



ROYAL BURGH OF CRAIL AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of 27th March 2023
7.15pm Crail Town Hall

Present: Chair: David Jerdan (DJ), Erica Hollis (EH), Colin Morrison (CM), Max Taylor (MT), John Wilson (JW), Andrew Purves (AP), Jenni Brittain (JB), Alan Hood (AH)

Community PCs Rob Cook and Rob Wallace

Councillors: Cllr Alycia Hayes (CAH)

Apologies: Dawn Wallace-Watson (DWW), Cllr Fiona Corps, Cllr Sean Dillon

7 members of the public including Dennis Gowans (DG for Crail Community Partnership)

Welcome: DJ opened the meeting and welcomed all.

DJ introduced our community police officers and summarised why we had invited them. The two PCs told us there had been 33 calls from Crail in the previous month of which 13 were reported crimes including the four house-breakings which were investigated by CID but PCs Cook and Wallace did some follow-up during which it was noted there was a distinct lack of CCTV such as Ring doorbells which might have helped identify the house-breaker who they think was probably a local individual as the method of entry was the same in all four and all were houses that normally had vehicles parked in the driveway that were temporarily absent on the night in question. They have been advising the home owners on security measures [two have certainly since installed alarm systems (EH)]. There have been no further house-breakings and a general reduction in calls this month – only 3 crimes reported, two specific to a single household and one mobile phone theft. Due to GDPR etc the police cannot tell us details of other crimes but noted that Greenacres children's home falls into the Crail jurisdiction. Across Fife there has been a lot of car theft recently.

JB asked about rules around ring doorbells – it is quite legal to have them on your property and to send any footage to the police but any footage of people in a public area such as the road outside your house must never be publicly shared. A member of the public asked how much under-reporting of crime the PCs felt there was but they couldn't begin to know as they are often the last to hear and re-iterated that if there is any suspicious behaviour such as cruising vans or gangs of youths intimidating an area the police should be informed by calling 101 or using the contact us on their web page. Another member of the public asked about alarms going off in unoccupied premises – that too should be reported via 101. MT pointed out that the Abertay public safety survey due to start in Crail may give a better picture of unreported crime.

JW asked how to keep car keys safe in the rise of car theft – the PCs said it was mostly electronic keys (ones not needing to be inserted or clicked to unlock or start the car) which were within car range from within the house (e.g. on hook by the door) that the thieves could intercept the signal and clone the key – all the current car thefts were taken from people's drives during the night. The best protection is either to keep the keys well buried deep in the house or purchase a Faraday cage type box for them – available from places like Halfords for under £10. They were not aware of any cases where keys had been cloned while the owner, keys and car were out and about.

DJ pointed out that the new 20mph zone for whole of Crail was not deterring speeding especially at going to work times, or through Denburn narrows (MT). The police said they had two traffic units out on Sunday monitoring routes to/from the Crail raceway but word soon gets out by flashed headlights etc. They will see if an occasional early morning check can be made to warn off habitual commuter speeders. They passed information about the speedwatch volunteering opportunities for locals to do their own to DJ.

Approval of last minutes:

The minutes of the 27th February meeting were approved

Matters Arising

- Denburn light complaint to Fife Council – cllr AH – apparently Scottish Power are in dispute over SLAs with the subcontractor they use to dig holes and cannot do anything until that is resolved – the Denburn light has been checked to see if it just a blown bulb but no it is a “dig-up” job. Fife council have offered their road digging team but apparently this would jeopardise current negotiations so nothing is likely to happen in the short term.
- Fees and Ethical investment of Common Good Fund – Cllr AH has pressed the council officer again but she is not getting answers from the Finance dept – she will stress once more CCC’s increasing frustration with lack of an answer. DJ will send back up letter of complaint to FC.
- Checking CCC insurance for events proposed by Fiona Budd – JW states there is public liability cover of £5m. This covers events with up to 500 attendees; events with fireworks, a bonfire or inflatables require extra cover (at extra cost). First Aid facilities must be available and an application for cover must be made at least four weeks in advance. AP has the form for completion. First Aid cover for visit of The Lord Lyon was provided by the First Responders. It is noted that there is no cover for alcohol and, in any case, the event is too close to apply for a license, also Crail comes under the by-law prohibiting alcohol consumption on the street so the event needs to stress that any alcohol even for personal consumption would be illegal.
- Using CCC Facebook page to disseminate information coming from Fife Council to CCC – EH has been posting items that come to CCC from Fife council as they get circulated to Crail councillors – excluding weekly planning as that can cause controversy and can be looked up on the Council website by anyone anyway.
- Subcommittee to carry on exploring ideas for positive publicisation of CCC – MT, JB, AH – JB has been liaising with head teacher Mrs Young and will address the school assembly on 28th April about the setting up of a “Junior CCC” which will involve parents and thereby publicise what we do to a wider audience.
- Subgroup to look at welfare issues – see Chairman’s report.

Chairman’s report

- 2 quotations are being obtained for the redecoration of the cemetery gates and the handrail leading from Nethergate to the Doocot. A common good funding application will follow.
- The 20 mph speed limit was formally instigated on 13 March and is for a trial period of 18 months. Initial reaction is that whilst ‘law abiding’ citizens have slowed down, the majority of drivers are still ignoring the speed limits. A request has been made for painted 20 white circles at both entrances to Crail, at the bottom of St.Andrews Drive, and for the renewal of the old markings at Denburn Narrows.
- A sub group of MT, DJ & JB plus Helen Armitage and Manuela Calchini Smith, met with Laiza Lorimer, Fife area anti-poverty policy officer and Lauren Cook, Community Food co-ordinator. There was a very useful briefing from which it was clear that there are (at least) two very different problems. Fuel poverty and lack of opportunity due to isolation and high cost of travel affecting all age groups and those seeking employment. Poverty affecting particularly single elderly folk, typically without IT skills/access and single parent families. A lot of publicity material will be made available and disseminated through Crail matters.

Potential expansion of hard copy delivery. Further information to come through Laiza and discussions also ongoing with Richard Wemyss at Anstruther food bank. Apparently food going from Crail co-op to Anstruther foodbank comes back to some individuals in Crail as food parcels – we may be able to either short circuit this and/or supplement those food parcels (MT). There was a query about emails from “Grace” to the Shoregate proprietors about a Community Food Larder to be set up in Crail, Fiona Budd was able to tell them a bit more as it seems to be emanating from a group of school mums who have got funding to set up a community larder in the Legion Hall with food from local businesses (Penmans have signed up) and a community garden in the grounds of the Marine Hotel. The meeting felt that our subgroup should coordinate with all this to avoid duplication of effort and division of available support. (action JB/ Fiona Budd)

- A pre-planning application has been made by Ground Developments Ltd, the new owners of all the derelict buildings at the airfield. They hosted a drop in event last Saturday morning in the Community Hall. Approximately 100 members of the community attended to view the proposals and ask questions and give feedback. The developers will host a further event in CCH on Saturday 29th April when they will formally present their proposals and take questions before submitting their initial planning application. Most of the feedback centred on access and it seems that the farmer with land to west and north of the site may be about to apply for planning permission for a new road down from the A917 to meet Balcomie road just east of the Balcomie caravan park where a section of field has been separated off by new hedging.

Treasurer’s report

Balance at 27th February 23 was £1983.26.

Only one expenditure for Zoom of £143.88, leaving a closing balance of £1839.38

Update – Crail Community Partnership

- Two ponds at Pinkerton Triangle are now lined with the third soon to follow.
- Kilminning had an archaeological survey last week which shows nothing that should hold up or modify the siting of a pond/wetland there. Also it seems there is a near 95% survival rate among the trees planted there last year which is amazing, they have been weeded and mulched and a few more planted.
- West Braes – nothing has happened since Sonja and Jude moved away so CCP are going to circulate the surrounding households to see how they want the approx £3000 funding spent.
- There will be a Common Good Fund application coming for sanding and lacquering and remarking the Badminton courts in the Community Hall as the current procedures of repeated waxing (as per Fife Council’s management) builds up to a toxic dust with a lot of foot fall and leaves the floor looking poor. Although this CGF application hasn’t come to us officially yet, the meeting unanimously approved it in the sum of £3762.

Crail Preservation Society have applied for planning permission to take down the diseased willow tree in Denburn Wood.

Items for discussion

DWW is unable to make this or April’s meeting but sent in the following updates to the playpark project:

- I have submitted the FET application (deadline 31st March)
- I have submitted the Crail Common Good Fund application
- Helen Main Fund I will submit once we are back from holidays at the end of April (deadline end of May)

It is noted that the total spend on the playpark will be in the order of £250k, of which Fife Council are contributing £100k

Councillors Reports

Cllr AH – apparently responses about allotments, of which 7 came from Crail, are being collated. There is one more week to complete the survey on transportation in Fife. She continues to press for tidying up the uneven pavement on St Andrews Road. Short term lets licensing is going very slowly since last October when applications opened there have been only 159 licenses applied for and, of these, only 23 granted so far. Legally the council has 9 months to process applications and any existing short term lettings cannot legally continue after 1st October 2023 without a license. New letting can only happen with a license. Fife Council found over 5000 advertised short term lets in the county so it is clear landlords are either unaware or leaving things to the last minute but with the grants happening very slowly they may already be too late! Some of the slowness is down to staff shortages – across all Scottish councils, not just a Fife issue. Although Cllr AH can't see why people would not want a job with the council given the very generous flexi-time and home working conditions.

No reports received from the other two councillors whose continued absence is noted.

AOCB

- CM noted that there was a new street light problem at Beechwalk – as there is only a single light there and has been reported by several residents but is unlikely to gain any priority due to there not being 6 or more lights out.
- CM also reported the decaying carcase of an adult seal, headless and well strewn around, on the coast path but the high tide seems to have washed it away.
- The notice board and flagpole at the Roome Bay toilet block have been moved to the building due to corrosion of the supports.
- CM also raised concerns over the large number (perhaps over 200) creels washed up on Balcomie Beach, the FCCT (Fife coast and countryside trust) only have two people to clear the whole Fife Coast line (about 160 miles) so they only get to Crail about twice per year and lack any heavy winches to remove creels buried in the sand or tangles in rocks. He has identified an organisation called KIMO – based in Sweden but to which several Scottish coastal counties belong which may help but Fife has not joined. Cllr AH commented that KIMO had been raised at a recent committee meeting and Fife Council are going to join. CM pointed out that once creels get completely buried in beaches such as at the harbour they pose a significant risk to bathers due to dangerous metal spikes from the decayed creel being only just below the surface. To remove these would need the combine efforts of metal detectorists, diggers and a winch.
- The proprietors of the Shoregate told the meeting the sign at the top of Shoregate with 20mph on one side and 30mph on the other had been removed (as per those on other side roads) as the 20mph zone was extended leaving a bare pole, but at a bit of an angle due to previous damage. A couple of days afterwards a single council employee came along, removed the damaged pole, concreted in a new one and then attached a new 20mph/30mph sign to it! They have reported to the council but are appalled at the waste of time and money by the council.
- Following this, a resident of Lamont Drive reported that the sign on a branch of Kirkmay road just along from her had been knocked off its legs by a reversing truck. Given the rumour that the council is no longer replacing signs but expects the residents to pay for them, what will happen to this one which gives the numbers of the council houses on the lane.

The meeting closed at 20:45.

Date of next meeting : Monday 24th April 2023 – 7:15pm in Crail Town Hall

For Action:

- Denburn light complaint to Fife Council – cllr AH
- Fees and Ethical investment of Common Good Fund – Cllr AH/DJ
- Poverty food group coordinate - JB