**Dechmont Community Council**

**Minutes of Zoom Meeting, 3rd March 2021**

**Present:** Sarah Macdonald, Lynda Mcgivern, Ian Ferrel, Jim Watson, Vikki Kennedy

**Also in attendance:** Cllr Diane Calder, Cllr Chris Horne

**Apologies:** Siân Williams, Greg Colhoun, Liz Swarbrick

The chair Sarah McDonald welcomed everyone to the meeting

**Previous Minutes**

The minutes from January’s Zoom meeting were proposed by **JW** and seconded by **IF.**

**Bangour Sub-Group Report**

* **The Bangour Village Planning Committee Meeting**

**SMac** had attended today’s Planning Committee Meeting about Bangour Village and informed the other members that the planning application had been approved in principle with conditions attached.

**CH** (who was also present) said that concerns about the development included; transportation provision and the potential increase of traffic through Dechmont. The key thing was that at each stage of development the developers will be required to go back to the Development Management Committee and any concerns which had arisen would be checked, this would be ongoing as the building/development progresses. The planning Officer had said that while 998 units were in the plan that would be the absolute maximum allowed. It had been agreed that traffic calming would be put in place in Dechmont village before building commences.

**DC (**also in attendance**)** said that there were other concerns about how children will travel to Winchburgh Secondary school; the number of trees to be felled; the number of houses and what would happen if listed buildings were beyond repair. **DC** had made the point to the Committee that assumptions had been made about the effects on the Dechmont village.

At a previous meeting with Bangour subcommittee Chris Nicol (West Lothian Roads and Transportation Department) had claimed that there would be no effect on Dechmont village this appears to be not the case based on recent findings and current experience.

Various points were made by DCC members about the speed and volume of traffic currently travelling through Dechmont and the impact of additional traffic from the Bangour development. It was suggested that there needs to be something put in place to deter traffic from choosing the main street of the village as a short cut/quicker route if there is a build-up of traffic at the Dobbie’s roundabout.

**DC** said that it would be helpful if consideration was made of mistakes made with the Winchburgh development and to put a plan in place to address issues prior to the commencement of building rather than wait for problems to occur. It was thought that the Committee had acknowledged that speed calming was a necessity in Dechmont.

* **JW** asked who monitors how many trees are to be felled and **CH** explained that trees are under a tree-preservation order and any trees felled to date were done so legally. **DC** said that some of the trees may be part of a cash crop and could be 30 yrs old but she is unsure of the whereabouts or amount (it may be an area at the top of the site) when she had raised the question with the Committee, she hadn’t received a clear response.
* **IF** asked if the Planning Department had access to the developer’s financial figures and **CH** said that they did.

The minutes of the recent subgroup meeting were proposed by Ian Ferrel and seconded by Jim Watson. The date of the next subgroup meeting has not yet been fixed.

**Nicola Gill-footpath issues**

* After the last community council meeting **IF** had tried to contact Nicola Gill several times directly and in-directly by both phone and e mail he is disappointed that she did respond to him until today even then, showing little interest.

**Action**

**DC and CH will both contact NG to pursue answers about the footpath.**

**Election of Planning Officer, Youth Member and Vice chair**

* The subject was broached briefly and the chair asked for volunteers for the positions of Planning Officer and Vice Chair but there was no uptake.

**Action**

**Keep on the agenda.**

**Traffic Task Force**

* **SMac** suggested that DCC should have a ‘Traffic Task Force’ this would be a person/group dedicated to dealing with traffic issues. Once restrictions are lifted it may be appropriate to hold a public meeting to encourage more involvement from residents as currently there are insufficient members to take on this responsibility.

**Action**

**Keep on the agenda. JW offered to expand the traffic report that he had already compiled in preparation for whoever takes on the role.**

**E mails**

* **SMac** explained that one of the reasons the vice chair had resigned was due to the volume of e mails she had received, another member has also complained. **LMc** explained that she is obliged to forward e mails, sheadmitted that she forwards a large volume (although not all that she receives) many are addressed to the Planning Officer, others to the Community Council in general. Another contributory factor is lack of response to requests, requiring additional emails to be sent. It had been suggested that emails of relevance should be sorted and only these sent out to relevant members, however as there is currently no Planning Officer, she cannot be selective and choose what she sends to whom. **LMc** asked for suggestions on how to address this issue and what members would like to happen. Suggestions included putting them into a ‘drop box’ , filtering them or creating a DCC folder and saving them all there for reference. Members were reminded that they are not expected to read the content of all e mails but can focus on those relevant to them or the community they represent.

The members present were asked what they would prefer to happen and all wanted to continue to receive e mails as normal.

**Action**

**LM to send out a e mail detailing the e mail procedures**

**Spaces for People**

* Cllrs **DC** and **CH** spoke about Spaces for People and how opinions had been collated on some of the initiatives that had been implemented during Covid 19 restrictions**. LM** confirmed that she had forwarded comments on behalf of Dechmont Community Council. The Cllrs are not sure when the results will be circulated perhaps around May. It was generally agreed by counsellors that the speed limits should not be carte blanche across West Lothian but consideration should be made of the area and size of village/town. Also, the majority were in favour of removing the bollards at bus stops as they were causing disruption to traffic.
* Discussion ensued about the speed limit in Dechmont village and how it should be consistent along the Main Street so as not to confuse drivers. The 20mph limit near schools is enforceable but in other areas it would be impossible to impose. At this morning’s Planning Meeting, it was agreed that speed mitigation should be implemented in Dechmont village **DC** suggested that the community council should hold developers to account re speed bumps.

**Traffic Volume- Jim Jack**

**Action**

**Discuss and next meeting**

**Town Twinning- Greg Colhoun**

Greg was unable to attend this meeting.

**Action**

**Discuss at next meeting**

**Counsellor’s Reports**

* Nothing to add as issues had already been addressed under other agenda points.
* **LMc** asked if the counsellors had any information about website compliance, **DC** believed that it had arisen from the Joint Forum’s Blueprint, but couldn’t advise.

**Action**

**LMc to contact Lorraine McCrorty and the Joint Forum for advice.**

**AOB**

**Disturbances experienced by locals**

* **SMac** relayed complaints from a local farmer of vandalism and harassment and concerns about their personal safety caused by visitors to the Bangour Village site. They have no faith in the police as on previous occasions they have had minimal support. **DC** suggested that the Farmers Union and the local MP are involved and to contact the Area Inspector. **SMac** has e mailed Iain Wells today explaining the situation. **VK** also reported the farmer is not alone in this and many residents in Dechmont are also experiencing problems with disturbances at night. They have also found it difficult get a hold of the police and when they do there is little reaction.

**Action**

**CH to pass on the contact details of the Area Inspector to SMac.**

**LAC**

* **LMc** asked if there was anything she needs to bring up at the LAC meeting on Friday 5th March. It was agreed that the disturbances and lack of police response associated with Bangour Village should be raised, if there is a police representative attending the meeting.

**Development in Bathgate Hills**

* **IF** voiced his concerns about the planning application in Bathgate hills he asked is anyone else had the same reservations and if it had been mentioned at the Committee Meeting this morning. It had not been mentioned.

**Action**

**Discover if there are any other objections, members can respond to IF.**

**Deer**

**VK** pointed out that a few deer had been killed in the Bangour Village area and she asked the counsellors if they were aware if any warning signs were going to be put up to warn motorists of the potential danger. **DC** felt that that the council did not consider it to be an issue as there is culling in operation, `however members are concerned that the deer could cause serious accidents. In addition, the deer corpses had not been removed.

**Action**

**DC** will investigate removal of the corpses.

**Next meeting 31st March 2021**