



Newcastleton & District Community Council
AGM MINUTES
Tuesday 8th March 2022, 7pm village Hall

PRESENT: Greg Cuthbert, Barbara Elborn, Keith Brough, Scott Wilson, Lyndsay Patterson, Ian Nichol, Marcus Day. Cllr Watson McAteer, George Turnbull, David Paterson, 4 members of public.

APOLOGIES: Margaret Elliot, Rob Irwin, Iain Crosbie, Ashley Thomson,

1. **OPENING REMARKS:** Chair opened the meeting, thanking all for attending. KB advised all of relevant Covid Protocols asking all to wear masks unless speaking/exempt.
2. **Minutes Last** AGM held digitally Dec 2020, previously circulated were approval. Proposed by LP seconded KB

3. Chairman's Statement Greg Cuthbert:

The chair stressed the challenges the community had faced over the last few years; flooding and covid as well as road closures, reduced transport, and many other issues. He thanked officers and elected members for their support in resolving some challenging situations and responding quickly to circumstances when needed.

He thanked members who had worked tirelessly to ensure that problems were resolved and welcomed the formation of the new flood group but stressed the importance of all residents needing to be proactive to protect their properties and support efforts of others. The long-term plan for flood defences would, in all likelihood, take much longer to resolve given Scottish government's 'freeze' on flood schemes until a new funding formula was approved. In the short term our aim was to try to get some interim measures in place as a stop gap. It would be important that the community took time to review the proposals in the coming weeks and made their views known so these proposals could proceed.

Current challenges and concerns are focused on energy and the escalating cost of petrol and heating oil.

He thanked Newcastleton Resilience Team and Volunteer Fire Service for their continued efforts to keep all safe during challenging weather events. Members of the CC were thanked for all their efforts to keep momentum moving forward for the community working closely with others when required to achieve the right outcome; roads, housing, CCTV, and many other things that everyone takes for granted.

The last few years had been tough on us all but summer 2022 was a time for looking forward with the return of both the Copshaw Common riding and the Music Festival as well as the Holm Show.

4. **Secretary Report** Past 2 years have been erratic with stop/starts for meetings whether in person or online. CC members recognised that lack of interaction has been frustrating particularly for members who depend on community feedback to help them drive forward requests for change or improvements locally.

There have been changes in the way SBC works with communities via the Teviot & Liddesdale Area Partnership, previously called the Area forum. Weak leadership and agenda's, no follow through on issues that matter to communities has frustrated this process; Newcastleton has a reputation of being outspoken, but we are not alone, the communities speak as one voice across many common areas, all seeing failures when it comes to supporting the work of CCs. Newcastleton

asked for support to help its increased workload created due to the pandemic; seeking SBC to provide a facility to host a common CC website as well as provide subscriptions for Microsoft office, that way common issues could more easily be shared, and data and information made more accessible to the public reducing time and sharing learnings. Since the start of the pandemic members of the public are expected to 'engage' with them via TEAMS, Microsoft's digital platform, however, they do not provide the means to do this. We are still waiting.

The CC receives £660 pr year to support the work of its members and the community. This isn't a sufficient sum to conduct business nor invest in the valuable work that CC's undertake, and it needs to change going forward. Our hope is the new administration, post the forthcoming local elections recognise that the time for discussion is over, we need to see action from those that represent us to provide the resources we asked for nearly 2 years ago.

On a positive note, the CC continues to engage on common matters directly with our neighbours. The communities have much that unites us; forestry, flooding, communications, policing, roads and access are just some things we have spoken about as well as wind farms and energy challenges. We share intelligence and information with each other, all of us recognising that each community is only as strong as its neighbour and that we are all doing our bit working towards overcoming our own local issues.

Cllr Turnbull was thanked for his help and support, we have enjoyed working with him particularly on issues like timber, wood waggons and policing. He was thanked for his support, and we look forward to working with his successor. NDCC wished him health and happiness in his forthcoming retirement.

Cllr McAteer was thanked for going out of his way taking time to get to know us and finding out about how we work, Copshaw has its own ambitions and ways of achieving them. The principles of collaborative working come easier to us than to others which is why the community has an enviable reputation of getting things done. However, when the chips are down and things happen over which we have no control like flooding, road closures, school transport or policies which don't suit our needs then Cllr McAteer has not been afraid to put the community case and to fight for what we ask him to do. NDCC look forward to the next 5 years.

Cllr Paterson was thanked for playing his part in supporting the community, helping with social housing and particularly the railway, keeping that on the agenda when others let it fall.

When the local elections held in a few weeks' time ask yourself who has the guts to go the extra mile for our community? Who is going to stand in our corner when the chips are down? Our current elected members have done that, we hope and need those that follow to match their achievements because it continues to get tougher to win budgets and get matters resolved. We need passionate elected members who are proud of us and want to represent us.

5. **Treasurers Report** year ending 2021 has already reported as part of an ordinary CC meeting earlier this year to enable the annual grant to be claimed and approved.

Opening balance from 2019-20 £1945.01

Incomes/Receipts from 2020-21 £13,110.02 *

*Covid support, flood and CCTV donations, operational and paths grants, small schemes (now paid direct to CC so work can be actioned quicker using local trades), A hardship award to cover extra expenses post flood and during covid

Expenditure 2020-21 £3814.64#

Rentals, bursary, planning application, riverside fencing, paths/lawnmower maintenance, expenses for covid/PPE resilience teams and subsidence costs and foodbank support.

Balance £9,295.38[§]

[§] this includes restricted funds of £8,723 for CCTV and gardening leaving an operating balance of £572.38 to start the books from April 1st 2021 to present.

There were no questions, accounts were approved.

6. Independent verifier

John Holliday undertook the role of independent financial verifier; he was thanked for his efforts over the past 4 years. Nominations were sought, Gillian Scott volunteered, CC looks forward to working with her going forward.

7. **CC Election:** March 31st 2022 the CC would go into abeyance, seeking new nominations to serve for the next 3 years. The CC encourages anyone who is passionate about where we live and can spare a few hours on a monthly basis to consider applying. Criteria is as follows:

- Live within NDCC catchment
- abide by the rules of the constitution
- abide by the code of conduct; adopting wider community wishes not expressing personal opinion and acting on it under the umbrella of the CC
- Non-attendance at CC's for 3 consecutive months means role is terminated.
- Passionate about where we live and its betterment
- Able to give up a few hours pr month to support the valuable work that it does

Nomination forms will be available from Buccleuch House/web site. Closing date will be notified, nominee forms scrutinised by SBC. If more than 12 nominations received a public ballot held, if 12 or less and all pass scrutiny, SBC will advise nominees giving them a 7-day cooling off period.

Assuming no changes CC members will be invited to have its first meeting, an interim chair – normally an elected member would host this element until posts are filled. Once posts agreed the new chair assumes the role and agrees protocols; frequency of meeting, signatures for code of conduct, deals with any pressing matters and requests feedback for an outline agenda for the next meeting. The second session is when 'work' normally resumes unless there is anything urgent that needs to be decided.

8. The meeting formally closed at 7:20pm, the chair thanked all for attending.