

Minutes of the Meeting of Garlieston Community Council

Tuesday 6th December 2016

Attendance

Members present: Jim Carter, Julie Carter, Barbara Holmes, George Houston, Ronnie Huxtable (Vice-Chair in Chair), Carol Lochrie (Secretary), Chris Rose, Roy Walter, Gavin Williams and Leslie Williams

Ex officio: Councillors Alistair Geddes, Jim McColm and Graham Nicol

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Wull Hawkins and Roy McGarva

1. Presentation and discussion on the future of Garlieston Primary School and the Village Hall

Mr Laurin Ross, who is responsible for Estates with Dumfries and Galloway Council, attended the meeting for this item in order to provide members with assistance in their consideration of this topic of concern.

He explained that, in the current financial climate, the Council was looking for savings “across the board”, and this meant looking carefully at schools with low utilisation, such as Garlieston School. However, he emphasised that the primary question was “what strategies can be put in place to enable the school to thrive?” Although the use of the school premises by the community was most welcome, the key factor in the sustainability of the school has to be pupil numbers.

He argued that central issue was, in fact, educational rather than financial. (He suggested that since staffing represented the biggest single cost, the financial issue was something of a “red herring”.) So, for instance, if, at Garlieston School the large central space currently designated as “teaching space” - for which it is ill-suited - were re-designated, the utilisation would take the School above the 50% threshold. However, this would not affect the fact that currently one teacher was having to manage the delivery of the curriculum across the whole age-range of the School, which inevitably raised concerns about quality.

He suggested that far more important was the number of pupils in the School’s catchment who went to schools elsewhere: there are currently fourteen pupils from the village attending Garlieston School, while nine eligible Garlieston children go to schools in Wigtown, Whithorn and Kirkinner. No children in the catchment areas of other schools attend Garlieston School. No research had been carried out on why parental choice is exercised as it is.

Councillors and Community Council members suggested that another important consideration was the impact of housing policy and the housing market generally on the makeup of the village’s resident population. Cited here particularly was the housing allocation policy of DGHP.

It was decided to try to establish a working group comprising representatives of Education, Planning, DGHP, Garlieston School and the Community Council.

The Secretary agreed to try to identify and contact possible representatives and Alistair Geddes offered to help supply the names of potential contacts.

It was understood that support for the School necessarily had implications for support for the Village Hall.

Mr Ross was thanked for his valuable contribution to the meeting.

(Action: AG & CL)

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 1st November, 2016

These were accepted as a true and correct record of the proceedings of the meeting.

Proposer: Julie Carter Seconder: George Houston

3. Matters arising not covered on the remaining agenda

a) Carol Lochrie had been given the name and contact number to contact the Community Payback team. Julie Carter agreed to provide her with the list of tasks. Carol agreed to complete the relevant forms

(Action: JC, CL)

b) Robert Cowie is to provide a site visit on either the 13th or 16th December at 1100. Volunteers were requested.

(Action: JC, GH, RH, WH, & RMcG)

c) It was reported that the Christmas tree had been ordered, delivered, erected and decorated. Thanks were expressed to Jim Carter, Julie Carter, Billy Gorman, Jonathan Lochrie, Michael McCreath and Roy Walter for their help with this.

d) It was reported that Jonathan Lochrie had kindly volunteered to operate one of the two salt spreaders.

e) Roy Walter reported that he had still had no success in contacting Simon Fieldhouse. It was agreed that he would try once more before considering how to escalate this matter.

(Action: RW)

f) Roy Walter reported that he had still had no response from Scottish Water. It was agreed that he would try to contact them again.

(Action: RW)

g) it was agreed that the Secretary would write to Alistair Sinclair on behalf of GCC expressing support for the provision of a car park at Barrhill Station.

(Action: CL)

h) it was agreed that the Secretary would write to Nick Walker expressing support for the Federation's submission on local bus service provision and (at least) the maintenance of the status quo.

(Action: CL)

4. Correspondence

There were no issues other than those covered elsewhere on the agenda.

5. Police Business

There were no police officers present at the meeting.

6. Public Forum

No issues were raised.

7. Winter Resilience Group

There was nothing to report.

8. Communities and EnterprisingDG

There were no issues additional to those minuted above.

9. Planning

There was nothing to report.

10. Harbour Site

Alistair Geddes updated the meeting on Dumfries and Galloway Council's approach to the dispute with the contractor.

11. Coastal Protection

No further issues were reported.

12. Councillors' Business

Alistair Geddes reported the sad death of Colin Forbes who, it was agreed, was a good friend of Garlieston.

13. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported no change.

Roy Walter was reminded that he had agreed at the October meeting to email members with a copy of the finalised and signed off accounts, and that this had not yet been done.

(Action: RW)

14. Any other business

a) It was reported that the Hall Keeper has given notice of their intention to resign in January. An attempt will be made to fill the position through advertising but, in the meantime, it was agreed to seek a volunteer.

b) Chris Rose requested that the use of the boat park be put on the agenda for the January meeting.

(Action: CL)

15. Date and time of next meeting

Since the first Tuesday in January (3rd) will be a public holiday, it was decided that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 10th January. This will be at 7.15 p.m. in the Temperance Hall.