

HUMBIE, EAST & WEST SALTOUN AND BOLTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes 365th Meeting

Tuesday 3rd of September 2024

19:30

Humbie Village Hall

Present: Iain Galloway, Margo Hodge, Sandy Wilson, Shamin Akhtar, Robin Grenfell, George McGuire, Tom Trotter, Jo Ward, Alastair Wyllie, Mandy Harrington, Kerry McIntosh, Carla Ward

Agenda
item

Action

1. Apologies

Frank Kirwan, John McMillan, Janet Beck

2. Disclosure of Interests

Nothing declared.

3. Approval of previous minutes and action update

The minutes were approved.

Change to be made in agenda item 5. 'Peaseland' to 'Peaston'.

4. Finance

The report was shared ahead of the meeting.

5. Saltoun School Mothballing Update

RG noted that 2 weeks before the end of term in June the parents had received an email as regards the drop in roll numbers. This created a panic, and more children were pulled, which resulted in the numbers dropping to 5.

JW noted that the nursery that was meant to be at capacity, but the numbers there have now dropped down to 8. A meeting had been arranged by the Head of Education and the parents were expecting it to be an opportunity to share ideas, but instead they were informed that the school would be mothballed in October.

He further noted that the communication and process throughout has been poor. If we had had advance communication, leadership could have been taken and there could have been some positive actions.

IG asked whether there was a desire from the parents to take further action.

JW indicated that right now, the children need to get settled at their new schools and we can then come back together and see if there is anything else to be done.

In the 2 years that he has been in the village, the shop has closed, the school is being mothballed and we are losing the church. Something needs to be done.

AW said that he had received a letter from the Head of Education regarding the mothball and requesting any outstanding invoice. He will also make them aware of items in the hall that they will need to remove.

SA noted that Saltoun has a nucleus for the nursery, which will maybe allow more options to keep it going.

RG noted that when Humbie was mothballed and the children moved to Pencaitland rather than Saltoun, it started the process as it gave a clear message. Humbie parents were also told that transport would only be provided to Pencaitland.

SAh and GM have met with the HoE. In terms of efficiencies and best value for children, it's not feasible to keep a school open for 5 children.

TT stated that it's all about numbers. We need to be realistic. If the potential housing in Saltoun and Humbie had gone ahead, the numbers may have been different.

JW suggested we bring this back to the next meeting and reassess the situation then.

GM said that mothball doesn't mean closure - it will be kept under review. JM noted that there is a school in EL that had been mothballed that is now being reopened. As regards the nursery, we need to advertise and galvanise the community.

RG said that we need to understand if there is still scope for small rural schools from the Council's perspective, or if they're rather looking to rationalise. If there is still scope, then what are the steps towards un-mothballing?

SA noted that the Council won't commit to a number for un-mothballing.

TT said that there is support from the local councillors, but there is only so much that they can do as they cannot influence the numbers.

RG will pass the 2 questions on to IG to be sent through to Nicola McDowell.

RG send questions through to IG.
IG send questions through to NM.

6. East Saltoun Local Place Plan

IG said that Pencaitland has just completed their plan and they used information from the East Lammermuir plan.

IG proposed to do the plan for East Saltoun - the 3 villages can do it separately.

He will be building a group of interested residents and they will share information and get feedback.

The suggestion is that the community councillors for Saltoun get together and pull in anyone else that is interested and take it from there. We have a template to use and there is possibly software that will help.

JW said that it would make sense to include West Saltoun in the LLP as there are a lot of young families there.

The next step would be to create community engagement, either by a village mail shot or email.

AW indicated that he has a formal association with membership for Fletcher Hall and he can share that information.

It was noted that Council has to take regard of the LPP submission but doesn't have to implement any of it.

GM stated that the draft LDP plan is available to view on the website.

7. Planning Applications

N/A

8. Correspondence (since last meeting)

- Digital Switchover Online Webinar Meeting
RG will be attending this meeting and will provide feedback.

9. Website - no additions from this meeting

- Add information regarding the LPP
- Add link to Council Website survey

IG add info.

IG add survey link.

10. AOB

- Hamilton Estates
JW queried whether there was any update. IG indicated that he's not had further communication from them but believed that they were trying to submit something for LDP. There will still need to be a planning application and consultation with the community before anything takes place.
IG noted that this is the sort of thing that they are hoping to pick up during the LPP process.
- Fletcher Hall
AW noted that the funds from Education accounts for about half of the hall revenue. The school had a block booking for use of the hall. Half their income is now gone.
Current issue is also that the kitchen is out of use due to the previous flooding. He is waiting for the council to come back to him as regards the asbestos issues. Given that the school will no longer be using the hall, he suspects that the Council will not want to assist with repairs.
MH said that we need to be challenging the Council on what it is that rural villages get from them.

AW noted that during the hall repairs that took place 5 years ago, he was told that the hall had about 3 years left. With the kitchen being out of use, it's hard to hire the hall out.

RG questioned what was being done with the money being saved with the mothballing. SAh said that there will be costs to maintain the building and the teachers have been moved, so there's no real savings. GM noted that the decision to mothball was not a savings decision.

SAh will follow up as regards the repair work.

- Maintenance of Humbie School
SA asked whether there would be weekly impressions and asked if the intention is to board up the school. He noted that there will be objections to the boarding up of the school.
GM will follow up on this matter.
- Roads Surfaces Issues
GM said that he had raised the issues in a meeting with the Roads team. It is down to resources. He asked that people please report potholes to get them repaired. IG stated that he can vouch for the repair work being done when it's reported.
Gm further noted that once a pothole has been reported and the council is aware of it, you've a better chance to claim for vehicle damage.
- Speeding at Leaston
SAh has raised this with Alan Stubbs - they will have a look to see what is possible in the area.
- Saltoun Kirk
IG said that the surveyor will be coming to look at the church in October. Once we have the quote from them and the funding from the Rural Development Fund, we will put together a plan and look into an outline feasibility study. He will keep in touch with the Church of Scotland and let them know what's happening. Once everything is done, they will bring the information back to the interested parties.
- ELC Website
The Council is asking people to complete a survey as regards the website which is due to be updated. SAh asked that we please complete the survey and share it with the community.

SAh to follow up as regards repairs.

GM to enquire as regards Humbie school.

11. Date of next meeting

1st October 2024

Bolton Village Hall

19:30