

APPROVED

Monifieth Community Council – Meeting Minutes

Thursday 11 August 2022 at 7pm

Held online via Zoom

Chairperson: Sheena Cochrane

Present: Ben Nicoll, Peter Morrison, Stewart Ellis (all Monifieth Community Council)

Councillors Beth Whiteside, Lloyd Melville, Heather Doran

Dave Smith, Sylvia Breen, Craig Lusby, Andy Dingwall (all Angus Council)

Lorna Denholm (Norr Architects – item 3).

Public: x2 members of public in attendance

1. **Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair, Sheena Cochrane, welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that this was the last meeting of the current community council term. Apologies were received from John Thornton.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

Ben Nicoll asked the members present in the meeting if anyone had received the minutes from the 9 June 2022 meeting. No one advised they had received these. An action point was noted to chase up the minutes of the last meeting.

3. **Monifieth Learning Campus**

The Chair welcomed Dave Smith, Capital Project Manager, from Angus Council and Lorna Denholm from Norr Architects to the meeting to present the new Monifieth Learning Campus project plans so far. Ben Nicoll advised that Andy Dingwall (Head Teacher, Monifieth High School) and Craig Lusby (Deputy Head Teacher, Monifieth High School) were to be in attendance for this item.

Dave Smith gave a brief overview of how the project came to being along with where the school project was being funded from and how. He advised that the first consultation process was undertaken in 2021 with the outcome of an early learning centre and a swimming pool. Monifieth Library and Police premises was consulted to be included at the new campus but following consultation this was latterly scrapped. A second consultation was conducted with Monifieth High to identify the space and designs required. Dave advised that plans have been tweaked and adjusted slightly based on feedback received. Various budgeting updates were also conducted considering the current rising cost of materials and labour.

Dave then handed over to Lorna Denholm to take the meeting through the plans via a slideshow.

Lorna started by advising that the design would need to consider that the current school building would need to remain operational whilst construction was taking place to avoid disruption – this has been fully considered within the plans. Lorna also advised that Angus Council and the school community wanted the school entrance to remain clearly visible – this was adjusted within the plans and the new building will sit immediately behind the existing building to retain this presence. The building will be located towards the rear of the existing Monifieth High School site. The old building will be demolished once the new campus is complete and new bus bays installed at this time as well.

Lorna advised that the new campus will be a three-storey building, with the school swimming block being a storey and a half. The key concept was to wrap inhabited rooms around the outside of the school with big-volume spaces in the centre of the building to give the classrooms natural ventilation and daylight.

Lorna then went on to give detailed descriptions and plans of each of the three floors, along with outside images and artist's impressions inside of the new campus.

Dave provided a quick update on the current stage of the learning campus. Due to the scale of the project, this is classed as a large-scale project, to a pre-planning application stage is required. This does not stop anyone making comments at the application project stage. Dave also advised that in-person and online events are being conducted as part of this. Catchment area sessions are also taking place. The final session is being held on 15 September where the final plans with comments/suggestions included will be available, there will also be online functions available for this too.

Ben Nicoll asked the question around the library space and the natural light involved – he felt that there was no natural light coming into this space from the plans and where this natural light will be coming from. Lorna advised that this section of the building as some external windows in adjacent to the library, which is the dead space for the Games Hall. Dave also advised that roof lights may also be included within this space.

Stewart Ellis asked if there would be a separate area for pupils with additional support needs. Dave advised that the ASN area of the school will be located at the west side of the building to enable them to have dedicated outdoor space and out with the main circulation route of the school. This has easy access with lift access provided close by as well. Andy Dingwall added that he and Craig Lusby were most positive about the ASN space allocation for the most vulnerable of Monifieth High School. The ASN staff have been consulted on this area and their feedback was invaluable. Craig Lusby echoed what Andy and Dave had said, adding that the views of the young people were also taken into account to see what could remain, i.e. ideas from the old building, as well as new ideas. Stewart asked that if a sensory garden could be added to the plans, citing external funding sources, after the success of the community garden down on Monifieth Seafront. Craig gave an undertaking to look into this and look to develop this as plans progress.

Stewart also added that with the new housing developments coming into Monifieth, he asked that if this has been considered for a future potential higher pupil intake. Dave advised that the projected school roll has been considered within the new campus plans. Dave also advised that 500 new houses would only produce on average 85 new school pupils. Dave advised that the projections would only consider current new builds, as

opposed to any future that won't be known about at this time. Stewart added that the sensory garden would give an opportunity to enhance outdoor learning for those who wish to get involved. Dave advised that there are plans to bring in landscape designers to start the process of outdoor spaces and to try and tailor this to make this unique to Monifieth. Dave echoed Stewart's comments about the benefits of sensory gardens and outdoor learning spaces. Andy referenced the new Monifieth High School Strategy which targets and gives aims to be one of the country's leading schools for outdoor education. Ben gave support to Stewart's comments regarding an outdoor learning space, noting that Monifieth High has gone from having too little outdoor sport space to maybe having too much, so more outdoor learning facilities would be welcomed.

Peter Morrison asked what the council's expectations are on the lifespan of the new school and what procedures have been put in place in terms of materials and quality of workmanship to achieve the lifespan. Dave advised that various elements of the building have various lifespans, noting that this campus is to serve Monifieth for the future. Dave noted learning areas from DG1 and the Edinburgh Schools where significant failures were noted – these are to be taken note of and ensure that a robust quality plan is put in place. Dave also advised that the building is looking to undertake “passive house” standard which makes the school energy efficient and the quality of the building, meaning all the materials must be certified and be of a good quality. Peter noted that there was no specific lifespan figure given asking if inspections are going to be taken place. Peter felt that a young building like Monifieth High School should have been maintained to a level where it shouldn't have to be knocked down. Dave advised that any number can be given to a lifespan if money is spent on it. Dave advised that robust inspection regimes are in place as a standard across all school projects across the county. Additional quality insurance will be conducted through the “passive house” standard, something that maybe hasn't been conducted in any school building project in Angus. Lorna added that the building is being made from robust materials and will enable the lifespan of the building and that the consultants have a key role of quality assurance. Lorna also touched on the procurement of the building is directly being worked with Robertson Construction and that the project team is working well together and will be involved themselves at site level.

Stewart asked regarding the completion of the building that additional materials may be left over – could these materials be contributed towards the construction of an outdoor learning area? Dave advised that a specific community benefit plan is being developed, which will mainly create jobs in the local economy. Excess materials from other campuses have been used for other projects, with contractors looking to minimise waste by contributing to local causes if appropriate.

Andy added finally in reassurance that he personally had been through two previous school builds and that the level of flexibility with the project and design stage is the best he has experienced in any projects he has been involved in. He feels comfortable and content with how “Monifieth” this design is. Andy also praised the level of consultation, in all areas, that has taken place. This stands out to him above any other project he has been involved in.

Ben thanked Dave, Lorna, Andy and Craig for their attendance and representations for this item. He also advised that he and Sheena would attend the final in-person consultation and recommended that all members take the time to engage with the consultation

process.

4. **Correspondence**

John Thornton sent a list of correspondence to all community council members. This was noted and no additional items added.

5. **Social Media Report**

Ben Nicoll advised that the Monifieth High School consultation was one of the main features of the social media activity, also the upcoming community council elections for Angus. Ben urged members to really promote the benefits of joining the local community council to the community, notwithstanding the pressures that are faced.

6. **Treasurer's Report**

Balance of £15,263.01. Stewart advised ringfenced amounts of £5,220 for Christmas lights, £5,000 for the Seagreen Project which a communication needs to be drafted up for the community, along with approximately £900 for the VE Garden. Ben asked Stewart to confirm if we had received the second instalment of the Seagreen community fund money, which Stewart confirmed we had. It was agreed that if a new community council were to be formed in October that the next stage of funding will be taken forward.

7. **Planning Matters**

No planning report received. Sheena Cochrane asked if any of our Angus councillors were aware of anything on planning matters in Monifieth. Beth Whiteside advised that there is nothing of note, but Heather Doran advised that the papers for the upcoming Planning meeting of Angus Council were available on the council website for viewing, but there was nothing of note, other than the pre-planning stage for the Monifieth Learning Campus.

8. **Police Report**

No police report received.

9. **Angus Councillors' Reports**

Beth Whiteside advised that it has been a busy time and that her personal workload as doubled overnight with the new administration, along with council recess in July. Beth highlighted the challenges around council pay awards and that this may be a common theme in years to come. Beth also noted her pleasure of the school plans moving ahead and hoped that everything will stay on track in the current financial climate. Beth noted that this is one of the biggest ever capital projects that the council has committed to. Beth feels positive about the plans for the new campus.

Lloyd Melville also noted the high workload over the recess period, taking on a lot of casework. Lloyd noted that he and Beth welcomed Margo Williamson, Angus Council Chief Executive, to the ward to showcase the "Cycling without Age" initiative and he also

met with the MSYP's for Angus to talk about their work and their ideas for shaping education in Angus.

Heather Doran also noted the high workload over the recess period. Heather noted issues regarding bin collections, but these have been resolved, mainly around assisted bin collections – if this arises again, members are urged to contact Heather directly to resolve this.

Sylvia Breen gave an overview in her community officer role with Angus Council. Within Monifieth, a youth café has been opened at Monifieth Parish Church on a Friday afternoon from 1pm to 3:30pm – this came about through the town centre fund and engagement with local community regarding young people's activities. Art trails have also been taken place, along with other summer programmes with the young people from the high school. There are also plans of cycling projects starting up, working closely with the school.

Beth added that there could be upcoming disruption to bin collections due to potential industrial action.

10. Public Questions

None.

11. AOCB

Sheena Cochrane advised that we are still awaiting our Christmas lights walkaround from Walter Scott at Angus Council. Ben Nicoll asked if Walter had been in touch with her following the last meeting to arrange a walkaround, no community council member has heard from him either regarding this. Beth advised that he acknowledged the email but no follow up if that had happened. Ben to check with John Thornton to see if Walter has been in touch with him directly and if not, he will contact Walter directly to get this arranged.

12. Date and Time of the Next Meeting

Ben Nicoll advised that this was the last meeting of this community council term and thanked all community councillors past and present across the five years for their service and time dedicated to the community of Monifieth, especially during the pandemic.

Date and time of the next meeting will be Thursday 13 October at 7pm (note: the inaugural meeting was scheduled by Angus Council to take place on Friday 14 October). Ben noted that in-person meetings would probably be the preference going forward – this is to be looked into and a suitable location found for the next community council term.

Ben noted the struggles that Monifieth and other burghs across Angus are facing to form a community council and that there is a realism that the same faces may not be round the next term's meeting table. Ben hoped that existing members would consider standing again for the next community council term as well as welcoming new members and issued a plea to the community to get their nomination forms in by 31 August at 4pm.

Sheena Cochrane added a personal note of thanks to all who have helped out during the

community council's term and her 10 years as chair of the community council. She noted the struggles of the last two years for everyone, herself personally, and noted Ben's help in chairing the meetings. Sheena also gave devoted thanks to the community council's secretary, John Thornton, who is standing down after many years' service to the community council – without him, the community council would have been in a very tricky position.

All three Angus Councillors present highlighted the importance of community councils and thanked all members for their service on the community council.

Sylvia Breen also gave her support towards the cause of getting Monifieth Community Council re-established in the new term.