



Newcastleton & District Community Council
Minutes
Tuesday February 8th 2022, 7pm village Hall

PRESENT: Greg Cuthbert, Barbara Elborn, Rob Irwin, Keith Brough, Iain Crosbie, Scott Wilson, Ashley Thomson, Lyndsay Patterson, Cllr Watson McAteer, George Turnbull, David Paterson, PC Allan Patterson, 6 members of public.

APOLOGIES: Margaret Elliot, Ian Nichol, Marcus Day.

1. **OPENING REMARKS:** Chair opened the meeting, thanking all for attending. He welcomed the opportunity to meet in person and to see familiar faces returning. KB advised all of relevant Covid Protocols asking all to wear masks unless speaking.
2. **Minutes Last Meeting:** Jan 2022 were proposed by LP, seconded by SW
3. **Matters Arising:**
 - 3.1. **Police Report:** Divisional Commander/Chief Inspector meeting feedback & Police Report Thu 27th Jan 2022 CC met with Divisional Commander Catriona Paton and Chief Inspector Vinnie Fisher. Highlighted lack of presence and visibility - increasing demands on their resources took teams away for weeks. Continuing impact of diversions, travelling car riders and etc. Lack of recognition of the increasing rise in rural crime that wasn't reported in the monthly assessments of Hawick & Hermitage; Storm Arwen - theft of heritage woods in the Sawmill bank plantation had cost the community est. £10-15k in lost incomes making it very challenging to undertake remedial works. Significant need to have more visibility and requested presence of the quad bike team. Very valuable meeting, agreed to meet again, in person to show the Div Commander the community and to showcase the community CCTV when it was operational. PC Allan Patterson was thanked for his rural report:
 - 3.2. Forest at Hyndlee, complaint regarding off road bikes in Forest. Registration numbers for vans provided and all had come from Northeast. Registered keepers contacted and made aware of offences and told not to return.
 - 3.3. Concern for call to village, person feeling low asking for help. Police attended; person assisted with contacting specialist help.
 - 3.4. Single vehicle non injury Vehicle Accident, car off road at Shankend. Police attended, assistance given to driver, no further Police involvement
 - 3.5. Male taken unwell in vehicle near to Myredykes. Assistance given to Northumbria Police in tracing the vehicle and giving assistance to driver.
 - 3.6. Saughtree Farm Attempt Theft quad and equipment attempt to break into a shed at the farm. Attempt unsuccessful, two males seen on farm CCTV, enquiries ongoing into the incident.
 - 3.7. Hit and Run Vehicle Accident in Village. Car parked at Garage struck by a van which drove off, ongoing enquiries into tracing van and driver.
 - 3.8. Chair thanked PC Patterson for attendance, discussions regarding theft of woods from Sawmill bank plantation would continue, necessary steps would be undertaken.
4. **CCTV update** Installation is ongoing. All cameras in place except the ones at Whithaugh pool. Due to technical reasons this camera has been temporarily deferred and will require a new planning application. Training on the system will take place in the next few weeks the date for switch on is to be finalised.

5. **Houghton Park & other pavements** moved forward to the 2022-23 infrastructure budget
6. **20MPH update** – SBC have opportunity to apply to Sustrans for pathways improvement budgets and this was encouraged to consider extending the roadside pathway to the north end of the village.
7. **Bin/placements progress** – last 2 placements have been placed matter now closed.
8. **Street lighting update** – meeting update, waiting for a date, to review with SBC officers
9. **Drainage update** – Cllr McAteer provided feedback for review; key point is that SBC plan to take action to sort the drain at Toll Bar cottage, intended before the year end. The following was provided by SBC:
 - 9.1. The gully system in Newcastleton is more complex than some other towns and villages. Essentially there are three separate operational systems: 1. gully's discharge directly to the Liddel water; 2. connected to a Scottish Water combined system; 3. connected to a separate surface water system.
 - 9.2. They can become compromised at times when there is significant rainfall, for example when river levels rise above any outlet pipes, or where the whole system reaches its capacity. In regard to 1, SBC have installed flap valves on the main outlets which discharge into the Liddel water and changed the orientation of other outlets, so they discharge facing downstream. These measures should mitigate water backing up the system onto the road from the river during high flows. The system referred to at 3 above already had a flap valve fitted as part of its original design. This discharges into small syke (burn), at the back of the football pitches, which in turn joins the Liddel Water.
 - 9.3. SBC maintenance approach: gully's in the village are cleared on a regular basis by the local workforce and using the gully cleaning machine, which took place on 30 Oct 2020 and 25 Feb 2021, and there is an intention to return before end March 2022, subject to resourcing. Additional targeted manual clearances have been undertaken on demand, but these dates were not recorded.
 - 9.4. To help give some perspective about the scale of this asset type, SBC has approximately 25,893 road gully's across the Scottish Borders network and aim to service them once every 18 months, but with identified hot spots attended to on a more frequent basis, where resources allow. In practice the 18-month frequency has proved difficult to achieve. The team have reviewed performance in this area, these include creating a better dataset of location and service history as well as any design and other local issues to try and reset realistic and achievable future targets for the maintenance programme. This also includes gathering more data and differentiating between urban and rural systems so that those areas with the greatest historic need can be targeted accordingly.
 - 9.5. The team are aware of the drainage issue at the Toll-Bar Cottage and a local squad have cleaned the drains out by hand and rodded the pipes on previous occasions the most recent being in October 2021. The pipe near the house is a small 3-inch pipe, these smaller diameter pipes can easily be blocked leading to issues. The team plan to undertake further investigation with potential to improve the system locally before the end of the financial year.
 - 9.6. Ponding within Douglas Square is as a result of surface irregularities as opposed to a drainage issue. Our Asset Team are aware of this issue, and it is on their list for assessment to allow it to be considered for potential future planned works.
10. **Douglas Square** – recycling, siting of cycling repair post site visit w/c Feb 14th. No progress with the crossing which was hoped would be given extra priority given that NHS Borders eye clinic also supported the request as a result of members of the public asking for extra help.

11. Queens Jubilee Fund – Woodland replanting, walks, signage etc A second application following a successful award of Trees from the Woodland Trust is being prepared to seek a grant from the recently announced Queens Platinum Jubilee Fund providing new interlinked paths from the village to the new wood. This planting will replace the damaged section above the caravan site. In honour of the Queen's Jubilee, this will be renamed. CC seek views on what it should be called; nominations so far are **Platinum Wood, Queens Wood, Jubilee Bank, Monarch Woods.**

12. Eildon Housing update ref vacancy – 3 bed family house vacancy in moss place

13. **Flooding:** Consultant's report with SBC flood team. SBC to present findings to community (Mar 15th) CC aiming for quick turnaround to seek approval from community prior to purdah being imposed on council due to forthcoming local elections, this may well delay any actions and may result in any proposals being cancelled if delayed. **Bund proposed,** upgrade to southern drains and acknowledgement that the Holm bridge gravel extraction did make a difference, but the Whithaugh pool extraction made no difference at all. The community will be asked whether or not they want the short-term proposals. **Timing** All likelihood this could be actioned in Spring so that the bund has a chance to green over before the winter sets in. This is likely to be the only short-term measure we can expect given budget constraints and a stop on new schemes until Scot Gov update on the national flood strategy, any longer-term solutions are not expected for 5-7yrs.

14. **Area Partnership update** – part attendance; Storm Arwen, Malik, Corrie issues – relayed ongoing concerns ref telecoms and digital connections; no concerns for those living remotely needing analogue connections to keep in touch. The planned battery pack has a shelf life of approx. 1hour which is useless given the times involved recently for reconnections when power fails. Sought support from SBC to seek clarity on the vulnerable persons recognition issue with SPEN so that a recognised local resource; Resilience, CC, Outreach could ring and seek emergency generators for most vulnerable – h/holds were not provided with generators until the system was back working 5 days after it failed. Whilst this was acknowledged the Area Partnership was not expected to provide any answers to the issue raised.

15. **Public forum/Community issues**

1. Community Trust update:

- 1.1. Buccleuch House opening Feb 21st, watch program/leaflet coming through all doors
- 1.2. Climate Challenge program/place planning – events will include the flood proposals which will be on display at BH. The ballot box will also be hosted here.
- 1.3. Holm Hill program - on hold until remedial works resolved, and Energy solutions found
- 1.4. Assisted housing feasibility work - Expression of Interest approved, moving forward with grant application to support a 8-10 bed facility locally with a well-being hub for wider community usage – dentist, chiro, physio etc. long way to go but seeking out best place to site it which is challenging as the planning act does not allow for development on the flood plain, but we have land to explore so all of this is in the melting pot. Once scoping agreed it will be shared and feedback sought.

2. A7 diversionary route now operating, village will see increased traffic overnight due to closures.

3. **Planning**

- 3.1. Legion flagpole update – application will be submitted in the next few weeks with view to erecting it in time for the Queens Jubilee celebrations, the meeting was asked if there were any issues, no one raised any.
- 3.2. 22/00062/FUL Change of use holiday let from dwellinghouse, Yethouse
- 3.3. 22/00177/FUL Extension at 45 South Hermitage Street
- 3.4. Pines Burn Wind Farm – new community benefit fund to be proposed, detail unknown
- 3.5. Windy Edge – revised heights 200 mtrs, over 36mgws will go to Energy Consents

4. **AGM** will be hosted at the beginning of the next meeting followed by an ordinary meeting.
5. **Elections** – will be held in April, all members will step down following the March meeting. CC will go into abeyance until May 10th when it is hoped a new CC will be operating. Nomination forms and posters will be issued in March. Please consider joining the CC if you are passionate about where we live and can spare a few hours pr month to support the work of the CC
6. Date of next meeting **Tuesday, Mar 8th 2022**
7. **Flood update** meeting Mar 15th, mid-morning till evening village hall, Mar 18th/19th in Buccleuch House