

Newcastleton & District Community Council
DRAFT Minutes of ORDINARY MEETING
4th December 2019 @ 7:00 pm village hall

Present: Laura Paterson (Vice Chair), Greg Cuthbert (Vice chair), Barbara Elborn (sec), Rob Irwin, Trevor Harrop, Joan Robson, Lyndsay Patterson, Cllr Watson McAteer, Cllr Davie Paterson, Cllr George Turnbull
Apologies: Margaret Elliot, Ian Nicol, **Also present:** 17 members of public and PC Allan Patterson (part)

December meeting was held earlier than usual to allow for the forthcoming General Election and to seek feedback from the community to the Community Consultation on the Holm Hill Community buy-out.

1. **Police Report** - The CC was pleased to welcome back PC Allan Patterson who reported for NOV: Call to address in Moss Place, alleging that an occupant had rigged a makeshift electric fence in garden. Police attended at the address to execute Non-Appearance warrants, two persons arrested, there was no electrification of any fence. Call to Moss Place alleging neighbour had a prohibited dog, checks made and SSPCA notified, no issues with the animal. Call to village, family members were unable to contact elderly relative, Police made contact, all was in order. Call to Moss Place alleging possible breach of bail, caller spoken to, and checks made, no breach. Call to Moss Place regarding an aggressive neighbour, statements noted enquiries are now ongoing.

Residents of Moss Place are reminded that incidents should be reported to both the police AND Eildon whose management are now taking an active involvement in trying to resolve the outcome satisfactorily. Senior management claim to have been unaware of the level of disturbance and distress any have suffered from recently. There will now be a calming period to enable steps to be taken to address matters.

The blue horse box parked in South Hermitage Street continues to cause serious obstruction for drivers exiting Union street and it is not displaying any road tax. The police have been requested to remind the owner to remove it.

There continue to be incidents of children cycling without lights, parents are encouraged to ensure their children are aware of the dangers and that bikes have lights/check batteries.

2. **Holm Hill Community buy-out consultation** – many members of the public had visited the exhibition, over 120 registered with many already leaving response to the questionnaire and leaving questions for answering in the evening session. These were addressed and a show of hands for support to proceed was asked, excepting visitors there was unanimous support from the floor to proceed with the program. All were reminded that the info was on line and in paper format and all were encouraged to review the plans <https://www.visitnewcastleton.com/community/holm-hill-buyout/> and respond to the questionnaire. The consultation runs until Dec 31st.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting** were accepted as a true record of the meeting. Proposed by GC, seconded by LP and signed by LP.
 1. **Matter arising:**
 - a. **CC vacancies** Ashley Thomson has come forward to join the CC, proposed by Barbara Elborn, seconded by Lyndsay Paterson. Copies of the constitution and code of conduct would be forwarded to her to read and confirm acceptance by email. Ashley was advised that she was required to attend 3 consecutive meetings prior to being given voting rights. NDCT was delighted to welcome her on board and reminded all that there are still 2 vacancies to fill.
 - b. **Flooding consultation feedback** The CC has not received any details from anyone who said they would sit on the community panel to work with SBC & CC to develop the flood plans, very disappointing considering nearly 40 people did state that they would be willing to do this. Work

would commence on the plans but without community engagement included at the outset it would take significantly longer to reach any solutions.

- c. **Community Transport update** – Received limited info from SBC, nothing confirmed. Have requested delay to any decision until the upgrade of Buccleuch House is complete so that everyone has access to online facilities and further education but not received any reassurances on this.
- d. **Road Gritting response Tracey Logan** no response now expected given that the dispute is resolved, and normal services resumed.
- e. **Bottle banks update** – temporary bins been lifted albeit that the CC requested these be left until post-Christmas. No efforts had been made to replace the damaged bins meaning that the overflow situation was likely to happen over the festive period. Cllrs were asked to take this forward and urged to demand proper action regarding the broken tanks. Newcastleton continues to be at the end of the line and poorly serviced by 3rd party contractors and this is not acceptable.

2. Planning applications - Buccleuch House update. Approved, will commence April 2020 subject to funding. Contrary to speculation the laundry will be included and will be able to serve members of the public, how this is delivered is yet to be determined by the Trust.

3. Public Forum/Community Issues

- a. **Dark Sky** – working with others raised at the Area partnership; Denholm, Bonchester Bridge, Upper Teviotdale and Chesters all agreed to work with Newcastleton to seek dark sky status. All will combine to apply for a grant to do this from the Community Grant fund for 2020 and again for 2021 as works must cover a 2 yr period.
- b. **Alchemy Film & Arts community engagement** - invited to attend the Feb CC meeting so all can understand what they do – make films of local things, capturing history and insights etc.
- c. **Tinnis Bridge 30mph** signage corrs received explaining need for signage and remedial works. We await the detail of what is proposed and will inform all accordingly. In meantime 30MPH restrictions imposed. No great hardship as you can barely go over it at 20 MPH, the hardship will come when it is closed for refurbishment.
- d. **Cattle Grid works** Completed on the road to Dykecrofts, but new work now proposed on grids at Ashtrees & Slatiebrae through funding, from the STTF with a condition requiring the grant is spent by 22nd February 2020. SBC looking at starting these works on site in mid-January. SBC will close the road to HGV traffic for the full contract period (24hrs / day) and to light vehicles during the working day (08.30 -17.00). This closure would be in place from South of the Ashtrees cattle-grid to North of the Slatiebrae cattle-grid for approximately 3 weeks (weather dependant), however access shall always be maintained for light vehicles (and emergency vehicles) to the properties within the closed section. **The CC responded to SBC:** We can all agree these are essential works that must be carried out. However, it is unacceptable to yet again have a road closure on the B6357 for 3 weeks after this stretch of road has just been closed for weeks on end. Residents, particularly on that stretch of road are being hindered and isolated. This really is having a detrimental effect on people living in this area and people using the road. Is this really the only option? Are there other options that can be explored that wouldn't be as severe? The roads infrastructure should never be allowed to deteriorate to the point where communities are being cut off for weeks at a time. It's very upsetting and extremely frustrating.

Given this and the ongoing issue of road closures ref cattle grids etc it was agreed that Cllr Paterson would relay info and concerns to SBC and Cllr Turnbull would arrange a meeting with the STTF and D&G and the CC to discuss the wider implications to users and the community, more joined up works need to be considered and longer timescales need to be given so that the community is not so severely impacted. IF works were maintained rather than repaired this would alleviate the problem. New policy was needed to address this for roads impacted by forestry around our community.

- e. **Road widening proposal** at exit of forest road at Dykecrofts have been temporarily resolved by doing nothing but requesting that Forestry deliver the signage promised to direct traffic to park in Douglas Square or Preisthill not on the verges.
 - f. **Empty commercial unit Moss Yard** – the CC is concerned that the yard is still vacant, and SBC is not taking offers of let seriously. Over £12k has been lost in 2 x annual rental by them not considering a sensible rent negotiation for a new local business wishing to occupy the site. The CC has requested that this be bought up formally to determine what SBC intend to do with the site as offers of purchase previously have also been refused and this current impasse will mean that the village loses a local family wishing to return to work and offer local employment.
4. **Open questions from the community – gravel extraction** from the river was raised again. The CC confirmed that SEPA and SBC were fine with gravel being extracted but the community would need to fund this as in their view it was not a long-term flood defence and could not be funded from the public purse. The CC suggested that if the many projects proposed by the Trust came to fruition then gravel was needed for new pathways and all sorts of things and it could more easily be funded as part of another project. Gravel extraction will be considered by the Trust as a source when these projects get underway, but if the public wished to raise money to pay for the cost of removing the gravel then this is fine if the necessary permits were granted by SEPA for this to take place.
5. **Correspondence** - Great Borders River Clean for 2020, anyone interested contact Tom Rason TRawson@stmarysmelrose.org.uk
6. **Date of next meeting** Jan 14th 7pm Village Hall

Happy Christmas!