

Upper Liddesdale & Hermitage Community Council

Ordinary Meeting 4th July

Draft Minutes

Meeting was held at Hermitage Hall.

Those attending:

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

Ward Councillors - Annette Smart

Members of the public - nine

Meeting started at 19:00hrs

1. Apologies for absence

Ward Councillors Jane Cox and Watson McAteer.

2. Presentation on 'Place Planning' by Scott McKail of Scottish Borders Council

Scott McKail started by trying to define a 'place plan' and said that its definition could be shaped by the community. A number of those present complained that they did not understand what was being proposed and there was too much 'jargon'. They wanted a clear route on what was supposed to happen. GK offered a meaning as a community action plan, put together after consultation with the community to decide the community's current needs and requirements with respect to matters of roads, schools, jobs, businesses and future aspirations which would include landscape use. GK asked if the 'community' in this respect was a Community Council area? Scott replied yes, but this was not necessarily the case. GK asked if it could be a prospective National Park and it was agreed that it could. Scott mentioned that Southdean were joining with Hobkirk to produce a place plan, and Newcastleton was going to produce a place plan. It was agreed that Scott would forward some place plans already drawn up by other Community Councils and this matter would be discussed at the next CC meeting.

There was also discussion on Community Funding via Pot A and Pot B in the Teviot and Liddesdale area. Scott said that if anybody wanted funding for any project, please contact him and he would match the project to some form of funding that was available.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting 3rd May 2022

AW moved that the minutes be approved as a true and accurate account of the meeting. JS seconded the motion. Motion was carried

4. Matters arising

GK reported the defibrillator for the B6357 was in the process of being installed in the resilience shed opposite Larriston Farm. There was discussion about training to use the defibrillator and it was agreed that a training day would be organised so people local to the defibrillator could learn how to use it. It was also agreed that the defibrillator would be registered with the emergency services once it was operational.

The question was asked about sandbags for use in case of flooding and if any were available? The answer was that there was not and it was agreed to make some available.

GK reported that the planning application for the mobile phone mast on Gorrenberry Farm had been withdrawn.

GK reported that the trees overhanging the road near Newlands had been removed. JS proposed that Watson McAteer be thanked for his intercession to have this work done, after visiting the site.

GK reported that the resilience questionnaire had only had three responses and asked why people were not filling in the forms? There was no real answer. GK said he would put out a further request that people fill in the forms.

Lynne Graham reported that deer legs were still being found on Tilhill land on the road up to Mountain View.

5. Treasurer's report (John Scott)

JS reported that £200 had been spent since the last meeting, the CC contribution to the Jubilee Brunch at Hermitage Hall. This left £1068.38 of unrestricted funds.

6. Meetings Attended

AW reported on the Area Partnership meeting, which lasted nearly three hours and where most of the meeting was taken up discussing the meaning of 'place making' and the Community Fund (Pot A and Pot B). AW explained how local projects could be funded through Pot A funding and said there was £6173.21 in the fund at the moment.

GK reported on the Fawside Wind Farm enquiry, where he attended the 'communities day' at the Buccleuch Centre in Langholm. He said that the day had gone well with the chairs of three Community Councils, the Fawside Action Group and Ken Moffat of the Mosspace museum on one side and consultants for the Applicant on the other. GK related that the session dealing with the Eskdalemuir noise budget had been delayed by three months, but that Dr Bowers of Blacknest (AWE) who are responsible for the seismic array would not give way to allow an expansion of the noise budget and if this continued, the application would fall.

8. Request for comments on planning application 22/00854/FUL, demolition of agricultural building to form dwelling house with garage/workshop

This was agreed, though comment had been raised about the adequacy of the water supply, which also feeds the other properties at Larriston. It was agreed that a comment to this effect be included in the response.

9. Request for comments on planning application ECU 00003248, Teviot wind farm

GK described the proposal and that there was a massive amount of documentation supporting the proposal. However, he thought a way forward was to look at the Applicants responses in their application, to our responses to their scoping report, and see if they were adequate. GK went through the responses in the Application. It was agreed that the Applicants response to our concerns about the threat to tourism was not adequate and that an objection should be formed around this point. It was also agreed that the disruption, damage and delays due to diversions on our roads would be a serious problem for the three years of construction, and that this should form part of our objection.

Cllr Smart commented that we needed wind energy. GK replied that nobody present was against wind farms and he personally fully supported the Scottish Government's policy on renewable energy. But this wind farm was one of a number proposed for the area and if they were all consented then there would be about 200 turbines around 250m tall spread around this area which would completely change the

landscape. Given the effort to increase tourism in the area this would have a very damaging effect on this effort.

Cllr Smart noted that we should “be careful what we wish for” with regard to increasing tourists and cited the problems a sudden increase in tourists caused with the NC 500 route for example. GK noted that this was a problem in managing tourists and Marion Livingston of the Campaign had produced a document “How to Keep (almost) Everyone in the Countryside Happy” on this topic.

10. Report on the National Park.

Jane Bower noted that the Scottish Government had announced the formation of at least one new National Park and that 10 MSPs had united in a cross-party call to the government to designate National Parks in both Galloway and the Borders. To this end, the Campaign was trying to galvanise support from SBC Councillors to support the Scottish Borders National Park, which would help boost tourism in the area.

11. Any other business

GK noted that in the May police report there was an item on the theft of tools and fuel from Kerndean farm. This was Paul Bell’s tools and he had been told by the farm insurers (Hoskins) that they needed photos of all the tools. GK thought that this was probably how all insurance companies were moving and so it might be wise to take photos of tools and items stored in locked sheds on farms, as well as serial numbers of the items.

It was reported that rubbish collections were not taking place as they should from the properties at Billhope, on the North side of the Billhope bridge. They had now been told that there would be no more collections until after the bridge had been re-built, which would be late September. It was generally agreed that this was not acceptable (they pay their rates) and Cllr Smart said she would investigate this matter. GK said he would pass on the chain of correspondence.

JS reminded the meeting that an ‘open day’ for the Community Council to tell the community what it does and how it does it had been put forward as an idea previously and suggested that, with elections looming for a new CC, it was time to do that. It was agreed that the meeting would take place on 24th August starting 6:00 pm. There would be refreshments available.

12. Date of next meeting

Cllr Smart said that Teviot & Upper Borthwick also met on 1st Monday of the month. Too, she was starting a part time teaching job and that she would only really be available on Wednesdays and Fridays, and was it possible to shift the meeting to one of those days? A possible date of 7th September was set, but GK said he would investigate if this clashed with other meetings.