclists. The scheme enables people to get an electric bike from the Energy trust Scotland by getting an interest free loan so more people can cycle who may struggle with a normal bike.

5. Secretary Correspondence/Report: Correspondence had been sent out about an application for land west of Strathmore fields and battery storage plans at Lunanhead. Consultations on winter roads and public transport had also been sent out. Update from JGC about the Glamis roundabout being used to store road planning's and the fact the rubbish has not been cleared away but pushed to one side. Consultation on changes to parking on Castle St and West high St sent out. A licencing application from Strathmore rugby club to extend opening hours. LC asked about face-to-face meetings and TOB said he would look into trying to get these started again if possible.

6. Treasurer's Report: No report, awaiting changes to signatory details and addressee issue.

7. Police & Fire Service Report: None received at time of meeting.

8. Local Councillor Update: Cllr Devine spoke about the traffic consultations in Castle St and West high St and what needs to be done. Hopefully the double yellow lines on Castle St will be removed and new parking

bays put in and make the time allowed to stay from 30mins to 45-60 mins instead. New disabled bays to go in West high St.

9. Future of Forfar community council and AGM: Short discussion followed, and it was mentioned that we need to get more people to get involved to boost numbers. If we do not get more people involved, then the future of community councils is in doubt. Instead of people just criticising they should join and help to try and make a difference. With more members we can get more work done as we can spread the workload out.

10. Lochside toilets and CCTV castle St: Cllr Devine said the tender for the toilets at Forfar loch had been put out and hopefully the toilets will finally get built, these are badly needed. CCTV update still waiting for company to start the works, this should be a priority due to the increased vandalism and crime. EF said the issue of the toilets has been going on for far too long and needs to be sorted asap.

11. AOCB: Forfar action network art project taking place around the town this involves artists and shop owners working together to display art in the shop windows to brighten up the town and also increase footfall to the shops. The project also includes wall art and wall panels being done around the town. Spot the mistake competition also helping to encourage people to shop local.

TW spoke about Angus alive not opening their building etc. for longer hours until October and if the public were happy about this. Cllr said the decision to not open longer till October was down to Angus alive not making enough money due to covid and other financial issues. TW said agreed but taxpayers should be getting value for money from the council. LC said that there was a local councillor on the board of Angus alive and that TW should speak to them re the issue. Cllr Devine said some staff were still on furlough till the end of September and if opened now they would probably run out of money and close permanently.

EF said a lot of people are visiting the loch, but it was noticed that sometimes there a group of people either on drink or drugs and possible dealing going on and this was not a nice experience for visitors to see. EF said that she had visited Coupar Angus and this town is clean and full of flowers this is in contrast to some parts of Forfar which is disappointing. LC said we need to keep reporting the issues with the town, problems with the council not having enough staff to deal with all the issues. Cllr Devine said that the CC should put out a press release about the issues with litter etc. and the need for people to pick up their litter. LC said the council need to sort out what their priorities are. GC said that now the schools are back there has been an increase in the amount of litter seen along Taylor St, the council have put out bins, but the people are not using them. BB should the community council liaise with the council to deal with litter problems. LC said community council get asked to do this and do that and we do have meetings with the council officers to try and resolve issues.

GC talked about Forfar Farmington Women's football club withdrawing from the premier league and said he would like it noted about the work that the club has done and is still doing to encourage people to take part in sport and fitness and that we should be expressing gratitude to the club. LC said that there are a lot of individuals who volunteer as adults, and this is excellent, and a lot of work was done over the summer to encourage sport. RW said the rugby club do a lot of good work to. Cllr Devine mentioned the work the cricket club have been doing as well, this includes sport, drama cookery and supplying food and fun programmes.

TW raised the issue of there being too many items on the agenda to discuss and that maybe issues can be passed to an individual of the CC to deal with and report back when dealt with. The issue at the moment is there are not enough members to do this.

BB attended a Scottish government course on resilience networks. **See appendix A.**

EF mentioned Path 273 Padanaram to Cotterton of Drumgley overgrown. I requested Angus Council to attend. Mr Paul Clark Countryside Officer advised that Community Justice Payback Orders would attend. Members are advised the service is available and to contact him at 01307-492435 or email ClarkPR@angus.gov.uk EF also said about the Montrose Road Centre future. She received a third-party e-mail stating that the Council were considering the future of the centre and until then cannot be guaranteed as a venue for community meetings.

EF spoke about the Community wood at Padanaram through Woodland Trust. This project is progressing, and order placed for 1600 trees. Planting will be in two stages November and Spring next year.

TW and BB asked about how the minutes of meetings can be put out to the public in better ways, ideas were libraries, sending out to community groups etc. and a press release.

Freeports – B. Batson: BB raised the issue of Freeports and whether Dundee and Angus should work together to promote these. BB has been tracking the issue of these with the UK government promoting Freeports and funding them. There are 3 in Scotland and there have been issues with Freeports over the years about creating jobs as sometimes the companies just move the business into the Freeport area and don't create new jobs and just make use of the reduced tax rates etc. Tob asked if it was correct that the Scottish government was not keen on having Freeports in Scotland. BB said that Scottish government wanted the Freeports to be green washed. This means that the companies should be environmentally friendly and have minimum wages paid. The Scottish and UK governments are at opposite levels of how this should work. Is it a race to bottom (cheapest option) or is it the Scottish model. LC we should encourage the model that offers minimum wage so that the poorer members can gain better pay and conditions, will these Freeports cause problems for Forfar businesses moving forward and has Angus economic development looked at the implications of a Dundee Freeport. LC said we may need a separate meeting to discuss the issue of Freeports. BB to contact economic department for more information.

12. Subgroup updates: Nothing to report

13. Planning Applications: Guild Homes www.guild-homes.co.uk Interactive consultation 26th August 2021 between 13.00 and 19.00 hours re 245 homes submitted for extension to Strathmore Fields despite being out with the Angus Local Development Plan (ALDP). There have been some spurious claims around bringing in millions of pounds into the local economy and the area of land is the best in the area. JM said there were issues with Guild homes and Scotia homes having a slanging match online and that lawyers may become involved. RW asked if Guild homes had a planning application in yet, EF said not yet but he could apply at any time. This could be considered a windfall site. TW asked, have the conditions been met yet such as education etc. EF said Guilds have asked for the section 75 to be removed and won their case not to contribute section 75 money, as the new homes have no impact on services. TW asked would the original development have got the go ahead if the services to be provided did not get provided. EF said this would be down to the planning department.

A discussion took place around planning in general. LC said that there is a local development plan and landowners can put forward to the council planning department to be included in the plan for future housing or business development. Meeting should be held to inform the public where this land is and what will happen with it. EF said new rules were in the national planning act coming into force soon. The public will have more say in planning issues. EF said that there are 9 different points that can be argued against, we need to look at these and then decide on what objections if any we can put into the council planning department. Any comments can be sent to EF for inclusion and the comments can then be put under 1 of the 9 categories if relevant. LC said Cllrs on the planning committee look to see what the community council have to say about the proposal. Some of the objections/issues may have to do with distance to schools, school capacity and health capacity to name a few.

14. Date and time of next meeting:

The next meeting of the Community Council will take place at 7 pm on Thurs 16th September 2021 via zoom

Appendix A

Colleagues, on Thursday 19th August I attended a zoom conference run by the Scottish Government's Resilient Unit. This conference was to report back and confirm findings from earlier research that had sought to the experience of those from the statutory and voluntary sector in connectedness and cross sector working during the Covid lock down. The original research outlined the positive experience and barriers to cross sector working.

Although I had no direct experience of service provision during COVID the subject matter was familiar due my experience of working in local councils and the non-statutory sectors.

In small break out groups we were encouraged to use the research findings to identify key areas that matched our experience. This was an interesting exercise that sadly echoed the issues and barriers to cross sector working that I had experienced during my working life.

However, what I find very useful was a a list of practice pointers that any organisation could use to measure its own performance in working with other organisation and/or the public. I would commend the practice pointers as guidelines for our own practice in the CC.

For further information see - <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/national-outcomes/communities>

Practice Pointers and the report that informed the conference can be sent out if required.