



Plains Community Council
Meeting held Tuesday 9th June 2015 at 7.30pm
in Plains Community Centre

Present:

Mary Doris (MD), Lilian Geurts (LG), Eileen Grier (EG), Anne Patricia Kane (APK), Annette McGlynn (AMcG), Jim Walker (JW), Elaine Tennent (ET)

Attending:

Residents Jan Stewart, Andy Stewart, John Grant, Cllr Morgan, Cllr. Beveridge, SPT representative, Kenny Hogg, John McNairn (McNairn buses), Calum Aikman (Bus Services Scot.Group).

1. Apologies: Fay Kerr, Stephen Murray (new Community Police Sergeant)

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Proposed: LG Seconded: EG

3. Matters Arising:

Concern raised by chair re poor attendance and lack of apologies for this. Meetings sometimes minimally quorate to proceed. Vice Chair FK has requested that long term absence be noted due to health problems, but she is willing to continue as Vice Chair, if nominated, on her return to meetings.

4. Police Report:

Chair told meeting that she had informed Sgt. Murray, our new Community Policeman, of the Community Council's intention to devote most of the June meeting time to discussion of the local bus services issue, which was not satisfactorily resolved at last meeting. Sgt. Murray intends to delay introducing himself until the next Community Council meeting in September.

5. NLC Report:

Cllr. Morgan provided the meeting with copy of his letter of opposition to NLC planning dept., outlining his, and local residents' opposition to the extension of quarry excavations at Hillend, Caldercruix.

Meeting concurred with this reasoned letter of opposition to this application. Discussion followed with Cllr. Beveridge providing updated information on the resultant noise, dust pollution, roads congestion with HGV transport etc. should this application be granted.

Cllr. Morgan confirmed that he would oppose the planning application at all stages.

Comparison was drawn with other local areas where community councils had succeeded in preventing haulage of anti-environmental material via HGV traffic through villages.

Cllr Morgan also drew attention to the pre-development reports from companies - as a norm these run into a volume or volumes, several hundred pages long and are couched in technical/scientific jargon, which made it impossible for non-specialists, like himself, to make a fully informed response or objection to such plans, and all but impossible for the general public and involved community councils/residents to understand or find the time necessary to plough through them. MD concurred this had been the case with such past reports, with CC members having spent up to a month reading/translating into lay language/summarising these reports before being able to make an informed response.

Cllr. Morgan gave meeting his response to complaints that Gala Day field was wet, with the promise that NLC will provide a 'well turned out park' on the day. He listed many of the facilities for play activities in our

village, including the BMX track.

Invitation to the opening of the widened pathway at Ford Bridge on Monday 15th June, at 10.30am, was extended to all attending and to the wider community. Everyone expressed admiration for the beautiful structure and particular thanks to Mr. David McDove, NLC, for his continued correspondence to us, keeping us informed of progress at regular intervals, and for his commitment to involving local school children at every stage of the development, very often visiting the site in inclement weather. The project has been a wonderful success and a tribute to Sustrans for funding, and to the civil engineering skills involved. Cllr. Morgan gave meeting a progress update of the path work ongoing from Killlearn Crescent to the schools.

He also expressed disappointment at the continuous media correspondence regarding a station for Plains, where the correspondents do not attend relevant Community Council meetings to discuss the issue. There was unanimous agreement on this.

Local Bus Services:

MD opened the discussion by reiterating villagers' ongoing concerns re local bus services:

- a. Non-adherence to timetables with the apparent prime objective of drivers being to tail competitive companies – result was greater time gaps to villagers between the arrival of buses. This was particularly unacceptable during the winter months for elderly/disabled passengers, and young women with children (often in prams).
- b. Rudeness/unhelpfulness of some drivers.
- c. No Monklands Hospital stop leaving elderly people and women with young children to cross an often congested junction section of roads to access Monkscourt Ave where hospital entrance is located. Long term feedback from villagers, with which members concurred, is that local bus companies are profit driven resulting in 'turf' war tactics resulting in inadequate service to the community they are supposed to serve.
- d. Poor evening/weekend SPT subsidised service.

Members unanimously agreed that deregulation had given local bus companies complete autonomy to do as they want, to maximise profits, and had all but negated their responsibility as a 'public' service.

KM explained that deregulation meant that SPT had no control over bus routes or timetables of local bus companies, but they do have Compliance Officers/Inspectors who can spot check that companies are obeying their own recorded rules, and hold them to account if found breaking these rules. He added however that only the Traffic Commissioner has any complete control over 'offending' commercial services and department is reliant On Bus Users Department to lodge complaints but this public facility is dependent on receiving recorded complaints from passengers against bus companies.

CM advised on how to lodge complaints. MD to contact Hazel Dunn for info on complaints' procedure to issue to residents.

CC members felt that putting onus on passengers to rectify inadequate services due to deregulation was wrong, and that any inadequate public service should be monitored and answerable to a controlling regional or national authoritative body. Cllr Morgan advised that Govt had previously been in favour of abandoning deregulation but attitude to such action had weakened in last year or so.

KM further stated that there was no additional funding to improve bus services, nor provide a safer hospital stop for residents. JMcN agreed with Cllr Morgan's suggestion for cross subsidising as a solution to improve services and that SPT had to address the inadequacy of local bus services in communities in accordance with the pronounced level of needs for improved services in certain communities as opposed to others and not impose a 'tablet of stone' rule for all communities. KM remained adamant that this was not feasible given the limited funding available to SPT.

JMcN admitted to poorer service in previous months but every effort had been made to improve on this with considerable success. Suggestion by CA rep that a more staggered timetable to achieve a more even spread of frequency of service throughout the day was welcomed by all attending.

Hospital Stop:

KM stated SPT funding limited and did not allow for this – it was the responsibility of NHS to provide adequate transport to access hospitals.

JMcN advised he was in talks with Arthurs and in liaison with KM to try and provide once an hour hospital stops. Problems were reticence of Arthurs to communicate and commit. MD commented that their failure to send any rep to the last two CC meetings to discuss the issue seemed to affirm the company's lack of interest in residents' concerns. CA commented that Arthurs already in trouble and fined by Traffic Commissioners for blatant disregard of regulations, and situation likely to worsen.

JMcN also stated problem of entering 'turf' of another bus company. EG stressed that a detour to access a safer drop for residents with no pickup of paying passengers could not be justified as a 'turf' infringement. Members unanimously concurred with this. JMcN to continue to work on an answer to this issue and to keep CC updated on any progress. JMcN to post timetables and other relevant info on buses.

My Bus Services:

KM informed meeting that rules for using this service now extend beyond Blue Badge holders to a wider range of elderly/less mobile people. To provide leaflet on changes to MD for distribution to residents.

Station: NLC STAG Report underway.

Disabled Access to Community Centre:

Access work has now been completed, along with the provision of disabled toilet facilities for the bottom hall. Cllr. Morgan explained reason for siting of disabled access toilet as being only position available in this building.

Post Office:

Chair informed meeting of correspondence on this issue sent to Neil Gray MP. By LG. She will inform members of any update /progress at next meeting.

6. Treasurer's Report:

Balance £2878.39p. Meeting agreed to buy admin equipment, namely, laptop, printer, paper, phone, filing cabinet.

7. Correspondence : none

8. AOCB: no time left for this

9. D.O.N.M: September 2015