

Blackness Area Community Council

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 18th April 2018 - Blackness Boat Club

Attendees:	
Community Council members: Helen Brown (HB), Dorothy Garrow (DG), Nick Paul (NP) (Chair), Helena Paul (HP) (Minutes), Martin Watt (MW)	
Members of the public: 5	
Apologies:	
Dave Lawson (DL), Merv Archibald (MA), Cllr David Aitchison (DA)	
	Action
1. Approval of Previous Minutes:	
Proposed: HB Seconded: SF	
2. Community Police Report	
Police did not attend in person. Police Report received by email, no activity to report. It was noted that there had been some police activity in the village the previous night - 17 th April - possibly related to a car theft from a house driveway. This would have occurred after the police report was circulated, and would be expected to be reported next time.	
3. Actions and matters arising from previous minutes	
2.1 Tree planting adjacent to path near play park: 9 field maple trees have now been planted beside the path. Noted that these are neither guarded nor staked. Point made staking can make the trees less susceptible to vandalism.	
2.2 Update on the width of the path and the proposed lighting - Mike Joyce (MJ) at FC has responded – says that 2.5m width is a funder’s requirement, and that he agrees that solar studs would not be appropriate for this location. MJ has undertaken to send a copy of the proposals to BACC for comment when available prior to works starting.	
2.3 Councillor Update Cllr Aitchison sends his apologies for this evenings meeting, but will come to our next meeting in May.	
2.4 MW reported that he had a copy of that BACC website backup should it ever be required.	
4. Future Events / Fundraising	
No update.	
5. Community Projects	
Play Park Extension: HB updated the meeting. Funding: HB has met with Art Berg from FET. Advised that FET will fund around £20k of total project cost of around £30k. BACC already holding around £7k in funds, leaving a shortfall of around £3k to purchase the equipment.	
Application to People’s Postcode Lottery was refused due to not meeting their criteria. Need to demonstrate a need for the project. HB has arranged with the School for the children to visit the playpark and then use the exercise as the basis for a letter writing project to give their opinions on the existing park and what they think about the proposals. The letters would then form part of the funding application. This idea was welcomed by members. HB to meet FET again at the end of the month.	
	HB
6. Budget	
In DL’s absence, no update.	
7. Councillors’ Update	
No update.	

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8. Planning Update	
8.1 Weekly planning list: Still looking for a volunteer to review the weekly planning list and flag up any relevant applications.	ALL
<p>8.2 P/18/0128/FUL Blackness Inn Single Storey Retail Unit in pub garden. Brief discussion of the current planning application for additional retail space. Comments included: unclear what the need was for additional retail in the village, as the current shop closes at 4pm, it seems unlikely there is scope for additional trade. The shop lay empty for a very long time prior to being finally let a few months ago. Concerns that the Inn has been closed for many years, and as a prominent building in the centre of the village lying vacant, it would not be appropriate to have even more vacant non residential space. Lack of clarity on the owner's intentions for the additional space – what sort of shop would it be? Is this application linked to the concurrent variation in the alcohol licence? Concerns expressed at the suitability of Blackness for a shop selling alcohol. It was felt that the more information about the owner's intentions for the site would be helpful. DL to attempt to discuss with owner.</p> <p>Post meeting note – Community Councils may still submit comments on an application even after the expiry date prior to the decision being made.</p>	DL
<p>8.3 Licence variation Blackness Inn Discussion of the current variation of the alcohol licence for the Blackness Inn, BACC is a consultee and has been asked for comments by Falkirk Council prior to the application being determined by the Licensing Board. Overall it was felt that the BACC needed a bit more information about why this variation has come about. Concerns were expressed that the pub had not traded for many years, and that the community would greatly benefit from the vibrancy that a well run pub / café type business may attract to the area. BACC would therefore support the Inn being opened again. With the additional visitors being attracted to the Castle and the John Muir Way, it would seem that there could be good business under suitable management. It was also commented that the splitting off of the shop area has reduced the capacity of the Inn, and removal of the hotel part of the licence may actually reduce the viability of the property overall as a licensed premises. Concerns also expressed about the possibility of the licence being used for off sales in the shop – felt that Blackness may not be the appropriate location. Closing date for comments is 26th April. Agreed that more information required, HP to contact Council and report back in time to meet the deadline.</p>	HP
<p>8.4 Request from Maria Montinaro re a motion to Falkirk Council HP updated the meeting on a request circulated by email from Maria Montinaro at Shieldhill CC regarding a proposal to put a motion to Falkirk Council proposing that the law should be changed to allow Communities to have a right of appeal in planning applications. This is supported by Planning Democracy and has already existed in Ireland for many years. A majority of CCs in the Falkirk area is required to put it</p>	

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<p>before the Council for the matter to be debated by Councillors, and support from BACC would tip the balance. Following a brief discussion, it was agreed that this is a good idea and that we should support Maria’s proposal. HP to advise accordingly.</p>	<p>HP</p>
<p>9. Broadband update Members welcomed Derek Halden, a village resident who attended the meeting to discuss the issue of poor broadband provision in the area. It seems there are various solutions, and that we could look at what was most appropriate for a rural area such as Blackness. Possibilities include mobile broadband via a provider such as Vodafone or EE, with different costs depending on the type of contract. Reception varies throughout the area, and depending on the location, residents may find one provider is better than another. PlusNet may offer a landline alternative to BT (which a number of residents have reported being unhappy with the service). PlusNet seems to be a bit more reliable, particularly for the small number of areas which are served by new copper wire infrastructure. The Community could arrange for a specific mast to be installed in the area, although if we can already access 4G mobile broadband, this may not be necessary. May also be a “whitespace” solution whereby redundant FM bands are used to convey broadband. This works on remote areas – there is such a provider on the Isle of Arran, for example. A more expensive option might be satellite broadband, which may need a certain number of users to be viable. Another possibility is upgrading the Hub in the house, as this can also make a significant difference to the network speeds within the home.</p> <p>Agreed: As there seems already to have been some upgrading to the infrastructure by Open Reach, with copper wiring being installed, can we identify what has happened and where, and what the plans are to roll this out throughout the area? How can we ensure this rollout happens asap? It may also be appropriate to invite someone from Open Reach to a future BACC meeting to hear firsthand the issues people are having with adequate Broadband speeds.</p>	<p>MW</p>
<p>10. Flight path matters</p>	
<p>HP updated the meeting: Edinburgh Airport Noise Advisory Board (EANAB) continues to meet monthly where Blackness is represented. Airport staff attended the most recent meeting and advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACP: EAL expects to make a new application to the CAA soon. In terms of impact over Blackness, this is not substantially different from what was applied for last year. The proposals will lead to more planes and therefore additional noise over the area. Concerns continue to be expressed that the airport has been allowed by the CAA to use rules that have already been deemed unfit for purpose. If approved, the changes will be permanent, and will result in greater numbers of flights and noise over our area. Concerns and doubts again expressed that these changes are not necessary. 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EAL is installing a new Noise and Track-keeping system that will allow member of the public access to more information about the planes that are flying over the area. The existing noise monitors will be replaced, although it is felt by the EANAB that the noise monitor locations need to be reviewed to reflect the new noise being created at new locations (such as around Blackness) where noise has not traditionally been a problem.• The EANAB is undertaking a project to have the historical flight data analysed by an independent aviation consultant. A proposal has been made for the airport to fund this, a decision is currently awaited. If approved this may allow the reasons behind the increased noise over the area to be identified. <p>Update on public meeting held in Dalgety Bay: well attended with many residents expressing serious concerns about the new and unwanted levels of aircraft noise being experienced over there. Attendees were eager to explore the possibility of legal action to restore their peace and quiet.</p> <p>Lesley Laird MP could not attend, but her assistant did and commented that anyone with issues relating to the airport was encouraged to contact her office. Lesley Laird is also the Shadow Scottish Secretary, so will accept communications on this basis from residents who do not reside in her Fife constituency.</p> <p>Comments made that the recent run of a number of weeks with Easterly winds have been particularly noisy at Blackness – with some planes being markedly noisier than others. Residents were again encouraged to complain to the airport, and to all of their elected representatives. Airport email is: noise@edinburghairport.com Elected reps details can be found using the Writetothem.com website.</p> <p>Again noted that Blackness should have a noise monitor. This will be taken up at the EANAB as appropriate.</p>	
11. AOCB	
<p>10. HB advised that Historic Environment Scotland has appointed a new member of staff, Malcolm Brown. A replacement for Amy Mack whom we have dealt with previously. Agreed to contact him regarding installing signage advising of opening hours on the new gate, as well as advance warning of any filming activities and the possibility of a contribution to Community funds as recompense for the inconvenience caused to residents during such events (as has previously been the case from filming in the past). HB to action</p> <p>9.2 HB advised of a Falkirk Council networking event for Community Councillors at FC on 25th April. While these events are felt to be useful, unfortunately nobody is available to attend that evening. HB to send apologies if appropriate.</p> <p>9.3 HB would add some small posters in the various notice boards with dates of forthcoming BACC meetings</p>	HB HB HB

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9.4 For info: Blackness is now included in pizza delivery from the pizzeria at Regent Centre!

9.5 Water supply at the Strip

Alan and Sharman Faulds advised that there was a problem with the private water supply to the Strip that passes under the car park at Mannerstons. Scottish Water have identified a break in the pipe, and are returning tomorrow to repair this, the water supply to the Strip will be unavailable while the repair is being done.

Following some heated discussion, the Chair reminded the meeting that the matter of a private water supply should be dealt with by the owners concerned and such neighbour disputes are not within the remit of the Community Council.

Alan and Sharman Faulds advised that they were not prepared to now agree to put up an appropriate sign to alert drivers in the interests of road safety as they confirmed at the previous meeting.

9.6 Contact with FC relating to road surfaces on B9109 and B903, recent weather has caused deterioration and pot holes in road surfaces.
Reported for repair by HP for action by Falkirk Council.

9.7 Litter along back shore adjacent to Hopetoun Woods. Mainly plastic, with around 35 dead seabirds counted on the beach. HP has contacted FC re possibility of Community Justice team arranging a litter pick for the area, alternatively we may be able to organise a Community Litter Pick.

9.8 BACC laptop – MW has this and will retain until advised required by another councillor.

Date of Next Meeting; Wednesday 16th May at 7 pm in the Boat Club.

The Chair thanked people for attending and closed the meeting at 21.30.

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Space here for updated budget document when received.