**Newcastleton & District Community Council**

**Minutes of informal meeting**

**13TH October 2020 @ 7:00 pm VIA ZOOM**

Newcastleton CC met virtually via zoom to host an informal meeting to discuss challenges facing the community. Cllrs McAteer and Turnbull were also present.

Greg chaired the informal session following resignation from Laura Paterson. He took the opportunity to formally ask for thanks to be noted in recognition of all her efforts on the community’s behalf both as a member and latterly as chair. This had been immense and was formally acknowledged by the committee. Laura’s role during flooding, particularly working alongside Lyndsay, Ashley and Greg rehoming displaced households post the flood, resulted in very few households having to be rehomed outside the village. Her insight and knowledge of public sector practises prove invaluable during this time. On behalf of us all the CC extends a huge thank you to her for leading us over the last few years.

The CC now has two vacancies on the council and urges anyone who can spare a few hours per month to join us.

In the short-term meetings need to continue to be virtual but all acknowledged that we need to establish new ways we can operate in the new normal to widen community engagement. SBC’s current policy remains as previous – no CC’s meetings to be held and they are invalid without members of the public able to participate. The CC has requested guidance on how we can move things forward and continue to be advised that there is no way forward. The CC is challenging this approach as other local authority areas and their CC’s seem to be operating their way through to a new normal and it is unrealistic to think this cannot be applied to the Scottish Borders. Until such time as our meetings can once again be ‘formal’ the CC will meet informally to discuss issued that impact us and take forward concerns of residents that are known to us.

1. **Minutes** of the last meeting – Mar 2020. There were no matters arising not addressed on today’s agenda. Proposed Lyndsay, Seconded Scott
2. **Matters arising**
	* 1. **CC vacancies, AGM and community engagement**. 2 vacancies, def need more support. Growing workload and support being requested from the CC. It was hoped that following the huge success of volunteers during lockdown that this would encourage others to step forward. The CC would seek to apply to the community grant fund for budget to pay for tech to support this as well as subscriptions to zoom or Microsoft teams so that all could more easily access files and ‘meet’. The Sec role was now too vast without support; either tech based via office 365 set up or software which enables us to create monthly database for all to access
		2. **Community Transport update** ORT/COGS and BE met with SBC via zoom. Absolutely no way forward. Members of public can get on school transport – must wear masks. No view on when services might be removed as planned previously. Meeting Telfords to discuss local service provision options; further education access issues – removal of free transport, old folk access to No8 for flu jabs is a challenge. Major issue ref flue jabs and process for appointments; residents reportedly called over 50 times to Gala number/email box sending back ‘full’ notices. Concerns regarding accessing appointments and how to get to No.8
3. **Planning application** - Buccleuch House, change of use applied for. Needed as result of NDCT decision to permanently relocate the salon to the new build in the rear due to Covid to provide sensible direction of ‘flow’ around the building and enact social distancing measures to protect staff and users.
4. **Flooding** - zoom meeting with key SBC/SEPA personal to kick start review/program. Greg/Lyndsay/Laura (attending)Barbara/Resilience Groups/Fire Service. Booked as a pre-meeting prior to hosting a community meeting.  Agenda is community led so we can cover off issues of significance to us:
5. Electric – what is happening to the pole and exposed cabling?
6. Subsidence – no works can commence until cabling resolved, what is happening on the riverside ref options and when might this work happen?
7. SEPA – where is the 2nd gauge?  If it isn’t being reinstalled what are the measures in place to give community early warning signals of flood?
8. Review of issues raised, and protocols needed, learning from mistakes
9. Village tidy – drains and gullies swept in prep for winter, what are the plans for this and when?
10. Feedback - how do we enable this to be discussed with the wider community?  what format given that we cannot host an open meeting?
11. Resilience issues – comms, kits, local safeguards and protocols, training etc
12. Insurance – need SBC to seek recognition that household repairs/working trades need to be acknowledged as key workers in a crisis situ
13. Community plan for Newcastleton; emergency facilities/support/locations under pandemic criteria
14. Follow up – regular dialogues, updates for monthly CC meeting?
15. **Pandemic contingent planning** - are we equipped to cope again in a crisis? Discussion on challenges: what happens if we have a flood? How do we cope with evacuation of Covid free/infected? Communication? If we get cut off how do we manage? Resilience awarded budget to provide radio phones which have large range but access to facilities to install the masts (health centre, village hall etc) needs agreeing with NHS/Fire service etc.
16. **Roadworks** – where are we? Canonbie bridge closure? Lack of joined up management between SBC/D&G severely impacting community and those further afield at Kielder. This continues to have serious impact on residents and businesses locally and further afield. Cllrs asked
17. **Village maintenance**
	1. **Bottle bank** what is happening with the banks? Usage of SBC yard? Frequency of emptying – particularly now home consumption likely to rise again? Scott will **monitor and request as necessary.**
	2. **Drains and maintenance pre-winter**; Grit bins, Snow plough timings etc Who is responsible locally? When is it happening, how is it being managed? Grit bins on road to Dykecroft are empty and off their placements. When are drains being cleared as part of flood defences?
	3. **Verges/grass cutting** Not clear what policy is – we offered to sort the setts/weeds was told we were not allowed, who is reps and when will this be resolved. Much more work now required to clear the weed debris
	4. **Signage** – needs cleaning on all facias entering the village, SBC did this last year what is the expectation this year?
18. **Public Forum/Community Issues**
	1. **Pathways Oliver Place/Houghton Park slipway** – continues to deteriorate, actions required urgently prior to worsening weather. Cllrs to investigate please.
	2. **CCTV update** – feedback on meeting and next actions. Plans shared. Seek info to include Whithaugh pool/riverside. Feedback from SBC ref pole usage and access to power supply negatively received. Cllrs to investigate further; communities asked to take on significant workload but when we request support from them this is sited as policy. Cllrs to take up the request as this is seen as obstructive and likely to add £££’s in additional costs for poles/supply/solar panels etc.
19. **Community issues:**
	1. **Copshaw Tartan:** needs CC approval. CCR asked and endorsement it. We need to understand what/how this is going to work? Lynn has only 1 small loom what is his expectation? how do we access to it? who can use it? will it be licensed? For example, can the community make merchandise, sell it, with proceeds used locally? What is the vision? Everyone is excited to endorse it but how do we maximise its usage? Who takes responsibility for it? It could be and probably will be a fantastic community asset, but needs managing.
	2. **Buccleuch House update**: Rear cleared, building to be cleared – top floor. All filing cabinets to be moved to community storage. Furniture going to Rock UK empty chalet. Can filing cabinets be cleared of all rubbish and can items on top all be binned? Wall hangings going to Heritage Centre and Margaret has asked for Lord Minto pic to be returned to her – this will happen once the scaffolding is in place to deal with the staircase as it cannot be accessed until then.
	3. **Leisure assets and Holm Hill:** **Sawmill woods** – fencing started, equip failure, progress delayed: **Riverside gates** – what is the view, how do we proceed? We need something in place to protect the community/residents for 2021. Proposal; gate both sides, allow access to vehicles if booked, deposit taken, partly returned on departure, allows funding to accrue for riverside maintenance. Likely issues – parking spill over to riverside, up the lane. Seek additional signage on riverside? Residents only? (Since meeting CCTV extending to cover riverside would probably overcome initial concerns, this will be included in the CCTV task list)
	4. **Next task –** forestry planning and leisure aspects design; new trails, walks, etc. Not likely till later in year.
	5. Community Outreach Team: Already making huge impact. Taking on all ‘social’ issues – passenger transport, bereavement counselling, financial planning, fuel poverty, mental health etc. Hoping we can maintain this going forward, intel being used to feed into the service aspect of BH.
20. **Correspondence** Too much to go over. IF budget can be found to create central resource then it will all be filed centrally so all can access and deal with it
21. **AOB**
	1. **Walking on MTB trails –** explanation from Lee Musson to be sought for publishing in Clatter
	2. **Flue jabs shambolic**
22. **Date of next meetings and how do we conduct them?** Regular Tue evening sessions to be reinstated? Only conducted via Zoom? CC will meet but how we engage with CC is yet to be determined.