

Newcastleton & District Community Council
Minutes of ORDINARY MEETING
Tuesday March 13th @ 7:00 pm Village Hall

Present: Scott Wilson, Barbara Elborn, Shaun Turnbull, Laura Paterson, Joan Robson, Greg Cuthbert, Gordon Steel, Ian Nichol, Margaret Elliot, SBC Councillors Davie Paterson, George Turnbull, PC Allan Patterson (part) Gail Donald/SEPA and Duncan Morrison/SBC Flood Team (part), Rachel Norris. **Apologies:** Adrian Downey, Lyndsay Patterson, Gary Cuthbert, SBC Councillor Watson McAteer.

1. **Police report: February** Call to ongoing neighbour dispute at Moss Place. Call complaining about severity of the potholes on Newcastleton to Canonbie stretch of the B6357, concerned about the danger due to vehicles swerving the holes. Call to Clerkleap about irresponsible dog owners walking their dogs in the area, one dog owner was traced and made aware of the complaint. Call from resident of Frank Coutts Court regarding a male trying their door handle late at night, on visiting the resident and discussing the incident it seemed most likely that it was an ex resident from that address who had attended by mistake. Call to Wills Bothy at Riccarton regarding a male who had been living in the Bothy for over a week, on attending he had left, however there were no issues. Resident of Moss place found a handbag lying at the rear of Garage, possibly left there by youths, open bottle of Vodka and large can of Red Bull inside, Vodka poured away other items placed through found property yet unclaimed. Further neighbour issues in Moss Place. Call to Lower Whisgills, female had fallen and broken arm, ambulance unable to attend due to weather. First responder from village attended in 4X4 and assisted. **March:** Call to South Liddle Street regarding strange behaviour of occupants of a car/ possible drug taking. Vehicle traced to a Hawick address and owner spoken to about incident. Call to Mangerton regarding possible tampering of padlock on gate to Horse stables. Probably just failure of old padlock.
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting (Feb 2018)** were accepted as a true record of the meeting, proposed by GC LP seconded by SW
3. **Flooding update** Gail Donald/SEPA and Duncan Morrison/SBC Flood team attended to report on recent incidents which did not trigger a flood warning but caused significant concerns locally. Gail explained that the trigger measures had been adjusted to reduce the flood warning level as many alarms had been given unnecessarily. They were confident that the triggers were sensitive enough to provide adequate warnings if the need arose the 2 gauges were at Braidlee on Hermitage Water and bottom of South Liddel Street. These captured rising waters from the Hermitage tributary running into the Liddel which would also include rain run off upstream. Snow melt and surface water were not measured. Recent incidents would be investigated again as water had tipped into places previously not seen to the extent that had happened in January 2018. Full review of flood prevention measures will be presented to the community end of the summer.

Tree planting on the bank south from Whithaugh Pool was cause for concern, the flood team would investigate. The team were asked what consideration the upland planting on private estates would have on the flood measures, they would investigate and report back on this in as part of the review.

4. Matters arising:

a. Community Council notes of Meeting held with Newcastleton Medical Practise, March 2018

The CC is working with SBC to develop the Community Plan and met with Newcastleton Medical Practise to discuss how we might help in ensuring our **health, care and wellbeing** needs will be met going forward. A greater understanding of current issues would help us better prepare for the future. Our eyes were opened about just how over stretched their resources are currently, mainly as a direct result of **patients not attending appointments.**

Specialist clinics, which the practise has fought hard to get put in place, so patients could attend locally have been particularly badly hit. **Doing Well (for Mental Health & support), Podiatry, Dietetics and Physio** have all been reduced or in some cases withdrawn, because appointments are not being attended. **LASS (Lifestyle Adviser Support Service)** is in danger of being withdrawn.

Clinicians, booked to attend and deliver sessions have on many occasions done nothing when appointments have been broken. Because of losing these specialist services our GP's are now providing

extra services which were provided externally, such as counselling and exercise advice which require longer appointments. These longer appointments subsequently increase the time patients must wait to be seen by their regular GP.

To combat this Locum GP's have been recruited to help take up the demand for general appointments but some members of the community are refusing to see a locum. Locums are similarly being paid for time that is not being fully utilised. The financial burden this places on our local health resource is immense. National Health budgets are hugely stretched and cannot afford to be abused in this way.

The Community Council was shocked to hear first-hand about how blasé a small minority of the community have been about wasting precious resources. As a direct result of their selfish actions the rest of us, but particularly our over stretched health teams, are paying the price.

We, on behalf of the wider community extend a huge thank you to the whole team at the Health Centre who always go the extra mile to look after us, we really do appreciate what you do for us. For the small minority who abuse this first-class service which penalises many, we say please attend appointments or cancel them in good time, so the times can be reallocated. The Health Centre have advised us that they are enforcing their policy of refusing patient care locally for continuing abuse of the system. We support them in this decision.

What can we do to help them?

Make sure you attend every appointment made for you.

Accept an appointment with a Locum if it is a general practise issue – your medical notes are as accessible to them as they are to your regular GP. They are fully qualified to assess and prescribe appropriate medication or diagnosis.

Book the practise nurse for all the things that don't need professional assessment, injections, taking blood, urine samples etc.

Believe reception when they say there are no immediate appointments.

If everyone turns up when they should and is seen by the appropriate practitioner, the queues will reduce, and our medical team will get the much-deserved time off that they need.

- b. **Small Schemes – Ettleton Cemetery** remains on agenda until concluded. Site visit identified issues, but it will take time to resolve. A spring has been identified running through the site, drainage will be needed to solve this, but this will impact on plots already awarded. Dialogue will continue with SBC to see how best to conclude this to move the solution forward. In the meantime, works will be undertaken to clear up the car park area. SBC were informed that local workers were prepared to provide their time voluntarily to help conclude this once the solution agreed to expediate works and reduce the cost burden. The CC thanks those who have volunteered.
- c. **Street/square ownership pavements update** – Ongoing to remain on agenda until resolved.
- d. **Douglas Square** – Mid-Square Fountain, the box will be removed, and the fountain cleaned up.
- e. **War memorial** – as it is granite it can be pressure washed which the Legion have undertaken to do. SBC have agreed to repair any damage to the monument once it has been cleaned. The statue light will also be moved so that it does not disturb neighbouring properties and can be turned on for appropriate occasions. The Legion have also undertaken to provide a 2nd flag pole so that the Union Jack can be flown along with the Saltire when required. Planning permission will be requested by them also.
- f. **Localities bid fund** – Greg reported voting closed. Still issues about how the system is being assessed and how the winning bids will be awarded. Request to CILrs to provide the expenditure budget for set up and administration of the scheme. There is strong belief that this has been disproportionate to the funds available to award and it could have been better spent. CILrs to provide when known.
- g. **Douglas Square small pathway upgrade** approved but not actioned – works were needed during the winter months, but this had been delayed due to recent weather and stretched resources.
- h. **Speeding in the village** – entrance slow down program had been confirmed but no timing given.

- i. **Buccleuch Estates meeting request** – invite extended to CC to attend the Langholm open meeting but given weather this was not possible. Feedback from others indicated that this was focused on tree planting program but that the open questions were focused on the way the estate had mismanaged tenants ref sale of farms and terminating leases. The CC felt that a meeting with BE would be preferable than working from hearsay. Sec to progress.
- j. **Timber transport tonnage** – Greg still progressing. 4k hectares pr year to be planted over next 15 years on Scottish side, English side and private estates needed to be determined.
- k. **Timber transport flow though village** - this would be monitored/counted by volunteers over a period to determine volumes as no one could confirm current flow or determine future flow. This would impact hugely on the transport program and road infrastructure in future years and considered extremely important to the new locality plan could address felling and road infrastructure needs which need to cope with 15/20% increases of traffic in the coming years.
- l. **Timber Extraction plans** – these were also identified as being significant to determine though put of vehicles in future years. FCS would be contacted to provide plant extraction maps/timings to help assess this.
- m. **Transport feasibility study** – still not published. Announcement by Westminster Gov to also undertake a feasibility assessment was welcomed and contact would be made with John Lamont to provide all the background info already prepared for the Jacobs report.
- n. **Paths/Road clearances during recent weather** – The CC thanked the local team; **Joey, Frank and Duster** for going the extra mile for us during the ice/snows/melt. Members of the **Resilience Team** and **1st Responders** were also thanked for responding to emergency situations. Their combined help in supporting medical staff to get to patients and for taking patients to appointments, for clearing pathways, for collecting messages for the elderly was unstinting. The community needs were again prioritised by them, they all went out of their way to make sure we were okay during the Beast from the East. We thank everyone who played their part to keep us safe, warm and mobile.
- o. **Roadworks** following meetings with SBC and Timber Transport Forum budget had been found to resurface road south of village on B6357. These would commence on imminently closing the road, but this hardship was accepted as an inevitability of the works. It was stressed again, that had proper resource been deployed to address matters then road closure could have been avoided. This places huge additional burden on the community and businesses, more cross county effort and planning needs to be done to avoid this happening again in the future

5. Planning

- a. **Pine Burns** – appeal. Scot Gov reporter requested further information
- b. **Letter of response** - Faw Law Side Wind Farm scoping sent
- c. **18/00211/FUL** – window replacement 41 North Hermitage Street, no objections.

6. Public Forum/Community issues

- a. **No8/youth funding** – the CC understands that the funding for Youth provision at No.8 expires Oct 2018 and asked Cllrs to respond with what happens next. Cllrs reported that the Live Borders assets review would be published in the Spring. CC challenged this as being irrelevant to providing youth services in the community and explained that these could be hosted in various facilities locally if the need arose. The issue was about the provision of the youth program, not the location in which it is was held. Will be kept on agenda until resolution known.
- b. **Hawick High School/School bus** - Concerns amongst parents about the standard of education and learning provision at HHS remain. Vandalism, presence of alcohol and antisocial behaviours continue to dominate discussions about the school. Little evidence of change has been experienced by local parents; meetings with school staff have proven to be fruitless, parents taking time off to attend appointments and these not being kept by school staff add to frustrations locally. Added to this, parent's sessions for evenings in Hawick and Newcastleton clashed impacting on those wishing to meet the Head teacher. All

these factors have contributed to the decision by most parents to send their children to Langholm Academy for the 2018/19 school term. This in turn impacts on places on the Langholm school bus.

The Langholm school bus is a 57-seater, predominantly full most days, thus any extra children are in danger of not having a seat as those in D&G catchment get priority. Cllr Turnbull advised that this service would be upgrading to a 70-seater, but this has not been confirmed by Telfords. (Subsequent discussion indicates that this is not an option as the 70-seater is contracted elsewhere). This has serious implications for parents who are rightly concerned about the welfare of their children and safe passage to/from school. The CC will follow up matters urgently to understand what plans can be put in place from the D&G side.

- c. **Nursery facilities** – Correspondence received requested help in finding budget to improve playground facilities, the CC previously approached SBC re improvements to the nursery playground given increased usage because of the extended hours early learning program. Cllr Turnbull advised that as the property belonged to the school any approach for resource needed to come from them but that any local fundraising by the community would be welcomed.
- d. **New mobiles masts** – emergency service only facility currently provided with no commercial platform available for calls. This was contrary to the planning request and not in the spirit of the agreement between the landowner and the service provider. New masts were welcomed, but the understanding was that these would extend commercial services, and this does not appear to be the case. SBC asked to investigate.

7. **Correspondence**

- a. Meeting with Rachel Hamilton MSP re Community Challenges April 27th 1pm
- b. Community Council Network Meeting 14th March 2018 - apologies to be sent
- c. Community Heritage Scotland - let's map it! Project/ Heritage Centre responded

8. **Teviot & Liddesdale Area Locality meeting** – held over till next meeting

9. **Date of next meeting:** Tuesday April 10th 7pm village Hall.