

# Lammermuir Community Council Ordinary General Meeting

**Wednesday 30th August 2023 at 7:30pm via Teams**

## **Minutes**

### **Present: Councillors:**

Alastair Gordon (Temporary Chair) (AG), Bill Landale (BL), Tony Homer (TH), Clive Warsop (CW), Anna Dabrowska (Treasurer,) (AD), Morag Rodger (MoR), Adam Prokopowicz (AP)

**Minute Secretary:** Dianne Repsch (DR)

**Residents:** Alison Landale (AL) David McVie

## **Agenda**

### **1. Welcome and apologies:**

AG welcomed everyone to the meeting. AG was standing in as Temporary Chair for this meeting.

Apologies: Cllr Mark Rowley (MR), Cllr John Greenwell (JG), Cllr Donald Moffat (DM)

### **2. Matters Arising:**

a) **Minutes of previous meeting held on Wednesday 14th June 2023** - AG confirmed that the Minutes of the previous meeting have been approved as a true record of the meeting and have been published on the Lammermuir website.

#### **b) Action Point Document from previous meeting:**

Action Point 1: Completed

Action Point 2: Completed

Action Point 3: Completed

Action Point 4: Letter to Fred Olsen regarding community benefit fund. This item is still outstanding and is being deferred to the next meeting.

Action Point 5: Completed

**Action 1: Letter to Fred Olsen to be sent.**

#### **c) Any other matters:**

**No matters raised**

### **3. Conduct:**

This item revolves around a discussion which has taken place at length in CELCA which is basically that there should be a code of conduct which is being prepared but is yet to be put in place. There has been some discussion about how community councillors conduct themselves as individuals and whether they are adhering to the Code of Conduct produced by SBC. With regards to this meeting which is being held under Microsoft Teams AG proposes that if any one individual(s) becomes belligerent and behaves in a bullying or intimidating manner as perceived by the majority attending the meeting the individual(s) will be muted by the Teams Organiser which is DR. AG asked for a discussion for or against this item as a proposition.

- BL agreed with this approach and suggested that there should be a forewarning to the individual(s) concerned if this was going to be implemented.
- AG agreed and confirmed that if any individual(s) felt excluded unfairly they could take the matter up with SBC.
- TH agreed with the above 2 comments and felt it was important that any individual(s) have readdress.
- AP said he did not wish to discuss this matter and would make written remarks in due course.
- CW said it is difficult to follow a discussion online if everyone is talking at once so something should be in place not just for decorum but from a practical point of view.

**Vote: Proposed that if any one individual(s) becomes belligerent and behaves in a bullying or intimidating manner as perceived by the majority attending the meeting the individual(s) will be muted by the Teams Organiser which is DR. It was further agreed that this proposal would remain in place until it was superseded by a proposal debated, codified and agreed by a subsequent meeting.**

**TH proposed BL 2nd. It was noted that AP was voting against.**

AP said he would like to discuss the Code of Conduct document further as he felt it was not needed. AG confirmed that it was expected that Community Councillors behave with common courtesy but there is no provision within SBC instructions what we should do if these high standards are not met and therefore the proposal being offered to the floor is for the community council to put in place an interim provision to fill the gap at this meeting and subsequent meetings until such time as there is a proposal put forward to codify this interim proposal. AG suggested AP put his proposal to discuss the Code of Conduct document as an item on the agenda for a future meeting.

TH said he would like to reiterate that there are no arrangements put in place by SBC to enable us to deal with people who consistently fail to reach the standards of behaviour set. TH's view further down the line would be to finalise whatever arrangements are suitable and that we then formally write to SBC expressing our concern that they have failed to properly address the challenges that community councils can face in this regard.

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#### **4. Appointment of Vice-Chair:**

AG said the appointment of a Vice-Chair had been under discussion for some time and asked for any proposals for Vice-Chair. BL explained the reason why he thought it was important that we nominate a Vice-Chair. AG noted and agreed.

If nominated TH agreed he would stand as Vice-Chair. MoR said that TH would be an ideal candidate as he has good knowledge of the area and alongside BL would make a great partnership.

**Vote: MoR proposed and BL 2nd 5 to 0 in favour. AG offered his congratulations to TH.**

## 5. Treasurer's Report:

<b>Bank Balance as at 30/08/23</b>	£1,550.84
Payments out (in transit)	£0.00
Payments in (in transit)	£0.00
SBC COVID-19 Funding (absorbed)	£0.00
Walking Fund (partially absorbed)	£1,000.00
<b>COMMUNITY COUNCIL</b>	<b>£550.84</b>
<b><u>(LCC PROJECT FUNDING – RING FENCED AT CELCA)</u></b>	
Defibrillator (incl AED training) (no change)	£884.47
Community Broadband	£1,000.00
Community Website	£617.45
Community Emergency Fund	£8,262.50
LCC Admin Costs	£2,000.00

AD confirmed that SBC had advised that the covid ring fenced amount of £330.03 could be spent on other resilience within the community. AD had also used £1,000 of the walking fund until the admin fund monies had been released by CELCA. As the admin fund has already been approved it is just a transfer to LCC's bank account from CELCA.

The evaluation form for the King's Coronation Grant of £500 has been completed by DR and the form and receipts have been sent to SBC which was a condition of LCC receiving the grant.

## 6. Planning Applications:

A planning application was received for Roxburgh Estates for the erection of a replacement dwelling house at Dunside, Longformacus TD11 3PF. Circulated to the community councillors and no comments or observations were made.

Received notification of the Hen Toe Burn Woodlands Management Plan and Certification - Scoping Process: The plan preparation includes the process of scoping by which consultation is carried out with organisations and individuals who may wish to express an opinion and contribute to the management of the forest. This includes community councils, representatives of Scottish Borders Council, relevant statutory bodies and any other interested parties. Circulated to community councillors no observations were received.

## 7. Recycling Bin Collections:

We have received notification that LCC will now be included in the Council's missed bin alert communication emails. The alert email will inform LCC of any issues such as extreme weather, collection vehicle breakdowns etc. that may impact on the Council's ability to uplift the general waste or recycling bins in the Lammern area and will also provide advice for residents on what to do with their bins. SBC aims

to return for missed collections as soon as possible but unfortunately there may be occasions when this is not possible. In these instances SBC will collect extra bagged waste on the next scheduled collection day.

TH confirmed that every so often a recycling collection was missed and it seems if you track back we get 2 collections then miss one and it happens repeatedly. The black bins are never missed as this would create a large number of complaints because of the smell. Are SBC going to be reducing the number of recycling collections? Should LCC pursue this question with the SBC Councillors (who are not in attendance at this meeting) because it is too regular and find out whether it is actually planned.

AG mentioned the latest letter citing staff shortages and the inability to recruit staff. Bin collections are paid for through the council tax and works out to about £5 per collection. Most people would not have the space to keep their recycling until the next collection and is an invitation for vermin. As part of our contract if they can't collect there should be a deduction from our council tax or everyone should be given an extra bin.

A general discussion took place:

- Should LCC ask CELCA to provide funding for additional bins? It was generally agreed this would be covering SBC's contractor when they are being derelict in their duty to collect the recycling bins.
- Everyone pays council tax which is due to increase and we are paying for something that is not happening on a regular basis.
- Even if you ring to report a missed bin they will not come back to collect.
- In bad weather excess rubbish not able to fit in the full recycling bins could be blown around the countryside.
- It was generally agreed we should formally write to SBC and then if no response contact the Berwickshire News.
- There would be 100% community support for any action we take.

**Action 2: It was agreed that AG would draft a letter to SBC and circulate via DR giving everyone an opportunity to add to the draft before it is sent.**

#### **8. BT Fibre Plans - Ellemford, Rigfoot and beyond:**

TH reported that someone from a subcontractor of BT (Morrison's) had been working in the area for the practical installation of fibre. Since the installation of the 4G Mast TH noted that we had not heard from BT about the installation of fibre in the Lammermuir area and as BT has not been in touch should LCC get in touch with BT to ask for more information on their plans for the area.

AG confirmed that a subcontractor had also been in Cranshaws and he had said that it was the plan to roll out full fibre by the end of next year. He said that we should expect to receive 900 megabits per second which would be quite a change from the current speed of 6 megabits.

AP suggested LCC write a letter to BT asking for a meeting for clarification. AP believes the new regulations say that if BT disconnects copper they are obliged to replace it with cable.

TH understood that removing the digital lines has been put back from 2025 to 2028 but if fibre is attached to a property the landline is automatically lost. This means that we can't communicate if there is a power outage.

**Action 3: DR to write to BT Openreach with a view to finding out what the plans are for the area.**

## 9. Longformacus Lychgate War Memorial:

DR confirmed that she had asked Cllr Mark Rowley for an update on the Lychgate War Memorial prior to the meeting.

**Action 4: DR to circulate response when it is received.**

## 10. Correspondence received:

- Grant Letter for the Local Community Council Paths Maintenance Grant for 2023-24. Please note that the deadline for submission is **15th December 2023**. The Local Community Path Maintenance Grant is available to reimburse annual expenses incurred up to the value of £450 for local path maintenance or improvements undertaken. This includes grass cutting, vegetation removal, surfacing, installation of gates, etc. and can be used towards the purchase of relevant tools and machinery.

TH mentioned that in the past LCC had agreed not to claim as we have sufficient funds in comparison with many other Community Councils.

MoR said that as it was our council tax so it could be claimed for the upkeep of the Cranshaws Community Walk.

AL mentioned that there was a public walk which runs from Ellemford to Abbey St Bathans and one of the gates is in a bad state of repair and one of the other gates has a lot of gorse that needs to be cut back. AL agreed she would take photographs and obtain quotes for the work and send to the community council for approval.

TH pointed out that LCC already had funds in the walking fund which could be used.

**Action 5: DR to let SBC know that LCC intends to make a claim for the £450 this year. It was further agreed that the walking fund monies would be used for this work less the £450 being claimed from SBC.**

- A Community Council Survey was completed by DR and TH. This was for a review of the Annual Support Grant that LCC received of £540. A copy of the response has been circulated.
- Scottish Borders Council will cover the difference in the premium costs between 2021/22 and 2022/23 due to the premium increases that were levied on many community councils last year. SBC will shortly be invoicing for last year's cover (if applicable) but will wait until later in the year to invoice for this year's cover (if applicable). The cost for Lammermuir Community Council 2022/23: £45.92 and 2023/24: £61.60.
- Lees Hill Energy Park has advertised the 2nd round of public exhibitions with one being in Longformacus Village Hall on Wednesday 6th September 2023. The project has evolved and there is a reduction by one turbine and the solar panel and battery storage areas are also reduced. New site plan was circulated to the community councillors. Notification was sent out via The Herald and the posters were placed on the village notice boards.

AG mentioned the letter notification in the post received by all residents and he felt that although there was a reduction by one turbine the project would not end there and there could be an expansion in the future. The turbines are 200m to the tip which is quite a bit taller than any other turbines in the Lammermuir area.

BL said the view from the road looking south is phenomenal and the turbines are going to be very visible and completely wreck the view to the Cheviots. The companies are making the assumption that we would prefer power generating turbines to the view which is second to none.

A general discussion took place and it was generally felt that even if we oppose the development it will go to appeal and the Scottish Government will let it through.

TH reminded everyone that we have submitted a response from LCC raising all the issues being discussed. He also reminded everyone that Cllr Mark Rowley had thought it was one of the most intrusive sites ever to be developed.

AG reminded everyone that it would be helpful if everyone attended the exhibition on the 6th September to air their views.

AP said that he was working on a report on wind farms in the Scottish Borders and was attempting to collect real data to submit with the report.

MoR asked to put forward a different point of view on the wind farms as she is a member of the farming community in the Lammermuirs and she felt we have to support the farming community as well as the residents. We have just been through all the issues with Ellemford Estate and the trees being planted and this caused a lot of objections with residents about ruining the views etc. The farmers have to live here too and earn money to survive as things are not getting easier for anyone. MoR wanted to make the point that the farmers live here and have to do things differently to protect their land just as much as the residents do.

**Action 6: DR to circulate the letter submitted on Lees Hill at the time of the scoping and also send the up to date information on the development.**

#### **11. Any other business:**

TH asked who was available to man the stall at Ellemford Show on the 30th September. BL said he was happy to do a stint. AP also offered to help cover. CW suggested we ask for volunteers via the Herald.

**Action 7: DR to ask ABPCC if they would be interested in sharing the stand.**

**Action 8: TH to send out a notification via The Herald to ask for volunteers for the stand.**

CW raised the speeding in Longformacus which appears to have got worse since the 20mph traffic calming measures. It seems to be more obvious that cars are speeding at 40/50mph. Although CW was raising this issue it was also the views of a number of the residents in the community.

**Action 9: DR to contact Councillor John Greenwell to ask if there are any plans to deal with the problem of excessive speeds and whether LCC could make representation based on the concerns of residents.**

#### **12. Date of Next Meeting:**

Wednesday 25th October 2023 at 7.30p.m. via Microsoft Teams.

Meeting closed at 21.15