**Newcastleton & District Community Council**

**Minutes of digital meeting 10th February**

**2021 @ 7:00 pm VIA ZOOM**

**Present:** Greg Cuthbert, Lyndsay Patterson, Barbara Elborn, Keith Bough, Marcus Day, Iain Crosbie, Scott Wilson, Ashley Thomson, Ian Nichol, Rob Irwin, Cllrs McAteer, Turnbull, and Paterson

1 member of the public **Apologies**: Margaret Elliot

**Welcome:** GC welcomed all to the meeting.

**Point of Order**: *Cllr Paterson raised a point of order;* why was Newcastleton CC not circulating agenda packs in a timely manner, stating it was not good enough to receive them 2 days prior to a meeting? The CC responded: January minutes were circulated via email to members, copied to elected members on 15th January. This was 2 days following the Jan meeting, other relevant papers on the Feb agenda had previously been circulated by their originating bodies; Teviot & Liddesdale Area Partnership minutes were distributed via email on Feb 1st, Hawick & Hermitage Police report via email on Feb 8th. They were only recirculated with a reminder link to zoom for members as a courtesy.

The CC felt Cllr Paterson’s point of order was unjustified as Newcastleton CC was a group of unpaid volunteers undertaking the work of the CC in their own time. Operating under present conditions were testing for all, the CC was doing its best to serve the community of Newcastleton to the best of its ability, he was asked to focus on the challenges not the processes in order to get the work done.

1. **Minutes** of the last meeting (Jan) were agreed. Proposed SW, seconded LP
2. **Matters arising -** there were no matters arising not on the agenda
3. **Matters arising:**
   1. **Flooding group update:** Discussions regarding adopting astrategy of engaging influencers and then identifying tasks was well received. SBC Flood team recommended SEPA as well as Eyemouth Search & Rescue be involved in initial meetings. Pauline Elliot and Chris Skelton would attend from Newcastleton Resilience group; 3 members of public had come forward to be involved and would be contacted. GC, SW, LP, AT, BE will represent the CC. Cllr Watson will encourage members of Hawick flood group to explain their approach and set up. LP to source contacts and first meeting fixed asap**.**
   2. **CCTV update** Confirmation of donations from Business Forum, NDCT, SLF, Resilience Group, NSP, NDCC. Huge thank you to all contributors. Letters of support received from Poly, Business Forum, NSP, Police and SBC Flood team. Letters of permission provided by home and landowners.

The Town and Country Planning Act Class 72 which deals with CCTV is clear, full planning will be required. Feedback from SBC, on pre-planning application received, a written report will follow. No issues identified the CC can now progress with full submission. Additional advice on what extra info to include will be considered and included in the submission. Full planning submitted asap, cost of confirmed as £202, SBC extending reduced fees as the application is coming from the community council.

All members unanimously agreed to progress, budget also agreed to support the application. Thanks were passed to Keith Brough who had worked hard to pull the overall plan together with the experts. The grant application to seek top up funds would now be submitted to the SBC Community Grant Fund for review before the March committee of the Area Partnership.

* 1. **Buccleuch House upgrade** - well underway, Swinton’s have full access to the building and while guidelines allow will keep the site open and working. Phase One roofing work has been impacted by adverse weather but they are making headway. Progress on the interior has begun with the light demolition and investigative works. Groundwork for the retail space in the garden begin this week with foundations dug and footings poured when cold weather eases.

Residents have approached workers with inquiries regarding recycling materials, there are strict Covid-19 safety policies in place which the site is operating within. Please respect the request not to engage with staff or enter the site. If anyone has anything specific to ask, contact Gordie Campbell, NDCT Development Manager. There are some worthwhile items; staircase, Victorian fire surround and there may be others for upcycling. These will be put on the website with donations sought. This will not happen for a few more weeks when all basic interiors are stripped back. The staircase will not be removed until the rear extension is built and usable.

* 1. **Pathways Olive Place/Houghton Park***:* SBC response received; Oliver Place and Houghton Park footways will be reassessed in the coming weeks to determine if their condition has worsened since the last inspection. They will then be considered for inclusion in future planned works programmes along with all other competing priorities. The road at Houghton Park is also on the list of schemes to be considered for future planned works. At this time, it cannot be confirmed whether either will be programmed during the forthcoming new financial year.
  2. **Footbridge Riverside** maintenance update no further work undertaken. The CC felt that everything that could be done had been done, residents are reminded to use the handrail provided when crossing.
  3. **Area Partnership update** – minutes circulated. Very positive meeting with SBC officers to review progress ref the new way forward with colleagues from Southdean and The Bridge. SBC now preparing draft papers for full council meeting to share with elected members to seek support for the proposed changes. There would be two papers: a) Community Grant fund, b) Area Partnership format. SBC reported there was much in common across the whole region on both issues, but some do not want change. **Community Grant fund** – transparency, wider involvement of communities in assessing bids, more flexibility in each area. Recognition current system not benefiting all as it might**. AP format** – wider agenda items with stronger management and follow up of issues raised. Both require support from SBC to ensure implementation and learnings maximised.

Cllr Paterson was asked to clarify his opposition to the proposal; he had previously shared his objections at the AP meeting when the full proposal was presented to all the Teviot & Liddesdale CC’s, voluntary groups, and elected members receiving unanimous support. He repeated his statement from that meeting*; very much against it, horrified to think that unelected CC’s could be making decisions about spending Councils money, he would be surprised if the changes were adopted by the council stating current laws would need to be changed for this to be implemented.* NDCC expressed disappointment at his view given the unanimous support the new way forward had received.

Cllr Paterson reiterated that constituents had complained to him, indicating the proposed approach was inappropriate. BE suggested anyone with issues could attend the CC to make their views known.

Cllr Turnbull reiterated the proposals were forward thinking and innovative and would engage more people more widely. Cllr McAteer stated he fully endorsed the proposals and had recently received feedback from Cllr Mark Rowley (Elected member Economic Development) who commented positively on them when presented at the Berwickshire meeting. Their Area Partnership members would use some of the criteria to create their own unique solutions. It was now widely recognised that one size does not fit all and needs varied widely by catchment. The matter would be concluded at the full council meeting when it was hoped the ‘new way forward’ would be agreed and that true community empowerment could commence across the wider communities of the Scottish Borders for the new financial year.

1. **Public Forum/Community Issues:**
   1. **Community Voices project – extending Borders Railway to Carlisle project**. Grant papers for all participating CC’s submitted. First time Area Partnership had worked collaboratively and submitted a joint paper. CCs encouraged to start process of preparing content; appoint local rep to work with core team. Confirmation expected in March AP meeting, CC’s encouraged to be ready to react asap once funding agreed. Spring was seen as key period to reach the influencers and break the current impasse on driving decisions forward.
   2. **Eildon/SBHA Housing** Positive meeting with Eildon in January, follow up Feb 13th. Marketing initiatives agreed, being prepared, and used to promote locally first. New local assessment priorities being created to allow our young people to apply to the 2 bed properties encouraging them to stay and live in the village. All felt this was an encouraging start and once the work was active the process would begin with SBHA, where much work was also needed to change their approach to prioritise local needs within the social housing sector.
   3. **Lynx update** Proposal to release 3 Lynx over 5 years was in consultation within the wider catchment of the Northumberland Great Park/Kielder Forest area. This had previously been kicked into touch by SBC, the UK Gov and Scot Gov with licenses refused in 2017 and it was hoped that this position would remain. Cllr McAteer would follow through with SBC, BE to forward pervious info.
   4. **Police Report** Newcastleton CCTV got a mention ref the boy racer incident. Link for reporting Covid restrictions breaches now provided <https://www.scotland.police.uk/secureforms/covid19/>
2. **Planning** Removal of Condition 1 of Local Review decision 18/00023/RREF (18/00686/FUL) pertaining to glamping units and ground works hereby permitted shall be removed and the sites restored to their former condition within 3 years of commencement of development of the first site @ Border Glamping Flatt Farm. **No comment**. Replacement windows to front elevation 6 North Hermitage Street Newcastleton 21/00121/FUL **No comment.**
3. **Community issues:**

**Newcastleton Primary School** Andy Jones confirmed as full-time head for 23month. The decision was very overdue and very welcome given current and previous challenges; much concern is still reported by parents with serious consideration being given to children being taken out and placed at Canonbie Primary impacting the school register. Immediate and rapid change was needed to persuade parents the right steps were being taken and the school would regain the status of a valued place of learning. There was potential positive change within the sector which if managed successfully by SBC could widen the educational provision in the village as well as re-opening the school for wider usage; all sports for children and adults had been cancelled, no outside usage was encouraged. The new approach recognised the need to put the school at the heart of the community. This was welcomed by all and it was agreed to extend an invite to the NSP and Andy Jones to attend the next CC.

* 1. **Local approved provider status** BE had contacted SBC to see if the Trust or CC can be approved as a provider to commission local services within the community; feedback from local trades suggests the level of work required to register as an approved supplier is onerous for the income received. But if the CC or the Trust became the ‘commissioning agent locally’ then costs might be saved, and regular income streams secured enabling us to use local services and keep money in the village. This was considered a sensible approach with both Cllrs McAteer and Turnbull extending support to the concept.

1. **Correspondence**
   1. Previously circulated updated GDPR certificate for reference
   2. Teviot & Liddesdale Area Partnership minutes previously circulated
   3. Hawick & Hermitage Police report
2. **AOB**

**Dog pooh –** huge issues currently, getting worse. Are dog bins in the right places for people to deposit pooh bags? This would be investigated, SBC contacted to arrange further bins. GC, AT, LP to action

1. **Date of next meeting – Wednesday March 10th via ZOOM, link below**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83765487690?pwd=WjJxWHIyRlFqNlZ1cis5WjVzQ0lNZz09>

Meeting ID: 837 6548 7690 Passcode: 972877