**Howgate Community Council**

Minutes of meeting 19th April 2018

**Present**

Bruce Hobbs (BH Chair) David Wilson (DW)Graham Young (GY) Ian King (IK) Ian Quigley (IQ)

**In attendance**

Tommy Goldie (TG) Councillor Joe Wallace (JW)

**1 Apologies**

Colin Bennett, James Garry, Debbie McCall, Phil Macdonald.

JW was welcomed to the meeting after his recent election as councillor. He explained that he or Debbie would try to attend HCC meetings.

**2 Minutes of last meeting**

Approved. Proposed by DW seconded by IK.

**3 Matters arising**

**3.1 Midlothian Local Development Plan (MLDP)**

BH tabled a summary headed “Recent progress and Milestones in production of second MLDP”

This stated that the MLDP is being examined by the Directorate of Planning and Environmental appeals, that the report is expected IN APRIL and subject to the Reporter’s recommendation, possible approval in Summer 2018.

The elements relevant to HCC are:-

1. Pomathorn Mill Penicuik, with indicative capacity of 50 houses but with key considerations being access and prominence of site
2. Wellington school , with indicative capacity of 50-60 houses but with key considerations being access restrictions though with potential to incorporate adjacent land (RD2 - Wellington) to assist in overcoming these.

DW reported on the mood at the meeting of the federation of community councils which was frustration that MDC seems to take no notice of representations made and that there is no feedback. It appears that MDC, instead of trying to discuss representations with Community councils, simply referred the whole issue to a reporter, and there must be doubts about how much detailed practical knowledge the reporter would have. It was felt that the much trumpeted importance of local democracy was a sham.

TG explained the importance of the Community Empowerment Act which gives Community Councils the ability to make specific representations. It was agreed that HCC would collate the responses already made by them and send these to TG in his capacity as liaison officer so that he can put these points to the reporter. TG also encouraged HCC to work closely with other community councils and that mutual distribution of minutes of meetings would be a good start.

*Action DW and TG*

**3.2 Traffic/Speeding issues in Howgate**

3.2.1 This was held over to be dealt with by CB. IK noted that the road markings on Pomathorn Road were incomplete.

3.2.2 TG gave details of a new initiative called the Midlothian Traffic Roads and Paths Group, which is a coordinating body and is a sub-group of the Federation of Community Councils. There are no MDC officials in this group but the group can make its requests known to MDC by making what is known as a Participation Request to MDC and such a request could be coordinated by a council official such as TG. The intention that the Group will identify to MDC matters which need to be attended to , and will also provide information to be considered in relation to planning applications. The hope was expressed that we would see a culture change resulting in better dialogue and mutual understanding between the officials of MDC and the community councils.

*Action DW and TG*

**3.3 New constitution.**

IQ reported that the draft had been agreed with Amy Noble of the legal department of MDC in November 2017 and that IQ had sent an email to Amy Noble asking whether, in view of the very minor substantive changes made to the present constitution MDC would require a new constitution to be adopted. IQ reported that Amy Noble had been very efficient and that he assumed that the lack of reply indicated that she was waiting for final instructions from someone in MDC. It was agreed that IQ would email Amy Noble and tell her that we would have the new constitution adopted at the AGM in June .

*Action IQ*

**3.4 MDC Budget consultation**

Held over in the absence of Debbie MCCall.

*Action Debbie McCall.*

**3.5 Footpath - Update.**

Held over in the absence of CB.

*Action CB*.

**4 Community Policing Report**

The written police report March 2018 was tabled . There were no reported crimes in the area covered by HCC.

**5 Standing Items**

**5.1 correspondence**

None.

**5.2 Planning**

No major applications. JG will report if he becomes aware of anything.

**5.3 HCC Funds.**

5.3.1 GY reported that balance is £1065.09p.

5.3.2 GY reported two matters which needed to be clarified before the accounts are sent to the auditor

5.3.2.1 HCC made a contribution of £400 to the fund for the acquisition of a defibrillator. It turned out that this contribution was not required because other funding was obtained. The £400 was therefore refunded. GY was concerned that there was no documentary evidence from Howgate Village Hall Association ( who were responsible for the acquisition of the defibrillator) showing this arrangement.

IK said he would speak to the appropriate person in HVHA and ask her to provide an appropriate letter.

*Action IK*

5.3.2.2 No receipts have been issued by HVHA for the rent received by them from HCC in respect of the year ending \* 2017 or 2018 [ alt –the rent for year ending\* 2018 is due but no invoice received]. IK will speak to the appropriate person at HVHA.

**6 AOCB**

**6.1 Contribution by TG.**

It had been noted that TG’s attendance at HCC meetings had been poor and that HCC had received no regular reports on what had been done by TG in his capacity as Liaison Officer.

TG explained the reasons for his absences and agreed to provide a regular monthly report in advance of HCC meeting dates. He asked that HCC provide a note of what information and detail was expected from him.

*Initial action BH and CB*

TG said that he would attend HCC meetings but said that he anticipated being able to attend only three meetings per year.

Although this does not seem like much it was felt that such attendances, taken along with good monthly reports and the ability of appropriate members of HCC to contact him informally, would be a great improvement and should prove sufficient.

It was noted that TG had made a very significant and helpful contribution to the meeting.

**6.2 Chairmanship of HCC**

It was reported that Colin Bennett, who has made a very significant contribution as Chairman, wishes to step down from that role due to pressure of business, but that he is willing to continue as a member of HCC.

It is hoped that following the AGM in June someone directly from the village will put himself or herself forward for consideration as chairman. Until then, or subsequently in the absence of such a person, BH would be prepared to take on the role of Chair so long as (1) DW agrees to continue the work he is already doing with the Federation of Community Councils and carries out the direct liaison with The Midlothian Roads and Paths Group and with TG all as referred to in 3.2.2 and (2) someone is prepared to be Secretary in the manner so ably done in the past by Adrian FitzGerald.

**7 Date of next meeting**

17th May 2018