

Upper Liddesdale & Hermitage Community Council

Ordinary Meeting 18th November 2019

Draft Minutes

Location: Hermitage Hall

Present:

Community Councillors - Geoffrey Kolbe (GK) Chairman, Andrew Warburton (AW) Vice Chairman, John Scott (JS) Treasurer, Lawrence Scott (LS)

SB Councillors - George Turnbull, Watson McAteer.

Member of the public - seven

Meeting started at 7:00 pm

1. Apologies for absence

SB Councillor Davie Paterson, Constable Alan Patterson

2. Police Report

None available

3. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting

JS proposed that the minutes be approved. AW seconded the proposal. The minutes were approved unanimously

4. Matters arising

GK reported that the Steele Road callbox was still operational.

GK reported that changes in polling station notices had been received by residents of upper Liddesdale so that the anomaly of these residents having to go to Newcastleton had been rectified.

GK reported that Borderlink were working through some teething problems with their fixed wireless broadband, but it was to be hoped that the reliability of the network would improve once these had been sorted.

GK reported UL&HCC and other local stakeholders had been interviewed by Pip Tabor of Southern Uplands Partnership as part of the consultation on the Scottish Government's new forestry strategy. It had been emphasised that the effects on the rural economy should be the first consideration in any forestry strategy.

JS reported on the continuing discussions with Royal Mail regarding the proposed post box at Hermitage Hall. Royal Mail continued to insist that there were not enough residents in the area to justify a post box. Discussions continue.

5. Treasurer's report

£1396.17 in the bank account. With a payment to Hermitage Hall for meetings and for 1st responders, and £121.84 ringfenced for the Community Trust, and £150 ringfenced for the Resilience plan, this would leave £1124.33 for the year. This exceeds the SBC policy that if the amount in the account exceeds 2 x the annual budget (£540) then we would be ineligible for a grant.

Various projects were discussed which it would be appropriate to fund with the CC cash. The defibrillator for the Upper Liddesdale (B6357) to complement the one at Hermitage Hall (B6399) was deemed too expensive at the quoted estimates of around £1200. It would be more appropriate to seek other grant funding for this. Likewise it was not known how much it would cost for a paths maintenance project. There

is a SBC grant of £450 towards this, but how much extra it would need has not been ascertained. Interpretation Boards is another possible project, but once again the cost is not known and the project is not fully worked out. There may be grants available from Historic Environment Scotland, and Councillor McAteer suggested that the sign making department in SBC may make info boards on a cost-effective basis.

LS proposed that £500 be ringfenced for the defibrillator and another £500 for the information boards. This was approved.

6. Community Trust

JS reported on a teleconference with Isla McCullough of Development Trust Scotland, which included GK. It was recommended that we should not form a charity, as this was too restricting. It was suggested we form a 'company limited by guarantee', similar to the Newcastleton & District Community Trust (NDCT). It was confirmed that for such a format, the size of the community was not an issue. Too, the fact that NDCT include Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage in their area of interest does not preclude us having this as our area as well - but it would be expected that we would cooperate with NDCT on projects of mutual interest and there would not be any competition between the trusts. We were encouraged to proceed slowly and not try to rush into the forming of the trust.

JS would be attending a Scottish Development Trust conference in Castle Douglas on 4th December.

7. Length limit on lorries on the road up the Hermitage Valley

LS explained that long lorries had got stuck at the bridge near Gorrenberry Farm on the Hermitage Valley road. This was due to sat nav devices which did not differentiate roads which were not suitable for long HGVs. GK said he had consulted with Twislehope and Angus Laing thought 28 feet long vehicles were the upper limit on length, with 30 feet being difficult. Braidlie Farms said most of their feed and fertilizer came on full length artic lorries, but they were generally drivers who knew the limitations of the road.

Cllr George Turnbull stated he would contact the Roads Department to see what solution they could come up with.

8. Flooding problems

JS and GK reported sites that regularly flood: particularly the B6357 between Hewisbridge End and Dinlabyre and the road from Steele Road to the B6399 next to Newlands. Cllr Watson McAteer asked that the locations be sent to him and he would take this up.

9. Limited sighting at bridge by Hewisbridge End on B6357

JS reported that the bridge was a hazard as it was on a bend and verge vegetation on the West side road a little distance to the North and South of the bridge prevented good sighting of on-coming traffic. GK wondered if there was something permanent that could be done to prevent vegetation growing there in the summer? Cllr George Turnbull said he would contact the roads officer about this and see what could be done.

10. Resilience Plan: Report by John Scott

JS reported that the plan was being finalised. The sheds had been ordered. Locations were needed for the sheds. One could be by Hermitage Hall for the B6399. The shed for the B6357 could be at one of the gates at Riccarton farm. This would be investigated.

11. Pines Burn Community Update: Report by Geoffrey Kolbe

GK reported that Hawick CC had now once again agreed to the scheme whereby there would be equal shares for each of the participating Community Councils, with two shares for Hobkirk CC as the host CC. There are ongoing issues with the Eskdalemuir Noise Budget, and with the MOD radar, and EnergieKontor was working to overcome these. The SB Planning Committee meeting to discuss the applications for

variations in conditions for Pines Burn Wind Farm, and for Windy Edge Wind Farm, were slated for the middle of 2020 - assuming the various problems had been resolved.

12. Langholm Moor Community Buyout. Report by John Scott

Newcastleton & District Community Trust (NDCT) are working towards a proposal which can be put to the community for consultation. It would appear that they are interested in a project involving the Holm Hill, and which would not include Leahaugh or Hartsgarth which are in the UL&H CC area. Langholm Initiative would appear to be working on their own plans for other parts of the Langholm Moor.

JS proposed that UL&H CC should have a stated liaison person with the NDCT and with the Langholm Initiative. This was generally agreed. JS volunteered to be the liaison person for the NDCT and AW volunteered to the approach the Langholm Initiative to act in this capacity.

13. Reports of meetings attended

JS reported on the SBC Community Council Scheme Review Group meeting in September. It was a constructive meeting at which Terms of Reference had been agreed. This was at a preliminary stage and the next meeting will be early in 2020.

14. National Park update

Jane Bower, chair of the Campaign, reported that a new newsletter had now been published. There was an upcoming ITV program on the National Park. The Campaign has decided to set up as a SCIO so that it may apply for grant aid to fund various projects it will be undertaking - including the "12 Towers of Rulewater" which it is currently working up.

15. Communications

There were no communications to report

16. Any Other Business

JS reported on the Home Energy Efficiency Program. A case study had been done for the NDCT and Newcastleton had been identified as an area being in "fuel poverty" and so eligible for a grant for house insulation. It applies to areas on the basis of post code and not to individual houses on the basis of income. Once a house has been identified as being suitable, the time to process, schedule and complete the work is about 10 weeks. Approximately 40 homes in Newcastleton had taken advantage of the program. It was commented that houses in the Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage area did not appear to have been contacted by the NDCT about this. It was agreed that the Change Works company overseeing this project for Scottish Borders Council should be contacted and asked to come and explain what they do.

Penny Scott reported that the road markings on the resurfaced road by Kirndeane still have not been replaced. Jane Bower said the road should have white lines along the edges to show where the edges were - particularly at night. Cllr George Turnbull would take this up with the Roads Department.

17. Date of next meeting

3rd Feb 2020

Meeting ended at 8:05 pm

