

ESKDALEMUIR COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING AND A.G.M.

17th November 2022 at 7pm in the Hub

PRESENT: Nick Jennings (Chairman), John Furlonger (Vice Chairman/Secretary), Bernard Provost (Treasurer), Beatrice Furlonger, Liz McQueen, Barry Young, Archie Dryburgh (D/G Council).

APOLOGIES: Stuart Green, Dennis Male (D/G Council).

MINUTES of 2021 A.G.M: These were read and approved.

MATTERS ARISING: At present our funds stand at £ 3647. We are due a further £ 9000 from Minsca Plus £2000 from Crossdykes. It was agreed at the previous meeting that the bulk of this money should be made available for our Resilience project which was planned to provide a safe centre at the Hub in the event of emergencies in the parish. This was to be discussed at greater detail in the meeting following the A.G.M. this evening.

APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS: The Chairman and Vice-Chairman were re-elected, and will continue to share the Secretarial duties. Barry Young was elected as Treasurer to replace Bernard Provost who was thanked for his many years of service in that role. Phil Johnson will remain as examiner of accounts.

There was a balance of £ 575 in the defibrillator fund. More will be said about this in the main meeting,

A.O.B. The Chairman thanked the Vice Chairman for organising the Remembrance Day Ceremony at the War Memorial in the village earlier in the month. He has done this for the last few years and it has been very well attended.

MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING, SEPTEMBER 2022: Read and approved.

MATTERS ARISING: These would all be covered in the Agenda.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE: Stuart has been very thorough in surveying the community to get an idea of the available resources, human and material. He has had a good response from local volunteer in the event of any crisis; the Hub is the obvious centre, also providing a warm space in the event of potential power cuts. There is a wood burning stove, but there is also a need for an alternative power source for which the £11000 wind farm money referred to earlier might be the source of funding. The complication is that a generator may well stand idle for long periods, so a substantial investment in this might prove uneconomical. Moreover an outside location for a large generator brings up planning issues. Battery storage has been considered but would be too expensive. Solar power is least effective at a time when additional power is most likely to be required. Thus we are arranging a group meeting to consider the matter further.

DEFIBRELLATORS UPDATE: 9 have been installed and are being maintained. Ian a member of the Fire Service is meticulous in keeping them up to date.

WIND FARMS UPDATE: We have two directors on the Board of the Crossdykes Community Benefit Fund and we had a recent meeting to discuss the operation of the fund, which has asked for bids. There have been 19 bids from the 6 Community Councils involved, which exceeded the total of the funds available. Foundation Scotland provides the expertise to provide advice on the applications, assessing business plans to be fed back to the board which will make decisions on the awards. The Hub has made a bid for 3 years core funding amounting to £90000. The issue of the share sale was also discussed. We had bought a 5% share for 1.3 million which was sold for 2.5 million. The excess will be put on deposit through the good offices of the Charity Aid Foundation. It might be advisable, if the projects go ahead, to re-invest in the Hopsrigg and Loganhead wind farms as there seems every prospect that wind power is likely to prove a lucrative investment.

CORRESPONDENCE: The Secretary had ensured that all relevant correspondence relating to Council activities was circulated to all members. We had received an e mail from Mela Consultancy regarding a telecommunications installation in the Garwald area which was part of a Government scheme to improve communications in rural areas. Residents in that area had been informed of the plan, and in view of the poor mobile reception we receive at present, there seemed no likelihood of any local objections.

PLANNING: Concern was expressed at the continuing lack of progress regarding the proposed shooting ranges at Clerkhill. An enforcement notice had been served and had now expired, but there had still been no action on the part of the D/G Council. The proposers of the scheme have lost at every stage. But the matter still seems to be as far from resolution as ever. A number of observations were made about the misdemeanours of the chief proposer, but Archie Dryburgh pointed out that Planning is determined on the project not the merits or otherwise of the proposer of the projects.

COMMUNITY WIND FARM BENEFITS: Until the Resilience situation has been clarified awards from the £11000 funding likely to be available will be delayed. However in the event of the Senior Citizens' Christmas Dinner taking place the Community Council will contribute £200 towards the cost. A Request has also been made by the Arts Group and the Village Hall for money towards a Burns Night Ceilidh. These are both tentative requests dependent upon the likelihood of either event taking place. It was agreed that money should be made available should it be required.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS: Bernard had pursued with SEPA the question of the soil that had been dumped along the banks of the river. He had received a lengthy reply to his request but it was not conclusive. If the material were intended for banking it would probably require no further planning, but until more was known a definitive requirement was not as yet made clear.

NEXT MEETING: 3rd Thursday in January.

The meeting was closed.