

WATERSIDE COMMUNITY COUNCIL
Minutes of Zoom meeting held on Tuesday 13 April 2021

Present: (Chair) J. Herriot, (Secretary) J. Whyte, (Communications.) C. Lilly
Treasurer (K. Chesney-Bathie), M. Todd, I. Bowman.

Also Present: Cllrs. S. MacDonald, J. Jamieson;

D. McFadden, D. Carmichael, J. Carmichael, C. Notman, L. Casey, B. Sewell, D. Malcolm, T. Smith.

Apologies: E. Carlin, Cllr. Murray, Vice-Chair, S. Wilson, D. Paterson, C. Willson.

1. Meeting began 7.35pm. Chair welcomed everyone. Good to see more people present.
2. **A minute's silence** was observed in honour of Bill Lapping, who died on Friday 2 April. His well-attended funeral took place on Monday 11 April. Rev. Mark Johnstone gave a eulogy of Bill's work for the village, WCC (of which he was chair for many years) and the Tenants and Residents Assoc. among other things. He was very well thought of everywhere and will be missed by all who knew him. Our sympathies go out to his family and friends.
3. **Minutes of previous meeting** were read. Proposer: C. Lilly; seconder: K. Chesney-Bathie.
4. **Abandoned car in Alexander Place** has now been removed.
5. **'Litter-free village' signs:** M. Todd had contacted Keep Scotland Beautiful about these and had been advised to talk to the council. **Action:** pass draft poster to Cllr. MacDonald, so the council can help (and mention penalty).
6. **Litter and litter picks:** Both WCC and Luggiewatch have recently held litter picks. Over 30 volunteers at one. However, a girl was seen throwing a tyre from assembled rubbish back into the Luggie after one. She was reprimanded and the tyre retrieved. Thanks to Karen Chesney-Bathie for organizing WCC's litter pick. It was suggested that WCC and LW should liaise over arrangements for future litter picks, perhaps doing it alternately. Both groups are doing a wonderful job (obvious to the eye). The road sweeper had also been round.
7. **Flowers** had been delivered to Lisa Giffin and Janice Whyte (much appreciated, and acknowledged).
8. **Easter:** Both the bunny egg drop by the Events Team and Archie's egg event were much appreciated too.
9. **Well-being concern:** Social services and family have this in hand.
10. **Flooding from field** via lane onto Bankhead Road and causing damage to property (on the agenda since February) is being investigated by the council, which will work with land owner. Drainage may be needed. Water board has been contacted. Drains on highways should be drained and gullies cleaned frequently. This might help. Cllr. MacDonald will get update.
11. **The mess left** at Moss Road and the school path was to be fixed during the growing season, but nothing has been done to date.
12. **Trails and Tales (T&T):** E. Thompson of EDLC had contacted D. McFadden about a meeting and the possibility of putting up more QR code-linked information about local history. The Flint Mill and Corn Mill already have one. Need to review what else is there already and add to it. The T&T project is due for completion in 12 months.
13. **Path on Burnside** is becoming dangerous as the banking is cracking badly. Cllr. MacD. has put this on his list for inspection.
14. **Path at stepping stones** is also further deteriorating and in need of urgent repair. Cllr. MacDonald is pursuing this too. To our knowledge the land owner/tenant is happy to move fence back as previously.
15. **Right of way:** Email received about the blocking off by a householder of the original path from Calfmuir Rd to the Spider Bridge. Does the path through the Woodilee estate to the

same point mean the householder is within rights to block it off, or has the complainer got a case? This had previously been raised with councillors (not on our ward), but nothing had happened. Cllr. MacDonald, who had only been made aware of this today, will investigate.

16. **CRT has kindly donated sunflower seeds.** D. McFadden had been sent packets to distribute, and these had been advertised on our Facebook page, with Lisa Giffen kindly letting Archie's be used as a collection point. Lisa Casey had given some to young people.
17. **Predetermination hearing (PDH) of 30 March 2021:** J. Herriot said how proud she was on seeing Waterside's presentations. She had worked with lots of community groups but never seen one come together like this. Everyone representing Waterside should be very proud of themselves for their presentations, and for their efforts from the onset. On behalf of WCC she thanked all those taking part or involved.

Points made by those present:

- i) This isn't over yet. There should be a protest. Also, look into judicial review possibilities.
- ii) Only the parents and staff were consulted before councillors voted (20 March 2018) on a then unstoppable proposal. Waterside was shockingly told nothing until too late. A resident overheard conversation at the library in Nov. 2017 about the school proposal, but was subsequently reassured by a councillor that this had to be wrong. This was NOT democracy. There should have been informal consultations on at least three sites beforehand. This would have informed discussions.
- iii) Moratorium not explained to councillors before their vote (not even mentioned under the 'Implications' heading on documents relating to the proposal). Only if they had looked for Education Act 2010 guidance referred to in the long reports might they have found it. However, they had hundreds of pages of documentation to read over a 5-day period. No time to follow up every possible reference.
- iv) At the planning meeting, councillors were not allowed a slot to speak on our behalf or make representatives. Points of order were used to keep them in line (though only when it suited the administration – see x below).
- v) The school was originally planned as a single-storey building. Brownfield Auchinairn was rejected because it couldn't accommodate that, and two storeys would have 'an educational impact'. When the proposal changed to a two-storey building because Waterside couldn't accommodate a single-storey building either, Auchinairn should have been looked at again instead of proceeding with green belt, open space Waterside.
- vi) Auchinairn should never have been sold to private developers before the planning board had met to discuss Waterside. Labour had put in an amendment to retain it, but the EDC administration threw it out. Selling it off was a cynical move on the part of the council.
- vii) At the planning meeting Cllr. MacD had not been able to get a seconder for an amendment on the design. He said that if someone had seconded him, there would have been an opportunity for debate and for our councillors to represent us better. Without that, because of the standing orders, they could only ask questions. Cllr. J. Jamieson had asked about the cost, which had risen by £10m (from £23.5m to £33.5m). Cllr. MacDonald had asked whether Auchinairn had been reviewed when it was found that Waterside had no room for a single-storey building either. He was not given a satisfactory answer. J. Herriot suggested that Cllrs. MacDonald and Jamieson could have worked together without breaking prior non-discussion rule. It was felt that council officials had managed the situation to close down discussion. All the way along, decisions had narrowed the path ahead so there was no room for manoeuvre.
- viii) I. Bowman had been shocked that at the council budget meeting of 18 February 2021 no questions had been asked about the £10m predicted rise in costs.

- ix) One councillor had made political points at the planning board meeting; this should have been stopped because it was supposed to be a non-political arena. One rule for those in the administration (cf. Cllr Moody's victory speech at the end); another for the others.
- x) The behaviour of some councillors at the hearing was unacceptable, with Cllr. Moody even getting up and leaving during the WCC summary. One councillor was clearly more interested in his appearance (tying and retying his tie); others were sniggering. It was quite obvious that Waterside was of no concern to some of them. This was no surprise: when community representatives went to the council chamber for the post-consultation vote by councillors (15 November 2018) following a protest outside, they were laughed at by some councillors (and had no opportunity to speak).
- xi) Even the location of the statutory consultations (at the schools) had been designed to make it hard for residents to put our side. It was made to look as if we were anti-school rather than anti-location (as in losing our one and only park). We encountered much hostility when we tried to put our points of view.
- xii) D. Malcolm had made significant traffic points at the PDH which led to queries at that and at the subsequent planning board meeting. However, the word of a council official was accepted despite its being very apparent that he didn't know what he was talking about. D. Malcolm's figures came from the council's own traffic report (PL46_TRANSPORT_ASSESSMENT_PART_3_OF_3-556019 Page 17 Figure 1.9).
- xiii) J. Carmichael suggested that all we can do now is try to achieve an intervention at parliamentary level.
- xiv) Clearly we had been stymied by the school closure and merger being viewed as inseparably tied to the location of the replacement school and by EDC's interpretation that a change in this location would trigger a five-year moratorium. [The Scottish Government disagrees with this interpretation – see ministerial response of 9 January 2019]. It was a stitch-up by EDC.
- xv) D. McFadden commented that this story must be told. The timeline of events would show what an unfair, undemocratic process EDC had followed. Government needs to be made aware of this bullying of Waterside and of the whole Waterside experience.
- xvi) It was commented that there will be no green space left soon. Our lovely village will be swallowed up in urban sprawl despite local development plan and government commitments that should protect our green space, identity and so on. At a meeting with deputy chief executive officer Thomas Glen, education officer Jacqui MacDonald, Stuart McDonald MP and Rona Mackay MSP (1 July 2019), J. Carmichael had suggested that if there were some commitment from the council to preserve at least one piece of open ground, maybe we would be having a different conversation. Thomas Glen dismissively told him that he didn't believe him. Yet another case of EDC not being interested in listening.
- xvii) The current school plans are nothing like the original specifications. The geography requirements have been fiddled. Reports backed up some of the site problems we pointed out, but these have been ignored. All smoke and mirrors. Waterside has been sacrificed so EDC could sell Auchinairn for £1m. Democracy is non-existent. The staff and parents will inevitably be disappointed once the school is built here if it is. The children deserve better. They will be surrounded by buildings as construction here will open up the adjoining fields to predatory developers (EDC's reports acknowledge this), so there won't be any of the green space they were led to expect. This site has clearly been chosen so EDC can maximize house building elsewhere. Anywhere with any community

space should be very worried by what has been done to Waterside by East Dunbartonshire Council.

- xviii) C. Notman suggested the need for media coverage was imperative. All objections would have to be forwarded by EDC to Scottish Government.
- xix) **Actions:** **1)** Request copy of transcripts of predetermination hearing, planning meeting and budget meeting under FOI. Code of conduct was likely broken. Professionals in other contexts would be reprimanded if they behaved in the way some of EDC's councillors behaved. [Done but FOI request unsuccessful as transcripts/recording not made/kept, though we will receive a summary in due course.] **2)** Speak to lawyers. CAB may provide details of pro bono ones. **3)** Request verbatim copy of what is sent to Scottish Government [done]. **4)** Find out key dates. **5)** Write to MSPs (including regional ones). **6)** Get article into press (national and local). J. Carmichael will put together an article (Day that Democracy Died.) **7.** C. Notman will look into environmental trust offering free legal advice to those protecting green belt.
- xx) Action Group to split into separate strands: 1) to continue fight; 2) to ensure council delivers on promises if this goes ahead. More volunteers may be required.
- xxi) Crowdfunding could help with legal expenses.
- 16) **Horse's field buyout:** A suggestion was made that WCC look into this because of the greater danger of development now. J. Herriot has some relevant documentation.
- 17) **New youth risky behaviour:** youngsters are stealing grey bins, taking them up to the pit/bin, setting fire to them and inhaling the fumes – highly toxic and could cause respiratory problems/death. D. McFadden had had an encounter with a group stealing one. Where possible bins would be safer out of sight. Cllr. MacDonald will raise with Education.
- 18) **AOB/Correspondence:** There was no correspondence this meeting and no further relevant business, so the meeting closed at 9.25pm. Chair thanked all who had Zoomed in.
- 19) **Date of next meeting:** 11 May.