

Howgate Community Council. Minutes of meeting 29 May 2019.

Present

Bruce Hobbs (Chair), Jenny Westwood, David Wilson, Ian King, Graham Young (Treasurer), Ian Quigley (Secretary).

In attendance

Councillor Debbi McCall, PC Keith Dolan, Tommy Goldie.

1. Apologies

Colin Bennett

2. Minutes of meeting held on 24 April 2019.

Approved. Proposed by Jenny Westwood, seconded by David Wilson.

3. Community Policing Report.

The full report is annexed to the Minutes.

PC Keith Dolan noted that in April there had been 70 reported incidents in the Penicuik area of which 33 had been solved.

Keith drew attention to specific incidents in the Penicuik area, including some drugs incidents and some theft and vandalism.

There was a case of a man charged with a sheep worrying incident at Pomathorn Farm.

There was no report on speed checks.

4. Report by Tommy Goldie, Community Liaison Officer.

This was Tommy's final report before he leaves Midlothian Council and is annexed to the Minutes.

It was agreed that this was by far the best report he had produced and actually addressed the important issues. The report referred to lack of support and/or response from officials in departments of Midlothian Council, including roads and planning and general communication. We don't know what efforts have been made to get responses but it is very much hoped that the leading people with responsibilities, namely Alasdair Mather and Anette Lang, will make a big difference and the members of HCC look forward to working with them.

5. Roads and traffic report by Ian King.

Ian had attended a meeting of the Midlothian Traffic Roads and Paths Group and is now a full member.

The issues are summarised in Tommy's report referred to in item 4.

HCC are very appreciative of Ian's work and expertise in this area.

6. Report by David Wilson on Meeting of Association of Community Councils.

David's report had been sent by email.

He reported that all the community councils had the same frustrations relating to lack of responses /action from departments of Midlothian Council.

It is thought that the new approach by the new Chief Executive is beginning to produce results. At the same time it is recognised that there are real financial constraints.

It was suggested at the HCC meeting that although the general concerns were common, specific issues had to be pushed forward by the Community Council. It was also suggested that it might be useful for the Federation to monitor the speed and quality of response from various departments to give a basis for discussion with the Chief Executive. However it was noted that there was merit in the Federation reporting good outcomes.

7. Any other matters arising

Ian King reported that he had attended the Traffic, Roads and Paths group (as an individual and not as a member of HCC).

There is a proposal to set up a community development trust, the proposed chair being Sara Snodgrass, and this body will try to enter into discussions with Church of Scotland.

8. Standing Items.

8.1 Correspondence. None.

8.2 Planning.

8.2.1 Debbi McCall clearly explained the problems/consequences of all Midlothian Councillors being members of the planning committee.

These are that a Councillor cannot discuss any planning application with one party (e.g an objector) without discussing it with the other (e.g the applicant), and cannot express an opinion.

8.2.2 Netherton. Debbi told the meeting that she had called in the application.

8.2.3 Wellington.

It was reported that the Wellington Action Group had had a meeting. They seemed very organised and had appointed a planning consultant.

8.2.4 Midlothian Structure Plan.

The Report by the Reporter had been obtained and circulated.

Ian Q commented that the report was disappointing in that it seemed to be a clerical listing of objections then a more or less complete acceptance of the proposal put by Midlothian Council. There has been no evidence of any local consultation or any reference to site visits.

It would be interesting to have the opportunity to have a debate with the Reporter but that will not happen.

8.3 HCC Funds.

Graeme reported that the current balance is £915.09p. There is rent of £150 to be paid.

Graeme reported that the expected Midlothian contribution of £380 had not yet been received.

9. AGM

Preparations have been made.

The guest speaker will be PC Rona Duncan on community resilience.

Ian Q will be away until 21 June but Bruce has agreed to prepare the Agenda and provide copies of the Minutes of the last AGM.

10. AOCB

Ian Q and Ian K asked whether it might be possible for HCC to make a small contribution to the cost of providing Howgate Connect, which is currently fully funded by HVHA, and to the initial start up costs of stationary etc for the Howgate Community Development Trust.

It was agreed to hold this over until more details are known.

11. Date of next meeting.

AGM 26 June 7.30 pm.