

## Park Improvement Sub-committee

### Minutes of Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023 by TEAMS Video Conference

#### Present:

Cllr Allan Morgans  
Holly McLoughlin  
Ann Catherall  
Cllr Lyn Gibson  
Sean Thomas  
Dawn Skelhorn  
Margaret Narburgh - Clerk

#### 1. Apologies

None

#### 2. Appointment of Chair

The Clerk explained that as this is a formal sub-committee of Llanferres Community Council, the committee is obliged to follow the same procedures and protocols prescribed for general meetings. The first duty is to appoint a Chair and the clerk invited members to put themselves forward. After due discussion Cllr Morgans volunteered, Cllr Gibson seconded and members McLoughlin, Catherall and Thomas voted in favour. There were no votes against or abstentions.

#### 3. Appointment of Members

Cllr Gibson, Ms McLoughlin, Mrs Catherall and Mr Thomas put themselves forward to formally join the committee and all were accepted. Ms Skelhorn was invited to join and stated she would prefer to just listen at this stage.

#### 4. Meeting Open to the Public

The Chair outlined the protocol for enabling members of the public to speak at the beginning of meetings. No matters were raised.

#### 5. Declarations of Interest

The Chair explained that members of the committee had a duty to make it known if they had a personal or prejudicial interest in any item being discussed during the meeting. Examples of personal interests are when a member is related to or a very close friend of a planning applicant, in this case they could join in the discussion and vote. Prejudicial interests are when members have a personal relationship with someone or work for a contractor who has quoted to undertake work for the council. In this case the member cannot partake in any discussions or vote and is required to leave the meeting during these discussions so as not to influence the outcome either way. No interests were declared.

#### 6. Terms of Reference

The Clerk had circulated draft Terms of Reference with relevant Standing Orders prior to the meeting. The Chair explained his understanding that park improvements included Maeshafn playing field (replacing the stone wall and fencing along the front boundary, planting gaps in hedge with saplings and replanting the butterfly garden), some of which the Council had already precepted to fund and Maes Ysgawen park (improving access for wheelchair and mobility scooter users, thinning trees, improving biodiversity, creating a nature trail, building an outdoor classroom and a decorative feature to depict the area). Others present had

also suggested creating a community garden, allotments, vegetable plots, compost heap and a pond. Ms McLoughlin suggested the T of R should also include involving the community to ensure there is a 'need and support' for the works being considered. Action: Clerk to include community involvement and circulate the revised Terms of Reference.

The Chair stated that improving facilities for the less able was looked on favourably by grant providers and Cllr Gibson stated that improving biodiversity was also key to securing funds. Mrs Catherall asked if creating a pond could be included and the Clerk explained that the Council had always shied away from this due to health & safety concerns and onerous conditions imposed by insurers with the associated substantial increase in premiums to cover the risks. Mr Thomas confirmed LPFRA had encountered similar issues when it considered creating a pond in the park to improve the natural boggy area either side of the stream straggling the boarder between the park and the playing field. Action: Clerk to circulate original Maes Ysgawen Development Plan, list of trees originally planted and 2022 Biodiversity report to members for reference.

Mr Thomas stated grant providers usually specify that applicants 'measure' and report back on the effect any improvements have had on increasing use by the community. Action: Clerk to include on agenda for discussion at a future meeting when relevant.

The Chair stated that the role of the committee was to investigate and recommend and that decisions to go ahead would be made by the full Council.

## **7. Members Experience**

Mr Thomas has considerable experience in securing funding and agreed to identify potential sources for this project.

Cllr Gibson and Mrs Catherall are joint secretary for Llanferres gardening club and agreed to lead discussions on planting and biodiversity.

Ms McLoughlin has considerable experience in 'best practice' for putting together and leading community projects and agreed to take the lead in involving the local community, including the school if appropriate.

The Chair is an experience project manager and agreed to obtain quotes at the appropriate time and co-ordinate activities.

The Clerk is familiar with legislative requirements and agreed to guide the committee in this respect alongside the general administration.

## **8. Legislation**

The Clerk reported that she had already outlined the Council's plans to Denbighshire Planning Department and has confirmation that the planning permission is not necessary because the works fall under 'permitted developments'. Planning had suggested that the Council contact the tree preservation officer for advice on thinning or removing any trees and using a permeable surface for any paths to prevent flooding. A copy of the confirmation from planning is attached as Appendix 1 for reference. Action: Clerk to contact the tree officer and arrange a site meeting if appropriate and undertake research to identify the most suitable surface for the paths.

The Equalities Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against those with mental or physical disabilities and requires that 'reasonable adjustments' be made to accommodate their needs when providing facilities. In practical terms, this means any improvements should following planning guidance notes for parks as outlined in TAN 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Spaces. Amongst other things this outlines the width and gradient of paths and provision of 'flat areas' for resting and passing.

## 9. Design

The Chair stated that he thought upgrading the paths would be expensive and that the Council would need to go out to formal tender if the project value was over £25,000. If under this value the Council could proceed by obtaining at least three quotes. Mr Thomas stated that the tarmac path in Llanferres playing field was designed to meet legislation for disabled users and cost £12,000 for 400 m<sup>2</sup> equivalent to £30 m<sup>2</sup>. The Chair thought the paths through the park were around 300m long so if 2 m wide the estimated cost would be around £18,000 plus extra for the flat passing places.

After due discussion it the committee agreed to meet in the park at 6.30 pm on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April to survey the area. Action: Clerk to book village hall to discuss ideas after the survey.

Ms McLoughlin suggested involving the community to find out what it would like. The Clerk stated that based on her experience people do not respond well when asked what they would like but are very willing to voice opinions when presented with outline plans. She felt it would be more productive if members drew up rough design ideas and present them to the community in a village meeting. This was agreed.

## 10. Funding

Mr Thomas asked what the outcome had been from the meeting with Denbighshire Voluntary Services on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023. The Chair explained that they had provided a list of potential grant providers but did not have any funding to offer themselves. Mr Thomas agreed to identify potential grant providers. Action: Clerk to forward information she had to Mr Thomas.

## 11. Actions

- i. Committee members to meet at the main entrance gate to Maes Ysgawen at 6.30 pm on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April to survey the area and discuss ideas.
- ii. Timing of future meetings to be agreed – Mr Thomas suggested a quick progress meeting every 2 weeks to prevent the project 'drifting'.
- iii. Clerk to forward information to members as outlined above.
- iv. Members to progress their individual actions as appropriate and report back on progress at the next formal meeting.

## 12. Other Business

Ms Skelhorn was asked if she would like to add anything and she asked if she could join the committee. All members agreed.

Date of next meeting to be agreed.

The Chair thanked the members for their contributions and the meeting was closed at 20.15 pm.

## Appendix 1

### Email received from Planning Department

**From:** Sarah E Stubbs <sarah.e.stubbs@denbighshire.gov.uk>

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 2:38 PM

**To:** clerk.llanferres@gmail.com

**Subject:** Maes Ysgawen Park Improvements Llanferres

Dear Margaret,

I am writing in response to your email seeking planning advice in relation to some improvements to open spaces in Llanferres.

Community Councils have permitted development rights to undertake certain works without the need to apply for planning permission. These permitted development rights are set out in Part 12 'Development by Local Authorities' which I have attached for you.

*(See attached file: Part 12 Permitted Development.docx)*

I understand from your email that the intention is to make the park more accessible to wheelchair and mobility scooter users by changing the gate and upgrading the paths through the park with ones that meets the requirements for these users and arrange for a dropped kerb to be installed outside the main gate (I understand you are in discussions with Highways in relation to this element ). In relation to surfacing paths, a permeable material is advisable.

In relation to the tree works, if the trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order or are located within a designated Conservation Area, consent would be required to undertake any thinning works. <https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/planning-and-building-regulations/planning/tree-preservation-orders.aspx>

It would be advisable to discuss proposed tree works with an arboriculturist and if relevant consult with the Councils Tree Officers.

If you are seeking to improve Biodiversity, you may wish to seek advice from the County Ecologist.

I hope this helps.

Kind regards  
Sarah Stubbs

Principal Planning Officer

Signed: *Allan Morgans*

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