

## Giffordtown & District Community Council

### **DRAFT - Minutes of Annual General Meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021**

- 1. Chairs Welcome:** Thanks to all for coming to this, the first meeting in person for nearly two years.
- 2. Present:** N.Brooks (Chair/Secretary), M.Sanders (Vice Chair/Treasurer), A.Emler, J.Kennett, J.Wightman, D.Ellison. Cllr Heer and Cllr Lothian. Two members of the public.
- 3. Apologies:** A.Christie.
- 4. Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020 were approved.
- 5. Chairs Report:**  
Thank you to all members of the Community Council (CC), Councillors Heer and Lothian and all locals from the four communities for a very successful year in challenging circumstances.

I took over as Chair at the AGM from Monique Sanders who was acting in a caretaking role after Jane Hutchinson resigned. Thank you to Monique for her steady stewardship of this role and for continuing in the dual roles of Treasurer and Vice Chair. It is with regret that Wayne Munro resigned from the CC in August due to work commitments. His quiet, confident, and assured manner will be missed at the meetings. The vacancy created was filled by Andrew Christie who had been co-opted on to the CC as Lead for the Paths Working Group. We look forward to working more closely with Andrew in the future. In October, we were also saddened to hear that Sandy Brydon announced his resignation for family and business commitment reasons. Sandy has served the community faithfully and well for many years. His contributions during the meetings and local knowledge were always highly valued. We wish Wayne and Sandy all the best for the future. John Sanders is already on the Quarry Liaison Committee and agreed to be co-opted onto the Community Council as the representative for the IBA Liaison Committee. We thank John for representing the views of the communities at both committees.

We will be seeking a replacement for Sandy, ideally from Edentown to ensure representation from that community. Watch out for posters advertising the role.

Covid meant that we continued our meetings via Zoom. This presented some challenges which we managed to largely overcome. Working within Scottish Government guidelines, we will continue to meet and represent our communities as openly and fairly as possible. The CC would like to emphasise that locals are most welcome to come to any of the meetings and also to participate in the decision-making process. Covid has meant that most of the usual community events have been cancelled, or curtailed. It is only in the more recent past that some events have managed to restart. With this in mind, it represents an opportunity to re-establish the links between the four communities of Giffordtown, Kinloch, Edentown and Charlottetown and especially to welcome and embrace the new families that have recently moved into the area.

We have seen some big changes in the local roads this year. The 'Kilwhiss Strip' was finally resurfaced for most of its length, which has been a great improvement over the various patching that had gone on for some years beforehand. The pavement from Kinloch Road end towards the zoo was also completely refurbished, leading to much improved access for all users. Various potholes in the surrounding roads have been repaired using the new online reporting system which seems to be proving effective. Our appreciation goes to Fife Roads Department for their efforts this year.

We have seen continual support from our Community Police Liaison Officers, primarily in assisting the speed reduction activities, but also in keeping the community safe. Thankfully, our communities

continue to be one of the safest in Fife with only a very rare occasion requiring contact with the police.

Speeding continues to be a major issue along the B937. A system called 'Telraam' was set up which showed traffic volume was on average 1200 per day and of that, an average of 25% were above the limit. Due to Covid, the Speedwatch team was prevented from mounting any campaigns, although our local CPLO's have increased the number of times they have set up speed cameras and deployment of pop-up BOB. Work continues with the various authorities to investigate ways to reduce this serious problem.

The Paths Working Group has been a little hampered by Covid but a team of volunteers managed to do some maintenance towards keeping the network of paths open and passable for locals to use and enjoy. Thanks to Robert Balfour for stepping in to Chair this group while Andrew was posted abroad to fulfil his army commitments. Quite a few of the local routes have become seriously overgrown and difficult to negotiate with ease and hopefully this coming year will see more community engagement as the role and purpose of the PWG becomes clearer. Significantly, it is expected that the Quarry will soon create the right of way diversion – this will mean the four communities will be connected via a small network of off-road paths all the way through from Birnie Loch, Fife Zoo, Kinloch, Giffordtown, Charlottetown, Heatherhall Woods, Edentown and all the way to Ladybank.

The severe winter last year saw some treacherously icy conditions on local roads and paths. It was heartening to see locals, who were able, pitching in to help neighbours by spreading salt on paths and roads. The CC procured and delivered bags of rock salt, free of charge, to every household in the area to help promote safety. Thanks to John Sanders in particular for his help in the distribution of the salt. It was suggested that a voluntary donation for the bags was given to support the Village Hall, which was essentially closed and had no means of fund raising but still had most of the expenses. The community responded overwhelmingly and over £600 was received. Thank you to all who donated towards this most amazingly generous amount. In addition, the CC was conscious that we are more prepared for future winters and four new grit bins were purchased; located in Kinloch, Charlottetown and Edentown, with locals from those communities involved in the installation and filling of the bins with a mixture of rock salt and grit. The total expenditure was circa £1400.

Funds continue to be healthy and have been put to good use (see grit bins and rock salt above). Additionally, the CC recently approved a donation of circa £1500 towards essential repairs required on the roof of the hall. Further projects will be to support tree and bulb planting in the various communities. A new, high quality, sign has been ordered and received for the park in Giffordtown and will be installed in the coming weeks. Please come along to view it.

A funding application has been submitted to the Community Resilience Fund for £1000 towards a defibrillator to be installed at the Village Hall. It is one of these things that we all pray is never needed but will hopefully provide some form of comfort knowing that the facility is there.

We continue to experience odour issues associated with LMWL site, although the constant campaigning of the CC has seen some benefit, as it has to be acknowledged the smells have been much less this year than in the last three to four years. This has been a considerable improvement to the quality of life for many in the area. Management at the site have been responsive and attribute this to capping having been completed at the 'problem' cell and improved gas extraction on the current cell, although everyone is still encouraged to report any issues to SEPA as the smells have not entirely gone away. The IBA processing plant was granted planning permission despite a massive number of objections from communities throughout the area. Conditions of approval are numerous and include a Liaison Committee to monitor operations. As mentioned, John Sanders is our representative. It has yet to be fully understood what the impact will be in the longer term although the community hope that any impact will be minimised.

Finally, it is with a range of emotions that I say a few words about the passing of John Arbuckle. Deep sadness is one emotion that comes first. For my own part, John was a neighbour of mine, and always had the time of day to spend a few moments 'chewing the fat' about something or other. However, I only knew John for a relatively short time, but there are many in the community who knew him for much longer and will feel his loss much more keenly. The other emotion is one of happy memories for the times he would impart his wealth of knowledge freely and his customary gentle manner. I'm sure there are many who benefited hugely from his wisdom, kindness and friendship. The final one is of gratitude for the years he served the community in his various capacities. His will be a presence that will be sorely missed and without a doubt, fondly remembered.

6. **Treasurer's Report:** Funds are healthy with a balance of £7262.20. Accounts show overpayment received from wind turbine and a cheque issued to reimburse that. Income of £3331.88 is higher than expenditure at £2034.60.
7. **Fife Councillors' Remarks:** Fife Council (FC) services are still under pressure and despite some semblance of returning to normal as Covid is brought under control, the Council is still not operating fully at the moment. FC are embracing the changes that working from home has seen and are reviewing office space required – which may mean an entire office block is no longer required, thereby a significant saving. Covid restrictions has actually resulted in there being more money available than normal, although this is indeed a one off situation and it is to be spent prudently. An example of additional expenditure would be £6 million on road improvements. Other areas could be technology improvement for employees to make the job more efficient. Education expenditure is around £300m a year but will be unaffected by the current cash rich environment.

#### 8. **Chair Closing Remarks**

The committee decided to meet in person once again. Therefore, we all must remain vigilant about becoming complacent around the danger that Covid presents. Although significant progress has been made against the disease, it may be some time before a return to a completely normal way of life is possible. In the meantime, the usual practices of social distancing, face masks and washing of hands and others measures etc., as detailed in the various Scottish Government publications should be followed.

The last two years have meant that our four little hamlets have been forced into a silo-like behaviour as necessitated by following of Covid guidelines and laws. Although some restrictions have been eased recently, we must be conscious that we will have to work harder than normal to regain the cohesive community relations we all enjoyed pre-Covid. Please encourage your friends and neighbours to join in events at the hall, come along to various activities and take part in the rich culture experience and enjoy the community spirit that makes living here one of the best places in Fife. In particular, this message goes out to those newcomers to the hamlets who have not yet had a chance to enjoy all that can be offered.

9. **AOCB:** It was agreed that the CC would review an annual donation to the Village Hall at each AGM. The sum is currently set at £500, but subject to review each year. Having agreed the principle, there was a further vote to make an immediate donation of £500 to start the process.

**Date of next meetings in 2022– all at 1930hrs in the hall unless advised otherwise:** 10<sup>th</sup> Jan, 7<sup>th</sup> Mar, 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 4<sup>th</sup> Jul, 5<sup>th</sup> Sept, 7<sup>st</sup> Nov. (plus AGM at 1900hrs)