

Upper Liddesdale & Hermitage Community Council

Annual General Meeting 10th June 2019

Draft Minutes

Location: The meeting was held at Hermitage Hall starting at 6:30pm

Those present were:

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

Councillors: Davie Paterson and Watson McAteer.

There were also 7 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence

Councillor George Turnbull, Debbie Thomas

2. Minutes of the AGM of 24th September 2018

AW proposed that the minutes be accepted. JS seconded the proposal, the proposal was agreed unanimously

3. Chairman's report of the previous year.

GK read out his report, which is attached

4. Treasurer's Report.

JS spoke to his report, which is attached

5. Re-affirmation of Community Councillors to abide by the Community Councillors Code of Conduct

All Community Councillors signed a statement, "We agree to abide by the Scottish Borders Council Code of Conduct for Community Councils"

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business

The meeting ended at 8:50 pm

Upper Liddesdale & Hermitage Community Council

Chairman's Report

AGM Meeting 10th June 2019

Good evening ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to begin by confirming the membership of our Community Council. I am Geoffrey Kolbe, and I am the Chairman. Andrew Warburton, who is the Vice-Chairman. John Scott, who is the Treasurer. And Lawrence Scott. The position of Secretary is currently un-occupied, as are two positions of our nominally six person Community Council.

This has been an eventful year, but the main theme of our work this year has been to try and improve our communications the people who live and work in our area, so that we may better address their hopes, worries and aspirations. Notable amongst these efforts has been increasing the number of Community Council meetings from four to six a year. We have also increased the use of our email contact list to try and keep people informed matters of concern and interest to this community. During the last month we conducted a 'meet-and-greet' campaign, where we tried to get out and introduce ourselves to everyone who lives in our area to, to explain about the Community Council and what we do.

This Community Council was formed five years ago because the people of this area felt they needed their own voice to represent their interests and their concerns. It is our privilege to try to do that and we are constantly seeking ways to improve our performance.

The only statutory power that a Community Council has is to comment on planning applications, and in the past year these have universally been about wind farms, in particular Windy Edge and Pines Burn wind farms and we are about to consider our response to the Grand-Daddy of them all, Faw Side wind farm. Wind Farm planning applications are very large and complex, and usually come in a crate with a lifting hazard warning attached. They take a great deal of our time to digest and respond to in an adequate manner. As the next door Community Councils are usually considering the same applications, it is natural that we should compare notes with those Community Councils. So it is that wind farm planning applications have had the benefit of forming bonds between Community Councils so that our opinions on an increasingly broad range of matters have the benefit of shared input.

The Community Benefit for the Pines Burn wind farm is a particular case in point. The cooperation between all the participating Community Councils, which includes ours, has been a cause of positive comment and congratulations from Councillors and other officials at Scottish Borders Council. We are conscious that as a small rural Community Council there is the risk that our larger urban neighbours can use their weight of population to hog the limited resources available from local government. But our remote and sparsely populated areas have problems and concerns of our own that need addressing, and by cooperating with other rural Community Councils, we can form an effective counterbalance to the large urban centres to ensure that our voice is heard and is noticed.

But we can only cooperate with other Community Councils or organisations so long as we have our own voice, and it is in this spirit we have also initiated the formation of a Community Trust. Such a trust would enable this community to receive grants and other funding to be used for the benefit of this community, and also for visitors to this community. We have undertaken a survey to determine the sort of Community Trust this community needs.

One urgent need for a remote area such as ours is a good broadband connection to the outside world and this has long been recognised as a key element in ensuring rural communities such as ours remain viable in the modern world. However, we have stood by in frustration waiting for the Scottish Government to finally commit to the R100 scheme by which the whole of Scotland is supposed to be 'connected' by 2021, and we learned recently in private discussions hosted by our local MP, John Lamont, that the likelihood of Openreach bringing optical fibre connectivity to this area any time in the near future was zero. So, this Community Council has initiated and facilitated the installation of a fixed wireless solution to this problem by which this community can have access to super-fast broadband within the next few months and we are currently working to implement this.

Looking to the future, it looks like the next year will be no less eventful. The Scottish Government in partnership with the Convention Of Scottish Local Authorities have launched Local Governance Review in which the makeup and roll of Community Councils is being re-examined. Too, Scottish Borders Council are conducting a periodic review of the Scottish Borders Community Council Scheme, with much the same intent. This Community Council will be actively involved in these discussions through our local representative on the SBC working group and through the Area Partnership.


So, by the time of our AGM next year, this Community Council could have a completely different look and with different powers and responsibilities. But whatever the future, you can be sure that this Community Council will continue striving to help improve the wellbeing of this community.


Balance of funds available for ongoing UL&HCC activities in FY 2019-2020	£ 1,308.67
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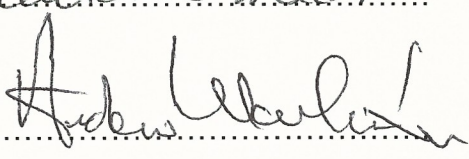
Upper Liddesdale & Hermitage Community Council

We agree to abide by the Scottish Borders Council Code of Conduct for Community Councils.

Geoffrey Kolbe.....

John Scott.....

Lawrence Scott.....

Andrew Warburton.....

Annual General Meeting, Dated 10th June 2019