



## Minutes 14th December 2021

1. **Attendees:** J. Sives (Chair), Cllr C. John, S. Campbell, L. Cullen, V. Garrad, I. Masterton, K. McKeown, A. Pinkerton, J. Thomas, I. Watt, S. McKenna (KCDT), H. Hunter-Gordon (ex-Chair).

Apologies: Cllr D. Timpson, Cllr T. Ullathorne, N. Gwynne, K. Rees.

Due to increasing concerns about Covid-19, this meeting was re-arranged to be held online as a 'virtual' meeting in line with WLC guidelines, using Zoom.

JS advised that the order of Agenda items would be adjusted to accommodate ex-officio attendees who had time constraints.

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

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

### 4. **Camilty Wind Farm:**

- 4.1 HHG referred the meeting to his paper previously circulated to KCC. He outlined several aspects of the proposed Wind Farm in a local context

- It has the potential to provide a stream of income
- Whilst up to 20% is available for community capital investment, the scale often precludes local communities from participating.
- However, there is one route which may yield the required funding, viz: the Public Works Loans Board.
- To secure this funding requires WLC 'buy-in', and the paper tabled argues this case, as a first step to opening the door.

HHG asked the meeting to consider the motion:

*The Chairman, in consultation and with the support of Directors of the Community Trust, is invited to write to the Chief Executive of West Lothian Council, formally asking to meet with the Chief Executive to discuss the proposition that WLC would lend sufficient funds to the Community Council to enable its investment in the Camilty windfarm.*

- 4.2 SMck expanded on the background, noting that this represented the last best chance of creating a revenue stream for the community.

- 4.3 IW asked if the proposal was simply to send a letter to WLC to open negotiations. KMck questioned why would KCC not wish to make the approach to WLC. HHG advised that there are risks – if electricity output does not meet expectations, there is a potential for a financial shortfall in repaying the loan. IW asked if there are benefits if we do not invest. SMck advised the meeting of the risks vs benefits.

- 4.4** JT noted that the downsides could, in theory, be significant, but was of the opinion that a letter as proposed should be sent to keep the option on the table. Cllr CJ concurred, suggesting that an approach to the Public Works Loans Board was certainly worth pursuing. AP commented, 'If you don't ask, you don't get'. JT also commented that a survey of his local neighbours indicated overwhelming (80%) opposition to wind turbine schemes.
- 4.5** JS summarised the discussion and called for a vote. AP proposed the sending of a letter as outlined above. KMckK seconded. There were no objections from the floor and the motion was carried.

**ACTION:** – JS to write to WLC to formally request a meeting to pursue PWB funding.

## **5. KCDT Report:**

- 5.1** SMcK advised that the long-awaited consultation exercise report is now published, which provides the stepping-stone to an updated Kirknewton Development Plan.
- 5.2** Funding has been applied for to continue Steph & Debbie's contracts.
- 5.3** £600 has been allocated towards Christmas 'hampers' for the OAPs.
- 5.4** Lottery Heritage funding has been obtained to further the Kirknewton History project.
- 5.5** A proposal for community woodland remains dependent on funding, which is in doubt.
- 5.5** The Camps Junction development for seven affordable, energy neutral houses has now a 50/50 chance of going ahead.
- 5.6** JS emphasised the benefit of the liaison with KCDT. He noted the success in acquiring Town Centre funding as evidence of the benefits of working in partnership and advocated forward planning to continue this process.

## **6. Councillors' Report:**

- 6.1** Cllr CJ reported that KCDT's work in the community had been noted.
- 6.2** Cllr CJ reported on the dissatisfaction with the timescales relating to LAC allocation of the Covid recovery funding. He emphasised this is separate from any other funding, but noted that online public consultation had been compromised by a last-minute change in WLC online scheduling, which he and the other ward councillors deemed unacceptable.
- 6.3** Cllr CJ reported on the P&R application. He noted that recent submissions to WLC seemed to present a conflict of interest – these submissions purporting to be from individuals are apparently from persons connected with the developer. The proposal, as it stands, splits local opinion. Cllr CJ would welcome a definitive opinion from KCC.
- 6.4** Cllr CJ advised that a proposal to create a winter training ground for circus performers at Oakbank is likely to be rejected given the number of objections received. IM noted displeasure that KCC had not been included in the consultation, but other members pointed out that they had been aware.
- 6.5** JS expressed disappointment that the Kirknewton bid for funding from the Covid Recover Fund had not received any consideration. CJ defended the decision, pointing out that Craigshill had lost out in previous rounds and was therefore awarded substantial funding as a 'catch-up'.



## **7. Town Centre Funding & Covid update:**

**7.1** Before reporting on this item, IW noted that the previous item had taken up 45 minutes, almost exclusively devoted to East Calder matters. The Councillors' Report needs to be more focussed on Kirknewton matters to be of relevance to KCC. JS accepted the criticism and agreed to raise it with the WLC Councillors.

**ACTION:** – JS to emphasise to WLC Councillors' that their report to KCC should be Kirknewton focussed.

**7.2** IW reported that the Town Centre Fund work was effectively completed. The defibrillator at the pavilion is due to be installed in the coming week. The work at the Village Hall is awaiting WLC sign-off.

**7.2** IW advised that the demand for soup bags had already outstripped initial expectation. This is being addressed as far as is possible. Also the requests for energy costs support were increasing.

## **8. Building on Active Travel:**

**8.1** IW, in lieu of NG, reported that a meeting with Lord Morton and his son regarding safe cycle paths was very positive. His Lordship is keen to establish viable and sustainable routes whilst preserving the integrity of the farmland by way of appropriate fencing.

**8.2** IW conveyed a big thank-you to AP for the Christmas street decorations. Feedback had been positive, noting the use of local materials without the need for electricity.

**8.3** LC reported that this is the 4<sup>th</sup> iteration of Stirling Developments' P&R proposal. At least three of the 'personal' comments on the public portal purporting to support the proposal have in fact been posted by Stirling Developments' own staff. Meanwhile, the safety issues remain self-evident: the junction and pavements are not to current standards and present a danger to users; misuse of the level crossings is an ongoing issue; vehicle emissions, particularly diesel, remains a concern; and there are unresolved questions regarding the envisaged A71 junction. The environmental impact assessment is now over a decade out of date and there is serious local concern that a revision in the light of up-to-date analysis is not envisaged.

**8.4** JS confirmed that he had contacted Tony Irving at the WLC Planning Dept. TI has agreed, and will confirm in writing that KCC will have until the week commencing 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 to make submissions on this issue. JS assumed this would be acceptable to KCC, and no contrary opinion was expressed. He suggested that a sub-committee of KCC should meet Ray Kirk of Stirling Developments and WLC to consider options prior to the DMC meeting. Whilst progress has been made, there remain concerns.

**8.5** AP concurred that the proposal as it stands is not fit for purpose. Many issues, such as SUDS (drainage) and EV charge points are insufficiently addressed. There was discussion on the future roll-out of EV vehicles and whether the revised application adequately addressed the requirements to support them.

**8.6** KMck reiterated the safety issues, the timetable constraints, and reiterated the need for a pedestrian footbridge, especially given the density of rail traffic.

**8.7** IW expressed the opinion that WLC are looking to 'tick the boxes' to allow the P&R to go ahead. He believes that KCC must, as a statutory body, object to the application as currently proposed.



**8.8** JS commented that Stirling Developments appear to have tried to address concerns to date. Notwithstanding, a further meeting with Tony Irving will be requested. In the meantime NG will be asked to prepare a response for the next DMC meeting, which is anticipated to be in February. JS emphasised the importance of pushing the discussions with Stirling Developments and Network Rail. Much depends on clarification of the details of the proposal. JS sought agreement to create a subgroup comprising LC, IW, NG & JS to formulate a response to the developers. After discussion, the meeting agreed to set up this subgroup. LC commented that it was essential that the views of KCC be made known, since silence would be deemed to be acquiescence. JS expanded further at length on the matter.

## **9. Spaces for People:**

**9.1** After discussion the meeting agreed to recommend retention of the 20mph speed limit in the village. People are encouraged to complete the SfP online survey

**10. Planning:** See foregoing items

## **11. Local Area Committee:**

**11.1** JS explained the changes allowing CC representation at LAC meetings. In the absence of any alternative, JS agreed to continue representing KCC at the LAC meetings.

## **12. Communication:**

**12.1** JS is of the opinion that the Google Groups list should be restricted to KCC members only. There was general agreement, although IM suggested that as a courtesy, the current members should be advised of the change. The meeting did not see the value of this. SC emphasised the benefits of a KCC members-only communication channel. IW noted that the current list is significantly out of date. JT explained the background to the list's creation and *raison-d'être*, and that the question of its update recurs after every Community Council election. After further discussion, the meeting instructed JT as the list owner to update it to include elected Community Councillors, ex-officio members and the previous KCC Chair.

**ACTION:** – JT to revise the Google Groups list as instructed.

**12.2** IW advised that the Kirknewton.info website was under reconstruction. A primary aim is to discourage the use of the KCDT Facebook page as an information portal, since this is open to anyone to post an opinion which contradicts information published by KCDT. In due course KCC minutes would be available as they have been hitherto on the old website.

**12.3** The issue of a dedicated KCC email address was discussed. No decision was made.

**12.4** IM noted IW's intimation of training for the new website, and requested inclusion to allow him to continue to publish KCC minutes online. IW explained that the training may not take place due to increased Covid restrictions, but undertook to ensure IM was instructed in the use of the new website.

**ACTION:** – IW to ensure IM is able to upload KCC minutes.



- 12.5** JS noted that the Joint Forum publishes individual Community Council information, and that KCC could avail itself of that facility.
- 12.6** SC wondered if Stewart McKenna should continue to be included on the Google Groups list. JS advised that SMcK was always invited to KCC meetings in his capacity as KCDT spokesperson. After discussion, it was decided to exclude SMcK from the Google Groups list.
- 13. AOB:** none.
- 13.1** JT reiterated his belief that WLC and other local authorities are less than helpful by discouraging the use of the 'FixMyStreet' app to report roads issues. This is particularly relevant where local authority boundaries make it difficult to determine which authority to report a problem to. JS will raise this issue at the Joint Forum.  
**ACTION:** – JS to raise with the Joint Forum.
- 13.2** KMcK picked up on IW's earlier point and noted that the meeting had been in session for 2½ hours. This is too long. She suggested a time limit for future meetings. JS concurred, but defended at some length the necessity to adequately cover the issues pertinent to the meeting.

#### **14. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 18.45. Provisionally in-person at the Village Hall

The Chair concluded the meeting with thanks and Season's Greetings to all who had taken part.