

MINUTES OF ESKDALEMUIR COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

7p.m. 18th January 2024 - Community Hub

Welcome: Those present, Nick Jennings, Barry Young, Liz McQueen, Ian Warden, Lara Porter, John Furlonger

Apologies: received from Stuart Green, Beatrice Furlonger and Bernard Provost

Minutes of Previous Meeting: These were read and approved. Liz McQueen(prop), Barry Young (sec)

Matters Arising: There had been no direct response to our letter to Mr McTier concerning the 'Screening Opinion' for the proposed target shooting range at Clerkhill, but Barry Young confirmed that it had been received and was visible on the DGC Planning Portal.

Planning Matters: An application has been submitted to install new antenna on the existing mast at Castle O'Er the proposed change will have little additional visual impact to what is already there. An application has been submitted for alterations and change of use of a barn to form an extension to the existing house at Cote Barn.

Democracy Matters, Public Meeting: Funding for this meeting had been applied for and approved. The purpose of the policy, as we had been given to understand, was to increase local involvement in matters concerning local communities and to give them more say in future planning. The Chairman pointed out that since the original communication from the organisers of the project, there had been little clarification of the aims. We would need therefore to approach the matter from a local perspective and relate the meeting, with the six proposed themes, to the needs of our own community, not as part of a Langholm centered regional project. It is hoped that there will be representatives from all levels of national administration if the project is to be seen as part of a National scheme for local participation and involvement. We must arrange the meeting with the intention in mind to stimulate interest in local development. To date, except on rare occasions, local development had been taken forward by a very small number of people locally. With a number of newcomers to the parish in recent years, it is important that the net is spread wider, and new blood is encouraged to take an active part in local development. Funding has been applied for, and granted for the organisation of the meeting, and it was generally agreed that there should be six tables round which those attending could sit to discuss the six themes provided for us, with a facilitator on each table to collate the comments of those attending. These discussions would follow brief presentations by representatives from local govt etc., and the summaries of the themes would be passed on to those administering the scheme. Money had been granted for materials and for refreshments. The latter grant, it was felt, was an important element in encouraging attendance. It was important to get members of the Community together to discuss the issues, and doubly important that the discussion should be related to very local issues. Eskdalemuir is a parish which has little of the infrastructure to be found in a traditional village, and our local place plan is not likely to have much in common with communities that have shops, offices, Post Offices, Banks, Clinics etc.

Resilience Planning: £11,000 has been set aside to ensure that the Hub can be relied on as a safe warm Centre in case of local emergencies. So far, no satisfactory system of generators has been decided on, and it is questionable whether that is the best avenue to explore. It is a matter of concern that the water system is vulnerable in cold weather, and it is a priority that this issue should be tackled. At present it is not entirely clear what the problem is and it is hoped that C.A.R.E may be able to deal with the matter. Lara would be contacted to determine whether she would be happy if we concentrated on making the water supply frost proof.

Small Grants: Lara Porter's request for a grant for undertaking an Oral History Project for the valley had originally been estimated at £1940. Following more detailed accounting it had been necessary to increase the request to £1997. This fell within the terms of the grant, and the increased sum was approved

The estimates for the equipping of the Therapy Room had been based on the hope that a bed could be acquired for about £250. This now seemed unlikely, and it was agreed that the additional sum required would be made available for the purpose of meeting the increased cost.

Hanna Casement had made a further request for training costs in order to increase her professional expertise. Her request was for a further £536. After some discussion a sum of £418 was agreed to keep within her limit of £1000

The Expressive Arts Group were anxious to bring their facilities up to an improved standard. They are one of the most long standing groups operating in the Hub, and their activities have been a mainstay of the operations within the Hub over the years. Their request was for £1850 for a printing press and other materials to enable them to continue with and improve upon their work. Their request was approved conditional on detailed costing. Correspondence:

Police Report: Two males charged with causing an affray, following a fight. 2/12/23

11/12/23 Cyclist injured seriously on back road to Langholm (B709)

A.O.C.B. It was proposed that Ian should be co-opted onto the Community Council. He had already indicated a strong interest in being involved, and the proposal was unanimously approved

There was still some concern over obstruction near the bus stop adjacent to the Churchyard. It was recommended that the matter should be referred to Archie Dryburgh for appropriate action.

Ian mentioned that it had been brought to his attention that the Ryehill park pavements were overgrown, and asked what measures could be taken. Barry suggested that the D/G Council fault reporting website could be used to inform them of the situation and to find out what could be done.

The meeting then closed, and the date of the next meeting was fixed for the third Thursday in March in the Hub at 7pm.