

Woodlands and Park Community Council

Minutes of Meeting

Wednesday 9 December 2020, via Zoom, 7.30pm

Present: Ruth Gillett (chair), Tom Johnstone (secretary), Gerry Doyle (treasurer), Derek Manson-Smith, Clare Crawford (minutes), Alasdair Gerrie, Johnpaul McCabe, Stewart Leighton

In attendance: Patrick Harvie MSP, Councillor Ken Andrew, Councillor Martha Wardrop

1 Apologies: Diane Mitchell

2 Police Report

As there were no police present there was no police report. Tom Johnstone said that a police report had been sent to his own email address and he would try to circulate it.

3 Minutes of 11 November Meeting

Ruth Gillett and Councillor Andrew pointed out that under item 5, Councillors' Reports, in line 13, the words 'Kelvingrove Park' should read 'the car park at the Subway'. Tom Johnstone said that under item 12, Correspondence, in lines 6 and 7, the names 'Fair Planning for Glasgow' and 'Planning Democracy' should be transposed and the word 'latter' in line 7 be changed to 'former'. Otherwise, the minutes of the meeting were proposed as a correct record by Derek Manson-Smith, seconded by Tom Johnstone.

4 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5 Presentation by Patrick Harvie MSP

Patrick Harvie said that, as a regional MSP for the whole of Glasgow, he had planned at the start of 2020 a physical tour of some of the community council meetings in the city, but the Covid-19 pandemic had brought a stop to that. He is pleased that a lot of community councils are now starting to meet online, and he hopes to drop in to a few of these meetings to say hello, to share thoughts about what he has been doing and what the community councils have been doing and to give community councillors an opportunity to let him know what issues they think he should be picking up on or that they think need an airing in parliament. One issue that he has been working on in this year like no other is continuing to advocate for the greatest public health measures rather than reducing them to take account of the economic impacts. He is strongly of the view that we will only overcome the economic damage of the pandemic by overcoming the pandemic itself. Even if the restrictions were lifted, a lot of the hospitality and social businesses would not be getting their normal custom. Although the situation is a little bit more optimistic now, he thinks we still have a very tough winter to get through. The Greens have put a lot of emphasis on supporting vulnerable bus services so that we don't lose routes but also on free bus travel for young people, which was due to come in in a couple of months' time from now, before the new financial year. It's going to be delayed but it will still come in. It will not only give young people the ability to access public transport affordably but it also makes more routes viable. The Greens have also had to work hard to try to make sure the Scottish government supports the Subway. There was a flurry of activity when the Subway's emergency funding ran out and the Scottish Government still hadn't replaced it. We've now got through that and we've got the emergency funding extended. We need to keep making the case that the Subway isn't something that we can afford to lose. An issue he has found lots of community councils are concerned about is waste management. His community council in Partick has been told that food waste collections are not going to be reinstated in back courts. We are expected to use street bins, and that's going to lead to more food waste going into normal bins and then into incineration rather than being put to good use, but it's also going to raise a lot of fear around the sanitary implications of street bins, which could be subject to vandalism or just accidents. He is concerned to make the case that Glasgow City Council should think again and restore those services to back courts and had raised the matter in parliament that day. Other bits of good news are that some of the funding that the government had promised but had delayed to the council is in place now, which allows the council to draw up a timetable for reopening things like libraries and community centres. In response to a question from Stewart Leighton about integration of public transport networks, the return of private bus companies to public ownership and the opportunities offered by Covid of a dramatic change in the way things are done, Patrick said that successive Scottish governments could have done more to create a change in the way we move about, both for sustainability and affordability. Countries with world-class public transport systems use public ownership, regulation and subsidy, the three tools that need to be used much more sensibly. The legal

ability for councils to set up their own local bus companies doesn't mean that all existing services will be brought into those publicly owned companies. At the moment it would be more about competing within a marketplace and there is a failure built into that model of seeing bus services as a market commodity. The market fails to deliver the quality public transport that we need. As we move into recovery from Covid, while it has delayed a lot of work that could have been happening there is a real opportunity to start re-evaluating how we organise our affairs in this area. He hopes there a chance to bring the argument for public ownership and regulation, even when it is in private hands, back onto the table as well as public ownership of the railways. None of this comes without a cost, and if we want that high-quality service we are going to have to pay for it. There has to be a role for subsidy. It is frustrating that it has always been hard to make that political case whereas those who want to throw another billion pounds at a road-building project just keep on doing it, pretending that it is in our economic or social interest. On the active travel side, there's a lot more happening. He thinks that Glasgow City Council is doing better than it has done in previous decades, looking at active travel, walking and cycling, and making it feel and be safe for everybody. In reply to a question from Stewart on the status of the Subway and the possibility of a Crossrail connection with mainline rail through West Street station, Patrick said that he agreed with much that Stewart said, particularly about Crossrail, for which he thinks there has been a very strong case made over far too many years. Although he gets on well on a personal level with some of the people who were on the Transport Connectivity Commission, he did find it frustrating that they recommended something as wildly expensive and highly improbable as a tunnel in the City centre to connect Queen Street and Central stations rather than Crossrail. As for the Subway's status, it was intended to be the beginning of a long-term vision rather than just another report that ends up gathering dust on the shelf. One of the unanswered questions at the moment is around things like the replacement for some of the capital investment that previously came from European funds. The UK government is saying that it is going to replace a lot of this, but it still hasn't given the detail yet so he thinks some of this is within the control of the city council, some within the control of the Scottish government but some of it, especially big capital budgets, that's going depend on funding that comes from within the UK. In reply to a comment from Derek Manson-Smith on superiority of the publicly owned Lothian Buses to the privately owned system in Glasgow, Patrick said that Lothian was never privatised in the first place. What we have in Glasgow is the dominance of First Bus in what is supposed to be a free market. First Bus is so dominant because it is effectively the inheritor of what used to be the Corporation's bus business. This is a reminder why it doesn't function properly as a market and it shouldn't function in the interests of competitors in the market anyway. It should function in the interests of passengers and the city. It is notable that when the 1985 Act came in and buses were privatised all the people who used them in London knew it wasn't going to work for them, but the government was willing to do it for the rest of the country. He was not going to pretend that it would possible to get to a point where every local authority or every region has something like Lothian Buses overnight, but he thinks that over time we could get there. That journey starts by setting up local bus companies and taking over services that the market retreats from. Stewart Leighton said there is a solution to the problem of Crossrail not connecting to inline stations such as Queen Street and Central by using the City Union Line, the North Clyde line and the loop up to Springburn and then the Cowlairs chord, which feeds trains directly in to Queen Street station. There was an estimate of about £20 million for electrification of about the two miles that's required. Patrick said he was on the same page on that one. There is a range of different ways to deliver something like Crossrail and a range of different price tags. They all tend to be cheaper and better value than some of the road-building projects that have been approved in recent years. Patrick said that if people have issues that they want to get in touch with him directly about his email address is on the Scottish parliament website.

6 Councillors' Reports

Councillor Wardrop reported that she had followed up a few matters from the last meeting. She has chased up the street lighting and the bars on the windows of an HMO. A traffic regulation order has been issued to make the Hillhead Primary School car-free zone permanent, which she is delighted about. Comments on the proposal for the outdoor area next to Webster's theatre, which was circulated recently, should be lodged by 11 January. She has been trying to get street sweeping done to remove some of the leaves that are making pavements and roads slippy and dangerous, particularly South Woodside Road. She has also been following up issues to do with rubbish and recycling being dumped in back lanes. In reply to a query from Tom Johnstone, Councillor Wardrop said that bulk refuse uplift would begin again the following day, 10 December. Clare Crawford thanked Councillor Wardrop for putting her in touch with the parking permit people. Stewart Leighton said that the parking permit disc has indeed been abolished and this will save money but, in effect, what they are saying is that the policy is exclusively the domain of Land and Environmental Services Roads and Parking. It's also a policy that we should own because the reason why the controlled parking zone was introduced in 2005 was to control the level of commuter parking and to ensure that residents who did own a car would be able to park. Discs showed that the owners of the cars lived in Woodlands. Now that there is no requirement to display a disc no one can know if the policy is being implemented effectively. When the policy was originally conceived it

was envisaged that the income from the cost of the permits and visitor parking charges would cover the cost of parking attendants, but then it was realised that it could be a money-making racket and the number of parking attendants was skimmed on. Councillor Wardrop offered to ask for a review of the parking policy.

Councillor Andrew reported that there is a glimpse of light at the end of the tunnel regarding Trinity Tower and funding for phase 1 repairs. Regarding parking permits, there have been problems with individuals getting permits renewed. A number of parking tickets have been issued and he has been asked to help to have them cancelled. He is still pursuing the matter of the open-air gym. Permission had been given for the gym and he is trying to come to some kind of accord with the people who are running it, at the very least carrying out their activities further away from the residential properties where the complaints are coming from. He has had a complaint about the noisy generator in the food van in Eldon Street and is checking to see whether it has a licence to trade. The Transport Steering Group had met the previous afternoon and is beginning to look at the various plans, of which there are many, to improve connectivity across Glasgow. The committee is made up of council officers and councillors of all parties, including Martin Bartos of the Green Party. He agrees that the transport system in Edinburgh is better than that in Glasgow but the city chose, a number of years ago, to give up its corporation bus service. As he understands it, apparently the Corporation's bus service was sold off and a number of individuals took handsome bonuses home. He may look into the matter further. It is probably perfectly legitimate that they took the bonuses, but he would like to know what the encouragement was to give up the transport system. Derek Manson-Smith said that in the 1980s there was a big stooshie about Strathclyde Passenger Transport senior people leaving with a lot of money in their pockets. Stewart Leighton said that First Bus, the former Grampian service for Aberdeen and the shire, bought out Strathclyde Buses.

7 Millennium Park

Nothing was reported.

8 Kelvingrove Park

Nothing was reported.

9 Cleansing

Stewart Leighton said that he had written a fairly lengthy email to all the councillors and had received replies with information from Councillors Andrew and Wardrop, for which he thanked them. One of the issues he raised was the landfill tax that might flow from the suspension of the waste food collection and which is a cost that is imposed on all of us. The waste food collection was suspended because of cross-contamination caused by people not observing the protocols. He will prepare a document in writing and share it with the community council. Councillor Wardrop said she had had a meeting with council officers to discuss food waste recycling and work that had been done in the northwest of the city. She had highlighted that the way they were going about it wasn't what was needed because residents have not experienced a reliable service for most of the time they have had grey bins. Part of the reason had been staffing issues last year and then the pandemic making things worse. She has sent them an email asking for clarification on a range of issues and is still waiting for a response. What the officers were saying was if your food waste bin is removed then there will be readily available communal bin on the street within walking distance which will be emptied every week. There is a map of the food bins. At present there are communal food bins in Maryhill and Woodside but none in Woodlands although there are a few in back courts. There has not been a consistent approach. Derek Manson-Smith said that there are four grey bins in the lane behind his house and the system seems to be working well. Tom Johnstone said that what can be managed with grey bins depends on who is living in the close. His close is over 50 per cent multiple occupancy and the inhabitants don't know what to do with any kind of rubbish, including food. The other owner occupier asked for the grey bin to be removed as it was just a nuisance. He sees no way of it coming back usefully unless there is compulsory education for HMO tenants. Stewart said that he had seen evidence of cross-contamination when he was secretary of the community council and had suggested at a Hillhead Partnership meeting in January 2020 that training courses for landlords, agents and tenants of HMOs should be inaugurated and volunteered to be part of such a course.

10 Correspondence, including Planning and Licensing

Tom Johnstone said that probably the most important thing is the survey that is being carried out by DRS, How Good are Glasgow's Places? Following intervention by Anne Laird, it is being carried out collaboratively within community councils so the period for responses has been extended to 5 February. It would help him to put together the community council's response if everybody who has received it sends it to him so he can collate them. He wondered why more is not done to prevent buildings that are too tall being brought forward for planning permission, e.g. the Unite building in Gibson Street, 341 Great Western Road and the development at the corner of St Georges Road and Grant Street. There is a DRS consultation on purpose-built student accommodation, responses by 22 January. Apart from not wanting any more in the area, Tom said he had very

little to say about it and asked Stewart Leighton to draft a response on behalf of the community council. There is a consultation on cross-sectoral connections, closing date 14 December, which is more to do with community planning than the planning that is his interest. There is also a consultation on the concessionary travel scheme, closing date 18 December. Tom said he is very dependent on the concessionary travel scheme, thinks it is a wonderful thing and will be responding as an individual. Ruth Gillett said she had responded individually. Tom said that the community council had submitted an objection to a renewal of consent at Greenoak Hill Quarry, which is miles away, arising from a decision taken by Fair Planning Glasgow to collaborate with other community councils throughout Glasgow to object to particularly obnoxious planning applications. Hillhead Community Council has also objected. The community council has also objected to the HMO licence renewal application in Park Road but, judging from the email that Councillor Wardrop circulated, that objection will probably have no effect as it has repeatedly been inspected by Fire and Rescue. Councillor Wardrop said she would be happy to go back to the officers in Housing to highlight that concerns continue to be raised about the bars on the windows. She is no longer on the Licensing Regulations Committee and can speak freely. Councillor Andrew said that he has formally objected to the Park Road HMO application. Tom sought views on the Webster's open space proposal at the end of North Woodside Road, which is not in our area, and agreed with Derek Manson-Smith that it is an excellent idea and that the community council should send a letter of support. Stewart said that he agreed and suggested looking at other areas in the vicinity where there has already been some improvement in public realm, e.g. across the road from Webster's where the Subway entrance is and the space opposite the café in Montague Street.

11 Finance

Gerry Doyle reported that the balance of the community council's bank account is £4,825.88. Tom Johnstone said he can't send an invoice for the Zoom subscription for December because it hasn't been sent to him yet but he expects it to be for the same amount, £14.39. Advance approval was agreed.

12 AOCB

Gerry Doyle asked if there was an update on Derek Manson-Smith's email about the phishing emails about planning alerts. Tom Johnstone explained that the request to confirm the password arose from him accepting the invitation. If they can't come up with information about planning applications quicker than he can by looking at the lists anyway he'll just unsubscribe.

13 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 13 January 2021 at 7.30pm via Zoom.