

**MINUTE**

**of**

**NEWTON MEARNS SOUTH, BUSBY CLARKSTON AND EAGLESHAM AREA FORUM**

**Minute of Meeting held at 7.00pm in Williamwood High School on 4 March 2014**

**Present:**

Councillor Barbara Grant  
Councillor Alan Lafferty  
Councillor Ian McAlpine

Councillor Stewart Miller  
Councillor Jim Swift

Inspector Alan Dickson (Police Scotland); Bill Duguid, (Eaglesham and Waterfoot Community Council); George McLachlan (Busby Community Council); John Seenan (East Renfrewshire Neighbourhood Watch Association); and Irene Yona (Newton Mearns Community Council).

Mr McLachlan in the Chair

**Attending:**

Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager.

**Apologies:**

Provost Alastair Carmichael; and Liz Holms (East Renfrewshire CHCP).

**MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

1. The forum considered the Minute of the meeting of 26 November 2013.

Referring to the Minute, and to proposals that Mrs Yona raise with Newton Mearns Community Council the possibility of the community council making a contribution to the project to install fencing at Broomburn Park, Councillor McAlpine enquired if any contribution was to be made.

In reply, Mrs Yona confirmed that the matter had been raised with the community council but that the view had been taken that as the park was Council-owned the Council should fund improvements. In view of this the community council had decided not to make a contribution to the project.

Councillor McAlpine having expressed disappointment at the community council's decision, the forum approved the Minute.

**PROJECT MONITORING AND PROPOSALS 2013/14**

3. The forum considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive giving details of the expenditure and projects associated with the allocated General Services budget for 2013/14.

Referring to the project to replace mounts for Eaglesham Heritage Trail information panels with stone cairns, Mr Duguid clarified that the match funding for the project had been provided by the Eaglesham Development Trust and not the community council as indicated.

The forum noted the report and the additional information.

## **FORUM BUDGET 2014/15**

4. The forum considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, giving details of the general services budget allocation for 2014/15.

It was noted that the Council was required to make significant savings across all departments, and that as part of the agreed savings the funding available to area forums had been reduced, with the funding available for 2014/15 being £9,280.

Councillor Grant referred to the reducing levels of funding being provided to area forums, which in turn affected the forums' abilities to undertake local projects and make a positive impact in their areas. She commented on the cost of organising forum meetings both in terms of accommodation and officer time and questioned the merit of the continued operation of the forums. She referred to the former area committee structure which she suggested more accurately reflected local communities, and also to the meeting room in Mearns Library as an example of a worthwhile local project taken forward in the past.

Noting Councillor Grant's comments, Councillor Lafferty explained the background to the introduction by the Council of firstly area committees then area forums. He reminded the forum that its purpose was not simply as a grant distribution body, and that the intention when they were established by the Council was that they would have role in community planning.

Councillor Miller having commented on some overlap between the work of area forums and community councils, Mr Seenan was heard in support of area forums, referring to some of the positive benefits in the Busby area that had come out of the work of the forum.

Councillor McAlpine was heard in support of area forums. Whilst acknowledging that funding for forums was reducing, he suggested there were still opportunities for relatively low cost projects to be taken forward, highlighting that the forum was able to prioritise projects which were never likely to be taken forward by the Council. This was echoed by Mr McLachlan who referred to projects in the Busby area that had been taken forward through the forum which would not have been carried out otherwise.

Councillor Swift having made further comment on the amount of overlap between forums and community councils, and having suggested that there was insufficient funding being made available to forums to justify their continued operation if simply approving projects was their only purpose, Mr Duguid referred to the review of the Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils which the Council was undertaking, and that there was an opportunity for the comments made to be taken into account and reflected on in that review.

The forum noted the report.

## **PROJECT PROPOSALS 2014/15**

5. Under reference to the Minute of the previous meeting (Item 3 refers) when it had been agreed to part-fund proposals to install fencing at Broomburn Park, Newton Mearns, subject to the remaining funding being approved from the 2014/15 budget, the forum considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive relative to the proposals.

The report reminded the forum that the total cost of the project was £10,985, that due to the nature of the project it had to be carried out in its entirety, and that following agreement at the previous meeting, funding of £6,585 was required from the 2014/15 budget to allow the project to proceed.

The forum agreed to fund the balance of the project at a cost of £6,585.

Mrs Yona indicated that one of the project proposers had indicated that she would be prepared to purchase a piece of equipment for the park if the project was approved and she would now contact her to let her know the project was proceeding.

## **POLICE AND FIRE AND RESCUE MATTERS**

6. Mr McLachlan invited Inspector Dickson to give an update on the activities of Police Scotland in the forum's area since the date of the last meeting.

Inspector Dickson began by advising of the new opening hours of the Barrhead and Giffnock Police offices in the course of which he explained that the offices would be staffed by civilian workers allowing more police officers to be out on the streets.

He also intimated that the 3-year Local Police Plan 2014-17 which set the local priorities of Police Scotland in East Renfrewshire had now been completed and would be submitted to the Council for approval towards the end of March 2014.

Thereafter he provided some statistical information both East Renfrewshire-wide and also in terms of the Newton Mearns South (Ward 5) and Busby, Clarkston and Eaglesham (Ward 6) wards.

Of particular note was the fact that calls from the public regarding drunk and disorderly activity had reduced by 47% in Ward 5 and 25% in Ward 6. He also referred to reductions in violent crime and serious assaults.

Inspector Dickson was then heard in response to questions from forum members in the course of which he referred to the levels of collaborative working between the police and other agencies, including the Council, and the need for all organisations to be "working smarter".

The forum noted the report.

## **QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

7. Mr Seenan referred to the "Instant Village" streetscape that had been erected in Busby. He explained that following the recent severe storms many of the panes had been blown down resulting in the area being unsightly, and enquired what steps were being taken to resolve the matter.

Mr Daly undertook to contact Mr McKendry from the Council's Economic Development section to establish what steps were being taken to resolve the matter.

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

8. It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 27 May 2014 at 7pm in Mearns Castle High School.