

**Newcastleton & District Community Council**  
**Minutes of ORDINARY MEETING**  
**12<sup>th</sup> November 2019 @ 7:00 pm village hall**

**Present:** Laura Paterson (Vice Chair), Greg Cuthbert (Vice chair), Barbara Elborn (sec), Rob Irwin, Trevor Harrop, Ian Nicol, Cllr Watson McAteer, Cllr Davie Paterson, Cllr George Turnbull **Apologies:** Joan Robson, Lyndsay Patterson, Margaret Elliot. **Also present:** 1 member of public, 1 member of press and PC Fraser Mortimer (Part).

1. **Police report** – PC Fraser Mortimer was welcomed to the meeting, standing in for PC Allan Patterson who was on holiday. The CC was pleased that a police presence had been provided and the report of incident was shared:

SEPTEMBER Various calls throughout the Month relating to addresses in Moss Place, call regarding an attempted fraud through internet, this was noted and added to the Police Intelligence database where such incidents are collated. Call regarding alleged harassment by youths who were repeatedly knocking at windows, Police attended and incident dealt with. Single vehicle injury VA on B6399 near to Shanked Viaduct. Call from other Force area regarding a possibly stolen vehicle at an address in Village, Officers attended and matter was resolved as misunderstanding. Call to Moss Place regarding symbol being spray painted on house. Incident checked and details noted, the substance was not permanent and washed off the wall. Motorcycle VA on B6357 near to Saughtree, rider sustained broken tibia. Report of possible high value fraud, enquiries were made with Bank as possible misinformation and matter resolved with no financial loss.

OCTOBER Further calls to Moss Place, all being collated and dealt with. Call to Frank Coutts Court, regarding persons in the area to rear of houses at night, there were similar incidents at start of year. Attempts will be made to attend in late evenings and check area. Report of hit and run VA at Lawston Farm House, vehicle skidded damaging fence and posts then left scene without attempting to report same enquiries into vehicle ownership and tracing driver. Report of a suspicious vehicle with two males seated inside on Dykecroft road, vehicle checked and all was in order. Reported theft of scrap metal items from Powisholm Farm, a vehicle is seen on CCTV, enquiries ongoing.

NOVEMBER Further calls to Moss Place regarding anti-social behaviour. Call to area of Hermitage School regarding vehicle which had crashed into Burn, driver was raced safe and well. Call to Moss Place regarding young dog, Council dog warden notified and no issues with pup at this time. Concern raised by Council into elderly resident who could not be contact. Police made contact and all was in order, no issues.

Members of the public had raised the blue horse box parked in South Hermitage Street for some time was causing serious obstruction for drivers exiting Union street- they cannot see traffic coming from the LHS needing to exit the road wide to get clear view. PC Mortimer would speak to owners.

Members of the public via the CC raised the increased incidents of children riding cycling without lights now the evenings were dark – efforts would be made to visit the school to raise awareness of the danger of this behaviour. Parents are encouraged to ensure children's bikes have lights/check batteries.

Given continued disruption and problems reported in Moss Place all are reminded about the need to report antisocial behaviours so formal monitoring can be maintained and necessary steps taken to address the issue by the relevant authority body. If incidents are not reported then nothing can be done.

2. **Minutes of the last meeting** were accepted as a true record of the meeting. Proposed by RI, seconded by TH and signed by LP.

**3. Matter arising:**

- a. **CC vacancies and workload** – to ease workload it was agreed by CC members to take on responsibilities for main areas. A status report would be presented at each CC meeting to enable updates and actions to be added. It was hoped that over time they become the go to person for local contact as well as liaise with other community personnel going forward:
- i. Education – Laura (Primary School), Ian (Hawick HS) Lyndsay (Langholm Academy)
  - ii. Police – Greg
  - iii. Railway – Greg
  - iv. Transport – Barbara/Greg/Laura
  - v. Roads – Rob/Trevor
  - vi. Broadband – Rob/Trevor
  - vii. Flood preparedness; drains cleared, sandbags provided, liaison with flood team, and resilience locally - Barbara
  - viii. Recycling – bins and bottle banks, scatty cart – Lyndsay
  - ix. Consultations - all
  - x. Planning – Ian
  - xi. Pathways and green spaces – Joan & Margaret
  - xii. Area partnership attendance – Trevor/Babs

Next month's report would be expanded to include the key headings with relevant actions updated monthly by all so it can be used as a status report and anyone can monitor it going forward.

- b. **Flooding consultation feedback** Over 40 people offered to join the working group along with the CC and SBC to develop the flood plan, notices were posted/requests in the Clatter asking those who volunteered to put their name and contact details in the red post box in Buccleuch House, none had been received. If you wish to help the CC drive this program forward then please pop your details in the box and we will be in touch.
- c. **Community Transport update** – disappointingly given the apparent urgency of previous meetings the CC had heard nothing and had requested updates via email. The CC remains concerned about SBC's intentions to cut routes which will impact on access to employment and education. Until the outcome of the Buccleuch House funding program and the commencement of the Hub & Spoke program cutting access to education is unacceptable. The CC continue to stress that the team is at capacity currently and without financial resource to fund a community scheme and its entire operation SBC must continue to provide the limited services we have.
- d. **CCTV update** – SBC insist that we must await their recommendations on how to operate and manage CCTV systems locally. Given the election and knock effect of 'no business' being processed this delay will effectively curtail any plans to see this in place this year. Cllr Turnbull was thanked for the insights provided to the CC to support any grant application.
- e. **Recycling status;** new facilities and state of bins – bins emptied but not replaced; one turned around to cover the hole, the other dropped without the pins depressed meaning that the bottom will be unlocked and it will be difficult to empty. Cllrs were asked to investigate the Viridor contract to ascertain the frequency of collections they are contracted to provide as well as any issues covering maintenance and repair. The complete disregard by the contractor and mistruths quoted to SBC officers contrary to the facts was unacceptable. The CC felt SBC officers had acted swiftly and kept us informed once they had understood the extent of the problem, but the problem was not resolved and continued efforts were needed by them to ensure that the contractor was held to account and fulfilled its contract.
- f. **Response from Tracey Logan, SBC CE** – it had taken 5 weeks for the response to be received and facts referred to were out of date and incorrect. The CC forwarded the correspondence to MSP's

and MP's for reference. The CC would continue to raise issue of note with the Chief Executive to ensure that matters of concern were on the public record.

#### **4. Planning applications**

- a. Buccleuch House update – nothing had been received by the CC to report any update
- b. 19/01602/FUL Blank Field, 29 South Hermitage Street. Alterations and extension to dwelling house, formation of new access and erection of fence and gates. No objections
- c. 19/01460/FUL 12 South Liddle Street, Alterations and extension to dwelling house. No objections
- d. 19/01609/FUL 1A Doncaster Street, single storey extension to dwelling house. No objections

#### **5. Public Forum/Community Issues**

- a. **Safeguarding Scotland's Remote & Rural Communities consultation** – paper circulated. The CC asked SBC Cllrs present what their view was of the proposed bill and what the wider view of SBC's was, they were unable to comment. The CC intends to invite Gail Ross to visit as the challenges referred to in her bill almost mirror ours. The Scottish Borders is one of 11 out of 32 local authorities with a presence of remote rural communities to which this bill applies. The CC is keen to discuss how our neighbours; specifically, Chesters, Bonchester Bridge, and Upper Liddesdale feel about debating this issue as the area partnership. It is Newcastle's view that this draft bill reflects many of the challenges we face as a community and having additional powers granted to ensure that local authorities and the government have to address rural remote needs differently to the one size fits all model is exactly what we have been challenging SBC about. We appreciate that currently SBC have to follow policy but this bill, if adopted, will give them powers to help the smaller remote rural communities overcome some of the major issues which only impact them.
- b. **Langholm Moor** – a final parcel of land had been identified and presented to Buccleuch to consider, the team awaited their response (Nov 18<sup>th</sup>). Should this prove positive then there will be a **community open day on Weds Dec 4<sup>th</sup>**. This will detail the proposed uses of the moor and seek community support for the proposals. Please look out for posters.
- c. **Forest gates still being left open** – security issues ref last year. Greg to speak to police and local forest users.

#### **6. Open questions from the community**

- a. **Car share** - Cllrs were asked why, when the rest of us were being asked to save budgets and accept cut backs, did they travel to the CC in separate vehicles. Travelling in one vehicle was likely to yield a £500 annual saving. They responded by acknowledging that it was a sensible option but the majority of times they were travelling from different parts of the region to be present, but they would consider it in future. They reported that the car share scheme had saved SBC £750k in costs in its 1<sup>st</sup> year of operation.
- b. **SBC Audit Commission Review** – Cllrs were asked their views on the recently published assessment of SBC; service provision, meeting targets, implementing changes like community empowerment, Fit for 2024, operating effective area partnerships etc. They concurred with the CC's view that performance was poor overall with only 75% of SBC own targets being met. The CC was keen to know what steps SBC were taking to address the failures, how this was being implemented and in what timescales. Cllrs were unable to comment further. The CC would write to SBC's scrutiny committee seeking answers to the above and to ensure that steps were implemented to deliver positive change.
- c. **Gritting policy in the event of strike action** – The CC sought reassurance from Cllrs about community cover given concerns over potential strike action and contractors roles during the winter period. It would not be acceptable if contractors were unable to reach the community and the school buses were unable to run as had happened previously. Cllrs advised that they had been told there would be no change to the planned schedule in the event of a strike. The CC would write to Ms Logan stressing the need to have local cover to ensure services could be provided.

- d. **Cattle grid at Dykecrofts** – complaints had been made about the repeated damage to the crossing by timber waggons, gravel HGVs and other flatbed HGV's with heavy lifting gear. 4 bars across the centre had been damaged and one was now splitting. Steps need to be taken to use timber transport budget to take a longer-term view about the presence of the grid given the increased road usage over the coming months and the likely disruption to residents and visitors if the gird worsens. The CC would contact the Timber transport forum for guidance and Cllrs would press internally for actions to be taken.
- 7. Correspondence**
- a. Present Voices, Future Lives' Housing Exhibition – Gala 16<sup>th</sup> Dec
  - b. **Motion request re national community energy campaign** – The CC agreed to adopt this motion; petitioning the UK government to amend the electric supply bill to enable communities who generate their own energy to 'sell' their own energy locally or elsewhere, currently not possible. Given the opportunity offered by Langholm Moor to consider renewables and create our own local energy company this was supported.
8. **Teviot and Liddesdale Area Partnership** – no issue with supporting the grants proposed. The CC would contact local rural CCs to discuss the Remote Rural Communities Bill and also ask their views of the SBC Audit commissions review on performance.

**9. Date of next meetings**

Nov 19<sup>th</sup> Area Partnership meeting Hawick Town Hall

Dec 4<sup>th</sup> CC ordinary meeting – **note date change due to election**