

Minutes of the First Meeting, on Tuesday 5th November 2024, of the

Re-established Craigiebuckler and Seafield Community Council

Present

Ranald Cameron (RC), Cameron Campbell (CC), Pamela Fraser (PF), Margaret Meikle (MM), Craig Melville (CM), William Sell (WS), Duncan Laidlaw (DL).

Apologies

Robert Frost, Keith Watson, Caroline Walker, Karen Reilly, Dana Blyth, Councillor John Cooke.

Police Report

The monthly report was forwarded to all members by WS.

During the previous meeting, it had been decided that WS would respond to the Police about their communications with the Community Council.

The police have not been present at a meeting for some time (estimated to be December 2023). Whilst it's acknowledged that there are time and resource constraints, it would be good to have the police present to provide additional context and respond to any questions. This would not necessarily be every meeting but a commitment to attend some of the hearings would be beneficial.

WS reported that the Police have not been attending the meetings of other Community councils, e.g., Braeside & Mannofield.

There was a general feeling that the police reports were often too general in nature and did not provide enough details about local crime events eg. the very sad fatality which occurred on Seafield Rd in Feb 2024.

CM had suggested at the last meeting that if it was possible, it would be helpful if the Police could identify 'hot spots' in our area eg. the garage in Springfield Rd.

Many ebike related problems in the area. These are used by troublemakers to gain easy access to properties and open ground areas eg. Hazlehead Park and offer a quick escape opportunity before the police can attend.

We need to establish how many ebikes may have been confiscated by the police.

Action: CC to email Ricky Burr

MG informed the CC that we may not get any reports at all in the future due to Police Scotland's recent 'work to rule' initiative, Apparently Community Council attendance and reporting information is not part of their work brief.

Treasurer's Report

CC reported that the bank balance is £1,600.

Malcom Allan's donation of £300 is for the cost of the Festive Season lights in Springfield Road.

Action: WS to email MA to thank them for the donation after confirmation that the donation has been received.

Springfield Church Festival of Light Event on 1st Dec 2024:

It was agreed to donate £110 for the silver band, £100 for magazine and £40 for crafts - a total of £250 towards this event. *(This donation is instead of the previously agreed £300 Xmas church donation.)*

The Jubilee Tree Replacement:

CC reported that Raemoir Garden Centre personnel will deliver the replacement tree when they are in Aberdeen for other scheduled deliveries.

Raemoir Garden Centre will advise the size of the root bowl so that the plot can be prepared in advance.

Members of the CSCC and the Raemoir team will jointly plant the tree and replace the plaque and hyacinth bulbs.

CC continues to liaise with the Raemoir Garden Centre regarding the organisation for planting the replacement tree.

Minutes of Meeting of 1st October

The adoption of the minutes of 1st October was agreed by the returning members.

Correspondence:

All emailed items of correspondence had been forwarded to the CSCC members.

Matters arising from the Meeting of the Former CC on 1st October:

Path Upgrades

Action: WS has been modelling a report on this project based on the 2022 survey's and will provide an update on his return at the November meeting.

WS reported that this is a work in progress.

Issue of Speeding on Springfield Road and Surrounding Areas

Actions: Continue to monitor this and other roads in the area and record specific concerns in the minutes.

Raise with the Police Liaison Officer at the earliest opportunity

Tree Planting and using empty tree pits

Two areas have been identified (see Minutes of May Meeting); Coulter

Bypass/Springfield Meadows and the area opposite Craigiebuckler Church where mature Cypress Trees were felled a couple of years ago. Two separate onsite meetings have been held with Richard Nicholson who agreed to provide plans and budget costs for each area. In the meantime, potential funding options are being reviewed.

Action: MG to liaise with Richard Nicholson with respect to the plans and approximate costs.

Residents' Bus Survey

MM explained that the survey was first conceived due to the changes made in timetables on the 18th of August 2024 (both only valid until 13th Sept) when the number 15 service was reduced from every 30 minutes to every 40 minutes and the ensuing diversions to the 11A service when Craigiebuckler Avenue was closed from 23rd July to mid-September for resurfacing.

The 11A diversions left passengers stranded on several occasions when 3 drivers continued down Queens Rd instead of going back down Springfield Rd after turning at Hazlehead roundabout.

MM has spoken to travellers who have been on the receiving end of the erratic bus transport service for this area, and they are fed-up being ignored and disregarded by FirstBus and ACC when they do complain about missing buses, outdated timetables and poorly documented route changes. Often this results in them missing medical and other important appointments.

One couple expressed their dismay that when the 11A bus didn't turn up for the 2nd day in a row, their attempt to get a taxi failed as the firm refused to pick them up from the bus stop and insisted that they return home. They did and took the car into town to keep their appointment! This clearly defeats ACC's attempt to reduce emissions across the city!

MM confirmed that the survey is intended to obtain information about how often people use the bus service, why they use it and what they would like to see changed. Armed with this collated information and the power of one collective voice, we should have demonstrative proof to present to ACC when 'First Bus' force service changes on us that we do not want.

In the ensuing debate, CC explained that 'First' is a private company and is not obliged to take notice of the results of the survey. Therefore, spending money on a survey is pointless.

MM agreed that FirstBus could ignore any survey results, and that ACC may not be able to persuade them to provide the services that we need in our area but if our bus services continue to deteriorate further, then the next step would be to go to our MSP and the Scottish Government. MM said that we need evidence to

take to them to prove what we need/want! There is money in our budget and approx. £300 she considers would be money well spent.

She informed the meeting that her proposed survey is being deliberately delayed within the community council. Her comments were supported by WS.

The three new members to the CC commented that as they had not seen a copy of the proposed survey, it was difficult for them to make an informed decision and then vote regarding whether to proceed with a survey and so MM agreed to forward the survey and relevant correspondence to bring them up to speed.

Action: MM to RC, PF, DL

Planning Matters

Narrated by WS referring to 241146/DPP

1. “The James Hutton Institute propose to form a car park. The parking area is situated between the Craigiebuckler Scout Hut building (to the north) and the JHI glass house and storage buildings (to the south). Further south is the Bright Horizons First Class 2 Day Nursery and Preschool and Couper’s Pond. The application site has access to Macaulay Drive to the south-west which provides direct connection to Countesswells Road. Beyond the immediate vicinity of the application site and the wider JHI campus, the surrounding area is largely residential, with the nearest residences being the dwellings of 2 – 6 Macaulay Drive. These dwellings are separated from the application site by a lit public footpath, a timber fence and mature tree belt. Interestingly, the Council Roads department have recommended refusal of the planning application as car parking that is not directly related to new developments will not be supported as per Local Development Plan.”

WS commented, “I think we should object to the plans and mention that a planning application for the temporary car park was not submitted, and James Hutton were in breach of planning regulations.”

2. In absentia, Robert Frost, Planning Officer, proposed that we submit a letter of objection concerning the planned carpark since the temporary carpark was constructed without planning permission.

The applicant was given permission to construct an access road linking the campus with Countesswells Road and has now completed that project. The objective being to divert the institute’s traffic from McAulay Drive.

If permission is granted to make the temporary carpark permanent, the result will be an increase of traffic on McAulay Drive, thus defeating the purpose of forming the access road to Countesswells Road.

Action: It was agreed that WS should submit a letter of objection to this planning application. His proposal was seconded by CM

2406/DPP Planning Application to install a Grid Battery Energy Storage Facility (BESS) with associated development at land at Newton of Pitfodels, Aberdeen AB15 7AL.

WS and MM reported that, on 19th September, they had attended a meeting of Aberdeen City Council's Planning Committee where the planning application was refused. The Committee heard an objection made by WS at the request of a Pinewood resident.

He explained that it is anticipated that the Applicant will appeal the decision by ACC to reject the application. MM and WS have been regularly attending meetings with the group of affected residents along with representatives of Braeside/Mannofield CC and Cults, Bieldside and Milltimber CC, where preparations are being made to respond to a likely appeal by the Applicant.

Matters for Discussion with Ward Councillors

MM asked MG for an update on his recent meeting with FirstBus. He informed the CC as follows:

1. Lack of drivers meant some buses were not running as frequently as per timetables. Firstbus have been actively recruiting more drivers to improve this problem.
2. Lack of supply for Hydrogen buses. ACC depot at Kittybrewster is only local supply.
3. Timetable planning for 11A & 15 routes is underway and these new staggered timings should improve the chance for residents to catch an alternative bus if they have just missed either the 11A or 15 services.
4. GTFS (General Transit Feed Specification)– offers a live system update of when buses are due. CM stated that too often a bus is shown on the system, but it does not turn up!
5. There is a new late-night service being offered by ACC and FirstBus from the city centre to key destinations across the city and into Aberdeenshire on weekends between Saturday 16 November 2024 to Sunday 5 January 2025. All services will operate on Friday night/Saturday morning and Saturday night/Sunday morning only. All services are free during this time.

Any Other Competent Business

We were awarded 2,000 crocus bulbs and 500 mixed bulbs by ACC. Now stored by WS.

MM asked MG if he had had a response from Hazlehead Academy re: school project to assist with planting. MG said no, but he would chase them up,

Members were asked to give an indication to WS re when they may be available

to help plant bulbs and offer any further ideas for planting areas.

Areas for planting already suggested:

- Culter bypass
- Woodburn Gardens
- Woodburn Place
- Kinaldie Crescent

WS thanked all present for their attendance and declared the meeting closed.

Date of Next Meeting.

Tuesday 3rd December at 7.00 pm in the Douglas Lounge, Springfield Church.