

MUCKHART COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Muckhart Community Council, held via MS Teams, on Wednesday 24th March 2021, 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
	Stuart Dean (SD)	
	Jon Jordan (JJ)	
	Marlene White (MW)	
	Val Whyte (VW)	
	Peter Wyatt (PW)	

Councillor Graham Lindsay

Status: **Approved**

1. Apologies for Absence

JA welcomed members and Cllr Lindsay to the meeting which was being held via MS Teams due to the current Coronavirus situation.

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Kathleen Martin and Denis Coyne, PCs Barry Ritchie and Barry Reiter and member Matthew Pease (MP) (who had difficulty connecting to the Meeting).

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Meeting on 27th January 2021

The Minutes of the meeting of 27th January 2021 were approved, proposed by JJ, seconded by PW.

JA thanked Alison Macdonald for producing these minutes due to PL's injury.

4. Matters Arising

- Re Item 4 Matters Arising, 27th January, second bullet (Dog noise): JA reported that he understood that noise from The Granary had reduced following issuance of a Noise Abatement Order and the Council has now closed the case. However, PT noted that over the last week or two the noise seems to have increased again. He also noted that, regarding whether the property was permitted to be used for a dog breeding business, he had heard nothing from the Council regarding whether a licence had been issued. This needed further follow-up.

- Re Item 4 Matters Arising, 27th January, fourth bullet (Muckhart Primary School: broadband): MRW reported that during a telephone call, John Allan, Head of IT at the Council, had confirmed that improvements had been made, the previous week, to the broadband service provided at the school (via a re-set of the Wireless Access Points). Further improvements are expected, which will deliver a broadband speed of up to 150Mb/s, when a new wireless 'private network' becomes available, which will be delivered via a mast located close to the Japanese Garden, following responses to a tender soon to be issued by the Council. The new contract is expected to be awarded in April with a live date expected some four to six weeks after this. VW confirmed that children at the school were experiencing much better internet connectivity now and thanked MRW for his support regarding his matter.
- Re Item 15, (Correspondence: Accessibility guidelines): MRW reported that he and JB had undertaken testing of the MCC web-site relating to the issue of accessibility for the visually and other impaired users. An Accessibility Statement, confirming the capabilities of the web-site, has also been produced and is now available on the web-site.
- JJ noted that the electric car charging point by the Coronation Hall had still not been connected. MRW confirmed this would be discussed later.

5. Police Report

According to the Police Report issued, there was nothing to report since the last meeting. The Report was accepted by all and JA thanked the officers for their input.

6. Burnfoot Hill Community Fund: Update

JA reported that, since our last meeting, a fund induction meeting had taken place with a representative from Foundation Scotland (FS) and members of MCC. During the meeting, it was confirmed that grant funding would be available from EDF, further to the earlier acceptance of Muckhart's membership of the Burnfoot Hill Community Fund (BHCF).

Winter and Event grants, valued at £2500 each, will become available, shortly, as will a further grant, worth £1500, to be used by MCC to award Micro-Grants, worth up to £500 each, to assist community groups. Groups can apply to MCC for funding from these three local grants. MCC, in turn, will be represented, by two MCC members and one member from the community, on the wider BHCF panel which is made up of community representatives from the five Clackmannanshire areas. This panel meets at least twice a year, to discuss and agree wider grant awards, with the next meeting due on 4th May.

JJ noted that a grant of £500 to the Nature Park would be very much welcome as there is a need for continuing general maintenance.

It was noted that the Christmas Light Up Muckhart (LUM) group would benefit from the Winter fund and that initial discussions have already taken place. It has been agreed that LUM would act as a Sub-Group of MCC and that the purchase of lights, together with installation plans, etc., would be discussed and agreed by September. VW, a member of LUM, agreed to represent the group and to report on progress at future MCC meetings. Any ideas or views on the Christmas Lights should be addressed to VW. **ACTION: VW**

JA requested nominations for two members to sit on the BHCF Muckhart panel. It was agreed, unanimously, that JA and PW would represent MCC on the local panel.

JA also reported that FS was currently reviewing nominations from Muckhart residents to select the third member of the Muckhart panel. Nominations close tomorrow. It was expected that interviews would take place shortly for those who had put themselves forward.

ACTION: JA / PW

It was agreed to discuss the need for a separate bank account for these funds under item 13, Treasurers Report.

7. Kirkhill Flooding

JA noted that two actions were currently underway. Firstly, the Council has agreed to fund a consultant to work on how to reduce the flood risk in the village and work is due to start on a local report, in April. Secondly, JB is heading up a local flood response group, which includes several volunteers from the community, and a “flood pod”, with equipment and items to be used in the case of flooding, has been supplied by the Council and has now been located at Kirkhill.

In answer to a query, it was confirmed there would be training provided on the use of the equipment contained in the pod.

JB has uploaded a post and a dedicated ‘Muckhart Flood Group’ page on the MCC web-site and will act as the contact point for the group.

ACTION: JB

8. Muckhart Lend a Hand (MLaH): Update

MRW reported that there were no major updates since the last meeting. He noted that a post advising that a shuttle bus service had been set up in Alloa to get to the COVID vaccination centre had been uploaded. The MLaH coordinator has also confirmed that no calls had been received by the group over the last few weeks.

MRW also commented that, according to government reports, further letters, with updated advice for individuals currently shielding, would be issued in the near future.

9. H49 Planning Application

a) Section 75 Update

SD reported that he had been in touch with Grant Baxter at the Planning Department who had advised that the Section 75 agreement with Springfield Properties was not yet complete. The expected timeframe was the end of March. This report will then go to the DPEA Reporter who will decide whether to accept it and grant planning permission or not. SD thanked Cllr Coyne for his help in discussing this issue with Council planners.

SD’s understanding is that at the end of the Section 75 process, contact will be made with MCC, and the community, to discuss how the planning contributions are to be allocated, although no details of how this process will work, or how influential we can be during the process, have been confirmed.

SD went on to discuss the archaeological investigation works currently being undertaken at the site. He has spoken with the Council archaeologist, noting that the earlier archaeological survey had to be undertaken due to the pre-historic stone ball reported to have been found previously at Birkhill¹, within 100m of the site. The preliminary survey, which was performed in February, had found two remains of interest: a fire pit and evidence of an old field boundary, which are the cause of the current excavations. SD's understanding is that an area of 20 x 20m has to be further examined, around the pit and the boundary, and if anything further of interest is found, then further 20 x 20m excavations will be undertaken. The works are being undertaken by Guard Archaeology, an independent archaeological firm. Once the work has been concluded, a report will be prepared and submitted to the Council.

MW reported that concerns had been raised, due to diggers and other vehicles accessing H49 via the field owned by the Izats, off the A91, to the east of Maudie's Loan, and the establishment of a base in the field, for vehicles accessing H49. MW asked if this raised any safety issues and could this act as a precedent for when building work begins? The concerns were noted and SD reported that access to H49, via this route, could be subject to a planning application.

JJ enquired whether the archaeologist was a Council employee or an external consultant. SD reported that he is employed by Stirling Council but also works for Clackmannanshire Council.

b) DPEA Complaint

PL reported that following the last meeting he had received feedback from a number of members and, following this, he had drafted a somewhat shorter version of the letter of complaint to the DPEA, which had since been circulated for comment. PL commented that some issues, separate from the process relating to the conduct of the virtual site visit, had been included in an appendix, which we may wish to include with the letter. Further to discussion, it was agreed to send the letter without the appendix and to copy it to our various elected representatives. **ACTION: MRW/PL**

10. Muckhart Community Plan: Updates

a. Infrastructure Working Group (IWG)

MRW noted that Council works to improve safety at the zebra crossing had still to be undertaken, together with works to complete improvements to the gateway, at the eastern end of the Pool. He had been in touch with the Council and was advised that its contractors still had a large backlog of work but that it was expected that the works would be completed by April, although this could not be guaranteed.

MRW also drew attention to the Slow Ways Initiative, information on which had been circulated previously. This UK-wide initiative is aimed at recording and recognising both foot and cycle paths that connect communities throughout the country. Cllr Coyne has raised this with the Council's Traffic and Transportation team leader, who was willing to support the idea.

¹ See: <https://canmore.org.uk/event/680135>

MRW noted that support has also been expressed by IWG members for this initiative, commenting that this may help to support additional funding for recreational and Active Travel routes across the Muckhart area and that residents will be encouraged to become engaged, by helping to identify paths and by recording them on-line under this initiative. Further information will be communicated via the MCC web-site. **ACTION: MRW**

b. Public Services

PL noted that a meeting of the Kinross-shire Community Transport Group had taken place but that, unfortunately, he was unable to attend. From the minutes of the meeting, he reported that a round trip bus serving Dollar – Blairingone – Powmill - Carnbo – Kinross had been discussed and that were this route to be considered further, it would certainly be of interest to Muckhart residents. PL will keep in touch with this group and report any developments.

JA commented that local residents should be encouraged to use the X53 bus service via the proposed bus users group. MRW added that this group should include representatives from all of the neighbouring CCs. It was noted that the X53 bus timetable could be put on the web-site to help promote the service. PL further commented that at present this bus service is available due to the current lockdown support funding and that it is not yet clear whether changes will occur when this support is suspended. **ACTION: PL**

c. Sustainability and Environment

PL reported that he had a conversation with Tim Allan (TA) relating to the Himalayan Balsam infestation in the community woodland and was informed that TA is proposing to apply systemic weed killer to remove the infestation, later in the summer. The advice is that these heavy-duty techniques are the only effective way of exerting control and in this instance the engagement of the school children to clear the weed would be inappropriate. The situation relating to Himalayan Balsam at the Golf Course is more complex, as this infestation follows the stream which feeds into the adjacent SSSI.

11. Planning Sub-Group

a. Local Place Plan

SD noted that, due to the current Covid situation, the government was behind schedule with actions relating to Local Place Plans but that a consultation is currently underway which closes on 25th June. He asked if MCC would wish to respond and, if so, who would like to get involved? During discussion, it was noted that members would not wish to commit the next community council unduly to any specific obligations relating to Place Plans. However, it was decided that we should set up a group to respond to the current consultation and that members of the community should also be involved. PL, JJ, PW, MRW and SD agreed to form part of a group which would also reach out to encourage residents to become involved. Support documents and the survey are available on-line, which should be read, and ideas channelled to SD. **ACTION: SD / PL / JJ / PW / MRW**

MRW reported that our response to the NPF4 consultation had been drafted, finalised and uploaded onto the government's web-site, on 19th February, and, subsequently, issued to members. He thanked all those involved for their support and suggestions.

b. Planning Applications

SD noted that the new signboard for the Church had been approved by the Council.

The only new application related to a garden room, to be located at the Manse, to which a letter of support had been provided to the Council.

12. Muckhart Primary School: Update

VW reported that the school had now been open for two weeks following closure due to the lockdown. Everything was proceeding smoothly and teachers were being tested for Covid, twice weekly. The broadband service was now working well and the recent change, allowing all pupils and staff to connect successfully, has been wonderful.

So far, there had been no new information relating to H49 planning for the school.

13. Treasurer's Report

The balance of our account stands at £1,934.11. The report was accepted by members. DC reminded members that the accounting year end is 31st March.

The question of using a separate bank account(s) to manage funds from the BHCF was discussed and it was agreed this was a good idea. JJ strongly recommended using the same bank for all accounts.

ACTION: DC

14. JCCF: Update

DC reported briefly on the last meeting of the JCCF, noting that the main item on the agenda was the subject of co-option and the forthcoming elections for community councils later in the summer (see also item 16 below).

15. Correspondence

MRW discussed some items of significance, received since the last meeting:

- Email from TA (08/02/21): re the Jubilee Green Canopy initiative for commemorating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022 which proposes a campaign of tree planting across the UK. JA presented an outline of this initiative and suggested that a community group be formed to take this forward when the campaign gets underway (May 2021). PL noted that schools are encouraged to get involved. The forming of a group was discussed and approved, with JJ, MW, PL, DC, PW and PT expressing an interest in joining it. JA will brief TA
ACTION: JA
- Email from Lesley Baillie (10/02/21): re Town Twinning requests for Scotland. Further to a brief discussion, it was decided not to progress this issue, currently, so as not to commit the new incoming CC, later in the year
- Email from Lesley Baillie (11/02/21): re the government's Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2). Members were reminded of this, noting input closes on 31st of the month
- Email from Lesley Deans (17/03/21): re Electric Vehicle charging points. Confirmation that the Council continues to await confirmation from SSE as to when the power supply will be connected

16. Community Council Elections: Succession Planning

JA reminded members that the election of a new CC is planned for September. He suggested it would be helpful if members could think about succession planning and to talk to members of our community who might be interested in standing for election. JA suggested that a cheese and wine evening could be arranged, in advance of the elections for this purpose, with DC offering to host such an event in his garden.

17. AOCB

JJ returned to the question of town twinning, to note that such arrangements are very much a community initiative, rather than those arranged by 'official' bodies, and that we should not be too concerned about the size of our community, as many examples showed the twinning of smaller communities.

18. Date of Next Meeting

The next MCC Meeting will be held on Wednesday 2nd June 2021, at 7:30pm, via MS Teams.
(Please Note: the next Meeting date is different from that previously agreed)

JA thanked all for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 9:45 pm.