



Meeting held on September 10th 2019  
in the Community Centre at 7.00 pm

**1. Present:** Peter Cailey (PC), Suzette Harris (SH), Helen Keating (HK, Chair), Jack Pickthall (JP), Fiona Power (FP), David Richmond (DR), Francois Van der Zee (FZ), Councillor Pauline Drysdale (PD), PC Alison Blacklock (AB).

**Also:** Lesley Richmond, Duncan and Vicki McConchie, Mandi Houfe.

**2. Public Forum:** (i) Duncan and Vicki McConchie presented their plans for a new Reception and Cafe/bistro at Laggan, which they hope to be able to open next March. This will bring four new full-time jobs to the area. (ii) Mandi Houfe is proposing to start street-sweeping and is making enquiries of the Council about equipment. She hopes others will join her. Councillors commended her and also William McSkimming and a non-Gatehouse-resident gentleman who currently pick up rubbish around the town. She brought the meeting's attention to recent moves to highlight the urgent Climate Crisis, including Dougie Campbell's appointment as regional Climate Change Champion, the formation of a multi-agency 'Dumfries and Galloway Climate Group' and the showing of a film on climate change in the Community Centre on Thursday 12th September at 7pm.

**3. Police Report:** PC Blacklock reported the theft of a boat engine from a lodge at Carrick; and the increasing prevalence of a new phone scam involving National Insurance numbers and fraud. She pointed out that over £1million of bank fraud is prevented per year and that 433 people in Scotland had been saved from losses of £2.6million last year alone. SH reported that drivers were not adhering to the 20mph limit on Dromore Road and NS agreed, highlighting incidents of dangerous driving through the chicane. One schoolchild no longer feels able to cycle to school as the cycle path at the chicane is often blocked by a parked car. PC Blacklock said that the Police and Council were aware and looking into this.

**4. Dumfries and Galloway Report:** (i) PD described the increasing drug problem among young people in the region with the coming of County Lines and the use of SnapChat and other social media to distribute drugs. GPs unfortunately continue to prescribe antidepressants, which in combination with drugs and alcohol lead to suicidal thoughts. AB reported that, unlike cannabis, cocaine was hard to detect and the Police rely on intelligence to catch suppliers. DA reported that Council Youth Worker, Paul Chisholm was very good at reaching youngsters; in addition the Royal Mail strives to intercept suspicious packages. It is vital to increase community awareness of this growing problem. (ii) PD reported on the coming arrangements for waste management in the region, which will involve three bins per household and four pick-ups per month. She is campaigning to make smaller, more manageable bins available for older people. The system should be operational some time next year. The Council is awaiting the Scottish Government's implementation of bottle and can recycling in supermarkets, which would reduce local recycling needs by 20-30%. (iii) There will be a Roads Event in Gatehouse Community Centre on 7th October from 1-5pm and members and the public were encouraged to attend.

**5. Minutes of the previous meeting** were approved with corrections by DR and SH (one name spelling and in relation to thanks for work on Gatehouse website) and the addition of an address to a planning application in 6(ii). Approval proposed by DR and seconded by JP.

**6. Matters arising:** (i) There was discussion about how and when the Minutes are displayed. It was agreed that, as well as the Draft Minutes, the Approved Minutes should be displayed on the Car Park noticeboard (in addition to being sent to D&G Council, the Gatehouse website and the Library). (ii) NS asked whether we had had a reply from D&G Council regarding the dangerous lack of reflective strips on the 'Keep Left' signs at the Cardoness Castle / A75 junction as he had witnessed a driver turning into Gatehouse on the wrong side of the road recently; and JP asked about the loose granite block at the High Street/Victoria Street junction. HK has sent CCESs to D&G Council about both (ii) and (iii) and has had acknowledgment of their receipt but has not been updated on implementation of the requests.

**7. Provost's report and communications:** (i) HK reported that the new Clock-Tower noticeboard was being well used. (ii) The revamp of street planters is nearly finished and she thanked JP and RD for their work moving these and also the Men's Shed for all their work. The Digby Street planter was recently moved and damaged by a reversing supermarket delivery van and HK has requested they provide some recompense in the form of plants. The Horticultural Society has been approached to look after one of the planters and Mary Clear has offered to take care of three. (iii) HK has spoken to Tony Topping (Team Leader, Network Strategy and Road Safety at Dumfries and Galloway Council) about possibility of putting bollards on the lugs at Digby Street and outside Boots. (iv) HK reminded the meeting that the AGM will take place before our October meeting. There will be no need for an election as there have been 11 nominations. (v) HK attended a Gatehouse Gateway 'hub' meeting at the school which met to discuss possible use of a school room for greater involvement of the community at the school (eg by TGB, Rotary, Fleet Valley Volunteers, churches). There was some discussion about why the Community Centre couldn't fulfil this function and RD reported that there was considerable disquiet among parents about this proposition. (vi) There has been a complaint about the state of the lade past the church on the Catherine Street side. It was pointed out that the Council is responsible for this. SH reported that she had seen an otter in this part of the watercourse recently. (vii) There will be a Dumfries and Galloway Partnership meeting at the Cairndale Hotel in Dumfries on 31st October to discuss health and social care in the region. (viii) Meals on Wheels recipients have dropped to four and it was felt that there must be others who would benefit. Bank of Fleet are providing excellent meals for the service. (ix) With recent increased interest in the history of Gatehouse, HK is looking into reprinting two local history books, *Gatehouse of Fleet in the Past* (its printer now unfortunately out of business) and *Gatehouse Memories* (printed by Solway Offset). Lesley Richmond mentioned that there is also increasing interest in an oral history project as it is many years since the last interviews. (x) There was discussion about the possibility of expanding the number of sculptures in Gatehouse, adding to the 'Big Twitcher' at the Mill and the Otters at the riverside, possibly creating a sculpture walk (as was originally envisaged). DA said that there was a fine chainsaw carver based at Gatehouse Farm at Laurieston; there is another at Rainton. Moffat holds a carving competition, something we could perhaps emulate.

**8. Dean of Guild:** FP reported that (i) a boundary wall has been approved at Ellfoot in Castramont Road, (ii) the application for the Manager's House at Laggan has been approved and (iii) retrospective alterations to windows and doors at 32 Catherine Street has been approved. (iv) As discussed in the Public Forum, an application has been made for a new Reception/Bistro and car park at Laggan to replace the existing set of buildings. (v) Proposed new house opposite church in Church Street - flood risk assessment has shown no risk of flooding from the lade.

**9. Treasurer's report:** The Admin account stands at £329.55 and the Common Good Fund at £119.25.

**10. AOCB:** FZ suggested that it would be useful to draw up a list of tradespeople in Gatehouse as he has had frequent requests for this, especially from new residents. Councillors pointed out that this was already available on a D&G Trusted Traders list and in the Bulletin delivered to all homes monthly but that it might be useful to have a page on the Gatehouse website where tradespeople could list themselves. FZ also felt we should do more to promote the town to visitors, the economic lifeblood of Gatehouse - not only in Gala Week. NS described the rolling list of events that Kirkcudbright organises. HK and DA pointed out that we already have Midsummer Music, Big Lit and events at the Bakehouse and monthly events at the Mill. DA reported that Climate Change awareness is already the subject of initiatives and work by Lusi Alderslowe, Maria Taylor and others, commending these efforts in addition to those of Mandi.

DA reported on the great success of the Bike Project at the Mill and its recent event, with training/work sessions soon to be increased to three per week; increasing numbers of tourists are requesting bike loans; Cycling UK is to erect a (free) bike shed at the school and will be running a rural cycling event next Spring; there is a proposed off-road cycle route from Gatehouse to Auchenlarie via Cairn Holy.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

Next meetings: October 15th (AGM), November 12th, December 8th