

Upper Liddesdale & Hermitage Community Council

Ordinary Meeting 6th September 2021

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, Lawrence Scott (LS).

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Member of the public - four

Meeting started at 19:00hrs

1. Apologies for absence

None

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting 10th May 2021

A proposal that this meeting accept these draft minutes as a true record of that meeting was proposed by JS, seconded by AW. The motion was carried

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting 5th July 2021

A proposal that this meeting accept these draft minutes as a true record of that meeting was proposed by GK, seconded by AW. The motion was carried

4. Matters arising

AW reported that he had been in touch with Susan Gray of SBC regarding footpaths, and that he would be meeting with the SBC footpaths team at Whitropefoot next week with a view to repairing and restoring the footpath to Nine Stanes Rig.

GK reported that the grant application for the defibrillator for the B6357 was ready for submission and would be submitted within the next week.

GK noted that there still seemed to be some conversation about the rules regarding the Pot A and Pot B Community Fund applications. It seemed sensible to delay setting up our Pot A panel until everything was clarified.

GK noted that there had been some changes to the outlay of the Teviot Wind Farm and these were shown in their presentations. Sandra Murray said she had attended the Newcastleton presentation, and she had been the only one there. She said they had been a lot more cautious about their project, stating that while it may not be acceptable now, they felt that the situation would change and it would become an acceptable project in the future.

5. Treasurer's report

JS reported that we had received the 21/22 grant and there was £4039.65 in the bank, of which £2521.84 was ringfenced and the balance of £1517.81 was free to spend. The ringfenced money was for interpretation boards, the B6357 defibrillator, the Trust, and the Covid Resilience Support (£1000)

6. Any other business

AW reported from the Area Partnership meeting, a grant was approved for the Hawick Bike Festival.

JS reported that camping had been taking place in a large area accessed by a forest road off the road to Steele Road. There was a concern about camp fires in this dry weather. Also, a lot of rubbish was being left. The forest is managed by Tilhill. It was agreed that this should be monitored.

AW reported that the new Tilhill area manager for this area is Andrew Fisher, and he has proved very positive and is keen to improve the social profile of Tilhill.

Jane Bower gave an update on the Scottish Borders National Park. She noted that the National Park had been an item on the consultation for the Local Plan and the Campaign were still waiting for the formal response of that consultation with regards to the National Park. The Campaign were also waiting for a date for a meeting with Mairi McAllan MSP, Minister for Environment and Land Reform regarding the SNP announcement to create a new National Park. Marie Gougeon MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands, had spend a summer holiday in this area and so was familiar with it. Jane announced that funding had been obtained for a feasibility study for the 12 Towers of Rule project, and funding was being sought from the Build Back Better fund for surveying and excavation of Bedrule Castle.

The Campaign were also keen in cooperating to open up the Wheel Causeway, a possible Roman road from the English border at Deadwater to Bonchester Bridge, to enable it to be used for walking/riding, and for access to the sites of Wheel church and Wheel village. It is currently almost impassable due to self seeded trees and being generally overgrown.

The Campaign were also seeking to establish cycle routes in collaboration with Hawick Cycle Club, who had offered to design the routes and implement them on a GPS app for mobile phones.

Jane Bower also mentioned Alan Bailey of Rubers Law Wild Woods Camping, who was trying to create walkways around Ruberslaw, which were now drawn up and agreed with landowners.

The problem with projects such as these is that they have to be maintained after they have been established and there are very few organisations which are set up to do that. A National Park is ideally suited for this sort of maintenance work.

Jane also mentioned a Review of Best Practice in Tourist Management, which is also being undertaken by the Campaign. This Review will draw on the lessons learned from two years of 'staycationing' where there has been a significant amount of uncontrolled camping in Scotland, with a lot rubbish and destruction in consequence.

Penny Scott noted the Great Scottish Squirrel Survey, which is taking place from September 20-26, where sightings can be reported at: <https://scottishsquirrels.org.uk/great-scottish-squirrel-survey/>

JS asked about the SBC CC scheme review? GK said he had not heard any updates from Cameron Knox. GK said he would ask Cameron Knox for a report.

7. Date of next meeting

November 4th 2021

Meeting ended at 19:42hrs