



Meeting of the Community Alliance - Minute

25 August 2021

Attending – Anne MacDougall (Chair), Rhona Young (Clydebank Seniors Forum), Stephen Burns (WDC), Cllr Jonathan McColl (Elected Member), Drummond McNair (Community Council Forum), John White (Stepping Stones) and Suzanne Mason (WDC)

Apologies – Barbara Barnes (Alexandria Neighbourhood Action), Cllr Sally Page (Elected Member) and Theresa Jones (Clydebank Asbestos)

1. Introductions / Background

The chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting over Zoom.

Everyone at the meeting was asked to introduce themselves briefly describe who they represent.

The chair asked someone to propose and second the minutes from the meeting on 20 July 2021, the minutes were proposed by Rhona Young and seconded by Cllr McColl.

Stephen updated the group on the consultations that he has held recently in relation to the Community Alliance. A survey monkey was sent out in December 2020 to Community Groups, Equalities Forum and Community Alliance distribution lists. The results were analysed and a report was written and circulated.

Following on from the survey monkey, a second consultation was organised in the form of listening events. The listening events either took the form of answering the questions through email or by attending the zoom listening event. On conclusion of this consultation, a report was written and circulated. Stephen offered to resend the reports.

There was a feeling expressed at the meeting attendance has been poor, the community are not being listened too and a sense that the Community Alliance has had it's day/ a fresh approach may be needed.

One member from the Community Council Forum expressed the view that an extended membership of the Forum could possibly replace the Community Alliance. There was also some discussion about the number of community bodies in WDC, and whether they can co-exist and gain enough interest to be worthwhile individually.

Stephen pointed out that not every area in West Dunbartonshire has a Community Council so they would not be represented and to expand the membership of the Community Council Forum to other community groups would change the nature of this group, which is currently being supported to develop and function effectively as a CC Forum.

There was some general discussion about how well recognised the role of the Community Alliance has been both now and in the past and how it has functioned, whether as mainly to rubber stamp decisions already made.

The chair asked the group how do we move the Community Alliance forward.

Cllr McColl reiterated some of the views stated, that whilst the former Community Participation Committee had developed in the Alliance, however it had lost its way somewhere along the way.. Cllr McColl also felt that the role and purpose of the Alliance may need to be totally revisited.

Cllr McColl felt that whilst the draft remit was strong, it requires input from a revitalised membership of which does not seem to be happening with the current format of meetings. Whilst the role of the Alliance should be the conduit between Communities and the Community Planning Partnership it is not currently fulfilling its potential in this regard and to present the view of the community groups to councillors on a wide range of topics.

The Chair also reiterated some of this sentiment and felt that the Alliance was not fulfilling its role, as did other members of the group.

There was some discussion about the Council's customer service charter and not responding within timescales set and some issues around Home Care services.

A new member of the group was in attendance and commented that the draft remit reads really well and Stepping stones would like to continue to be involved with the Community Alliance. John had not previously been aware of the Community Alliance, but had in the past had experience of similar forums and recognised the sentiments which had been expressed by members today.

Cllr McColl responded to some of the issues raised re.lack communication in response to the community and stated that any instances should be reported. Also regarding the Home Care Service and highlighted that the council are following the Government guidance about staff who can work from home should work from but in the months ahead, a phased return to offices is planned.

Cllr McColl suggested that before considering the election of office bearers it would make sense to ensure that the remit is complete to represent the type of group the Community will support. This item was therefore deferred.

The chair commented that in the previous forum, guest speakers were invited to the meetings and it improved attendance as people wanted to hear what was being said.

Cllr McColl suggested that due to numbers in attendance it was not possible to cover the full agenda of the meeting.

The chair proposed some changes to the draft remit and felt that changes should be made to the Governance section i.e. if any finances were going through the group and the list of participants. It was also felt that when setting the agenda that the relevant staff member from a department in question attend the meeting to participate in the discussion.

Cllr McColl also suggested that the Community Alliance meetings become part of the audio streaming to be available for members of the community to listen to if they can't make the meeting.

Stephen will make the relevant changes to the draft remit for comment.

Cllr McColl has offered to do a letter all the Community Groups named in the draft remit to invite them along, give them a brief update on the Alliance to encourage participation. This letter will be a joint letter from Cllr McColl and the chair.

The Chair closed the meeting.