

MUCKHART COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Muckhart Community Council, held via Skype, on Wednesday 27th May 2020, at 7:30pm

Present:	John Anderson (JA)	Chair
	Patrick Thompson (PT)	Vice-Chair
	Mike Wilson (MRW)	Secretary
	Danny Conroy (DC)	Treasurer
	Philip Lord (PL)	Minute Secretary
	Jonathan Bacon (JB)	
	Stuart Dean (SD)	
	Jon Jordan (JJ)	
	Marlene White (MW)	
	Peter Wyatt (PW)	

Councillor Graham Lindsay

Status: **Approved**

1. Apologies for Absence

JA welcomed members and Councillor Graham Lindsay to the meeting which was being held, via Skype, due to the current coronavirus lockdown.

Apologies for absence had been received from PCs Barry Ritchie and Barry Reiter.

JA noted that the last regular MCC meeting, scheduled for 25th March, had not taken place due to the coronavirus restrictions which were put in place earlier that week.

2. Declarations of Interest

SD declared an interest, through his involvement with the Friends of the Ochils, regarding the Coulshill forestry planting proposals (agenda item 9).

3. Minutes of Meeting on 29th January 2019

The Minutes of the meeting of 29th January 2020, issued to members by email on 18th and 24th March, had been accepted without amendments. Their acceptance was proposed by JJ, seconded by PW.

4. Matters Arising

MRW noted that matters arising, re the H49 Planning Application and the Main Issues Report, would be covered under items 7 and 9 to follow.

- Re Item 12 (Correspondence: National Planning Framework 4): SD indicated that due to work on the H49 Appeal and the response to the Main Issues Report, it had not been possible to respond to the Call for Ideas stage of National Planning Framework

4 (NPF4). However, there will be the opportunity to respond to the draft NPF4, now due for public consultation in autumn 2021.

5. Police Report

JA noted that a written Police Report had been received which had been distributed prior to the meeting. Since the start of the lockdown, 3 minor crimes had been reported in the Muckhart area.

MRW reported that further concerns regarding traffic speeding through the village had been raised by several residents, during the current lockdown period. These concerns, in turn, had been raised with the Police. MRW commented that, on several occasions, recently, he had noticed the presence of police cars, at the eastern approach to the village, which was having a positive effect on the speed of approaching traffic. The Police have confirmed that high visibility speed checks will continue.

The Report was accepted by all and JA thanked the Officers for their input.

6. Muckhart Lend a Hand

JA noted the magnificent effort that had been made by the Church's Muckhart Lend a Hand team which had been formed just prior to the lockdown. It was proving to be a successful initiative and was providing much needed assistance to the more vulnerable members of our community. To date, fortunately, it had not been overstretched and the resources required were being maintained. On behalf of all members, JA sincerely thanked all those who were involved in helping to deliver this service.

7. H49 Planning Application Appeal

SD gave a brief overview of the current situation, confirming that MCC had produced and submitted its response (previously circulated to members) to the appeal documentation submitted by Springfield Properties. MRW confirmed that all of the missing documents, from the Clackmannanshire Council website, had also been submitted to the DPEA and were now available on their website.

SD noted that the appeal process is currently on hold, due to staff at Springfield being furloughed, and that the Reporter will proceed with the determination, once the appeal comes out of hold. There was some speculation as to whether an H49 site visit would go ahead, perhaps, accompanied, when the current lockdown is lifted, but this remains uncertain.

JA thanked SD, together with all other members involved, with the hard work undertaken in producing MCC's response to the appeal.

8. Muckhart Community Plan: Updates

JA noted that, due to the current lockdown, action had been severely limited since the last meeting. However, the following was discussed:

Feasibility study into developing and improving Glebe land in front of church

JA noted that there had been a positive response from the Church of Scotland to progress this study.

Promoting the MCC Web-site

MRW asked if there had been any noticeable increase in the use of the MCC web-site, further to the decision taken at February's Sub-Group meeting, to upload Minutes, community notices, etc., directly onto the web-site. JB noted that although it had not been possible to install software required to measure site-usage, there were indications that the site had seen more use by the community, for example, on the web-site's "Yellow Pages".

JB noted that the website should be promoted on the various village notice boards, via Facebook, etc., and this was agreed. **ACTION: JB/MRW**

Transport Services

PL noted that the buses through the village had ceased running, a week or two into the lockdown, and asked if anyone had been formally notified this was to happen and whether any notices had been posted at the bus stops. Members reported that they had received no information regarding this. It was agreed that PL should investigate this further, regarding decisions taken and what will happen in the future. **ACTION: PL**

9. Planning Sub-Group

9a: Main Issues Report/Draft LDP: Update

SD noted that a comprehensive range of representations on the issues in the Main Issues Report had been submitted to the Council Planners for their consideration (previously distributed to members). He noted that due to the current coronavirus restrictions, work on the new draft LDP was likely to be delayed. Graeme Finlay, Principal Planner, envisages that there will be further dialogue with MCC regarding our representations before a draft LDP is produced although he is not sure when that will be. The draft LDP may be ready for public consultation this year but more likely early 2021.

Cllr Lindsay agreed to request an update from Council Officer.

JA thanked everyone for their work and contributions to the MCC response.

9b: Planning Applications

SD noted there had been just one Planning Application, since the last meeting, relating to Kirks Cottage. It had been agreed to support this application and submit a "no comment" response.

9c: Woodlands: Arndean and Coulshill

SD reported that work on the Arndean woodland had now started and that our request to preserve the views westwards, over the SSSI area, would seem to have been taken into account in the final design. No information had been received, to date, regarding the exact routing and start date of the proposed path to the viewpoint to the west of core path 155. SD agreed to follow-up on this. **ACTION: SD**

Re the Coulshill woodland proposals, with PT's assistance, a Community Drop-in Event had been held on 4th March. JA reported that a response to the proposals had been prepared and submitted, on behalf of MCC, on 1st April and that we now await the next stage of this project.

10. Muckhart Primary School: Update

In VW's absence, JA noted that the school is currently closed and that pupils are under home schooling with the support of staff. He understood that the Primary School had still managed to hold their annual marathon with children running in their gardens!

11. Treasurer's Report

DC presented the Treasurer's Report, noting that on 27th May 2020 the balance of the account stood at £1221.51.

It was noted that the Hall hire for 2018-19 was reimbursed early by the Council and is included in the previous 2018-19 Accounts. The Hall hire for 2019-20 will not be reimbursed by the Council until after the AGM, which is scheduled for September, and this appears to skew the balance figures.

DC is preparing the Annual Accounts for audit and these should be available in time for the AGM. It was noted that auditing this year's accounts may be more challenging due to the coronavirus lockdown.

The current Treasurer's Report was accepted.

12. JCCF

DC noted that an informal meeting of the JCCF had taken place, on 21st May, on-line via Zoom, where the main focus of the discussion had been on the current lockdown and its effects on local communities. Of particular concern was continued support for charities across the Clackmannanshire area. DC also noted that an on-line questionnaire had been issued regarding how communities were coping with the lockdown which all members were encouraged to complete.

Cllr Lindsay noted there concerns had been raised with the Council regarding an increase in fly-tipping and that the Council was planning to re-open the Forthbank waste and recycling centre, at the start of June, using an on-line booking system.

He went on to say that grass verge cutting had ceased during the lockdown, as it was not considered to be an essential service and there had been no capacity to undertake it. He further intimated that, in the future, verge cutting may be decreased except where road safety was a concern. This was broadly welcomed on environmental and biodiversity grounds.

13. Correspondence

MRW had circulated a list of correspondence received, in a summary format. two items were discussed:

- Email (27/03/20) from Lesley Baillie, re unacceptable behaviour: a draft governance policy has been produced by Lesley Baillie for dealing with unacceptable behaviour by members of a Community Council. MCC has the option to review this policy and adopt it if we wish
- Email (26/05/2020) from Lesley Baillie, re this year's Community Council elections: see the next agenda item

14. Community Event for Community Council Elections

JA suggested that, given the current lockdown, the planned community event should be put on hold, for now. It was agreed that this will be discussed further by members, in July, by which time more information regarding CC elections should be available.

If CC elections are to be held under lockdown conditions, it was agreed that MCC will try to generate as much interest, within our community, any way we can. The discussion continued under the next item.

15. AGM and Community Council Elections

MRW referred to the email, sent from Lesley Baillie, regarding the CC elections, due to be held later this year, requesting feedback from all CCs as to whether these should be postponed, as a result of coronavirus. Due to the current restrictions in place, it was noted that it would be difficult to arrange an event intended to encourage members of our community to put themselves forward for election and also for the community, as a whole, to participate in any subsequent ballot.

SD felt that postponing elections was a serious step to take and ways should be found to hold them, particularly given that CC elections are conducted through a postal ballot. He suggested that members could discuss the role of MCC, etc. with any members of the community who may be interested in standing for election, by telephone or email.

JA asked members to consider this question and, further to a lengthy discussion, the majority of members agreed that, in the interests of electoral participation and fairness, it would be best to postpone any election activity, for a period of time. JA agreed to respond to LB's email, advising the Council of MCC's opinion. **ACTION: JA**

LB's email also noted that no date had yet been set for the postponed Clackmannanshire Council East Ward by-election.

MRW suggested that as the next MCC meeting, together with our AGM, were not due to take place until 2nd September, it might be desirable that a further meeting be arranged prior to this date. It was discussed that such a meeting would both replace the MCC March meeting, postponed due to the coronavirus lockdown, and would allow further discussion to take place based on the latest information available regarding possible election dates, and any associated activity, the AGM itself plus any other matters that may arise, over the coming weeks.

It was agreed that this meeting would take place on Wednesday 15th July, at 7:30pm, most likely, via Skype, depending on the guidance in place at the time.

16. AOCB

Cllr Lindsay passed on his good wishes to everyone on the call and to stay safe.

17. Date of Next Meeting

The next MCC Meeting will be held on Wednesday 15th July 2020, at 7:30pm (via Skype - TBC).

The meeting closed at 8:40pm