

Upper Liddesdale & Hermitage Community Council

Ordinary Meeting 14th August 2025

Draft Minutes

The Meeting was held at Hermitage Hall.

Those attending:

Councillors: Annette Smart

Community Councillors - Geoffrey Kolbe (GK) Chairman, Rosemary Webster (RW) Vice Chairman, Ian Hunter (IH) Martin Steed (MS) Treasurer. Lynda Graham (LG, co-opted)

Members of the public - 6

Meeting started at 19:05hrs

1. Presentation: Crime Prevention (PC Patterson)

Unfortunately, PC Patterson could not attend

2. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Watson McAteer regretted he had to attend another meeting.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting 12th June 2025

RW proposed that the minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting. IH seconded the motion, There were no dissenters and the motion was carried.

4. Matters arising

a. Place Plan update

RW gave a short presentation in which she explained that the Place Plan is now in the consultation phase. It is on the website (see https://www.ulhcc.scot/place_plan), it has been circulated to neighbouring Community Councils including Kielder Parish Council in England, and to the Ward Councillors. The period of consultation will be nominally 28 days, but this will be extended for a while as it is the holiday season. RW asked that everyone read the Place Plan and come back with any comments you may have.

There are a number of projects to benefit the community which are described in the Place Plan. RW noted that volunteers will be needed to steer those projects forward.

GK commented on the hard work which RW had put into the Place Plan and in particular on the high praise for the Place Plan in the comments from Southdean Community Council. GK asked for a vote of thanks to RW, which was enthusiastically given.

b. Information Boards

RW commented that she had a price of £600 each for the information boards of A2 size. She said she might be able to get a cheaper price from Wilson Signs of Hawick. One of the boards would be at Hermitage Hall and it was suggested that it could go on the outside wall where the gents toilet is in the Hall. GK commented that the other board, which will be placed in the layby opposite Larriston near the noticeboard, could go on the side of the resilience shed there.

RW commented that there was not enough ringfenced funds in the CC bank account to cover the cost of the information boards. It was suggested that an application could be made to the Neighbourhood Support Fund (see Item 7) though GK noted that the Community Council could make an application for funds from Foundation Scotland, who are holding Pines Burn wind farm community benefit funds for the Community Council. This should be a straightforward procedure.

C. Scottish Parliament Protected Status Langholm Goats

LG reported that there were now 12,336 signatures for the petition to: "Grant protected status to primitive goat species in the Scottish Borders" and the Scottish Parliament would consider this petition on 10th September. LG noted that Dr Shirley Goodyear of the British Primitive Goat Research Group had stated in her opinion the goats were a landrace of primitive goats that had existed here since the Stoneage. LG also noted that the Grey Mare's Tail Nature Reserve (near Moffat) were now offering walks which featured a sighting of the feral goats which live on the hills in that area. GK asked LG to inform the meeting in October how the debate in the Scottish Parliament goes in September.

5. Report: Resilience Shed

GK reported that the resilience shed at the top end of Hermitage Valley is now in place and equipped with wheelbarrow, spades, hi-vis vests, hard hats, torches and a first aid kit. GK noted that this was the first phase of the project and the second phase would be to install an off-grid defibrillator similar to the one attached to the resilience shed opposite Larriston House.

GK noted that the resilience shed was locked but that there was no mobile phone reception for people to get the code in a time of resilience stress. John Scott suggested that it could be unlocked if there was a warning of a period of resilience stress. Jane Bower suggested that all the surrounding houses should have the code for the lock and a list of the equipment the shed contains. John Scott also noted that the insurance company was in agreement that the defibrillator box would remain unlocked. GK noted that the defibrillator box opposite Larriston is unlocked.

6. Report: Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) Set Up

GK reported that an application for a SCIO to handle wind farm community benefit, and other funds the community may wish to obtain, had been submitted to OSCR which is called the Upper Liddesdale & Hermitage Organisation (UL&HO). The process would take about 100 days. This organisation currently has a constitution and a bank account. This SCIO would provide limited liability for those handling the funds. GK reported that Foundation Scotland are currently holding £7071.46 in Pines Burn wind farm community benefit payment for this community and once the SCIO was approved, the money would be transferred to UL&HO for use to the benefit of the community.

GK proposed that the £121.84 currently held as a ringfenced fund by the Community Council should be transferred to the UL&HO bank account as funds for bank fees etc. This was agreed.

It was suggested that in view of the recent spate of robberies in the area, some funds could be used for setting up CCTV cameras in the area. GK warned that GDPR meant that this was not such a simple task and some research was needed to determine the practicalities of such a scheme. GK noted that the crime in Newcastleton had decreased markedly since the introduction of cameras there. It was agreed that this should be explored.

7. Report: Community Projects Applications - Neighbourhood Support Fund 2025-2026

RW reported that Community Fund which had previously been distributed via 'Pot A' and 'Pot B' looked like it would disappear, but Borders Community Action had taken the funds over. There was £180,500 available. These funds were for projects across the whole of the Borders and there was nothing earmarked for a

particular CC or area. RW had only just learned that the funds had been open to bids in June and the closing date is 31 August, which leaves very little time to make an application for our info-board project or for the Hall to apply for funds for the Community Garden. Too, it was thought that there would be sufficient applications to exhaust the funds in this round and that there would be no further application rounds.

GK noted that the community benefit funds being held by Foundation Scotland could be accessed via an application through the Community Council and suggested that this might be a simpler way to go. Councillor Smart suggested that the 'Unpaid Work Team' could be accessed through the Council which might be of assistance. This is a 'community payback scheme' for those who have been sentenced to community work by the courts.

8. Contribution to the Sir Arthur Elliot Trust

GK noted that Newcastleton & District CC were donating £300 to the Sir Arthur Elliot Fund and invited UL&H CC to do the same. Councillor Smart stated that the purpose of the Trust was for the education and help for young people to give them a good start in life. Jane Bower thought that more information about how the funds are used should be sought before giving them a donation. GK noted that this donation was 'political' as a fraternal gesture to our brothers and sisters in Newcastleton, but suggested that more information should be sought regarding how the money is spend, perhaps with some case histories.

It was agreed that UL&H CC would donate £300 to the Trust

9. Report: Financial Report

MS reported that there was £3,195.96 in the account, of which £1696.24 was ringfenced for various projects and the unrestricted funds available was £1,509.72.

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business

11. Date of Next Meeting

9th October 2025