



## Newcastleton & District Community Council

### Minutes of digital meeting Tuesday November 9<sup>th</sup> 2021

**PRESENT:** Lyndsay Patterson, Greg Cuthbert, Barbara Elborn, Ian Nichol, Margaret Elliot, Rob Irwin Marcus Day, Keith Brough, Cllr Watson McAteer, Cllr George Turnbull, and 5 Members of the public

**APOLOGIES:** Cllr Turnbull, Iain Crosbie, Scott Wilson, Ashley Thomson

1. **OPENING REMARKS:** Chair opened the meeting, thanking the covid officer for his diligence in supervising the arrival procedures required for a safe venue; reminding all present to respect the protocols and that face coverings should be worn at all times except when speaking. A register of all those in attendance was taken and will be kept for 21 days.
2. **Housekeeping:** Venue for next CC to be decided on a monthly basis; risk assessments will be undertaken by KB/Covid officer Members of public informed of protocols in advance of meeting for attending.
3. **Minutes Last Meeting:** October 2021 were proposed by GC, seconded by LP
4. **Matters arising:**
  - a. CCTV update/SBC correspondence. Very real planning frustrations in SBC responses where they seek to defend rather than converse to try to get a level of understanding. It still remains a fact that SBC planning dept did nothing on the community application for 16 weeks when other applications outside of our catchment area were averaging approvals within 11weeks. It was hoped that approval would be granted if a compromise on the placement of the pole at the forecourt could be agreed.
  - b. Houghton Park & other pavements Jason Hedley/SBC responded to matters paths/roadsides: The signs have been inspected and the fault identified. I shall pursue an update on progress for repair and let you know. Discussion about the footway extension has also continued; *Meeting fixed; SW/GC/SBC. Will cover the commencement of the 20MPH zoning at start of village and also prior to the approach on the Holm Bridge, it would be safer given the amount of footfall on it all year round that this also included to protect pedestrians.*
  - c. Drainage still remains a challenge requiring an integrated solution as part of the overall flood works like Hawick flood scheme.
  - d. Bin/placements progress – no sign of theses being placed out. Cllrs to follow up.
  - e. Handrails riverside/Polysport progress NDCT confirmed that this would be undertaken by end of Nov following award from Fallago for paths maintenance
5. **Police Report:** October for review received. Becoming less and less relevant in terms of providing insights and valuable information to remote rural communities. Need to see police face to face on a regular basis and to have a more visible presence in the community.

Acknowledgement that COP26 required relocation to other duties but there is an expectation that they should be back on patrol going forward.

6. **Flooding** Event Oct 26/27<sup>th</sup> feedback on protocols and any actions:
  - a. **Charley Syke** – to reduce waters in the Lakes needs to be turned to the RHS to realign it so the capillary action of the water flowing draws water from the lakes.
  - b. **Dry gravel lowering the levels** – speeded the getaway, intention to maintain this annually but needs a funded program. NDCT cannot fund this ongoing
  - c. **Lakes** – needs maintenance work clearing ditches to encourage flows
  - d. **Protocols on the night** – having locally based team who know the habits and behaviours was extremely valuable. Their presence meant that the core team were able to monitor things indoors not expose themselves to challenging situations. Flood warning was given too early causing alarm. SEPA river level gauges next to useless in a crisis as they lag 1 hour behind
  - e. **Communication** – during event this was erratic and very difficult. What was going on was gleaned from social media pages rather than being fed by the bunker. HQ had to be pushed to issue a statement for Newcastleton residents.
  - f. **Drains maintenance** – still not being regulated and managed. Need a proper strategy for the village; every time something gets dug up its patched and put back, why can't the community development plan incorporate the drains that need addressing and when any work is needed it is done in a holistic manner – Hawick flood scheme is reckoned to have save £30m in costs by doing all infrastructure works in combination?
  - g. **Sandbags** – some households were greedy taking more bags than necessary leaving others more needy exposed. A new sandbag policy will be published once the new shed is in place at the south end of the village. Fixed numbers of bags per vent, homes that flood prioritised, those who collect them must return them.
7. **Winter Resilience plan** – 2<sup>nd</sup> sandbag shed location, requested formal decision from Polysport.
8. **Drilling update** TBA when update provided
9. **Flood group update** – meeting being refixed
10. **Area Partnership update**
  - a. **Place planning feedback** – Area Partnership 16 Nov clashes with SOSE meeting NDCC won't be present. Formal apologies given as well as feedback: Findings shared ref consultation, poor responses across the whole of SBC communities. Acknowledgement from SBC about our concerns; we do seem to be in harmony but capacity versus deliverability is likely to stall progress; much of the SBC investment is spent covering specific support for task/towns identified from Borderlands which means the smaller communities will not get any support.

Newcastleton has strands of development work all of which will have overlap with outcomes of place planning, it will be critical to tap in for help as things evolve. These

cover housing, renewables, tourism & leisure, land mgt (forestry and flood). NDCT proposed a meeting with the place planning team once plans are formalised.

- b. **Nov agenda items for review:** Forestry and timber transport no comments where forthcoming. <https://consult.gov.scot/environment-forestry/forestry-and-land-scotland-draft-corporate-plan/> closes Nov 22<sup>nd</sup>. All encouraged to comment on lack of 'policing' extraction, run off and lack of community engagement. Deadline Nov 22<sup>nd</sup>
- c. **Grant applications – Copshaw Gardeners** applied for new tubs made from recycled materials. Full support from the CC. Further application will be submitted by the Legion to support the 2<sup>nd</sup> flagpole and flagstones to enable disabled access to the memorial. This was fully endorsed. The CC will submit the planning application to allow for reduced fees and repaid.
- d. **Public seating – top/middle/bottom square** – all seats need major overhaul, some already in state of collapse. Cllrs asked to seek funds from the small schemes budget to replace these with 25yr guaranteed recycled materials. Work would be undertaken locally, and the materials would seek to match or enhance those of the tubs secured by Copshaw Gardeners to present a better overall appearance.

## 11. Public forum/Community issues

- a. Flu and booster jabs. Reports of poor communications and no shows at local surgery. Cllrs will investigate.
- b. AGM Campaigns for Borders Rail feedback positive meeting and turnout. Connectivity Review expected imminently, expected to endorse the extension of the line.
- c. Potholes need to be reported online with images to speed up remedial works
- d. Request to consider Men's Shed locally. This had been reviewed as part of the initial community consultation with little appetite. The outreach team would consider this again if there was demand.
- e. Bus connections to Hawick and onward to Edinburgh a challenge, this had been reported and it was hoped that the new program would resolve matters.
- f. Phone box – poor state of repairs. BT need to be advised to maintain it as it qualifies as one of the remote rural locations where sites will be kept.
- g. Street lighting will be reviewed towards the Olive Tree where it was felt that the LED were not sufficient.

## 12. Correspondence

SOSE roadshow November 16<sup>th</sup> Village Hall all encouraged to attend, points for discussion noted: grid capacity/renewables investment, Connectivity – lack of superfast everywhere continues to inhibit growth – our dev plans must incorporate fibre, but this will only 'drop' the further away we are from the cabinet – where is R100? Transparency of process, Communication

**Date of next meeting Dec 14<sup>th</sup> Venue TBC**