

Lammermuir Community Council
Extraordinary Meeting

Wednesday 21st September 2022
7:30pm Cranshaws Village Hall

Minutes

Present: Councillors:

Bill Landale (BL), Tony Homer (TH), Anna Dabrowska (AD), Adam Prokopowicz (AP),
Alastair Gordon (AG), Cllr Mark Rowley (MR)

Minute Secretary: Paula Easton (PE)

Resident & Chair of LCF: Alison Landale (AL)

Other attendees: Ettie Spencer (ES), Kathleen White (KW)

Agenda

1. Welcome and apologies:

Apologies: Morag Rodger

Code of Conduct distributed with key points read by BL. These include to respect fellow Community Councillors, those they represent and reflect the views of the community as a whole.

2. Ellemford Estate Woodland Creation and Management Plan

BL will create a detailed 1st document from discussions at the meeting. Any subsequent changes in planning can then be addressed.

All agreed with MR that this is the start of an ongoing process. The main issues are to be flagged now, with the later focus being for specifics like recreational access and gates.

2.1 Publicity

One of the earliest points received was the lack of awareness about the project. Since then, meetings have taken place with managers of the project and Scottish Forestry giving publicity. Information will also be available at the Ellemford show. AP advised that maps have been distributed to those households affected. BL said this has given sufficient publicity.

Request 1 - MR asked that the developer publish all maps and information on the website. This was requested as their obligation to publish with responsibility for continued updates.

Action 1 - TH will ensure Ellemford Estate Woodland Creation information on Lammermuir's website.

AD has taken over from Johnny Fisher (JF) to update the LCC community website. ES said Carly has taken responsibility for Facebook page updates instead of JF.

Action 2 - Carly to add Ellemford Estate Woodland Creation details to Facebook

2.2 Consultations & Stakeholders

Scottish water had not been included as a stakeholder which will be rectified.

Request 2 - Stakeholders that need to be informed:

- Nature Scotland - Scottish Natural Heritage and Deer Commission are now part of Nature Scotland
- ScotWays (Scottish Rights of Way & Access Society)
- SPEN (Scottish Power Energy Network)
- Ramblers Association - Scottish version

AP said the developer made an obligation to contact every resident and association affected by the project as a second stage activity.

2.3 Deer Fencing & Public Access / Road Safety

BL said the developers realise that they need to realign some of the proposed fencing.

Request 3 - TH asked developers to put fencing up on the Ellemford side of the river first. Then it can be seen to determine if there are any issues with fencing before being erected around Rig Foot.

Priority to certain areas that can be seen, and phasing of the works is very important for the community to understand the changes. Planting soil needs to be suitable for trees.

AD asked who was responsible for road safety. MR thought the Road Department would not be involved as no risk increase. Deer are less likely to be on roads with the new fencing. BL was concerned that deer or hares could become trapped on the wrong side on the fencing causing road concern. Scottish Nature will be concerned about animals being corralled near roads. AP said the current design has some flaws like Rigfoot Road having fence plans for both sides of the road giving concern for causing a corridor.

Request 4 - Set back fencing with a clear area between fence & road (BL)

BL had asked for an artist's impression but was told one would not be available. AG said from his experience with the Planning Department they will be concerned about sight lines.

Request 5 - Hedges be left to grow and mask view of fences (TH) AL said Health & Safety might be concerned

Action 3 - MR to check road safety concerns with Roads Officer and Health & Safety

ES asked if the point of deer fencing is to keep the deer out of the trees and there will be an impact when restricting the movement of animals. The developer's map shows how wildlife can move. TH said badger gates are planned to be included.

2.4 Views & Viewpoints

Views could be restricted from the Rigfoot area to Sunnyside. MR said hedge cutting on public roads is the landowners responsibility. The council enforces hedge problems by contacting the owners. The LCF funded much of the hedge planted in the area with assumption that the council would maintain these.

Request 6 - Corner view heading towards Longformacus after Winchester is important to establish as a proper viewpoint (MR) BL verified this has already been requested.

2.5 Biodiversity

This has not previously been measured making any improvement unknown. David (Forestry) said reports have been made for flora and fauna. Level of current biodiversity they have surveyed should be made available.

Action 4 - BL to Ask estate to let us know what biodiversity information they have obtained in preparation for the project.

Request 7 - general point has been noted that areas have been registered as General Woodland, but bulk is commercial forestry (MR)

AP said the biodiversity issue is not because of the concept but the scale. Decisions are being made on something that will impact the area for many years to come. Biodiversity will be used to check the success of the project long term.

TH said we need to accept that the estate will consult with LCC but be limited to be able to stop any changes. They will want the change to be positively received.

2.6 Local Employment

Estate directly employs 6 people. MR said no impact studies have been made. The area already has a closed farm and some empty homes. This has a significant impact, for example to closure of village hall if low electoral poll numbers & local businesses. Risk of rural depopulation unless positive action is taken. Assessment of those implications is a concern.

2.7 Community

Landowners that live far away and use land agents, properties are not let locally but rented out as holiday homes. Need to encourage landlords to find tenants locally.

Request 8 - part of response could say that the community would feel more positive if the cottages that had been for agricultural workers are kept for residents and not external holiday homes (AL)
AG said they could commit to employing locally for cleaning and gardening.

For specific employee numbers would need to include every beater and picker up and caterers are also employees during the season. MR noted this needs to be protected.

Ian Davidson (ID) highlighted to BL that they describe what they're planting as an Upland Hill Sheep farm, which is incorrect. This is a negotiation so they can be asked to push some planting away from the valley floor. Specialist knowledge is required to be able to put together a sound response and argue land use options in detail with the best mix for the area. Scottish agricultural college can help, and ID is in place to assist as former Head of Agriculture Policy Division. Senior members of SBC have spent 4-5 years working on strategy to check wind farm/ agriculture/ woodland, timber, grazing, crops Hill farm use.

Action 5 - MR will send details of SBC strategy to BL

Strong case for creating a more varied landscape and requesting they make concessions.

Request 9 - TH has asked how the fencing will affect the main drive of the shoot but they had not considered this.

TH highlighted the need to make sure core arguments are set out to show challenges and the alternative options that might be available. Need expertise beyond that of LCC.

AD doubts they can plant as many trees as they want due to change in land use, which is currently agriculture. Must need permission to change land use to forestry/woodlands. BL said they go through the government body Scottish Forestry who have the overview of the development of woodland and arrange grants. TH said they confirmed to him that even without grant funding, they can make changes within Scottish forestry.

AG's experience in Aberdeenshire and Highlands was that changes are usually not made to planting without funding. AG continued that they can lose the minimum funded land, to then use area and maximise funded area.

How to manage shooting and birds with so many trees. Currently using cox and strips planting.

Request 10 - Narrow strips of wood for shooting and offering shelter for sheep (BL)

2.8 Carbon Sequestration

TH appreciates that we have a dialog with the landowner. BL said to look for compromise that suits everyone.

MR said there is negative food production, taking considerable pieces of arable land that need to be set against the benefits.

2.9 Scale

AG said certain parts of land are less viable for other uses and the highest level of grant funding can be used for this type of regeneration. Tree story should be advising about this.

BL said SBC has a landscape expert who works on views and AD requested to see the results of these assessments. Rigorous consultations expected for woodland creation by council.

Request 11 – See results of landscape study the developer mentioned (AD), other studies that have taken place (ES) & share on a mini website to look open and transparent (MR, see also *Request 1*)

AL said once BL has collated a summary document, it will be distributed to share information. Bill suggested a shorter version distributed to residents to encourage their feedback.

Action 6 - BL distribute summary document & short version for residents

Request 12 - Visuals of future views in 5 years to verify claim of improvement to the aesthetic of the landscape (MR.)

Request 13 - Talk from expert in biodiversity for the community to learn more (ES)

Request 14 – Land to be left to regenerate naturally (AL) They said it takes too long but doing this artificially is not as good.

2.10 Issues Log

Their issues log says they will undertake a landscape study to ensure these features are enhanced. Mark wants then to demonstrate this new more varied landscape will be an enhancement, but this must be demonstrated. BL's last point in the Summary Report will be an Issues Log. This will be a record of input from all those they've consulted, and stakeholders will be added to their Ellemford issues log. TH said it was worth maintaining Issues Log ourselves.

Action 7 - BL produce an Issues Log

3. Resilience - Food and Support for the Community

3.1 Cranshaws Food Larder

AL said that 2 people in Cranshaws (Maureen Ferguson & Christian Bale) would be prepared to organise and offer a larder. £100 per week to start and will apply for funding in CELCA application for Nov meeting. Access is problematic through village hall. AL showed measurements of a new small wooden sentry box style shed that would be required to be placed at the rear of the hall. They do not want to use Fareshare as many are doing so and 5 people said they did not eat the food they offer. Basics like potatoes, carrots, onions, tins, long life milk would be more suitable. MR suggested food that required limited cooking. BL suggested a request list be inside the larder shed asking for food types to be purchased going forward.

AG has put in a call to Mr. Anderson about resilience suggestions creating 3 hubs and suggestions for incorporating resilience into village halls.

ES said CELCA/LCF funding should cover this. MR. said the idea came from a previous LCC meeting. AG said it was up to LCC to give ideas for funding to CELCA.

Application to be made via CELCA to start with for 1 shed and £150 per week, which is the amount currently approved for the Longformacus Larder. Which should go to the village hall committee first and then be sent to all CELCA trustees for their approval.

Action 8 – AL to coordinate with Cranshaws Village Hall Committee to send a larder request to all CELCA trustees for their approval.

KW got involved in the emergency resilience planning following the storm Arwen. The focus has shifted to food and energy payments. Good progress but keen to proceed with the emergency planning and JF is still willing to support the group.

TH said obtaining contact arrangements is a slow process sending an integrated survey as the first step. Need to get people meeting and moving forward although everyone is busy. AG said we need to identify who's vulnerable and needs assistance but challenging with data protection. Winter weather is approaching and we need to take action in the village halls, for example log burner or generator if electricity fails. MR said this has been done at Gavinton and not expensive. LCC should use the village halls as a hub with financial support for costs.

Action 9 - TH meeting with KW to discuss and proceed with making an action plan.

MR's experience visiting Scottish borders hubs when power went down identified that they needed power to recharge phones and have access to working sockets. Scottish Power Energy Network are supposed to have a list of vulnerable people, but this was not well communicated or up to date.

MR recommended an early action suggestion of finding out who has a corded analogue phone. Cabling is being limited to offer analogue landline phones. TH said this affects all NHS services in addition to stairlifts/hoists all being electronic.

KW meeting with JF and will report back to the resilience group. They will then have a report from the resilience group on each LCC agenda. JF has a resilience survey ready.

MR agreed with KW that LCF postcards were the best way to contact everyone. TH confirmed that only about 6 households do not receive The Herald, sent by email. KW said send both ways by Herald & postcard and ES thought vulnerable people are less likely to respond. MR added that hand delivery has worked in other areas. AL agreed this makes a big difference with people being more willing to ask for help and offer help in person.

4. Any other business:

None

5. Date of next meetings:

Ordinary General Meeting: Wednesday 19th October 2022 at 7.30p.m. via Teams

Annual General Meeting and Ordinary General Meeting: Wednesday 7th December 2022 at 7.30p.m.
held at Longformacus Village Hall

Meeting closed at 21.16