

# GOVAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING 5 FEBRUARY 2018

**Present:** Allan Bell (chair), Esme Clark, Flora Pagan, Robert Preston, Georgina Preston, Jean Melvin, Wilma Bruce, Reinhild Gorniak, Daniel O'Neill, Brian McQuade, John Foster

**Attending:** Cllr John Kane, Cllr Stephen Dornan, Chris Stephens MP, Cllr Richard Bell, PC Gary Larman, Clyde yards conveners Duncan McPhee, John Logan, Billy McKay, David Jones, three representatives of Asylum Seekers living in Govan, Jimmy Stringfellow

**Apologies:** Cllr Allan Young, Humza Yousaf MSP

Minute Taker: John Foster

### 1. Minutes of 8 January

These were moved as correct by Esme Clark and Gina Preston.

### 2. Presentation by shop stewards conveners from the Scotstoun and Govan yards of BAE Clyde

The three conveners, Duncan McPhee, John Logan and Billy McKay, the Unite conveners from Scotstoun and Govan and the GMB convener from Govan, stressed that the two yards worked collectively together as a team and this also applied to the unions. The Govan yard built the ships while Scotstoun did the finishing and some of the manufacturing. While the yards had sufficient work for some years building the Type 26 frigates, the volume of work promised to the yards had been cut back and this was affecting the intake of new workers and particularly of apprentices. Previously intakes had been up to 100 apprentices. They were currently badly down on that figure.

They felt they had been betrayed over the government's promise that the yard would get the order for the Type 31 frigates and that the order for the Type 26 would be thirteen. Now even the reduced order for eight Type 26 frigates was being made contingent on the satisfactory delivery of the first three.

They were particularly concerned about the Ministry of Defence decision to consider awarding contracts for the three Navy support vessels overseas, probably to Korea. These massive vessels, representing as much tonnage as an aircraft carrier, would have provided much needed work for other yards such as Rothsyth, sustaining the British shipbuilding industry, and at the same time, though taxes and NHI contributions, feeding up to a third of the cost back into the home economy.

The stewards contested the idea that competitive tendering was economically justifiable for specialist warship building. Additionally, the figure of £250m for the Type 31 frigates, set by the Treasury, was quite unrealistic.

They stressed the loss to local businesses through the reduction in supply orders and to the local community for the loss of jobs and particularly apprenticeships for youngsters.

Chris Stephens MP reported on his campaign in parliament on this issue. All were thanked for their contribution.

It was **agreed** that the Community Council write letters to:

The Secretary of State for Scotland David Mundell

The Defence Procurement Minister Harriett Baldwin

The Chancellor of the Exchequer Phillip Hammond

The letter should express grave concern at the decision of the government to go back on earlier promises regarding thirteen Type 26 frigates for BAe Clyde, reducing the order to eight, and then subsequently to go back on promise that the Clyde yard be given compensation by awarding it the contract for the Type 31 frigates. These decisions placed in jeopardy the longer term maintenance of key shipbuilding skills on the Clyde, would penalise local businesses, making it more difficult to sustain local supply chains, and would deprive the local community of employment and especially good quality employment for young people, noting that the intake of young people as apprentices had already been sharply reduced.

The letter should also query the economic justification for placing orders for the three naval support vessels overseas – given that a significant proportion of the cost would otherwise come back into the local economy through taxes, NHI payments and the provision of materials and components.

The letter should ask the government to reconsider its decisions in these matters and to include in its assessment of costs the benefits to the wider economy that would otherwise be lost.

### **3. Presentation by three representatives of local Asylum Seekers**

The representatives introduced themselves (names have been withheld to ensure security). They thanked the Community Council for its past support and described the harrowing experience of years of insecurity, not knowing their future or that of their children, and their constant fear of 'leave to stay' applications being rejected and being deported to countries where their lives would be at risk.

They raised in particular the current denial of the right to take paid employment. This denial had three bad consequences.

First, it left them entirely dependent for their subsistence and that of their children on a weekly payment of £37 – for food, clothes, travel and all other necessities. If they needed to visit the City centre for an official appointment or to buy clothes, they had either to walk or go without food.

Second, it deprived them of the opportunity to make a contribution to the local community. They all had professional qualifications – in health and accounting – and these skills were needed.

Third, not working degraded their skills and led to depression and mental illness.

Chris Stephens MP explained that previously there had been a right to work but this had been removed on the assumption that applications to remain would be processed within a year. This had not happened. He also raised the poor standard of accommodation provided by the Home Office subcontractor SERCO – on which he had waged a campaign in the Commons.

It was **agreed**

- a) To raise a parliamentary petition in favour of the right to work and to seek support from neighbouring Community Councils – on the basis that G51 had one of the largest concentration of asylum seekers in Scotland
- b) To publicise the plight of asylum seekers in the next issue of the Govan Letter in order to overcome the misconception that asylum seekers received special treatment.
- c) To provide specific support to individuals as required

It **was further agreed** that the Community Council should give support to planning permission for the opening of overnight accommodation in Fairlie Street for homeless refugees who had been given the right to remain. This should be done on line on the City Council planning website reference 17/03520/DC change of use Class 5 to Class 7 before 13 February. Individual members of the Council were asked to do the same (there would be a planning consultation on the subject on Thursday 8 February at 5-7 p.m at Fairlie Street)

#### **4. Police report**

PC Gary Larman was welcomed to the meeting. He said that in future he hoped to attend on a regular basis.

He gave the crime figures for the previous month which indicated 50 reported crimes as against 55 over the same period in 2017. The main offence was shoplifting in the Shopping Centre (9 cases), thefts (6 cases), common assaults (6 plus 2 serious assaults), and 3 attempted housebreakings in Govan Road. The thefts had included that of a laptop from the Coming Home Team in the PI.

Gary reported that he was discussing crime prevention measures with the Shopping Centre management.

Other issues raised included the throwing of stones at buses on Govan Road from the Graving dock site.

#### **5. Matters arising from the January minute**

##### **a) Membership of the Community Council**

Stephen Dowling from Democratic Services had written indicating an agreed increase in membership to 14 (quorum raised to 5) The Secretary would liaise with Stephen over dates for an election. It was agreed that this might be held towards the end of April and that an issue of Govan Letter be prepared to publicise.

##### **b) Proposals resulting from the 29 September annual strategy meeting with elected representatives – review of actions taken**

###### **i) QEUH**

Arising from the presentation to the January meeting it was agreed to continue to review A&E waiting times. It was noted that disparities of pay between NHS nurses and agency staff remained a major problem and that even with a 3 per cent pay increase (in face of 3 per cent RPI) little progress had been made in making up for lost income over the past five years.

###### **ii) Housing provision for older people**

Cllr John Kane stressed the need to keep raising this issue. He had ensured that consideration was now being given allocating housing with lifts for this purpose in the GHA Hinchelwood development.

###### **iii) City Bus Transport**

It was **agreed** to write to First Bus to protest against the fare increases imposed at new year. Although the company appeared to have withdrawn the increase in the fare for unemployed, the increase from 70p to £1 for children at 30 per cent was unjustifiable and would cause hardship. It was also noted that tickets had now been changed to 'Valid To' which would appear to give scope to unjustified claims by the company for the transport passenger subsidy.

###### **iv) New joint initiative against dog fouling**

Cllr Kane reported that there was unlikely to be any budgetary provision for a new campaign until the Council budget had been set

*c) East Govan CC*

There was no further information.

*d) Shopping trolleys*

No improvement. It was hoped that the next meeting would get a report on how far City Council Chief Executive considered that a by-law could be created to fine offending stores.

*e) Mary Barbour statue*

Preparations were well in hand for an unveiling on International Women's Day 8 March 2018: 11 a.m. There would be a march by school children and a civic reception in the Pearce Institute. Work would start shortly on preparing the base outside the Underground Station.

*f) Graving dock site: planning permission process commencing*

A consultation meeting would be held on 3 March in the Riverside Hall 'for an alternative vision for the Govan Graving Docks site by agents appointed on behalf of Mr. Jim McColl and Ferguson Marine to develop a proposal for the reinstatement of the existing Grade A listed Dry docks into a working ship repair and maintenance facility alongside a mix use development with an emphasis on community and cultural uses.'

Danny O'Neill reported he had attended a seminar on this held at the QEUH and felt that the proposal had some positive aspects compared to that of New City Vision and would be less dominated by high cost housing – although he would like to see a riverside walkway maintained.

It was agreed that the Community Council should be represented on 3 March. It was noted that SEPA had lodged an objection to the NCV proposals on grounds of flooding dangers and that any proposal would face up to £15m costs for cleaning the site of contaminants.

*g) Lyceum building*

There was no further development.

*h) Shaw Street-Langlands Road circuit: traffic hazard*

A further letter to be written to James Rodden of LES

*i) Scottish Fire and Rescue Service*

Cllr Kane noted that one consequence of the new proposals had been the withdrawal of staff for HMO inspections – as a result of which the City Council had had to appoint its own fire officer.

*j) Food banks*

Chris Stephens would write to Asda raising their failure to provide facilities for collections

*k) Coming Home Team*

Allan Bell reported on his visit and it was **agreed** to ask a representative to attend the April meeting.

*l) Housing development at Water Row*

Danny O'Neil reported on his visit to the consultation and indicated some reservations about high rise flats as inconsistent with the heritage aspects of Govan Cross. It was **agreed** that officers would consider the plans and report back.

## **6. COMMUNITY COUNCIL ORGANISATION**

**a) Changing signatures on the bank account with the Royal Bank of Scotland**

Our Secretary had the forms and would secure signatures

**b) Community Council responsibilities**

Danny O'Neill had offered to set up members' smart phones to speak to the new twitter account which so far had fifty followers. Unfortunately so far no members possessed smart phones. Danny would continue his invaluable work in publicising the activities of the Council

**7. PLANNING**

There was none.

**8. CORRESPONDENCE**

**a) Invitation to the Royal Garden party**

There were no members who wished to attend

**b) Nomination for Community Council representation to sit on the City Council Committee for Citizen Engagement**

There were no immediate proposals, It was agreed to return to this.

**9. COUNCILLORS' AND ELECTED MEMBERS REPORTS**

**Councillor Kane reported**

**a) Area Partnership: phasing out of metal bins**

Councillor Kane noted that Govan was well down the list for the phased replacement and suggested that if there were areas of very high need a special case be made.

**b) Carers Support Group**

This was now operating from 901 Govan Road (the Govan HA Hub) and providing support for children with ASD and ADHD.

**Councillor Dornan**

**Unsnagging of the Fastlink route**

Members were asked to identify areas of the route that posed particular safety risks and congestion problems

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: MONDAY, 5 MARCH 2018 at 7pm in the Workspace Board Room.**