

ESKDALEMUIR COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday September 15th in the Hub

WELCOME: Those present were Nick Jennings (Chairman), John Furlonger (Vice Chairman) Bernard Provost, Liz McQueen, Barry Young, Stuart Green, Dennis Male (D/G Council).

APOLOGIES: Beatrice Furlonger, Archie Dryburgh (D/G Council).

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: Two or three inaccuracies were noted. A. The Website had been set up and was operating.

MATTERS ARISING: These would all be dealt with in the course of the Agenda.

ROAD REPAIRS: In Boreland, as in other areas in the region, efficient road surfacing had taken place, but pot holes had not been repaired. We were informed that re-surfacing and pothole repairs were dealt with by two different sections of the maintenance teams.

It was noted by Barry Young that the timing schedules for repairs were not strictly adhered to, and that there was frequently a gap of several days between the advertised and signposted date for repairs and the actual date on which they took place. It was also commented on that Diversion signs associated with these repairs were often left up for weeks, even months after the repairs had taken place. Denis Male said that communications on this issue were not great, but that if he received information he would pass it on to the Chairman.

WEBSITE UPDATE: The website was indeed up and running and it was recommended that a sub-committee should be formed to clarify details and to enable the Community to participate. Barry Young was asked to convene the group in consultation with Lara from the Hub. It was suggested that the first meeting of the group should be in the evening of Tuesday September 20th. Liz McQueen and John Furlonger asked to be included in the group.

CROSSDYKES COMMUNITY BENEFIT COMPANY UPDATE: The Chairman referred to our hope that we could ring fence some of our financial entitlement but this was not going to happen. The benefit agreement has been agreed between Crossdykes windfarm Ltd and Crossdykes Community Benefit Company. The sum for distribution is £ 322,000 between the Community Councils of Langholm, Lockerbie, Middlebie and Waterbeck, North Milk and ourselves. We can handle applications of up to £2000. We are well represented on the Board so the interests of Eskdalemuir will not be disregarded. The details of applications will be published in the website. Applications for funding can only be submitted through properly constituted groups, which in our case are the Eskdalemuir Expressive Arts Group, The Ex-Servicemen's Hall, and the Upper Eskdale Development group.

The Hub is likely to be coming forward with a core funding bid which is appropriate as it is the centre for much of the activity in the area. The Chairman commented on the considerable activity in the Hub, with particular comment on the interest shown by newcomers to Eskdalemuir. The first funding round will probably have a closing date of the end of October with decisions by the end of December.

The Chairman will be pressing for the re-investment of the money for distribution. The best possibility is probably in further wind farms. Why not buy a turbine? Maintenance costs

might be considerable. Shares are probably a better bet. There are two new windfarms in the offing which might be considered.

CORRESPONDENCE: The Police reported on the circumstances of a homeless Chinese woman who appeared to be suffering from a mental health issue and who has been hiding in the woods in Eskdalemuir. She may well be living here illegally and her case has been drawn to the attention of the MSP. Local people have been offering what assistance they can. She had approached Samye Ling but had been turned away. Dennis Male said that he would pursue the matter; although the woman seemed to be taking care of herself, she was vulnerable, and he would not wish her to come to harm.

PLANNING NOTICES: The question was raised as to whether any progress had been made regarding the enforcement notice issued to the organisers of the Clerkhill Range. Were there any indications that the notice was being observed? Queries have been received from residents living near the Clerkhill Range regarding large loads of soil which have been dumped on the river bank. Is SEPA permission required for soil movement? Is it intended to assist with the strengthening of the bank? Is it in fact preparation for riparian planting? There could be a risk of river pollution.

WIND FARM COMMUNITY BENEFITS: For two years we have not spent the money accruing from Minsk's £9659, or ANCBC £2000. How is the money best to be spent? The suggestion was put forward of the creation of a resilience centre in the Hub, and of a 'Warm Space' to mitigate the problems of the Energy Crisis. Denis Male was asked about the possibility of Council assistance. It was also suggested that Stuart Hamilton should be consulted on the subject. The possibility of acquiring a Solar Cube Generator was brought up by Stuart Green as providing greater economy to back both these projects were they adopted. The Vice Chairman pointed out that the Resilience issue had been raised some years ago, and because of the large land area and scattered population particular problems were likely to arise. A detailed map of the area indicating where residents lived should be acquired and placed in the hub to help in identifying potential problems. Could emergency wind farm funding be used for those in trouble? Could there be a minibus obtained to assist those who have no transport or who needed, for example, prescriptions delivered. These were matters that would need to be discussed more widely.

AOCB: The possibility of pupils returning to Hutton School had been discussed at an earlier meeting. Liz McQueen reported that there was little support for re-opening among parents. Moreover the Education authorities had made it clear that Educational requirements had to be the determining factors in making the decision, and this pointed to the existing situation being retained.

NEXT MEETING: This would be on Thursday November 17th which would also be the AGM

The meeting closed.