

Bus service situation in Plains/Caldercruix:

It is presently an hourly service subsidised by SPT while it continues to monitor passenger numbers. The hourly service is still running late.

MD concerned with the fact that we were now in autumn had emailed SPT about the prohibitive nature of vulnerable people attempting to use this service in winter months. Response from SPT was that while the review of passenger numbers was still ongoing, they have now issued tenders to continue the service which include options of continuation of the present service and options to improve the present service. They are waiting to see what level of operator interest there is and tender prices submitted. SPT hopes that the introduction of decriminalised parking will ease congestion/the flow of buses through Airdrie and that this may encourage tenders to be submitted. MD to be kept updated by SPT on the situation. All agreed the situation cannot be taken further at present until further news is given on this. MD will monitor any progress/lack of progress on the situation and contact SPT again as the pressure of time warrants.

It was agreed that since we can have to wait for the outcome of the bus situation outlined above, we should move on to the issue of Gartcosh as the voted preferred option in the July 2018 NHS Lanarkshire appraisal event and the ensuing public consultation.

NHS appraisal/consultation process – preferred option of Gartcosh for a new Monklands Hospital

Members agreed that the whole process was a farcical process leading to an NHS driven pre-planned conclusion of the choice of Gartcosh. Comments made in support of this included:

The two day event made it impossible for members of the public to attend because of work/family/personal commitments. As such, it was undemocratic. The event could have been done in a matter of hours with the outcome being predictable at an early stage. The high percentage representation by high ranking NHS/NHS Partnership voters supportive of the pre-planned location made the decision inevitable.

It was unfair to give South Lanarkshire representatives almost an equal say in the location of a hospital which rightly gives its residents access to acute/specialist services, just as Hairmyers gives North Lanarkshire residents, but not in relation to other services. Its residents already have Hairmyers for such services. In addition South Lanarkshire is a much more affluent area where few residents are likely to contribute to the 15% of people who do not have access to private car transport to access a hospital at Gartcosh. RL pointed out that many areas of North Lanarkshire are areas of multiple deprivation with a resulting high level of serious health problem statistics including heart and lung disease

Members felt the time frame of 13 years for a new build at Monklands was ridiculous and unacceptable. The summary dismissal of 35 out of 37 locations identified by Lanarkshire Planning Department was farcical. They should not even have been listed if they did not meet the criteria. Members find it impossible to believe that only one location in the whole of North Lanarkshire is suitable for a new hospital. This reinforces members' belief that this conclusion was pre-planned.

There was unanimous agreement that the location of Gartcosh was also intended to serve the east end of Glasgow which it would in fact serve better than many communities at the eastern end of North Lanarkshire, including Plains, especially the 15% of people with no access to private cars/vehicles. 15% did not look much against the 85% of people who drive to hospital, but could in fact include tens of thousands of people.

Access times for drivers were ridiculous and made no allowance for heavy traffic/congestion points. There are no rail links from Airdrie to Gartcosh. Those with no access to private transport, particularly outlying communities like Plains would have to travel by the existing shambolic bus transport to Airdrie, get a train from Airdrie to Glasgow, then travel back to Gartcosh by public transport. Members had no faith IN NHS Lanarkshire's commitment to ensure adequate to good public transport for all communities to access a hospital at Gartcosh. We have been given many assurances of improved public transport over the last ten years to no avail. We are worse off now than we have ever been in relation to decent bus services and still don't have a station. RL said that since deregulation under the current Government, transport authorities have no legal powers to force private companies to service routes. Scottish labour has put £700 million aside in its budget to nationalise rail transport. Bus services will be regulated again. A new Government Transport Bill is to give local authorities power to run their own bus services. TM said a major concern for local authorities being given this power, is where the money is going to come from in the face of continuing budget cuts on local authorities.

RL fully supported a new hospital on the present site. It had already been done with the new Queen Elizabeth Hospital. A hospital at Gartcosh would not adequately serve many parts of North Lanarkshire. There was some support for this on the grounds of the vast amount of money that had been already spent on the upkeep of Monklands and the building of the Beatson Centre and Maggie's. It would be a total waste of all

the money already spent to demolish these and other facilities e.g. The David Matthews Diabetic Clinic and integrate them at Gartcosh.

Others thought that a new build on the present site was not possible. The site was too small and would cause too much upheaval over a long 13 year period. The Southern General had been demolished before building on the new Queen Elizabeth began. With an existing shortage of hospital beds, where could patients be transferred to? Some members felt that this was a 'done deal' the public could do nothing about. Some members agreed with this. Others disagreed on the grounds that you have to challenge what you believe to be injustices and not just lie down to them. MD felt the main problem generally and in relation to CC activities to address whole village concerns was apathy. TM said he could understand such apathy in the face of constant rejection by authorities to address the issues put forward to them by the community council, but agreed, but agreed, as did RL, that you just can't give up bringing these matters to the attention of the appropriate authorities.

MD pointed out that that the main reason behind the Government's Centres of excellence like the planned new Monklands hospital was to address the shortage of beds. This made little sense since the present bed capacity in Monklands was 453 beds and the planned bed capacity in the new hospital was 450 to 500 beds. Any additional bed capacity would easily be offset by any overspill of east Glasgow patients.

The main problem was the Governments manic drive for economic growth at the cost of inadequate health and social services. RL commented that too much focus on economic growth at the expense of essential public service was a politically weak course to take. He also agreed with TM that budget funding for education and health and social services should be separate from other budget funding and should be addressed as a priority for adequate funding.

Concern was expressed regarding the potential problem of ambulances getting emergency cases from outlying communities to a more distanced location at Gartcosh. EG had been a staff nurse in Monklands for 18 years and was sure that a more distanced location of Gartcosh, especially in winter weather conditions, might well result on occasions to the difference between life and death outcomes for patients, particularly in outlying communities further removed from Gartcosh.

Main bone of contention for all was the choice of Gartcosh as the preferred option. Members wanted either a new hospital on the present site or a more centrally located hospital in North Lanarkshire. MD believed that the building of large university hospitals to serve wider regions was a Government strategy to pool existing staff and resources together to disguise the fact that the Scottish NHS is in crisis due to a lack of staffing and resourcing spanning across the entire Scottish Health and Social Services provision.' Achieving Excellence', the precursor to 'Centres of Excellence', had so far only had limited success for the same reasons.

Other questions put to RL:

JG asked why there were so many large foreign companies winning contracts for major developments in Scotland. RL explained that bids made for contracts were assessed as the most cost effective for the best service. MD felt this had a negative effect on employment in the Scottish market since many of these companies used their own foreign workforce.

JG also asked why so many new schools had been built under PFI contracts binding local authorities to long term extortionate costing of such contracts. TM responded that with the pressing need to replace schools which were no longer fit for purpose, it appeared to be the best choice at the time. RL stated that many of these companies were now struggling financially and as a result it was an optimum time for the Government to buy back these contracts to gain savings.

6. North Lanarkshire Report: delivered by Councillor TM:

Potential new build is proposed by NL Homes at the playing fields adjacent to both Meadowhead Road and Annieshill View. Ground investigation is currently taking place. TM will keep CC updated on this. Notification of residents living next to proposed developments has been reduced from 100 yards to 30 yards.

Possible funding for road bumps on Bruce Street was discussed at the recent Local Area Partnership. TM to keep CC informed of any progress on this.

Decriminalised Parking Enforcement to start 13th September. Hopefully this will help the free flow of traffic through the town centre and help to improve bus service timetabling.

TM was aware that fly tipping/littering is a serious problem. In the last financial year, despite biting budget cuts by the Scottish Government, NLC has spent £900.000 in the last financial year on tackling fly tipping/littering. This is unsustainable, especially in terms of requests to clean up private land areas. This is the responsibility of private landowners who own much of the land in Plains and who are often themselves guilty of fly tipping on their own land and failing to address fly tipping by the public. NLC has no legal powers to force private landowners to keep their properties clear of rubbish. NLC Environment, if staffing and resourcing is available will respond to requests from communities/residents for the cleaning up of areas, but this is done as a favour in response to the concerns of complainants.

Monklands House Care Home will close on the 18th September. Existing patients were fully involved in the arrangement of care from home packages, and three patients were fully involved in the choice of a suitable alternative placement in an alternative care home. There have been no compulsory redundancies. The property, owned by NLC, will, after closure, put the property up for sale and issue tenders for contract bids.

Station for Plains:

TM was working with other local councillors Davie Cullen and Alan Beveridge in taking up again the case for a station for Plains. TM informed members that a response from the new Scottish Transport Minister to a request from Councillor Cullen for reconsideration of a station once again passed back the responsibility of making a convincing case for a station on to the shoulders of NLC. TM to respond to the Transport Minister.

ET complained that a half empty school bus had not stopped to pick up a Secondary pupil who lived 1.9 miles from the school which was not within the regulated distance of 2 miles, but stopped to pick up another pupil under 2 miles from the school. TM pointed out that NL residents had won their battle against NL's proposals to extend the existing distance, and NL had dropped the proposal.

7. Correspondence:

Dealt with in items 4 and 5 above.

8. Treasurers Report:

Money in CC bank account £3195.37. NLC Admin grant had been received. Members agreed unanimously to honoraria of £100 being given to MD.

A cheque for £200 and a cash sum of £50 was handed over to GMcC as a contribution towards a defibrillator for the village.

9. A.O.C.B

Objection to new Monklands Hospital at Gartcosh

Nearly 1000 A5 leaflets had been issues to households in the village. One A5 leaflet urged residents to respond to the consultation and the public meetings being held (dates and venues given). The other attached leaflet was a short summary of the appraisal. MD had refused to give out the 25 page mini brainwashing version of the full appraisal document with the two page response form at the end of it. Retail outlets had also refused to present this to customers. On request, NHS agreed to supply her with as many copies as she wanted of a one page 'At a Glance' version of the appraisal with the two page response form attached. Residents were also urged on the CC Face Book page to respond to the consultation and attend the public meeting in Airdrie.

Flats on Main Street:

Estate agent for the flats, Richard Stapely (RS), had copied MD into email correspondence to NL Waste collection re his request five weeks previously to replace missing recycling bins. He was also aware he had to pay for additional bins. The bins available to tenants had not been emptied for months. They had been tagged as containing unsuitable waste and were becoming a public health hazard as an attraction to vermin. Tenants were forced to put unsuitable rubbish in the bins, predominantly general black bin waste since most of the missing bins were black bins. MD checked on this and found the bins were stinking with clouds of flies encircling them. She emailed NLC reminding them of the time and effort NLC had spent on trying to get the previous landlord to address the disgraceful exterior of these flats, including the long term horrendous litter and fly tipping on the road area and the area to the back of the Main St shop, both of which belonged to the flats' owner.. RS had liaised with the community council on these problems and has kept his commitment to the CC to make improvements, and address the fly tipping/litter problem with the volunteered assistance of tenants on a regular ongoing basis which he has done. She asked that NLC treat the matter as urgent.

To the credit of NLC the matter was attended to the following day – the bins were emptied and fumigated and all missing bins have now been replaced. MD received an email from RS thanking her for her support. MD thanked NL for their prompt response.

Muirhall Energy Ltd Wind Farm:

As requested by lead developer Peter Marshall, MD has contacted all village voluntary groups (she knows of) for a statement of potential funding requests from the future wind farm community fund, along with estimated costs.

Muirhall Energy Ltd, via Peter Marshall, had donated £200 to the CC. This was a request by MD with a view to passing donation on to Community Futures as a contribution towards a defibrillator for the village.

CAB outreach facility in Plains:

Councillor Beveridge at May 2018 meeting had suggested this facility. A suggestion was made that an ideal time would be during the pensioners' lunch club time on Mondays. Councillor Beveridge was to look into this. MD spoke to a CAB officer recently and was informed that this facility had and continued to exist on Tuesday mornings from 10am till 12 o'clock. I asked if this could be changed to Tuesdays and was advised to take this up at the next Local Area Partnership meeting. MD phoned Councillor Beveridge with this information and he was to follow it up. No feedback as yet.

New Privacy Law:

Any email correspondence from MD to members includes only members as a group. MD will not give out any personal contact details of members without first seeking their consent. MD has not yet finished an agreement letter for members to sign, but will do so for next meeting.

MD thanked RL for making time in his busy schedule to attend this meeting and closed the meeting.

10. D.O.N.M: 9th October 2018