

MONIKIE AND NEWBIGGING COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 6th July 2022

1. Members and Councillors present: George Winslow/ Betty Winslow/ David Morrison/David McGovern/ Cllr Brian Boyd/ Cllr David Cheape.

Also present were PC Suzanne Stark/ Lynn Lawrence – St John’s Scotland and 12 local residents.

2. Apologies: Iain Richmond/Alison Binnie/ Caroline Stevenson and Cllr McDonald.

3. Betty welcomed all members and requested that the police report be heard first to allow PC Stark to return to duty and that the presentation from Lynn Lawrence follow this.

4. Police Report:

PC Stark explained that she was deputising for Sergeant Stewart Ramsay and first of all informed us of the change in the local Community Police team for our area namely that 2 new officers have already been appointed, Martin Brennan and Ronnie Irvine.

She addressed the latest Police report, copies of which were available at the meeting.

The recent crimes/issues in the area for the Assessment period 01/06/22 to 05/07/22 of relevance were as quoted in the report –

Quote;

Group 3- Crimes of dishonesty – 4 crimes recorded

Group 4 – Crimes involving Property Damage – 3 crimes recorded.

Emerging Issues:

Damage:

Overnight on Wednesday 8th – Thursday 9th June the electricity box in Sanderson place was vandalised by graffiti, further similar graffiti was then found in Pitairlie Place.

In the early hours of Tuesday 28th June 2022 a caravan was set on fire in Pitairlie Road. We understand that the caravan has lain abandoned on private land for a considerable time. We do not have an owner for this at present.

In the early hours of Saturday 4th July 2022 Monikie park was targeted , this time a bird hide and play park were set on fire.

Dishonesty:

In the early hours of Saturday 11th June 2022 a boat used by Monikie Angling Club within the park was broken free from it’s secure mooring on the reservoir. A number of youths were seen running off and leaving the park in a suspect vehicle.

In the early hours of Tuesday 14th June 2022, this same suspect vehicle was used in the commission of a break-in to Pitairlie Garage, Newbigging where 3 vehicles were stolen.

The suspect vehicle and all 3 stolen vehicles were recovered, 1 stolen vehicle nearby and the other 3 in Dundee.

In the early hours of Sunday 19th June 2022 Monikie Country Park was targeted again when an attempt was made to force entry into a garage workshop there. Such were the methods used we suspect that it is linked to the crimes on 11th and 14th. Additionally there was also a theft of fuel from a car parked in Panmure Road Monikie during the same night.

All crimes above are still under investigation.

Whilst the dishonesty crimes appear to be linked to the same group living out with Angus and responsible for acquisitive crime throughout Dundee, Angus and Fife, we think it likely that the damage related crime is not.

We have asked for additional night shift patrols for Monikie and Newbigging and would urge residents to be vigilant and report anything they are suspicious of to Police.

End of quote.

As the local residents present had an involvement and a interest in the crimes reported PC Stark took questions from various people and valuable information was presented and shared with the meeting.

Residents have noted and reported the presence of youths in cars using the park car at night and have reported abuse from them when confronted.

The arson crime committed is obviously causing of great concern as any escalation of this could spread to other targets involving great danger to human life.

A number of those present had provided the Police with valuable evidence in the past but reassurance was needed that all concerns of suspicious persons or events would be responded to by police.

PC Stark emphasised the need for ANY concern however seemingly trivial should be reported as it could prove to be vital in apprehension and conviction for a crime.

One of the main issues discussed was the complete lack of any relevant security in Monikie park. It was the opinion of many of the residents that this is what has been attracting the perpetrators.

Methods of security were discussed at length with helpful input from PC Stark who also informed us that extra patrols and also a CCTV mobile unit would be employed in the area in the meantime.

The provision of CCTV and security lighting as well as some method of locking vehicular entry to the park after opening hours was discussed at length with the problems of access to the Byzantium Restaurant on certain days being noted.

As Angus Alive is responsible for the administration of the park it was agreed that the Community Council should write and engage with them on the subject of security in the park as immediate installation of this could help in deterring criminals. Betty will do this and report response.

It was obvious from the local residents at the meeting that there is a willingness to be involved in any security plans which could prevent the park being misused.

Cllr Cheape will also make enquiries on this issue and inform us of any means of solving this.

Another issue was raised with PC Stark. Residents reported problems regarding the presence of an air B&B property in Monikie.

They outlined incidents of anti-social behaviour by the renters and were concerned by the frequent changes of residents giving them concerns for safety of children particularly in respect of more traffic in that immediate area. The frequency of change in occupation was discussed and the problems related.

Cllr Boyd reported that legislation is in place to issue licenses to owners of short term lets and mentioned that the scheme would be largely self policed.

Residents concerned were advised by PC Stark that all concerning incidents should be reported to police and advice would be given especially where anti-social behaviour is involved.

Residents were also advised that contact with their MSP Graeme Dey to receive more information on the new regulations could be helpful and Betty will research the legislation for any useful information.

The members thanked PC Stark for her attendance and helpful information.

5. Defibrillators:

We welcomed Lynn Lawrence from St John's Scotland who described her role in that organisation as the Coordinator for Angus.

She explained how the system operates and passed round a defibrillator for inspection. She explained St John's role in the supply of the machines and provided the meeting with valuable information about the distribution and maintenance costs of the equipment.

Lynn also answered questions about the training offered by herself in using the machines and great interest was shown by the local residents who expressed a willingness to attend training sessions.

In thanking Lynn for her attendance at the meeting all agreed that it had been an informative and worthwhile session.

6. Minutes of previous meeting:

David Morrison proposed and David McGovern seconded that these were a true account.

7. Seagreen Grant:

Betty informed the meeting that the next grant had been received and briefly explained how the grants were allocated and that the chairman would be posting information about how interested groups should apply.

8. Community Planning:

All correspondence from the above is sent to all members of the C/C but there was no comment to be made .

9. Planning:

There were no applications received for the area at this time.

10. Treasurer's Report:

Balance at this time is £6,930.52 .

11. Councillors Questions and Answers:

In answer to a question from a resident about new housing development having an impact on numbers in the primary school Cllr Cheape gave a full explanation about how maximum numbers for schools and also local Health Centres are calculated and taken into consideration when forward plans are made in relation to formulating the local development plan.

He quoted the local area where many schools were running under capacity with spaces available for children from local development sites.

It was pointed out that organisation of classes is an educational matter and the responsibility of the schools using the guidelines in place.

12. A.O.C.B.

The curling pond site:

Betty gave an update on the Enforcement Order which had been served on the owner after the destruction and damage caused by him to this site.

Betty, George and Iain had visited the site with Mike Strachan, Operations Manager for Scottish Forestry who advised about assessment of the recovery work which had been specified in the order.

The C/C submitted a report on the work still pending to Scottish Forestry.

This report showed that there were two outstanding actions which had not been taken to comply with order.

1. The breach in the bund had not been repaired allowing water to continue to drain from the area which has implications for the present and future contamination of Himalayan Balsam and the re-establishment of the amphibian population which were affected by the destruction of this wildlife habitat. The repair of the breach is vital to the viability of the site.
2. Himalayan Balsam – This non-native species has established a significant presence in the drainage ditch out with the site because of the bund breach and this needs immediate action (before the summer seeding) to destroy the existing plants and to prevent further spread.

A map showing the extent of the spread was submitted also.

Great interest was shown by those present in the preservation of the site and Betty updated them as to the effort that had been made in March 2020 to have the site designated and included in the Angus project to create a suite of local nature conservation sites.

She read a recent letter of reply to her request for an update from the countryside officer in charge of this project which indicated that initial concentration was on sites which had been surveyed by

Scottish Wildlife Trust around 15-20 years ago , a process which had not been concluded. This did not include Monikie Curling Pond.

He wrote that there are likely to be other sites which are potentially suitable and the intention is that, subject to funding, consideration would be given to a second tranche of sites next year and that the merits of Monikie Curling Pond would be considered as part of that process.

Betty stressed the importance of sustaining a public and C/C interest in the outcome probably for the next few years as the Enforcement Order states that the owner must –

“ provides a report to Forestry Commission Scotland at **YEAR 5 and YEAR 9** confirming the progress with the woodland reinstatement”.

Action would be needed by C/C probably in **AUGUST 2023 and AUGUST 2027** to contact Scottish Forestry and request an update of this progress.

Triathlon:

A request was made by Jamie Robinson, race director of the triathlon which is to be held on 6th August 2022 to enquire as to how they could help the village or reduce any disruption caused by the festival.

Betty spoke to him and his concern was shown about the fire damage caused by vandalism in the park and he suggested that they had a desire to help in some way perhaps by a donation.

It was thought that a donation sent to the C/C could be directed by them in a way that could benefit the area.

It was generally felt at the meeting by the members and the residents that this would be acceptable. Betty agreed to contact Jamie and convey this to him.

Bus shelter :

It was agreed that this item be deferred till next term of the C/C

Community Council Elections;

It was at this point that the councillors emphasised how they appreciated the presence of so many residents at the meeting who were able to respond to the distressing events of the week before with practical suggestions for the future and also in the interest shown in the elections of a new C/C in October.

The members reinforced this by explaining the procedures for the election which they are expecting in the next weeks.

Retiring members expressed the positive aspects of serving on the C/C and the need for fresh ideas and use of available means of communicating to generate interest.

David McGovern agreed to continue generating interest.

Members thanked the residents for their input in the discussion and indicated that notification of the next meeting would be posted as usually there is no meeting in August.

