

**HOWWOOD COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 8 APRIL 2003**

PRESENT

Nick Walker, Linda Smith, Norma David, Millar Leon, Craig Crawford, Gordon Weir, Andrew Wilson, Robert Scarsbrook, Ken Macdonald, Rosee Macdonald, Bill David, Brian Young, Danny McAlister, David Bottomley, Grace Weir.

IN ATTENDANCE

PC Graham Bartley, PC Colette Pryde, Sgt George High, Derek Lawson (Bryant Homes), Andrew Fleming (Barton Willmore), Margie Stewart, Elizabeth McArthur, Norma Walker, Jeanette Fraser, Gisela Foy, Elizabeth von Kleistenfël, Linda McWilliam, David Hanley, Elaine Strang, Mairead Boyle, Chris Wilson, Irene Grierson, Noreen Pollock, and approx. 4 other Howwood residents.

APOLOGIES

Cllr Alastair Nimmo, Christine Scarsbrook, David McKie, Amish Amin, Tom Currie, Evelyn Currie.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

The Minutes of the 11.03.2003 meeting were accepted (prop. Linda Smith, sec. Norma David) with one typographical correction: Dog Warden, Michelle Knox's telephone number should read 0141 840 3106, for confidentially reporting wayward owners.

1. FIELD BETWEEN KILKNOWE & BEITH ROAD COTTAGES:

Andrew Fleming and Derek Lawson indicated that Bryant Homes has an option to buy this field from the current owner, and over the next four or five years they would hope to develop it into an estate of around 35 houses. The Company is keen to evaluate local situations before going ahead with applications, and the field's current green belt status (which the final draft local plan currently proposes to retain) would need to be overturned. Apparently planning permission for housing was granted for the field in the 1970s but this has lapsed. At this stage, no specific information is available about types or styles of houses, but they expect road access to be from Midton Road, and typically they build eight houses to the acre. They are keen to know the views of Howwood residents on possible development and to find out if there are potential planning gains for the village (ie could Bryant Homes assist the village in any other way, as happened with the rebuilt railway station). The Council has to identify land release for building on a five yearly basis and has identified almost none in Howwood currently, so the Company might have some basis to argue for the field to be released, but in general the Council is not in favour of using greenbelt if other areas are available.

Numerous residents expressed concern about development. In particular, Beith Road and Kilnknowe Cottage residents fear their views being disrupted and their privacy being invaded, and Kilnknowe Cottage residents already have significant traffic and parking problems which could worsen with development. There were concerns about the possible impact on the natural environment, and loss of the current recreational use of the field. Howwood has had about 300 new houses in the past five years or so, effectively increasing the village size by half, so no land development in the next five years should be welcomed.

Possible areas of planning gain might include roads, playgrounds and community woodlands; however the Howwood Playground Project is well-advanced and unable to wait until the potential development goes ahead; roads require constant attention and are clearly Council responsibility; Howwood Wildlife and Woodlands does not see immediate opportunity to benefit the local natural environment through housing development. There was a feeling that any development would be primarily commercially driven.

The past mining around Howwood affects the field and large areas still subside from time to time. Locals imagined that this would be a challenge for any development, though apparently survey work suggests not. Obviously the Company will check this further. The CC now waits for further word.

2. POLICE REPORT:

Sergeant George High was introduced. He has responsibility for Community Policing in West Renfrewshire. Figures for March: one motor vehicle theft, one theft by housebreaking. Linda Smith asked about the abandoned car in Semple View Estate; it is a Council responsibility but the Police will look into it. Graham Bartley has been on patrol with the Dog Warden and will do so again. The Midton Road traffic survey was brief but indicated sufficient speeding that the Police will develop an action plan to monitor speeds in the area and target offenders. As spring arrives, people were reminded to take care of garden equipment, sheds, etc. to guard against opportunistic crime.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES:

3.1 *Hall tables*

Ken Macdonald has yet to gather information on availability and costs of small “cafe” style tables for social events in the Hall.

3.2 *Howwood Playground Project*

Mairead Boyle and Elaine Strang reported on the recent HPP AGM: a number of financial applications have been lodged and so far they have about £3000 in hand and £21 900 in agreed grants. Another two large grants are expected in the next month or two.

Kilnknowe Cottage residents have some concerns about the proposed playground however, centring on youth behaviours including noise, vandalism and intimidation; this does occur already but the new playground might bring it nearer the cottages. Traffic and parking issues (already troublesome) may deteriorate with an improved play area nearer to the cottages also. They wonder if the current playground could be made safer and upgraded but the Council cannot fence it robustly because it doubles as equipment access for mowing the playing field, etc. meaning all fences must be removable. Parking may be an issue and HPP is looking at traffic and parking issues, lighting, CCTV cameras and policing as part of the project, but practicality and expense limits what is possible. The second plan is to make the current playground into a teens gathering area with seating and so forth which may attract youths away from the new playground.

The CC agreed to acknowledge the concerns of Kilnknowe residents but noted that apart from parking the issues raised are current issues to which the new playground may or may not contribute. Parking and traffic are significant issues which the playground could well aggravate, but the Council is being lobbied about this already (as per item 5 below). Security may benefit from CCTV and increased policing, and the CC will consider how actively this should be sought.

4. WORKING GROUPS:

4.1 *Planning*

Bill David, Brian Young, Andrew Wilson and Ken Macdonald.
Main Street site. No news.

Bowfield Way decking. No news.

Pamandus. This house in Bowfield Road was sold two months ago and an application is in for two two-storey houses (three storeys at rear) to replace it. There were concerns from neighbours and within the CC about the proposed houses being out of keeping with the surrounding properties, intruding on neighbours' privacy and their size obstructing sunlight. CC agreed to write to the Council objecting to the development.

4.2 *2003 Fête 21.6.03*

David Bottomley, David McKie, Rosee Macdonald and Amish Amin.

Tickets and programmes should be ready for the May CC. The Guides event will not now be Wednesday 18.6. Howwood Cheerleaders and Gleniffer Dog Agility plan to attend the fete as demonstrations. Prices for bunting are still not available.

4.3 *Margaret Fraser Commemoration*

Norma David, Linda Smith and Brian Young.

Bill David agreed to check progress on donations with the School. Howwood Playground Project plans to make a donation as does the Women's Rural. All donations are welcome.

5. ROADS:

CC representatives, Howwood Playground Project, Kilnknowe Cottage residents and Alastair Nimmo met Roads and Housing Dept representatives on 4.4.2003 about Midton Road traffic. It remains unclear what the Council will do about speeding which the Police acknowledge is a problem (as per item 2 above). Traffic calming measures often cause ill feeling with residents but Kilnknowe Cottage residents are keen to see some intervention. Craig Crawford has been advised in the past to report speedsters (and their car registration numbers) to the Police, as this information is recorded and may be acted upon in some cases. Alastair may have more information by the next CC.

Midton Road pavements are causing concern. Hallside Street, New Avenue, etc. are to be resurfaced soon.

6. ENVIRONMENT:

The litter clearing weekend (5-6.4.2003) went well, gathering two skipsful with input from about 24 people including a number of Howwood Guides. The Council's contribution was invaluable. Beyard Services lent a pick-up truck for collecting filled rubbish bags, and the CC is grateful for their support also.

7. WEB SITE AND COMMUNICATION:

No news.

8. MEMBERSHIP:

This item ran out of time due to specific Planning and Roads issues, and was discussed briefly. It will be the main item on the agenda for the May CC (unless any urgent issues arise).

Numerous views were put forward, including: the ruling on attendance by CC members (three consecutive missed meetings without apologies or six meetings in a year whether or not apologies) should be applied uniformly with initial verbal contact and secondly a standard letter (irrespective of vacancies on the CC or people expressing interest in joining) in all cases but each CC member's situation should be judged on merit by the CC; add a minimum voting proportion for such decisions; letter to invite representation regarding poor attendance rather than "final warning" letter; why change current practice since missing six meetings acts against the informed decision to commit to CC participation implicit in standing for the CC; missing six meetings is hard to understand if at all committed to CC since CC members receive minutes each month whether in attendance or not and meetings follow a regular schedule; if CC member unable to attend for a period, he/she should inform CC as soon as realised so that decision can be made before many meetings missed; circumstances may prevent sending apologies; perhaps a sabbatical period would be agreeable in certain cases decided pragmatically on an individual basis.

Views to be aired (once and for all?) at May CC.

Meanwhile, there is still one vacancy on the CC.

9. COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:

Hallside Street houses are due for renovation. Some pedestrian safety attention may be paid to the barrier on Station Road near the station.

10. CORRESPONDENCE (as per list attached to agenda):

The CCs Training schedule involves Planning on 12.4.2003; Andrew Wilson and Ken Macdonald to attend.

12. AOCB:

Nil

NEXT MEETINGS:

TUESDAY 13 MAY 2003, 7.30 pm, Howwood Village Hall

Then the following Tuesday: 10 June.