

NEWCASTLETON & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL/SBC

Meeting 29th May 2018 @ 2pm
Buccleuch House, 4 South Hermitage Street, Newcastleton, TD9 0QR

MINUTES

Those in attendance SBC: Tracey Logan, Shona Haslam
NDCC: Scott Wilson, Barbara Elborn, Lyndsay Patterson, Greg Cuthbert

1. **Welcome & Introductions** - SW welcomed all and thanked SBC for coming meet in the village.
2. **School transport** – prior to discussing item SBC asked for background into why parents felt strongly about sending their children to Langholm Academy (LA):

LP explained that she and her husband had taken time off work to attend an arranged meeting with an open mind given reports of incidents reaching the village/parents, which many felt had been exaggerated by the children or one-off incidents. She explained that prior to the meeting they had no intention of moving her children to LA as her husband's family had attended Hawick. They were kept waiting in reception for over 30 mins, during that time they witnessed spitting, bad language and behaviours. At no time were members of staff present to take control or calm behaviours. When they asked to see someone, they were informed that there would be no opportunity to meet with another member of staff.

CC members gave other examples of incidents; further attempts to meet parents locally had failed with clashing meetings and timings, reported lack of teachers, locked class rooms, no lessons in certain subjects, currently children were playing board games as no curriculum work commenced till later in the term. Ongoing feedback from children attending continues to give concerns.

Members believe there is mixed messaging being received about the school which has led to a complete breakdown of trust and belief that things can or are being addressed. Suggestions to the school about engaging with parents locally in both P6 and P7 were ignored. As a result, the impact of this year's leavers will probably follow on and a similar situation will occur for next if efforts are not made to rebuild the trust and dialogue between parents and HHS. Parents feel their concerns have not been acknowledged and this will take time to rebuild. Efforts to rebuild this will be needed to give parents and children confidence to return. SBC will investigate further and report back directly to LP and the CC.

Transport – CC explained the untitled numbers travelling were 35 with a further 33 entitled travelling for the new intake to LA. Best scenario is a 70seater plus a 12seater. Estimated costs for untitled children are £5 pr day, an additional daily charge of £3.05. The cost per school year per child is £610. Overall the 'gap' is well over £21k pr pa which is too much for parents. The CC and parents are seeking support to overcome this. SBC explained their policy of no cross-county support but were willing to investigate how to work with D&G on our behalf to come up with the best solution. It may fall to the community and parents to operate a community transport option to solve the problem. Given time pressures this would be investigated asap to find a solution.

3. **Roads**

The CC expressed continuing concerns about the joined upness between Local Authorities we rely on for access; what are the procedures? Timescales for notification and feedback? Contact details for special arrangements? The CC requested that consideration be given to the fact that once agreed/announced arrangements cannot be changed given impact on businesses – no caravans,

buses or coaches or large HGV's can access the village from the south. This means lost business and damaged reputations. Road closures, 3 times plus postponements, in the last 5 months has severely impacted on the community. SBC explained that they did work cross border but that they were reliant on goodwill of others to deliver programs but acknowledged that better processes could be put in place to deliver better communications going forward. Meetings were taking place in the coming weeks and outcomes would be circulated thereafter.

Transport Corridor Feedback - CC provided copies of community feedback which criticises lack of foresight in planning for small rural communities like ours. It is critical that the work focuses primarily on travel modes within the Borders and lack vision about the opportunity that exists with the potential of Borderlands which will have a huge impact on tourism, social inclusion and wider parameters like timber transport. These factors are not included in any depth in the study. Rural communities like ours will be marginalised again if the option process is not amended to address our concerns at the outset.

4. **Speeding through the village** – SBC reported that the communities request for slow down LED lights at the road ends had been approved and would be installed imminently. The CC thanked SBC for approving this.
5. **Housing** – ongoing problems at Eildon/Moss Place were discussed. Recent meetings would result in some positive movement ref mediation and relocating but concerns still prevail about the drain unsuitable families is now placing on the local services and amenities impacting on the wider community. The 2015 local housing study provided to relevant departments for local would be forwarded for ref; ground floor accessible required. Conservation status still stifling opportunity to upgrade front facing properties in North/South Hermitage Street. The CC continued to hope that here would be a relaxation of the rules going forward.
6. **Youth work/support** – confusion on both sides exist about where any budget comes from for youth work. SBC will investigate and report back.
7. **Development plans** – community action plans and development strategy presented. SBC acknowledged work of the local teams in their ambition to deliver benefit to the community and wider market.

SBC explained that a remote learning apprenticeship scheme was on trial in Eyemouth and that there might be options to roll this out, Newcastleton would be considered if this prove to be forthcoming.

The CC sought SBC support for the Scot Gov RCGF program current application being led by SBC on their behalf. It was hoped that having declined the last offer of £420k the new 2019 proposal, based on very similar objectives, would be approved and the next phase of upgrades could commence.

8. AOB – there was no further business

CC thanked SBC for coming to hear community concerns and looked forward to an improved dialogue going forward.