

ESKDALEMUIR COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING
7pm 28th July 2022 in the Community Hub

PRESENT: Nick Jennings (Chairman) - John Furlonger (Vice Chairman) - Bernard Provost (Treasurer) - Barry Young - Stuart Green - Beatrice Furlonger
Also: Archie Dryburgh (D/G Council) - Stuart Hamilton (Ward Manager)
Stuart Hamilton introduced himself to the Council members, explaining his role and inviting members to contact him on any matters in which he could be of assistance.

APOLOGIES: Liz McQueen

The Chairman welcomed the recently elected new members and stressed that there was still room for new members and co-optees. There had been several new arrivals in the village. There were 4 vacancies on the Council and casual elections were always possible.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: These were read and approved. (Prop; Beatrice Furlonger, Sec; Barry Young)

MATTERS ARISING: The location of the Jubilee tree was still undecided. The Hub car park was probably too small to accommodate the tree. The Samye Ling car park was a possibility as was a plot close to the village hall. It would be necessary to consult with the Hall Committee and the Samye Ling authorities before a decision could be made. The Community Council had already agreed to fund the project.

NEW OFFICERS: The Chairman asked if any of the new members would be prepared to take on the role of Secretary. The role had been shared between the Chairman and vice-Chairman, but a permanent appointment would be preferable. The main role was the link between the Community Council and the D/G Council and other authorities or organisations. The vice-Chairman said that dealing with the minutes was a simple matter, but looking to the future he would welcome someone taking on his role as Deputy Chairman. The Chairman indicated that he too would like to consider the future with new members taking on the main offices. He was happy to continue to serve on the Council but would be happy to feel that the future was secure.

The treasurer too had been in the post for many years. Were there a willing volunteer he would be prepared to pass on the reins. It was not an onerous post. There were rarely more than 15-20 transactions per year, and in the past two years several of these had been concerned with the defibrillators for which Eskdalemuir had taken on responsibility. Barry Young was willing to consider taking on the role. Treasurer would therefore bring everything up to date with a view to Barry taking over.

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA: The setting up of the website had not yet been resolved with the Tech Army, but there was a technical issue that had to be taken into account if the website were to be fully available for the Community. The format for material published on the website could present difficulties if conversion were an obstacle. Was the appropriate software available? The vice-Chairman pointed out that he received a good deal of correspondence in his secretarial capacity, some of general interest and some very specific;

E.g. "School cooks needed in ...School", and similar advertisements which might be of interest to an individual. The website would be invaluable in disseminating this Community targeted material.

PLANNING MATTERS: With reference to the range at Clerkhill, Eskdalemuir Forestry now has to re-apply via the Major Development route. The Chairman made the point that there is a regrettable lack of a legislative framework relating to an issue associated with firearms. There is a discrepancy between the descriptions in the Standard Operating Procedures document and the reality of the situation. There is a great difference between that claim of twice weekly shooting with no more than ten shooters and the plan for seven day shooting including night firing. There is a lack of clarity regarding the role of the police and in consequence a great deal of ambiguity concerning the status of the range and the entitlements of those using it.

It was noted that the original application, based on a claim of Local Development with no change of land use. The confused situation seems likely to continue. Archie Dryburgh pointed out that because of the confused history of this application, the re-submission was likely to be very carefully scrutinised. It was likely that the Public Consultation, when it took place, was unlikely to be online, so that it would be possible for the concerns of the local population to be heard.

There was also concern expressed about the Sound Tests that had been carried out. The question of the noise nuisance associated with the ranges was far from resolution. What was required was testing by an impartial and independent body fully acquainted with objective regulations and requirements. It was insufficient to have decisions made with small calibre weapons when some of the firearms under consideration were so much larger and noisier. Hopefully Public Consultation would bring this issue under closer scrutiny.

CORRESPONDENCE: Police Report: There had been a traffic accident involving a motorcycle on the Langholm Road requiring the presence of two emergency helicopters. Speed checks had been in operation in the area, and Operation Tramline, aimed at checking on mobile phone use, non-use of seat belts and careless and dangerous driving, had also been operating. The missing person reported earlier had been found, and there had been reports of deer being illegally killed.

The question of a procedure for reporting local concerns back to the police was raised. Archie Dryburgh suggested that a quarterly surgery in the Hub would serve the purpose if it could be arranged. We had had police representatives at Community Council Meetings, but as few people attended Council meetings this did not serve the purpose. The Council agreed to pursue Archie's suggestion.

The Chairman and acting Secretary received a good deal of correspondence some of which could usefully be posted on the Community website for general information. Some of it however, concerned with administration and regional meetings could be passed on to Council members of the Community Council in order to keep them fully informed. The Chairman and acting Secretary agreed to forward such items to Council members.

CROSSDYKES/WINDFARMS UPDATE: There has been a planning change in that the operational life of the wind farm will be extended from 25 to 40 years. The Crossdykes Community Benefit Company is now in operation with Nick Jennings as Chairman. Funding will become available in the autumn and any ideas for the use of such funds could be fed through the Hub. One suggestion put forward by Archie Dryburgh was for Educational Bursaries intended for 5th and 6th year students planning to go forward for FE or HE. The Chairman asked Archie to forward him details of such a scheme. As the potential funds are still a matter for speculation there was no further discussion at this point

The share purchase had been concluded. Muirhall would now be selling Crossdykes and we would therefore be compelled to sell our share, which could realise a figure of £1m for the five councils in our group. It was proposed that our 20% share should be

ring fenced for the use of Eskdalemuir. This was proposed by Stuart Green and seconded by Barry Young. The problem in the present economic climate was that of investing such a large sum in such a way as to counteract present inflationary pressures. The Chairman put forward the idea of considering investment in other wind farms or in other energy concerns. However this was a matter to be considered in greater detail in the future.

ANCBC: As with Minsca, we are awaiting the next tranche of funding

A. O.B. Eskdalemuir, the future: The vice-Chairman referred to a recent meeting held in the Hub where developments in the parish were discussed. He had attended on behalf of the Council and expressed his disappointment that so little had emerged from it. Several points had been raised that had often been raised before, but nothing of substance had been settled on or even discussed at length. With greater potential funding available in the future, with a number of newcomers in the area, and with several new Community Councillors, we should find the opportunity at least to look constructively at the future.

The Chairman, and others pointed out that that activities within the Hub itself were flourishing. This was not disputed, but if the views of new residents, and if the potential impact of increased funding could be taken into consideration, there might be the prospect of wider development. The vice-Chairman was not putting forward specific suggestions, but he felt that this might be an opportune time to encourage discussion.

Grit Bins: There were several points in Eskdalemuir where supplies of grit were very desirable. In the winter, parts of the road, and several of the tracks up to the road, could become difficult and dangerous to negotiate. There was a requirement for stacks of grit, or grit bins to be placed at strategic points. Archie Dryburgh agreed to liaise with the Roads department to see what could be done. In the past the Council has been very cooperative in addressing this problem.

As there was no other business the meeting closed with Thursday Sept 15th fixed as the date for the next meeting.

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