

Upper Liddesdale & Hermitage Community Council

Ordinary Meeting 9th April 2026

Draft Minutes

The Meeting was held at Hermitage Hall.

Those attending:

Councillors: Watson McAteer, Annette Smart

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

Members of the public - 8

Meeting started at 19:00hrs

1. Apologies for Absence

Councillor McAteer thanked the meeting for the good wishes sent after the meeting in February.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting 11th December 2025

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

3. Matters arising

None

4. Wind Farms update

GK cited a recent update in the planning progress of various wind farms by Stephen Lucking and referred to it in respect of Teviot, Hartsgarth, Cliffhope, Windy Edge and Liddesdale wind farms. In general, wind farm applications are being paused while there is consideration of the Wull Muir wind farm judgement, which means wind farms applications will have to account for the Environmental Impact Assessment of the connection to the grid, also the technical consultation on the Eskdalemuir seismic array, and the review of grid connections being carried out by NESO. Most of these wind farms are giving Q1 2027 for putting in applications.

5. Newcastleton & Langholm Moor Wild Goats

LG reported that the Wild Goat Conservation Trust (TWGCT) are working with Police Scotland to learn about wildlife crime that might be committed with respect to the goats on the moors. A goat kid was found in the Telford bus depot in Newcastleton and it was reunited with its mother. It seemed to be none the worse for its experience.

The Dinley heft has not shown up this Spring as they usually do. The goats are clearly missing as TWGCT have been out looking and there is no sign of them. LG was out Wednesday with binoculars, but there was nothing. LG took extensive photos of them last year and if they turn up on another part of the moor I'd be able to identify them.

The Trust is putting road signs on the moors to warn motorists about baby goats. A new Scottish Parliament petition is being started to legislate for a closed season for all wild goats in Scotland. The Trust is raising

money so that a proper count can be made for the goats on the moors. To this end, crowd funding has been quite successful, there is merchandise for sale on the Trust website and the Trust recently had a stall at the craft fair in Langholm. The Trust is applying to be a charity.

Dr Shirley Goodyear has obtained DNA samples from the goats and hope to compare the DNA to other examples of ancient goats and to the genome of the Bronze Age goat.

6. Council Decision to Appropriate benefits

GK recounted that a motion had been passed at a Council meeting, asking the government to change the law so that the Council could appropriate community benefit from wind farms. GK asked Councillors McAteer and Smart for their comments on this matter. Councillor McAteer endeavoured to correct a misapprehension in that it was a Conservative led motion whereby the Council was seeking to be able to take a stake (part ownership of the wind farm) if local communities did not avail themselves of the opportunity to take a stake in a wind farm.

Gary Cooper warned that this was an incentive to the Council to encourage and permit wind farm developments so that they would have a source of cash. Jane Bower warned that the Council knew nothing about running a wind farm and with ownership came liabilities of which the Council would be ignorant. Councillor McAteer said that as shareholders in a wind farm limited company, the Council would be legally protected against liabilities.

GK said that the background to this was the Highlands Council, who noted that community benefit was not being taken up by local communities and so sought to have community benefit paid to the Council for them to redistribute. South of Scotland Enterprise were also seeking to have the community benefit from wind farms in the South of Scotland paid to them for redistribution. If the community benefit was to be paid to the local Council then this amounted to a tax to the local Council and lost its purpose as a benefit to the community hosting the wind farm. Councillor McAteer agreed 100% that the community benefit should go to the local community, but wanted the Council to have the option of a stake in the wind farm if the local communities did not avail themselves of the opportunity to take a stake in the wind farm, which is quite different.

Jane Bower and others raised the matter of the cost in wear and tear to road infrastructure and and to local businesses due to the construction of wind farms and there needed to be some mechanism to account for this.

7. Any Other Business

Fuel Thefts GK noted that there had been a number of fuel thefts from the village now that the price was so high and warned people to put locks on their kerosene tanks

Potholes and bridge repairs It was noted that there was a proliferation of large potholes which were taking a long time to get repaired. And the bridge just off the B6399 on the road to Steele Road still had not been repaired.

8. Date of next meeting

June 11th 2026