

Upper Liddesdale & Hermitage Community Council

Ordinary Meeting 11th July 2024

Draft Minutes

Meeting was held at Hermitage Hall.

Those attending:

Councillors:

Community Councillors - Geoffrey Kolbe (GK) Chairman, Rosemary Webster (RW) Vice Chairman, Ian Hunter (IH) Secretary, Martin Steed (MS) Treasurer

Members of the public - 5

Meeting started at 19:00hrs

1. Apologies for Absence

The Herberts and the Warburtons apologised for not being able to come

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the 9th of May 2024

A motion that the minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting of the 9th of May 2024 was proposed by IH and seconded by MS. The motion was carried without dissent.

3. Matters arising

a. Pot A meeting: RW affirmed the members of the Pot A panel were RW (Chairman), Don Herbert, Christa Dobson and Jane Law. RW proposed a meeting for the 25th of July to assess an application from the Community Council for a resilience shed. GK promised to have the application ready by then.

b. Deer Management Policy (Tilhill): GK read out a letter from Simon Blagg of Tilhill in which he explained that grallochs, legs and heads are left well away from walking paths. He noted that signs were being put at the entrances of all forests where deer are managed. The signs are for information only. Comments included the question, "Why not take all the gralloch, heads and legs away? They do not need to be left on site." and, "Leaving gralloch, heads and legs 100 yards from the path is no obstacle for a dog, who will sniff it out very quickly. Deer hooves are very sharp and should a dog swallow one, it could damage a dog's digestive system and result in very expensive vet's bills!" and, "The sign starts with 'Please be aware', and reads like a warning notice rather than just an informational notice as the letter claims. How are the public supposed to respond? The implication is that the public should stay out of the forest, regardless of what the letter says what was intended." **GK said he would write back with these comments.**

c. Shooting Policy & Safety Procedures (Buccleuch): GK said he had written to Buccleuch, noting that 'Gareth' and his syndicate were supposed to contact us when next visiting and explain their safety procedures. Despite the fact that Gareth and other syndicate members had visited in the meantime, we had not been approached. While we wish to retain cordial relations with members of the syndicate, that requires them to act responsibly and we are concerned that is not the case. GK has not yet had a reply. **GK said he would follow this up.**

4. Place Plan Update

RW reported that there had been a meeting in June and a start had been made in producing the document by identifying three main themes. RW noted that Scottish Borders Council were prepared to fund a

consultant to help put together the Place Plan. She said that after consideration, she thought that bringing in a consultant would help with the design and mapping, as well as ensure the wording of the Place Plan was 'robust' for planning purposes. She was also concerned that the Place Plan would be of the same standard as Place Plans of surrounding areas. There are a number of consultants on offer, and looking at their CVs RW picked "Community Enterprise" as it looked as though they would be sensitive to the needs of a rural (rather than urban) community. RW suggested another meeting on Thursday August 29th for the Place Plan committee, but stressed that everybody was welcome to come along and add their voice.

5. Teviot Wind Farm, response to additional information (AEI).

GK noted that a draft response was on the website. It covered a number of areas on which this CC continued to object to the application, despite the additional information. The first was the Environmental Impact Assessment, which still only confines the assessment to the site itself, when the act clearly states that any significant environmental impact must be assessed, wherever and whenever it occurs, due to the construction of the wind farm. The second is Community Benefit and Socio-economics. The AEI included a report, commissioned from BiGGAR Economics, in which it stated that the net socio-economics had been "maximised". However, no matrix by which this conclusion could be reached was described, so this statement was challenged. Thirdly, it was pointed out that the revised Windy Edge development is about to be submitted for planning application, and this development is clearly an extension of the newly proposed Teviot layout. The two applications should therefore be considered together for the purposes of determination. BiGGAR Economics continue to peddle their line that 'Wind Farms have no impact on Tourism' and this was challenged. Fifthly, the proposed lithium battery storage system will need about 20,000 tonnes of water to fight a worst case fire and this water would end up in the Teviot/Tweed and cause a major environmental event. It was agreed that this draft go forward as the response of this Community Council.

GK also noted that EnergieKontor are having an exhibition on the revised Windy Edge wind farm. It will be in Hermitage Hall on Wednesday 17th July, between 3:00pm and 6:30pm

6. National Park Report

Jane Bower said that we are still waiting for the Scottish Government to make a decision about which candidate National Park nominations would go forward to the next stage of assessment. She noted that Pete Rawcliffe of NatureScot had commented that an announcement would be made in the latter half of July.

7. Financial Report

MS spoke to his financial report. He noted that the bank balance as of this date is £3136.72 and the net funds available after the ring-fenced funds had been accounted for was £1014.88

MS noted that to obtain a grant from Scottish Borders Council, they required sight of the Promise by Community Councillors to abide by the Code, which is signed at the AGM. It would be convenient then to shift the AGM to the May meeting rather than the March meeting so that the Promise is within the current financial year. This was agreed

8. Review: Community Trust

GK noted that MS was finding the task of starting a community trust very difficult. IH asked why we needed a trust to handle wind farm benefits? GK responded that a charity set up as a SCIO or a CLG provides protection to Community Councillors with regards to receiving, handling and spending wind farm benefits. They are corporate entities. GK noted that his opinion was that it was better for us set up our own trust so that the money was spent according to our wishes, rather than give the money to some other trust so that it is spent according to somebody else's wishes. There was general agreement. GK offered to help MS set up the trust. MS agreed.

9. Co-opting members onto the Community Council

GK noted that the CC was currently down to 4 members whereas the full strength complement was six. The CC needed more members so that there was better community representation on the CC.

10. Any Other Business

a. Litter Picking. GK noted that he had been approached by Jane Law with a view to the CC organising a litter-pick along the roads of our area. GK said he had not been keen because of the liabilities the CC would be exposed to if it organised a litter-pick. GK showed that Scottish Borders Council could be applied to for litter-picking equipment and that there were lots of sites which gave advice on running a litter-pick, doing hazard assessments and getting insurance. However, it was noted that this advice stated that litter-picks should not take place along roads or roadsides. That was where our rubbish is and so it was not possible for the CC to organise a litter-pick, or even encourage anyone to undertake a litter-pick themselves.

b. Sponsored ride. IH noted that Ian Graham had ridden from Carlisle to London in one day to raise money for the Eden Valley Hospice. Ian Graham was not present but his wife Lynda said they thought he had raised between £2-3k. The meeting congratulated Ian Graham on his achievement. Lynda was presented with a bottle of wine by way of congratulations on his effort.

11. Date of the next meeting

12th September 2024

The meeting ended at 20:00 hrs