



Minutes 13th December 2022

1. **Attendees:** J. Sives (Chair), Cllr D. Logue, Cllr V. Smith, S. Campbell, I. Masterton, A. Pinkerton, J. Thomas, K. Rees, I. Watt, S. McKenna (KCDT/Assoc. Member), S Terris (Prospective Co-opted Member).

Apologies: Cllr C. John, Cllr D. Doran-Timson, L. Cullen, N. Gwynne, K. McKeown. A standing apology was noted for V. Garrad due to ongoing illness and his likely inability to attend in the near future.

The meeting was held in person at the Kirknewton Village Hall. No hybrid capability for remote participation via Zoom was requested by KCC members unable to attend in person.

2. **Declaration of interest:** None.

3. **Approval of previous meeting's minutes:** No amendments to the Draft 1.1 November minutes as circulated were noted. IW proposed approval. JT seconded. The Minutes were approved.

4. **Actions from previous meeting:** none.

5. **Councillors' Report: & Questions:**

- 5.1 Cllr DL reported that the bus shelter at Braekirk Gardens has been re-orientated to provide better protection against the prevailing wind.
- 5.2 Cllr DL outlined the current status of the Humbie Holdings water supply. This has hitherto been a private supply, but there is now an agreement with Scottish Water to maintain the supply. Unfortunately Scottish Water has advised that this involves a one-off cost of £4000 to each connected premises. There is naturally some disquiet at this, and discussions with SW remain ongoing.
- 5.3 Cllr DL advised that discussions had taken place on the provision of additional parking at the new Health Centre, when it is built. The developer has undertaken to contribute to the cost. JT asked if this was a 'Section 75' condition. Cllr DL replied that it was not, and the funding was already 'in the bank'. IM asked if the funding was hypothecated for the intended purpose. Cllr DL confirmed it is.
- 5.4 Cllr VS again noted that the majority of the communications she continues to receive from constituents revolve around housing and bus services. On the former, Cllr VS reported that An initiative to use shipping containers as temporary accommodation is under consideration. SMcK commented that such 'containerised housing' is increasingly employed across the nation as a short-term solution to the affordable housing shortfall.

5.5 Cllr VS commented that Kirknewton continues to be badly affected by the unreliability of the Lothian Country Buses X28. JS reported that the latest response received from Lothian Country is as unhelpful as the previous one. This is not acceptable. IM again raised the issue that the X28 not infrequently bypasses the Kirknewton loop to recover time and hence minimise any penalty for late arrival at the route terminus. For older people dependent on the bus service, being dumped a mile and a half from their destination could be a critical issue in inclement weather. JS will escalate the concerns about the service via the Bus Users' Group.

ACTION: – JS to raise the issue with the Bus Users' Group.

5.6 SMcK stated that there is anecdotal evidence of several employers systematically declining to offer Kirknewton residents a job interview on the basis that the unreliability of the bus service impacts these candidates' ability to arrive at work on time.

5.7 IW referred to the publication of a Traffic Order advising that double-yellow lines are to be implemented in Whitemoss Road. He noted strongly that the plan as published is ridiculous. After a discussion in which the WLC Councillors were made aware of the depth of feeling, there was unanimous agreement that the plan as published would exacerbate rather than alleviate traffic difficulties at the blind corner, and would increase the safety risks to road users and pedestrians alike. It was decided to create a petition objecting en-mass to the proposal. Individuals are also encouraged to object via the published contact address. It was further noted that given the approaching Christmas shutdown, an urgent response is required. JT undertook to create a survey to capture residents' feedback.

ACTION: – JT to create and circulate a survey.

6. Proposal to Co-Opt Sandra Terris to KCC:

6.1 JS notified KCC members of a vacancy at the November meeting, and invited members to put forward any candidate they considered suitable. He advised that the statutory 14-day notification period has been complied with, and asked if any alternative candidates had come forward. None had done so, therefore JS suggested that Sandra Terris be co-opted to the Community Council, on the basis that she was the highest placed non-elected candidate at the Community Council elections last year. Sandra indicated her willingness to serve. JS formally proposed her co-option. AP seconded. KCC members were asked to vote, which was unanimously in favour of ST's appointment. JS welcomed ST onto KCC.

7. Cost of Living:

7.1 JS reported on continuing efforts to establish a network of 'warm hubs'. Kirknewton Village Hall is now open every Wednesday lunchtime, and as stated at last month's meeting, patronage has increased steadily from zero in week one, to between ten and fifteen regular users. The volunteers are also delivering lunches to residents who are unable to make their way to the hall in the winter conditions. Cllr VS strongly supported the ongoing work, noting its significant benefit to the community. Usage is anticipated to increase once the knock-on effects of Christmas expenditure feeds through into household budgets.

7.2 Cllr DL related that security staff in the Livingston Centre are seeing the same 'known faces' using the Centre itself as a warm space. The staff there are taking it upon themselves to provide tea and coffee to these regulars.



- 7.3** JS tabled the information leaflet prepared by WLC, and referred to in last month's meeting. IM noted that at 32 pages the booklet is dense-packed. JS admitted that it is very comprehensive and some parts may not be relevant to many residents. Moreover, due to a lack of funding from central government, only a limited number of copies have been made available to KCC. However, following the successful evening for members of Kirknewton senior citizens on 9th December, WLC has indicated that if KCC holds a similar event in January WLC is prepared to send along representatives to discuss what help is available for members of the community relating to fuel costs, employment, and other grants etc.
- 7.4** JT returned to the point made above anticipating increased use of warm hubs and other support. He suggested that this would be exacerbated when the Government energy price guarantee ceased in April. IW concurred, noting that there are already incidences of people suffering hardship in the village. One measure that may help ensure that support gets to those who need it is the creation of 'street champions' who would ensure that contact information is kept up to date. This would include updating the list of older residents to be included in the Christmas hamper distribution. JS confirmed that the database, such as it is, is compliant with GDPR (data protection) requirements.
- 8. KCDT Report:**
- 8.1** SMcK reported that KCDT has received some additional funding for cost of living support. IW added that the shop and pharmacy are the hubs through which the best way to distribute this support can be evaluated
- 8.2** SMcK advised that the Scottish Government has agreed to provide additional grant funding for the houses at Camps Junction. This is, however, dependent on the developer holding to the agreed price, and the cut-off for this has actually expired. SMcK remains hopeful that an agreement can be reached allowing work to commence.
- 8.3** SMcK stated that over 240 Christmas hampers will be distributed to older residents in Kirknewton. Whilst the hampers will not be as large as in previous years, they are still expected to be a very welcome boost to the recipients.
- 8.4** SMcK advised that the Green Room is available as a warm hub.
- 8.5** JS reported that the seniors' supper evening featuring a magician in the Village Hall had proved a great success. Over 50 people attended. Going forward, further events are planned for early 2023, including a Burns Supper. Ways to expand and improve social outreach are always sought, and there may be some discussion at a future meeting as anticipated at 7.3 above.
- 8.6** SMcK reported that 220 sets of hats and gloves had been provided for primary school children.
- 8.7** JT reminded the meeting that there is a historical surplus in the bank account which could be legitimately allocated to hardship spending.



9. Village Hall & Pavilion:

- 9.1** JS noted that the Pavilion continues to see use, although activities are constrained by the winter weather.
- 9.2** The replacement of the ceiling tiles in the hall remains to be carried out, as does completing the installation of the Audio-Visual equipment. The LAC (Local Area Committee) released funds last week to commence outside amenity work at the rear of the hall.
- 9.3** Lawrence Dick's support subsidising the football team was acknowledged with grateful thanks.

10. Planning / Travel:

- 10.1** In NG's absence, SMcK raised the issue of the Park and Ride. Having been rejected twice by the Reporter, it is now dead as a proposal, and there is a need to actively influence any future discussions on an alternative. AP wondered if the future of Kirknewton Station was at risk. IM advised that Network Rail has stated publically at the Scottish Annual Rail Conference on 22nd November that there are no plans to close any stations in Scotland.

11. AOB

- 11.1** There was a brief discussion revisiting some of the points noted in the foregoing sections, in particular cost of living issues and the idea of 'street champions'.

12. Next Meeting

The next meeting is on 10th January 2023 at 18.45, in-person at the Village Hall. By prior agreement, access to a hybrid meeting can be arranged

The Chair concluded the meeting with thanks to all who had taken part, and invited those in attendance to stay for a short social period given this was the final meeting before Christmas.