



NEWCASTLETON
COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Newcastleton & District Community Council
Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 7pm
Minutes of Ordinary Meeting

Info and documents available online at:

<https://livenewcastleton.com/community-services/newcastleton-and-district-community-council>

Present: Barbara Elborn (sec) Jim Lewis (chair), Rob Irwin, Barry Hawkins, Keith Brough, Lisa Rogers

Present: SBC Councillors Annette Smart and Watson McAteer

Absent: SBC Councillor Jane Cox, PC Allan Patterson

Welcome: 6 members of the public

- 1) **Declarations of Interest:** none
- 2) **Election of Officers and Proposal of New Members:**
 - a) **Election of Chair:** Jim Lewis was proposed by BE, seconded by BH,
 - b) **Election of Treasurer:** carried forward to January meeting
 - c) **Election of Secretary:** carried forward to January meeting
 - d) BE will apply to SBC for additional £1,000 funding to cover CC costs.
 - e) **Proposal of New Members:** residents Shane Mitchinson and Chri Ruddock were co-opted as NDCC members. Shane Mitchinson (electoral roll number 11H/32) was proposed by KB, seconded by BH. Chris Ruddock (electoral roll number 0319) was proposed by BE, seconded by JL. They will be co-opted members for three consecutive NDCC meetings before becoming full members with voting privileges. They agreed to abide by the code of conduct, adopt the principles of equality and have read the constitution.
- 3) **Police Report:** Hawick & Hermitage ward monthly report is available on the NDCC website. There have been 10 calls to Newcastleton over the month of November – mostly relating to noise complaints, concern for persons, road traffic offences and one report of theft. These calls do not include those involving a continuing situation which PC Patterson is currently dealing with.

JL pointed out that the village CCTV system has been very effective for discovering, solving and deterring crime in the area. Residents can report suspicious activity for vehicles going through the village at excessive speed to Buccleuch House with details locations, time of occurrence or number plates.

BE noted Police Scotland are supportive of Newcastleton be included in the planned pilot to reduce speeding, NDCC will be seeking volunteers to assist.
- 4) **Minutes of November 2023 meeting:** Acceptance proposed by JL, seconded by BH
- 5) **Matters arising**
 - a) Douglas Square Crossing: Work has begun. The width of the two lanes is wide enough for two timber lorries to pass each other. JL noted that the proposed “pencil” bollards are not appropriate for the location, changed to standard black bollards. The original request for the buildouts was from the NHS to support physically or visually disable residents in crossing the road, but no tactile paving to assist them is indicated on the plans. JL will follow up to request this.

- b) Lighting for Riverside steps feedback: Cllr AS reported that SBC does not own this area and cannot install lighting.
- c) Revised bus timetable/workshops feedback: JL pointed out that SBC promised a community consultation in July but no action has been taken. Cllr WM will pursue this.
- d) Bins: Two bins have been installed – one at the north end of the village near the sign, and Two Bridges junction/Rock UK.
- e) Holm Bridge damage: Some work was done but stopped before completion, some areas are deteriorating further. Cllr WM said that it would not be a priority for the road repair team, and the issue remains outstanding.
- f) Flood Group update: Updated information is available on the NDCC website; SBC, NDCT and NDCC unable to accept liability for the flood gate at south end of the riverside bund, request for procedure ref clearing branches and undergrowth on the riverside was answered: desirable to clear loose overhanging vegetation but rooted vegetation needs to remain to mitigate further erosion. Work needs to be undertaken by volunteers when waters are at their lowest. There are no funds available to support this.

6) **Planning** (information and documents on the website)

a) **Flatt Farm/Liddel Water forestation**

- Updated map has been sent by the developer but, despite specific community feedback, looks little changed from the previous map.
- Private water supply: The developer's text indicates that no planting will take place within 10m of this, but the map appears unchanged. A local resident pointed out that the mapped location of the private water supply is incorrect.
- Parking and amenity requests not included.
- Riverside planting setback not included.
- The ecology report: This is very long with no executive summary or conclusions that integrate the impacts across flora and fauna and wildlife. It is unclear how the information will be used by the developer to amend the proposal. Some species are not mentioned, although they are present in the area, and there is no mention of the South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project.
- BE will contact Scottish Forestry about the concerns raised and encouraged residents to continue to make their voices heard, particularly through the Regional Land Use Partnerships.

b) **Blackburn & Hartsgarth/Oxygen Conservation forestation plans**

- BE reported that there were three main concerns from the community consultation:
 - size and scope of the proposed fencing that create barriers to access
 - proximity of planting to the Langholm Road and property boundaries
 - poor communication in failing to notify tenants in advance of the plans being shared of stock removal from the hill in advance,
- Concerns about lack of fire breaks in the planting maps.
- Community feedback will be forwarded to OC

c) **Pines Burn windfarm:** JL noted that transport of the blades has been delayed several times, disrupting traffic. BE noted three upcoming meetings:

10 Jan: Roundtable with community councils

17 Jan 2024: EnergyKontor meeting with community councils and MSP

18 Jan: UCU policy meeting with Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit

BE added that there should be an offer for the Community Benefit Fund by 17 Jan.

d) **Teviothead/Muirhall windfarm:** BE stated degree of urgency on settling this, NDCC/Southdean CC met with Burness Paul on 12 Dec to brief needs of the community benefit structure. This will be shared at roundtable on Jan 10th. Muirhall will award £10k to the vehicle once formalised. It is hoped that the agreement is ringfences the CBF structure to the site to address issues of potential sell off and possible requirement to renegotiation under any new ownership if this happens in due course.

e) Public forum/Community issues

- a. **Changeworks/Everwarm Warm Homes update:** Changeworks has pulled out because there is not enough power coming into the village to install energy-efficient heating systems. Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) had earlier committed to upgrading electricity distribution in the village, but now there don't seem to be plans to undertake this. Local concerns include possible equipment damage from ongoing random power cuts; and lack of specialists for maintenance and repair. SBC should take this up again with SPEN to ensure that the power distribution to the village and buildings is upgraded in 2024.
- b. **Playpark** upgrade consultation: BE reported that the SBC plan were providing a visual of the feedback preferences to share with the community, c/f to the January meeting.
- c. **Untaxed vehicles:** With regards to untaxed vehicles on public streets in the village, if they are not dangerous, it is a matter for the DVLA to arrange uplift. If they are dangerous, they should be reported to the police, who can uplift them. Lack of MOT is also a matter for the police.
- d. **Road signage warning for horses:** raised as issue from the Holm hill consultation and referred to the CC; horses are regularly ridden or led through the village and surrounding roads, but there is no signage warning drivers about this. A request for signage had been made to SBC and turned down, Cllr WM pointed out that this is a road safety issue and he will liaise with SBC staff and report back.
- e. **Roadside hedge cutting:** Several stretches of public road north and south of the village have overgrown hedges which should be trimmed in the winter. Cllr AS will take this up at SBC and report back.

f) Consultations

Please see the website for consultations on placemaking and the proposed Local Development Plan.

g) AOB

- a. On 13 December the full SBC Council has scheduled a vote on the proposed Scottish Borders National Park. Cllrs AS and WM reported that the recommendation to the SBC is to not support the proposal.
- b. Installation of the cattle grid at Hill End is unfinished. BE recommended that a format complaint be made to SBC, and Cllr WM will investigate.

h) Date of next meeting: Tuesday 9 Jan 2024, 7pm in the Village Hall

There being no other business of note the acting chair closed the meeting at 8:35pm.