

Helensburgh Community Council



"Helensburgh – Be Better : Be Excellent"

Minutes of a Meeting of the Helensburgh Community Council Thursday 26th March 2009

Present: Sonja Aitken, Karen Brabender, Ian Fraser, Marion Gillies, James Gorie, Catriona Malan, Alastair Macbeth, Findlay McQuarrie, Nigel Millar, Jim Milligan, Stewart Noble, David Sinclair and Richard Trail.

Councillors: Vivien Dance and Al Reay.

Helensburgh Advertiser: Fiona Howard.

Apologies: Councillor Ellen Morton, Councillor Andrew Nisbet, Ronnie Finnegan, Maggie Sheen, Kathleen Siddle and Gordon Tran

Chair: Nigel Millar.

Topic	Minute	Decision / Action
1. Welcome and Recognition	The Chair welcomed those present. He wished Compton McGill well in his new business venture near Kilmarnock. The HCC would like to thank him for showing commitment to the HCC and for making it much more responsive to the needs of local business, particularly in the present tough economic climate.	
2. Public Session	There were no members of the public present.	
3. Vale of Leven Hospital	Councillor Vivien Dance, in her capacity as a Co-Chairman of Hospitalwatch (a campaign group for the promotion of the Vale of Leven Hospital) spoke to the meeting and subsequently answered a number of questions. A number of points were made : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Vision document for the hospital had been issued and a series of 19 consultation meetings with the public had been held. There was minimal public reaction. The effort put in to the public consultation cannot be criticised. The Hospital Board did not listen to the public.• There will be an additional 18,000 patient episodes (including 4,000 relating to dentistry) dealt with at	

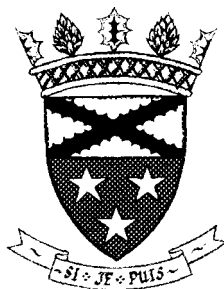
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Topic	Minute	Decision / Action
	<p>the site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By and large admission to the hospital will be via a GP referral rather than via NHS24 or 999. • Christie Ward is to be transferred to Gartnavel. • After hours care will be based on a GP model, but will be consultant led during office hours, though the precise model proposed is not clear as yet. • The Board briefly considered the North of River option (ie an option not involving people from the north side of the river travelling to the south side), but have discounted it as being not financially viable and would not fit the acute services strategy based on the Southern General and the Royal. • The Board has submitted its recommendations to the Cabinet Secretary Nicola Sturgeon who will make the decision. • An effective A&E department needs a catchment area of at least 300,000 people. <p>The Chair thanked Vivien for her presentation and the HCC expressed its appreciation in the usual way</p>	
<p>4. Minutes of Previous Meeting</p>	<p>The minutes of 26th February were considered. The following adjustments were considered necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Item 4 the missing name should be Bill Freeland. • In Item 9b the first sentence should be made into two separate ones – <i>Nigel Miller explained the way the Planning Group operated. He outlined the internal problems surrounding the handling of the Lomond School retrospective planning application which had now been decided upon by the Area Committee</i> <p>Proposed for approval Marion Gillies; seconded Richard Trail.</p>	<p>The Minutes of 26th February 2009 were approved with the adjustments noted.</p>
<p>5. Matters Arising</p>	<p>5.1 Housing Shortage The opportunity has arisen to invite Graham McCormack, a future political candidate, to a future meeting to speak on the housing shortage in the Helensburgh area.</p> <p>5.2 Operation of Planning Group The desirability of the Planning Group's operating in a consistent manner was raised. A copy of their proposed Standing Orders is attached as Appendix I.</p>	<p>It was agreed to invite Graham McCormack to speak to the April meeting and for the Statutory Plans Group to report to the same meeting.</p>
<p>6. Local Issues</p>	<p>6.1 Councillors' Surgery Times Following a request that a Councillor's surgery times be display on the Community Council notice board, there was a discussion about this.</p>	<p>It was agreed to display notices giving details of Councillors' surgeries.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that this information is already prepared by Argyll and Bute Council and published in the local press from time to time. • It was felt that the Community Council should not be involved in preparing material, but could display it if requested by individual Councillors. 	
	<p>6.2 Dog Dirt It is felt that there is a lack of facilities for disposal of dog dirt in parts of the town. It is understood that such facilities, when they are provided, are done so in locations readily accessible to the cleansing lorries.</p>	<p>It was agreed that A+BC should be asked to provide more such facilities.</p>
	<p>6.3 Hermitage Academy The negotiations with the developer in connection with the sale of the site continue to be ongoing. In the meanwhile A+BC are expending some £20k per month on providing security cover. The matter of demolition by A+BC will be addressed by A+BC in the not too distant future.</p>	<p>The situation was noted.</p>
	<p>6.4 Antisocial behaviour It was reported that groups of youngsters are tending to congregate around Havelock Street. The Police and Community Wardens have become involved</p>	<p>It was agreed to invite a representative of the Community Wardens to come to a future meeting of the Community Council.</p>
	<p>6.5 Hospital Bus Service It was reported the article in the Helensburgh Advertiser was slightly misleading in that it implied that the new timetable was already in operation. In fact it has still to be ratified by NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde.</p>	<p>It was agreed that the HCC would be liaising with NHS to ensure maximum publicity for the launch of the new service.</p>
	<p>6.6 West King Street Resurfacing It was reported that the patching work currently being carried out in West King Street is preliminary to the general resurfacing of the whole road to be carried out shortly.</p>	
	<p>6.7 Footways The attention of the meeting was drawn to the number of places in town which do not have proper footways. Councillor Reay explained that on occasions money becomes available which may be used for the provision of public footways, but that Luss Estates were unwilling to co-operate in their provision, so little can be done about it. A+BC do periodically issue notices to householders to trim back vegetation overhanging footways.</p>	<p>The position was noted.</p>
	<p>6.8 Changes in Planning It was reported that changes will take place in August to the Planning regulations. A+BC (hopefully) will be providing training to Community Councillors in two locations (north and south). One will be in Inveraray in May or June.</p>	

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6.9 National Spring Clean	It was noted that there will be a national spring clean to which community councils will be invite to participate.	It was agreed to consider how Helensburgh might become involved.
6.10 Support for local businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Helensburgh Partnership is approaching the end of its life. What will take its place? • It was reported that lots of towns have initiatives to deal with the negative effects of empty shops, eg their use for visual displays and exhibitions by local Art clubs. • The question was raised as to what the business community is doing to fight the recession. A more pro-active approach may be needed. There is a lack of promotion of the town. It is said that drivers of tour buses are given incentives to visit particular places, but not so in Helensburgh. • Parking is said to be an issue. In 2002, when there was the debate about the supermarket at the pier head, there was said to be a shortage of 25% in the number of parking spaces available; now it is said that there is a surplus of 20%. 	It was agreed that the HCC should take this up with the Chamber of Commerce.
6.11 Twinning	It was reported that funding is available up to €20,000 for legal entities. Ian Fraser has the relevant forms.	It was agreed that a proposal involving Kosør in Denmark should be worked up.
7. Planning	Catriona Malan reported on the activities of the Planning Group. See Appendix II.	The report was noted .
8. Helensburgh Design Statement	<p>The Chair reported that the draft of the Helensburgh Design Statement has been nearly prepared. It will be presented to the next meeting of the Community Council. A good many of the photographs which it contains are the excellent work of local photographer Jim Shimmings.</p> <p>The question of a Landscape Statement to complement the Design Statement was raised. This should be based on the European Landscape Directive.</p> <p>NB The Design Statement relates primarily to buildings in the area while the parallel Landscape Statement being prepared by the Helensburgh Study Group deals with the landscape context in which buildings are located.</p>	It was agreed that a draft Landscape Statement should be drawn up.
6. Finance	The Treasurer reported that funds currently stand at £809	
9. Any Other Business	None.	
10. Next Meeting	The date of the next meeting will be held on Thursday 30 th April 2009 at 19.00 in the Victoria Halls.	

APPENDIX I
Helensburgh Community Council (HCC)



"Helensburgh - Be Better Be Excellent"

Helensburgh Community Council Planning Group - Standing Orders

1. The Planning Group, on behalf of HCC, responds to planning applications, subject to the subsequent endorsement and adoption of its decisions and actions by the full HCC.
2. The Planning Group will make a verbal report of its latest actions at each HCC meeting.
3. Group discussion will focus on understanding the requirements of applicants, the views of the objectors, the HCC's Helensburgh Design Statement and the process of the approved development plan.
4. There will be at least 5 Community Councillor members of the Planning Group. Additional members can be co-opted, including from outside the HCC
5. Decisions within the Group will be by a majority vote or by consensus.
6. All letters, regardless of who writes them, will be signed ' (NAME) for Helensburgh Community Council Planning Group'.
7. All formal communication with residents, A&B Council Planning Departments or any similar body will be by letter or e-mail and not by phone call. Records of these communications will be filed for access by Community Councillors and members of the public
8. Copies of all correspondence will be kept in files for access by HCC members if requested.
9. Minutes will be taken at every group meeting. These minutes must be included in the minutes of HCC meetings, which are lodged in Helensburgh Library and will be available to or members of the public

APPENDIX II

Planning Group Report - March 26th 2009

1. Planning applications reviewed in the library 2.03.09

- a) Two planning applications were looked at :

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- **For 2a, Stafford Street** there was a retrospective application for the erection of a wood fence and monoblock driveway. This plan included photographs, which showed the driveway, brick gateposts, and the wooden fence which had replaced a short length of hedge. Initially we decided to :
 - make enquiries about the Council Planning Department's policy on monoblocking in the Conservation Area
 - point out that the fence went against the pattern of boundaries - walls to the north and hedges to the south
 - repeat our opinion on the use of permeable monoblocking

However, on receiving a letter of complaint from a Mr J McMillan of 2, Stafford Street, and after a site visit, we decided to register our objection to the application, mentioning the above points and that the fence was visually unsuitable in its surroundings.

- We have put in an objection to the proposed erection of a dwelling house at **58, James Street**. This is a repeat of the previous objection- even though the plans have been revised and the building slightly lower. We still consider it unsuitable according to the rules of building in the Conservation Area.

2 Planning Group Standing Orders

In the light of a recent request for information by a member of the public on another matter, the Planning Group decided that our standing orders should be written out to be available for scrutiny, should that be needed. The rules of the standing orders have been adhered to so far, but have now been rewritten and updated.

3 E-alert system

Via Gordon Tran, we have received a letter from the Scottish Parliament stating the alarming fact that only 10% of Community Councils in Scotland, and an abysmal 2 out of 52 in A & B, have registered for the Scottish Government's E-alert system. This system updates Community Councils on planning consultations, e.g. the recent proposals to allow householders to build extensions without planning permission.

Nigel has registered the HCC and we shall be in receipt of the necessary information and able have our voice heard in future consultations. Thanks to Gordon for bringing it to our attention.

4 Further applications reviewed in the library on 24.03.09

- There were four applications, in Albert Street, Sinclair Lane, Sutherland Street and Sinclair Street. Each was for the erection of an extension, and we considered no action need be taken. on any one of them.
- We looked at the 105, Sinclair Street site from the street to check on the tree which requires to be removed. This turned out to be neither a particularly large nor attractive tree, but a bushy cypress type.
- In the case of 4, Sutherland Street (a listed building) the application involved demolishing the existing extension and also replacing UVPC windows with traditional wooden ones. The whole alteration seemed a very welcome improvement which would add to the style of the building.

5 Phone call in answer to correspondence

On March 22nd, Catriona Malan phoned Mr McMillan, who had contacted the Planning Group with his objection to the new fencing at 2a Stafford Street. This was to inform him that HCC Planning Group had, indeed, registered its objection and for that he was grateful.

He added that he was perturbed to note that a mature tree had been taken down in order to widen the driveway but had been informed that permission had been given. This was surprising, given that it is within the Conservation Area.