

Notice of Meeting and Agenda Petitions Board

Date	Time	Venue
Monday, 04 June 2018	14:00	Corporate Meeting Room 2, Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

KENNETH GRAHAM
Head of Corporate Governance

Membership

Councillor Bill Brown: Councillor Stephen Burns: Councillor Neill Graham: Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes: Councillor Scott Kerr: Councillor Jim Sharkey: Councillor Andy Steel:

Councillor Jennifer Marion Adam-McGregor (Convener): Councillor Michelle Campbell (Depute Convener):

Further Information

This is a meeting which is open to members of the public.

A copy of the agenda and reports for this meeting will be available for inspection prior to the meeting at the Customer Service Centre, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley and online at <http://renfrewshire.cmis.uk.com/renfrewshire/CouncilandBoards.aspx>

For further information, please either email democratic-services@renfrewshire.gov.uk or telephone 0141 618 7112.

Members of the Press and Public

Members of the press and public wishing to attend the meeting should report to the customer service centre where they will be met and directed to the meeting.

Items of business

Apologies

Apologies from members.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare an interest in any item(s) on the agenda and to provide a brief explanation of the nature of the interest.

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|----------|--|----------------|
| 1 | Petition: Elderslie Golf Course - Access | 3 - 10 |
| | Report by the Director of Finance and Resources. | |
| 2 | Review of the Petitions Process | 11 - 18 |
| | Report by the Director of Finance and Resources. | |



To: Petitions Board

On: 4 June 2018

Report by: Director of Finance and Resources

Heading: Public Access – Elderslie Golf Course

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Council has agreed procedures in relation to the submission of petitions including parameters for determining valid petitions and those areas where petitions would not be valid.
- 1.2 All valid petitions are to be submitted to the Board for consideration and a summary report is to be prepared on any petitions which are not considered to be valid in terms of the procedures and it is for the Board to determine the validity of such petitions.
- 1.3 A petition has been received which relates to access to Elderslie Golf Course and the application by Renfrewshire Council of the terms of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 to access to land being closed off within the council area.
- 1.4 The Head of Corporate Governance considers that the petition is not valid in terms of paragraph 3 (x) of the procedures:

Petitions about any decision we have made as a Council, or a decision a board, committee, joint committee or officer has made in the last six months.

- 1.5 The Head of Planning and Housing Services has advised that Elderslie Golf Club erected fencing along a section of the golf course adjacent to a private lane to the rear of properties at 65 – 69 Glenpatrick Road, Elderslie in June 2017. Residents subsequently contacted Renfrewshire Council expressing concern that the erection of the fence led to the removal of an existing access from the lane to the golf course. An alternative access to the golf course exists at Lexwell Avenue, a short distance from the properties at Glenpatrick Road. This leads to a defined track which is part of a designated Core Path and extends into woodland within the golf course.
- 1.6 Following the enquiry from local residents, Council Officers contacted Elderslie Golf Club. The club confirmed that the new fencing had replaced an existing wire and post fence which was in poor condition, and that the works had taken place in response to health and safety concerns, particularly in view of members of the public entering directly on to the golf course.
- 1.7 A site visit was arranged with local residents, representatives of Elderslie Golf Club and members of the Renfrewshire Local Access Forum in August 2017 to consider the matter and potential solutions. While an alternative access option between the lane and the golf course was discussed at this meeting, this was not supported by all local residents.
- 1.8 The Head of Planning and Housing Services has advised that Council Officers subsequently further engaged with Elderslie Golf Club and sought additional guidance from the Local Access Forum as well as the Head of Corporate Governance to consider further options.
- 1.9 Following a review of these options, Council officers decided that the existing access at Lexwell Avenue, a short distance from the properties at Glenpatrick Road, provided the most appropriate, safe and reasonable access to the golf course and the associated path network. The Head of Planning and Housing Services has advised that the Petitioner was advised of this decision on 30 March 2018.
- 1.10 This route continues to facilitate public access to the golf course, as required by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. Access at this point was felt to be preferable in terms of health and safety, as it did not involve members of the public emerging from a wooded area directly onto the fairway and potentially into the paths of golf balls. For the reasons given above Officers felt that it was not appropriate to take action in terms of the 2003 Act.

- 1.11 It is for the Board to determine the validity of the petition and whether they wish to hear it.

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Board determine the validity of the petition and whether they wish to hear it

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – none
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
3. **Community/Council Planning** - none
4. **Legal** – none
5. **Property/Assets** – none
6. **Information Technology** - none.
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - none

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. **Health & Safety** - none
9. **Procurement** - none
10. **Risk** - none.
11. **Privacy Impact** - none
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – not applicable.

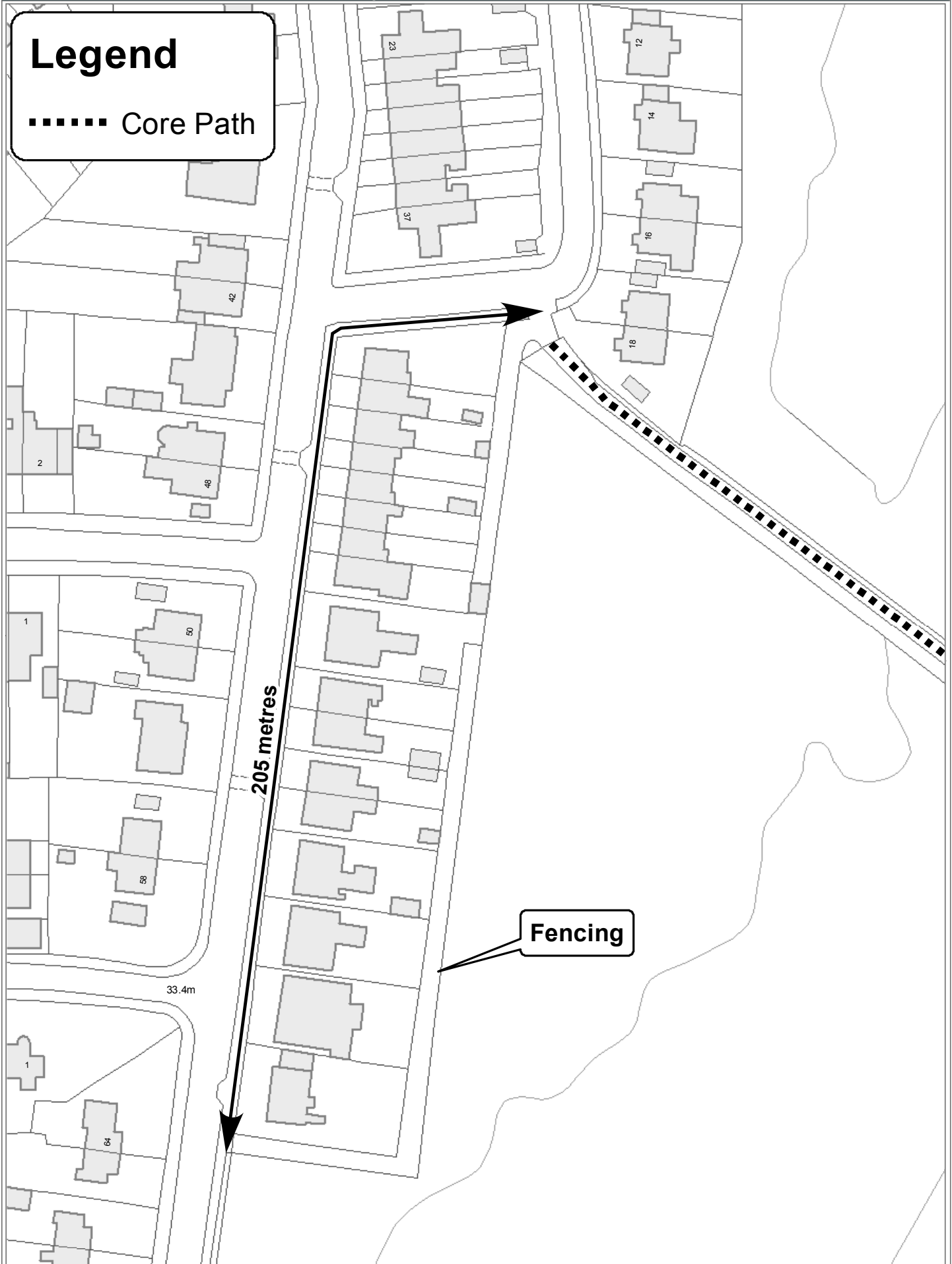
List of Background Papers

(a) Background Paper - 1 Petition

Author: Paul Shiach, Committee Services Officer
Tel: 0141 618 7103 Email: paul.shiach@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Legend

..... Core Path









To: Petitions Board

On: 4 June 2018

Report by: Director of Finance and Resources

Heading: Review of Petitions Process 2016/17

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Council at its meeting held on 13 September, 2007 agreed a procedure in relation to the submission of petitions, including parameters for determining valid petitions.
- 1.2 The petitions procedure is part of the Council's commitment to give people a more formal and direct involvement in decision making and to allow them to raise issues with the Council and potentially influence policy on issues which matter to their communities.
- 1.3 The Council originally agreed that the procedure for submission of petitions be reviewed on an annual basis. Following these reviews action plans were developed and implemented and a number of changes made to improve engagement with and participation of the public in the petitions process. The former Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board subsequently agreed that the petitions process be reviewed biennially.
- 1.4 As part of the current review, consultation was undertaken with elected members, senior officers within the Council, community council representatives and members of the public via 'survey monkey' questionnaires to obtain feedback to further improve awareness of, access to and participation in the petitions process.

- 1.5 In total 26 responses were received compared with 17 in the previous survey. While generally it is the same group of people who are asked each time, there were a number of Councillors elected to the Council for the first time in 2017 which could possibly have had an effect on the number of responses. The majority of those who responded were Community Councillors (7) members of the public (7), employees (3) and Elected Members (5). There were four respondents who could not be categorised from their responses.
- 1.6 As a result of the current consultation an action plan has been developed, which forms the Appendix to the report, to address some of the issues raised.
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2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the consultation responses be noted;
- 2.2 That the suggestions for improvement, in particular with regard to publicising the process in a variety of media, be noted;
- 2.3 That the action plan which forms the Appendix to the report be approved; and
- 2.4 That it be noted that the next review of the Petitions process is scheduled to take place during 2019/20.
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3. **Background**

- 3.1 The petitions procedure was introduced in 2007 and has been reviewed on a regular basis, following which a number of changes have been made.

4. **Consultation**

- 4.1 The consultation was based around the undernoted questions.

(a) **Are you aware of the Council's petitions process and how could we improve awareness?**

From the responses received 38.46% were aware of the procedure compared to 86.7% previously and 47.8% thought it easy to find out about compared to 90.9% previously. In terms of improving awareness, 30.4% thought the process should be highlighted more on the Council's

website and be prominent on Council correspondence; 17.4% thought information should be available on social media and 8.7% suggested information should be available through Community Councils. Other suggestions included advertising in the local press, local shops and in schools; and highlighting successful petitions. It was not evident from the responses that respondents were aware of the annual petitions report which detailed all petitions received and their outcomes. This decrease in awareness could be as a result of the turn-over in elected members following the Local Government elections in 2017 as newly elected members may have been unaware of the petitions process, and a turn-over in Community Council members following the Community Council elections in 2015.

(b) **How helpful, understandable and accessible did you find the information about the process and how could we improve the information we make available?**

From the responses received, 47.8% found the information easily accessible, 39.1% found the information on the process helpful and 52.2% found the information easily understandable. This compares unfavourably with the figures from the previous review where, once information about the process had been accessed, 100% had found the information helpful and the information accessible.

(c) **How can we improve processing of petitions**

Responses included improved guidance, clear instructions and what can be included in a petition; better use of social media and emails; improving publicity about the petitions process itself; availability of information in different formats including leaflets and online; information available in different languages, and accessibility for those visually impaired or deaf; better visibility on the Council website and clear links to explanation of the process. Other comments included providing a list of previous petitions and their outcome in order to show what is possible under the current arrangements.

Next Steps

Analysis of the responses received indicates that a number of the suggestions submitted in relation to improvement of the process are currently in place, i.e. web links and annual reports on petitions received and their outcomes. The consultation results indicate that raising awareness is required to ensure that the petitions process is more easily understood and accessible.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – none
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
3. **Community/Council Planning** – none
4. **Legal** - none.
5. **Property/Assets** – none
6. **Information Technology** - none
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety** - none
9. **Procurement** - none
10. **Risk** - none.
11. **Privacy Impact** - none
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – not applicable

List of Background Papers

Responses to consultation via "survey monkey".

The foregoing background papers will be retained within Finance and Resources for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting.

Author: Paul Shiach Committee Services Officer
(tel: 0141 618 7103/email: paul.shiach@renfrewshire.gov.uk)

Suggestions received	Proposed action	Completion date	Previous actions on similar Suggestions
Improve awareness of the Council's Petitions processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for appropriate publicity in local press and Council publications 	September 2018	This has already been done following a previous review but will be repeated.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise prominence on the Council's website 	September 2018	This has already been done following a previous review but will be repeated
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute information leaflets at Community Council meetings and events 	September 2018	This has already been done following a previous review but will be repeated
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the process via social media 	September 2018	This has already been done following a previous review but will be revisited
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedure on the website to be updated 	September 2018	
List previous petitions and their outcome in order to show what is possible under the current arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A report detailing the number of petitions received, the nature of the petition and the outcome submitted annually to the Petitions Board 	September 2018	This is already being done and will continue to be submitted annually
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome of petitions received to be updated on the Council website 		This will be done following approval of the relevant Petitions Board Minute
The scope of the possible outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The actions open to the Petitions Board in determining a petition are outlined in the Petitions procedure. This will be highlighted on the Council website. 		This was implemented following a previous review

Plain English to ensure accessibility for all			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All leaflets and other information relating to Petitions are printed in plain English 				This is currently in place
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