

Thorntonhall and Jackton Community Council
Annual General Meeting Minutes
October 17th, 2024
Location: Thorntonhall Tennis Club
Time: 8:15 PM



Present:

Chair: Claire Marr
Vice Chair: Sandy McEwen
Treasurer: Douglas Eunson
Secretary: Janice Edwards
Committee Members: Mark Aitken, Bill Turner
Members of the Public: 30 members of the public

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair, Claire Marr, welcomed everyone to the AGM meeting.

Apologies were received from David Ross, Cllr. McAdams, and Cllr. Watson. It was also noted that David Milloy, a Community Council member had resigned the previous month.

2. Approval of Previous AGM Minutes (November 15th, 2023)

- The minutes from the previous AGM (November 15th, 2023) were reviewed.
- **Proposed by:** Douglas Eunson **Seconded by:** Sandy McEwen
The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Chair's Report (Claire Marr)

The Chair, Claire Marr, provided a report summarising the Community Council's key activities over the past 12 months, highlighting achievements and challenges.

Main items:

Large Development Proposals:

- **Neighbourhood Centre, Peel Road, Thorntonhall planning application P/23/1383:**
Last year, the Council worked extensively on first gauging opinion and then opposing a neighbourhood centre proposed for Greenbelt land at the north end of the village. The Council, alongside a local residents' group, produced newsletters to inform the community. Nearly 100 people attended a December meeting in opposition to the proposal. The Planning Officer's report echoed the Community Council's objections based on Greenbelt protections. Ultimately, the applicant withdrew the proposal, avoiding formal refusal.

- **Notable Data:**

288 objections from Thorntonhall residents were submitted, which represented 90% of the Thorntonhall comments submitted to SLC about the development.

- **Battery Storage Facility (BESS) Proposal at Meikle Dripps, Thorntonhall:** The second main item is the current development proposal of a 150mw battery storage facility (BESS), which has been the subject of a Screening Request (P24/0179 and ECU00005045) and is now awaiting formal planning application submission. The planning application will be processed by the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) which is a Scottish Government office. As with the former, this is a proposal in the greenbelt, and it has become apparent that most local residents are unhappy about the location being greenbelt and proximity to residential properties. Plus, there are concerns about noise, fire safety, roads issues, loss of nature, and contravention of some planning policies. However, considering government net zero ambitions, the likely outcome of the application is uncertain to say the least.
- **Other issues and achievements:**
 - The Community Council has successfully navigated smaller issues, such as residential planning applications, road closures, hedges, and drainage problems. Despite a reduced number of Councillors attending meetings regularly, Councillor David Watson has been particularly reliable and supportive. All meetings have included the requisite number of committee members (the 'quorum').
 - **Attendance Increase:** The Community Council has seen a marked improvement in attendance, averaging 33 attendees per meeting, which is an increase on previous years.
 - **Special Event:** A notable meeting featured a presentation by a local historian and archaeologist on the history of Thorntonhall, drawing a large crowd.
 - **Volunteers:** The Community Council has faced difficulties in recruiting new members for most of the year, but after the announcement (albeit an informal announcement) that the Community Council would collapse without new volunteers, three new members stepped forward in the past month, ensuring the Council's continued operation.
- **Challenges:**

Going forward there is a need to co-ordinate volunteers to look at the possibility of formulating a Local Place Plan (LPP) for Thorntonhall. Although there have been some volunteers interested in planning, the group will need to appoint a leader etc. There has been a suggestion of a Thorntonhall Village Residents Group, and this could incorporate planning.

 - **Lack of SLC Councillor/Police Attendance at Community Council Meetings:** Aside from Councillor Watson, the attendance of South Lanarkshire Councillors has been minimal, with Councillor Williams attending only once. Other councillors have not attended at all, although some have expressed scheduling conflicts.

The Chair expressed hope that Councillors will attend more meetings in the future, as their presence significantly aids in addressing community concerns.

- **Police:** There has not been a police presence at the monthly meetings for around two years. The new secretary will be asked to reach out to the Community Policing Unit to check on their future plans, as their input on local crime had been appreciated in the past.

- o **Jackton participation** (or lack of it) is a fact. On average, one or two residents from Jackton attend the meeting. This may be a lack of concerns from Jackton, or it may be that the venue is an issue. Something to think about in the future.

Actions taken this year have included:

- a. Hand delivered flyers in December and August. Plus, smaller delivery in March and April to recruit possible volunteers for planning group.
- b. Compilation of sample objection letter and crib sheet for December meeting.
- c. History of Thorntonhall presentation (book to go with it - micro grant given for printing).
- d. Discussion group on improving participation.
- e. Two litter picks in Thorntonhall, plus two in Jackton and grass verge partially re-seeded.
- f. Resident volunteers cleared a large amount of fly tipping, and another raked the damaged verge before re-seeding.
- g. Micro-grants awarded.

Thanks:

The Chair thanked the Community Council members for their hard work and dedication, with particular thanks to Janice Edwards for her five years of service as Secretary, and Vice-Chair Sandy McEwen and Treasurer Douglas Eunson for their support.

Conclusion of Report:

The Chair formally submitted her report to South Lanarkshire Council, including a note on the need for stronger support from SLC Councillors.

4. Treasurer's Report (Douglas Eunson)

Douglas Eunson, Treasurer, presented the financial report for the year.

- **Microgrants Awarded:**

- o £250 to the Thorntonhall Christmas Committee
- o £500 to the Thorntonhall Tennis Club
- o £250 to Thorntonhall Planters
- o £500 to the Thorntonhall Burn area improvement project
- o £500 to Beechwood Lee Residents' Association for bridge planters
- o £500 to the Association of Certified Field Archaeologists for printing the *History of Thorntonhall*

- **Other Financial Details:**

- o £50 remuneration to both the Secretary and Treasurer
- o £20 subscription to Scotways.
- o The administration grant of £515 was received from SLC for hall rental and expenses reimbursements.
- o The South Lanarkshire Council Renewable Energy (Microgrant) Fund was topped up by £750 this year, £4,250 was unused from last year's budget.

Douglas emphasised that funds were available and encouraged community members to apply for microgrants.

5. Secretary's Report (Janice Edwards)

Janice Edwards delivered the Secretary's report, outlining the Council's administrative activities over the past year.

- o A total of 10 meetings were held over the past year. Moving forward, the December meeting will be omitted due to recurring scheduling conflicts among members during the Christmas period.
- o Agendas were prepared, and minutes were recorded for each meeting. These were carefully reviewed and distributed promptly to community members, South Lanarkshire Council, and local Councillors.
- o Official council communications were managed efficiently, including receiving and responding to correspondence from various authorities, residents, committee members, and other stakeholders.
- o Notices for meetings, elections, and events were issued in compliance with regulations. Information is now consistently posted on community noticeboards, the Council's website, and on Facebook.
- o The Secretary also served as a key liaison between the council and external parties, including local authorities, community groups, and the public.
- o A dedicated email address, **jackthornccc@gmail.com**, was created for Community Council business to improve communication efficiency and safeguard privacy. The webpage contact form now forwards to this email, which is managed by the Secretary
- o Both the social media following, and email mailing list have expanded. The mailing list now has 204 members, an increase of 39, while social media followers have grown to 531.

Janice emphasised the need for continued improvement in communication and encouraged greater engagement from residents.

6. Election of New Office Bearers

• Ordinary Member Vacancy:

David Milloy has stepped down, and Warren Bader was nominated to fill the vacancy.

- o **Proposed by:** Claire Marr
Seconded by: Janice Edwards
Warren was welcomed as a new ordinary member.

Following Warren's nomination, the Chair and Secretary officially stepped down, and the Vice Chair, Sandy McEwen, assumed responsibility for the meeting.

- o The Vice-Chair, Sandy McEwen, expressed deep gratitude to the outgoing Chair, Claire Marr, for her dedication and hard work, both in her previous role as Secretary to the Council but also as its Chair, the latter having been a particular demanding period. Overall, Claire's commitment, as a resident of Jackton, is to be commended as over 90 percent of the issues and matters before the Council have been issues affecting Thorntonhall.

- o The outgoing Chair, Claire Marr, acknowledged the exceptional contributions of Janice Edwards, who has served as Secretary for five years. Claire noted Janice's stoicism in her duties, emphasizing her self-motivated dedication, and significant behind-the-scenes work in managing the Council's administration.
- o A vote of thanks was proposed for both Claire and Janice's dedication and hard work on behalf of the Council.

● **Chair Election:**

- o **Fiona Gardner was nominated and has accepted the position of Chair.**
- o **Proposed by:** Sandy McEwen
Seconded by: Douglas Eunson
Fiona Gardner's professional background as an NHS consultant was noted, and her administrative experience will be an asset to the Council.

● **Secretary Election:**

- o **Christian Potter was nominated as the new Secretary.**
- o **Proposed by:** Sandy McEwen
Seconded by: Warren Bader
Christian was welcomed to the Council and will be supported by existing members during the handover.

● **Treasurer Election:**

- o **Douglas Eunson agreed to remain in his position as Treasurer.**
- o **Proposed by:** Sandy McEwen
Seconded by: Warren Bader
Douglas was praised for his diligence, particularly for resolving long-standing issues with the Council's bank account.

● **Acceptance of Office**

- o Returning members: Davis Ross, Mark Aiken, Bill Turner

7. Closing Remarks

- o No changes to the Constitution have been proposed. We also confirm that new members will adhere to the handbook and the code of conduct.
- o Sandy McEwen mentioned that the increased attendance at Community Council Meetings over the last year had been very welcome. Whilst this was mainly due some of the meetings dealing with controversial proposed developments affecting the community, it was important for the future of the Community Council that the current momentum and interest is maintained.
- o Trisha Hughes asked from the floor of the meeting if the Community Council had the power to raise funds to finance projects and other objectives such as objections to local developments and the Place Plans which had been referred to in the meeting earlier in the evening
- o Sandy McEwen said that fund raising had been carried out several years ago and that the current position would be checked with SLC, but it was clear, at this stage,

that funding could only be used for projects which were consistent with the aims of the Community Council as representing the views of the local community.

Dates of Meetings:

- o It was agreed that there would be nine meetings scheduled for the 2024/25 year. These meetings will take place on the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM, held in the Thorntonhall Tennis Club.
Note There will be no meetings in December, July, or August.
- o As circumstances arise, we will remain flexible in our scheduling

With no further questions, Sandy McEwen concluded the business for the AGM. And thanked everyone for their attendance, interest, and patience.

The meeting was closed with a round of applause and presentation for the outgoing office bearers and the note of appreciation for the new appointees.

The business of the AGM concluded at 9.15PM

Next Meeting:

The next AGM meeting will be held on October 16th, 2025, at 7.30PM in the Thorntonhall Tennis Club.