

Thornhill Community Council
Minutes of Meeting
Held at Thornhill
On Monday, 21/02/2011

Present: Douglas Watters, Lorraine Murdoch, Jeannette Kerr, Willie Lenza, Davie Sharp, Scott Jardine, Robert McGarva, David Kerr, Jason Davies, Linda Airley

In attendance: Adele Queen, Robert Peacock, Sara Bain, Sgt Emma Dodds, Doug Bowie; Cllrs Jim Dempster, Gill Dykes and Andrew Wood;

Apologies: Cllr John Syme

1. Police Report:

- Sgt Emma Dodds reported on recent local incidents:
- 2 Vandalisms (1 detected); 1 Breach of the Peace (Detected); 1 Assault (Detected); 5 Road Traffic Accidents (most of them on a single day); 1 Theft of CH Oil in Drumlanrig Street (so far undetected: vigilance encouraged as this crime is on the increase); 1 Vandalism at Community Centre (so far undetected).
- [Cllrs Dykes & Dempster arrived at this point]
- Portable CCTV: Cllr Dempster reported that it was bought by the Council but the Police deploy it. It's in use in Upper Nithsdale at the moment, where it is urgently needed. Lorraine reports that the Playgroup have had enough: constant vandalism etc; they offer us the benches etc. Community Council decided that we would decline this meantime, with thanks, and try to get problem fixed so Playgroup can keep them. The deployment of plain clothes Officers is a possibility, depending on available staffing. Cllrs will speak to Inspector Blacklock and will also speak to Peter Clingan at Environmental Health Dept, who have CCTV as well. It's mainly intended for catching dog fouling etc., and may not be of such good quality but, if deployed, it might 'by accident' pick up the vandals. Sgt Emma Dodds will also see what can be done.
- Detection regarding ingress and damage to old WHA building still ongoing. Scott Jardine reported that the skylight in the Primary School had now gone. Robert Peacock had also noticed a rope hanging from a window in the former English Department. Education Department and Buccleuch are still haggling over handover. Buccleuch want certain conditions in their Planning Consent to be waived and Council is reluctant to do this. Buccleuch won't conclude Missives until they get what they want.
- [Linda Airley arrived at this point]
- [Police departed]

2. Wallace Hall Academy:

- Adele Queen and Robert Peacock, respectively Depute Head Girl and Depute Head Boy gave us an update on the School's achievements in recent months:
- Eilidh Bryson (S4) is standing as a Candidate fore the Scottish Youth Parliament

- 20 S6 Pupils had donated blood at last week's Blood Transfusion Service visit.
- Senior Girls had achieved 2nd place in the Regional ?? Tournament
- A group of pupils is going to Honduras to do Biological and other Scientific Research. They are raising the money themselves. There is to be a Ceilidh on 12 March, including a Buffet. A similar enterprise last year had raised £2,000 towards the Borneo trip.
- Another pupil, Jenny Hutchison, had been awarded 1st place in the Regional Rotary Young Musician contest.
- Some pupils are undertaking the new Scottish Baccalaureate course, which requires a minimum of 2 Advanced Highers. Adele is herself undertaking a Science Baccalaureate.
- There has been a high level of participation in the Dumfries & Galloway Music Festival.
- The school has begun a Peer Mediation Scheme, whereby Senior Pupils help, amongst other things, to resolve disputes between younger pupils.
- S6 pupils are also operating as Bus Monitors.
- Some S5 pupils took part in an e-twinning exchange with pupils in Germany.
- 30 pupils are currently participating in a trip to China.
- Adele and Robert were thanked for their attendance, their full and interesting report and particularly for the fact that they had attended during what was, for them, a holiday.

3. Gala Sub-Committee:

- Gala will be on 09/07/2011. WHA is being asked to become involved. They are producing posters, encouraging people to become involved and to wear fancy dress to it.
- Meantime some seed funding is needed. It is thought that some £750 will probably be available from D&GC. Funding Application will be needed, and this is largely done. Cllrs report that repeat applications should be simplified in future years, so that information D&GC already has doesn't have to be endlessly repeated. A bank account is to be opened, so some funding is needed now. Douglas proposed a grant of £750 from the Community council meantime, and this was approved. Cllrs advised that various items, such as crowd barriers etc., could be borrowed from D&GC. If Committee let Cllrs know what they need, they will see what can be provided.
- Bar didn't make much money last time (on paper, at least), though it was thought that this might be due to accounting failures (not Robert's); whereby various outlays (?band etc) were paid direct out of bar takings. Agreed a tighter accounting system would be needed next time
- West Morton Street residents are to be approached about the proposed road closure during the day of the Gala.
- Committee will produce a Business Plan for the next Community Council Meeting.
- [Sara Bain & Doug Bowie left at this point]

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

- were proposed by Davie Sharp and seconded by Scott Jardine, subject to the following two clarifications:
- Lorraine pointed out that the 'landowner concerned' referred to in connection with Closeburn PS' Parent Council's deliberations re the proposed Quarry had not withdrawn from the Parent Council; he merely withdraws when that matter is under consideration.
- Linda wished to make it clear that her objection re presentations to Cllrs had been that they should have been given the opportunity to nominate a Charity or other beneficiary to receive their gift.

5. Matters Arising:

- With regard to Andrew Vermeersch's presentation last time, doubt was expressed as to whether the Community as a whole would welcome the installation; particularly at a cost of £60,000-odd, which would have to be raised, and in the present economic climate. A vote was taken on whether we should proceed to put the project before the Village at a Public Meeting. Of those present, no-one (out of 10) voted to do this, although there were two Abstentions. Douglas is to write to Andrew Vermeersch and advise him accordingly.
- Closeburn Quarry: Linda has attended several meetings: she advises that the matter needs more publicity. Local people also seem to be under the impression that the Quarry will bring local jobs (it is established that it will not). People also need to be alerted to the enormity of noise, dust, pollution and traffic volume to which the Quarry, if allowed to go ahead, will give rise. Cllrs described the Planning Process. As a Community Council it seems we should hang fire with our corporate objection meantime, for fear that Applicants feel they have grounds for objecting that we had pre-determined the issue. There is no reason why individuals may not meantime write and lobby Cllrs. All they can do is file such correspondence meantime, until the Planning Application is formally lodged.
- Golf Club: Douglas had replied to them in the terms agreed last time, but nothing further had been heard meantime. Doubt was expressed in some quarters as to whether we should be assisting what might be considered a commercial operation, although it was not clear to everyone that that was what it was.
- Drumlanrig Country Fayre: David was supposed to have spoken to David Harkness about what benefit the village might derive from this, but he had not. Oops. This will be attended to.
- Trees: nothing further heard from Buccleuch meantime, though some trees have been attended to.
- Cllrs have meeting with Buccleuch coming up. They undertook to raise the questions both of the trees and the Fayre at that meeting.
- Wind Farm Money: Some of the money due to us in respect of projects notified to Solway Heritage had – finally – been received, though some is still due and there are also ongoing claims. It seems Solway Heritage may be about to go into some form of Administration. No-one could quite understand how a body whose sole purpose was to hand

out grant monies from elsewhere, presumably deducting a Management Fee for so doing could go bust, but perhaps this will become clearer later. There is to be a Public Consultation in Thornhill Community Centre tomorrow (Tuesday, 22/02/2011) at 6.30pm concerning the re-negotiation of Public Benefit funding from Wind Farms. D&GC had originally sought to arrange a uniform approach towards these funds throughout the Region. The view was expressed that they had made a poor job of this and that most other Regions had struck much harder bargains with Wind Farm companies as, indeed, had individual communities and that we, or perhaps a group of local communities should negotiate direct with the companies.

6. NHS:

- Allis Balance had had to change her proposed 'surgery' in Thornhill. She is now proposing to come from 16.00-17.00 on Thursday, 17/03/2011 at the Community Centre. This was approved.
- [Willie Lenza left at this point]
- It was noted that the Ambulance Service is leaving the Portakabin at the Hospital site; apparently it's no longer 'fit for purpose'. They are moving to the One Stop Shop. Concern was expressed at this: difficulty of responding to Emergency Calls at 9.00am of 16.50 (beginning and end of school day); speed humps in E Morton St etc. Members felt the Fire Station would have been a better venue, but Ambulance Service had apparently opined that Fire Station was not good enough. Cllrs have also lodged objections on grounds of traffic problems, the apparent lack of a Risk Assessment and, certainly, a lack of consultation. The picture is further clouded by the questions hanging over the One Stop Shop itself. Future staffing of this looks in doubt and the present level of service it offers (frequent closures due to staff unavailability, heating problems etc) is far from satisfactory. Watch this space.
- Cllrs also advised that NHS were transferring some £7m (it was thought) to D&GC Social Work Department to fund the services which are being transferred to Social Work responsibility from the NHS. More on this next time. Concern was expressed that the responsibilities being transferred to Social Work might be completely open-ended, whereas the funding would not be.
- [Cllr Wood arrived here]

7. Mrs Adam's Bequest:

- Cllr Dempster had not got round to determining ownership of the Plot as a whole (Scout Hut Site and adjoining 'Parker's Yard') from D&GC, but would chase this up.
- [Cllrs Dempster, Dykes and Wood left here]
- Scott had received a helpful, and fairly positive, letter from Planning Department re our proposals, but a fair amount hinges on whether sufficient car parking spaces can be created on site. This would definitely require the use of the adjoining Parker's site. Scott proposed we should try to acquire the freehold of both sites (since it would be improvident to build on the Scout Hut site when there's only 50 years or so of lease on it left). Davie Sharp suggested that one or both sites belonged to Buccleuch ultimately, although the Scouts' lease is from

D&GC. Scott is to draft letter to D&GC to try to clarify the ownership issue; Douglas and David to revise this.

- The detailed reply to Ian Renicks' letter, objecting to the Scout Hut Site decision, and the means of arriving at it, drafted by David has now been fully revised and checked by Douglas and is ready to be sent off. A similar letter will be sent to the Community Centre Management Committee.

- [Linda Airley left at this point]

8. Formation of Sub-Committees:

- Douglas and David proposed the formation of sub-committees to deal with various issues, and which would report back to the full Community Council, in order that the CC can actually get through the business before it month by month. Meetings have been getting longer, mainly due to pressure of business. This was agreed, in principle. There is already a de facto NHS Group, including others from outwith the CC; a Gala Committee and, in due course, there would be a Bequest Group, once matters regarding the site have been clarified. A Community Resilience group is also proposed (see below).

9. Community Resilience:

- Further to David's brief presentation on this last time, he reported that he had been in touch with Steven Wylie, Community Resilience Officer for D&GC, who was willing to come and talk to such a group, advise it, and help it set up etc. It will only work if members of the Public are willing to become involved in this, too, since a lot of personnel will be required to deal with gritting etc. It may be just the beginning of various other services we need to consider trying to underpin, once the full effect of Council cuts take effect. Moniaive, amongst others, seem to be organised already and there had been some complaints that we were not so far on. With the re-organisation we have recently undergone, this cannot really be helped, but we need to get on with it. Meantime, it was agreed that David should go ahead and arrange a Public Meeting about this. Needs to be well publicised in and about the village and see if Standard will give it some coverage.

10. Treasurer's Report:

- Legacy Account £255,628.59
- Investment Account £5,321.03
- Current Account £3,886.86
- Robert reported that the Legacy Account had kept fairly good pace with inflation, having originally amounted to £230,632 when received in 2006.
- High balance of Current Account is due to Solway Heritage having finally disbursed some long outstanding funds. Robert confirmed that Solway Heritage's cheque had been received a couple of weeks previously and had cleared, so the funds received were safe, notwithstanding what might happen to Solway Heritage in the next few days.

11. Correspondence:

- See paper apart.

12. Planning:

- Douglas and Scott had attended a Planning training meeting at Castle Douglas Town Hall and had been told about a new Local Development Plan, although it was not clear what this was. Cllrs were also a little unclear, but undertook to find out. Cllr Dempster suggested that this was probably the consultation for the update to the present Local Plan and that our input, as a Community Council, would be crucial.
- See paper apart for Planning Applications.

13. AOCB:

- Web Site: most information is now in place, though some still awaited. So it needs to go live asap. Missing information can be added later. Lorraine says finished result is impressive. It was agreed that we would make a visit to Blu Apple's Offices on 14 March, subject to agreement with Pete Hannah.
- Hanging Baskets: It was confirmed that CC would fund one hanging basket per business in the village: if businesses want additional baskets we can provide them if they pay for them. Lorraine and Beavers are to ask round which businesses want them. Businesses must agree to keep them watered in season. Planters round the 30-limit signs: Linda was looking into this, but was not available at this point of the Meeting.

14. Meeting Closed.

15. DONM:

- Monday, 21/003/2011 at 7.15pm

Paper Apart:

Correspondence:

- Letter from D&GC: Windfarm Community Benefit Framework Review: Meeting 6.30pm, 22/02/2011 at Community Centre.
- D&G Fire & Rescue Authority Draft Service Improvement Plan 2011/12
- Letter from Nithsdale Area Management: they will henceforth pay Data Protection Registration Fee; updates on Constitution.
- Letter from Community & Support Service, D&GC: Consultation on Community Capacity Building (Nithsdale)
- Intimation Copies of Amendment to Licences:
 - Elmargin Hotel (add live entertainment, changes to storage arrangements, Children's Certificate)
 - Co-Op (Layout alterations, new signage)
 - Thornhill Inn (Off Sales for putative new On-line business)
- WHA: Invitation to visit school and find out about Queensberry Initiative – Friday, 25/03/2011
- Notifications of various consultations from Federation of Community Councils:
 - Police Reform, Fire Service Reform (ends 5 May)
 - Building Repairs (ends 5 March)
 - Association of Community Councils: 'Common Ground Meeting' Saturday, 26/03/2011, Glasgow, 13.00-17.00.
- 'Community Councillor' Magazine
- From Rennie Chalmers: Summary of 'Case for a Bedded In-Patient Facility in Mid-& Upper Nithsdale.
- Letter from Jim Hume MSP (re NHS)

16. Planning Applications:

- 100A Drumlanrig Street (10 replacement windows: single glazed → double glazed timber sash & case)
- (Not in our District): Application for single Wind Turbine at Lochmailing, Auldgirth.