

APPROVED

Eskdalemuir Community Council (ECC) Meeting
Thursday 28th May 2026 – 7pm, Eskdalemuir Hub
Ordinary Meeting

Elected members present: Barry Young, Liz McQueen, Ian Warden, Al Green, Julie McLeod, Bernard Provost

Guests: Denis Male (Councillor), Paul Corrick (UEDG) Heather White (resident), Jude Graham (resident) Gerry Fox (resident)

The Secretary confirmed the meeting was quorate with 6 elected members present.

Minutes of last meeting (19th March) supplied by Liz McQueen - approved by Julie McLeod, seconded by Ian Warden

Correspondance:

- B709 Road Closure from Smithy to Mountview – June 18th

Police Report

- Report is now clustered to include Canobie and Langholm
nothing specific to Eskdalemuir

Eskdalemuir Seismic Array Consultation

- Members and guests had reviewed the consultation documentation ahead of the meeting. Discussion focused on the CC response.
- It was noted that the proposed 15km Exclusion Zone around the Seismic Array (an increase from the existing 10km zone) was broadly accepted as appropriate and not contentious. Discussion centred on the implications for development *beyond* this zone, within the 15-50km "Restricted Zone," where the following concerns were raised:
 - **Visual impact:** cumulative visual impact of turbine development beyond the exclusion zone, noting the existing presence of Crossdykes wind farm in the wider landscape
 - **Cumulative industrial impact:** turbines beyond the zone would add to visual/industrial impact already arising from existing forestry operations in the area
 - **Tourism and recreation:** potential impact on cycling, walking, and tourism
 - **Precedent concern:** relaxing restrictions beyond the exclusion zone could set a precedent for other forms of development (e.g. solar, battery storage) in areas currently protected by proximity to the Array
 - **Conservation area:** suggestion that the area could benefit from conservation area status
 - **Community benefit:** Denis Male raised concern regarding the current community benefit funding model, which is tied to the operational life of a windfarm (typically around 40 years), with no clear provision for what happens

thereafter. He suggested there should be a better model for investing community benefit within Community Council areas, generating an ongoing return through interest payments rather than a finite funding stream tied to windfarm lifespan.

- **Alternative mitigation:** it was noted that borehole-based sensor burial has been proposed by wind industry stakeholders (including CWP Energy) as a means of enabling further onshore wind development in the area. The view was expressed that this is unnecessary, given the Array has operated, calibrated and effectively for six decades in its current configuration.
- **Local contact:** Gerry Fox has independently been in contact with Christopher Houston, Co-Chairman of the Borthwick Water Landscape Conservation Group, who has authored a paper on the "curious case of the Seismic Array" relating to the Scoop Hill rejection — the precedent underpinning Eskdalemuir's protected status. Houston's group has already submitted objections to the consultation and has offered to share their groundwork with ECC. Contact details to be forwarded to Chair Al Green, arrange chat via teams or zoom if possible
- **Consultation process:** response deadline confirmed as 12 June 2026. Responses to be submitted via a form on the consultation website; it was noted that submissions already made by others are visible there. It was suggested Paul Corrick could respond on behalf of UEDG, and that a standard set of answers could be developed to support a coordinated community response.
- **Council position:** Denis Male noted that Dumfries and Galloway Council are a consultee in this process but confirmed no planning application has yet been submitted; the decision rests with the Scottish Government.
- **General sentiment:** members expressed a clear view that no further development should proceed, citing existing levels of landscape industrialisation in the area.
- **Actions:**
 - Al to make contact with Christopher Houston (via Geraldine Fox)
 - Members to access the consultation portal to review/submit questions
 - Noted overlap with Local Place Plan work (e.g. safeguarding nature) — worth cross-referencing

Multi User Trail

- A resident had contacted the Secretary regarding the need for a cut on the multi-user trail. It was noted that, following Lara Porter's departure, a new point of contact is needed to organise this with the Community Payback team.
- Barry Young to make contact with George, who manages the Community Payback team, to arrange the next cut. It was confirmed that funds are available to cover fuel and associated expenses.
- **Action:** Barry Young to contact George re: organising next trail cut.

LPP

(Heather White, a resident guest present at the meeting, raised an informal query — unprompted and not on the agenda — expressing distress about clear felling affecting beauty spots, and felt these areas should be better maintained or looked after.)

- Al Green noted this connects with the ongoing Local Place Plan work, and the meeting moved on to discuss the LPP.

Barry Young confirmed work on the LPP draft is ongoing. Julie McLeod expressed a wish to strengthen several areas — archaeology, geology, and dark skies — and offered to write additional content for inclusion.

- Further additions agreed included photos to illustrate the document, the active travel presentation recently given by Al Green, and a section referencing the earlier Seismic Array discussion and the broader point that developments affecting the area are often only picked up because residents happen to spot them, rather than through formal notice to the Community Council — the Black Esk water treatment works being cited as a further example of this gap.
- Barry noted there is a backlog of LPPs awaiting formal review, but confirmed that even without committee review, ECC's LPP would still be taken into consideration in planning matters simply by virtue of its existence; he estimated a further couple of weeks' work is needed and felt it was worth taking the time to get it right rather than submitting it half-finished, while Al Green expressed a preference for completing the LPP within the next two weeks, citing upcoming holidays and time constraints.
- **Action:** Barry Young, Al Green and Julie McLeod to meet on **29 May 2026** to add in the further content (archaeology, geology, dark skies, active travel presentation, photos) and discuss the 28-day consultation period ahead of submission.

Scottish Water Black Esk Treatment Works Development

- Members noted that there has been considerable activity on site, but no further updates to report at this time.
- Action : Al will check in with Ken Ruthven to find out any updates from residents
Denis Male agreed to contact the MSP (Craig Hoy) to follow up.

Office Bearer Discussion: Minute Secretary Role

- Raised by Liz. Interest had been expressed by Jude Graham, via Bernard Provost, in taking on the Minute Secretary role. Jude's professional work experience was

summarised in support of her suitability. Proposed terms: £30 per meeting plus expenses, with minutes passed to the Secretary for circulation. Jude is self-employed and would invoice monthly, with payment by BACS transfer to her bank details.

- Members were happy for Jude to take on the role.
- **Action:** Liz to make contact with Jude to sort out arrangements.

Small Grant and Training Bursary Applications

- Ian Warden, as a Director on the Crossdykes Community Benefit Fund (CCBF) board, gave an update.
- Following the dissolution of North Milk Community Council, the CCBF board is now short of members and needs new Directors in place by September.
- Liz McQueen and Barry Young noted they are unable to take this on, having previously served in this capacity.
- It was suggested a member of UEDG could potentially fill one of the vacancies, and that an advert be put out more widely to attract further interest, with meetings available in person or via Zoom.

Action: advert to be prepared to recruit new CCBF Directors ahead of September deadline; potential UEDG member to be approached.

- **1. Dol Isca Iron Age Reenactment Event (8th–9th August)**
- Application originally submitted by Lara Porter prior to her departure. Total event costs are £6,500, covering workshops, reenactment professionals, willow working, pottery, costume making, food, and camp. UEDG have requested £2,000 from the Council towards this.
- It was noted that CCBF funds need topping up, but that ANCBC and Minska funds could be drawn on to cover this application.
- Members unanimously supported application
- **2. Eskdalemuir Expressive Arts (EEA) — New Website**
- EEA have requested £2,000 to build a new website to promote their work and enable workshop bookings. Two quotes were received: Weblink.co.uk at £885 + VAT, and Creatomatic (Lockerbie) at £4,500 — the latter excluding additional costs for hosting, an online booking system, branding, and Mailchimp.
- Discussion points raised:
- It was agreed EEA should be asked for more information, including who would maintain the site on an ongoing basis, and what the associated ongoing costs (hosting, maintenance, renewals) would be beyond the initial £2,000
- Members queried whether EEA's content could instead be incorporated within the Hub website (e.g. eskdalemuir.com/EEA) rather than funding a standalone site
- It was questioned whether £2,000 is the best use of funds for this purpose, given ESKAPE's own plans to become a CIC have found a cheaper route to a booking site, with core information hosted via the Hub

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- Al Green noted that word of mouth and recommendation remain the main driver of bookings locally, and that a website functions more as a "shop front" — a search for Eskdalemuir is likely to surface the Hub first in any case. He offered to share good local contacts who helped set up ESKAPE, which may be useful for EEA, and noted a website may still have long-term value
- It was felt EEA should better articulate why a website specifically is the right option, whether other approaches have been explored, and that this may benefit from consultation with other groups operating out of the Hub
- Members were not opposed to the application but would like EEA to attend the next meeting to discuss further before a decision is made.
- **Action:** Barry Young to go back to EEA with these points, including sustaining/ongoing cost questions, request further information, and invite them to attend the next meeting.

It was noted that **£978** remains in the Training and Education Bursary fund.

Two thank-you communications were received from previous bursary recipients:

- Charlie McCulloch, supported towards a student placement in Australia, has offered to give a presentation to the Council about the experience
- Logan Green wrote to thank the Council for support towards driving lessons

Action: consider inviting Charlie McCulloch to present to the Council at a future meeting.

Planning Notices

- Lodge at Castle O'er – extension to side and rear

AOCB

- Anecdotal reports were raised of dangerous logging lorry driving on local roads, specifically involving Armstrong's Hauliers, described as very aggressive. Geoff McQueen, who drives the school transport run twice daily, has experienced a couple of incidents. Al Green also reported an incident involving one of the cycle group members while out on one of the e-bikes – reported to the police.
- Al Green has arranged a road awareness course, and Scottish Cycling are prepared to speak to hauliers directly. It was recognised that a balance needs to be struck between the commercial and residential interests of the community — particularly given the efforts to attract families to the valley for tourism, including e-bike use.
- Denis Male agreed to go back to James England on this.

Actions:

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- Members to suggest to residents that they document incidents using dash cam footage or a camera placed at the hub
- Denis Male to raise with James England
- Al Green to progress road awareness course and liaison with Scottish cycling
- A resident raised concern regarding the use of glyphosate on fields near the village. While signage had been put up, residents on the Craighaugh estate felt they had not been given advance notice before spraying took place.
- **Action:** Al Green to contact the farm manager.

Date of next meeting :

Thursday 16th July 2026 – LATER start of 7.30pm requested