

# Heriot Community Council

Macfie Hall

June 19<sup>th</sup> 2019

## **Present:**

Frank Connelly, Gavin Whittaker (Chairing), Sue Sharp, Helen Brinkworth, Julia Campbell (secretary cover) Apologies: John Williams, K Dun, Area Councillor: Sandy Aitchison (will arrive later).

14 members of the community

**1 AGM** – due to a complaint about procedure, this was delayed until the next meeting

**2 Minutes of the previous meeting:** Agreed.

**3 Police report** – Not received

## **4 Planning Applications**

a) **Heriot CC response to 19/00191/FUL** 8 Wind Turbines at Carcant, Wull Muir Wind farm

At this point Sue Sharp came off the Community Council and joined the members of the community in the room.. The Community Council met to consider Wull Muir Windfarm. The CC went through the key issues systematically and will raise an objection on the grounds of landscape, the effect on water supplies, noise and wildlife, and position of one of turbine sweeping outside the planning boundary.

The Community Council voted 1 neutral, 3 in favour of submitting an objection to the windfarm proposal.

There was a discussion about the RSPB's response, and it was noted that SNH have not put in their response as yet.

A member of the public raised a question as to which water supplies would be affected. It was not clear which water supplies would be affected but it was asserted that the issue lay within Midlothian.

A member of the public asked the Community Council when they were thinking of putting in a response? The procedure was explained and outlined by Gavin Whittaker.

There were many comments regarding the positive and negative impact of windfarms upon the local community. It was recognised that there was a cumulative impact and that in a community there is a balance to be struck between the interests of developers and landowners and the effect on the wider community.

Councillor Sandy Aitchison then spoke about the visual impacts of windfarms and explained that he was recently in Berwickshire looking at the cumulative impact of a windfarm.

b) **Stable Block** – as this was retrospective there was no comment from the floor or from the Community Council. Members accepted the erection of this Stable Block.

c) **Gilston Windfarm Appeal Update** Heriot Community Council submitted a legal objection to the Reporters conclusion on several grounds. The Chair read out a statement from the Community Council in response to this development. A copy of the statement would be made available on the website and with the minutes of this meeting.

There followed a discussion about the role of the Chair of the Community Council. Several members of the public questioned the personal stance and viewpoint of the Chair of the

Community Council in regard to Windfarm applications in particular. Some members of the Community considered the Community Council members did not represent the whole of the community in a fair and balanced manner. A discussion followed.

Councillor Aitchison was asked to provide information on the roles and responsibilities of the Community Council members. It was requested that the role of the Chairperson was clearly written down so that the Community Council can represent their community entirely and effectively in all matters.

There was further discussion about how the community council make their decisions and ensures it has reached out and gained responses from all relevant members of the community.

Helen Brinkworth assured members of the public that the Community Council members do have their own personal opinions on such matters, they are not persuaded by the Chairs own personal viewpoint, as was being asserted, and that they do seek opinions from the community.

To assist the Community Council, Councillor Sandy Aitchison agreed to contact Gerry Wilkinson (SBC) on community council roles and responsibilities.

## 5 Community Fund/ Area Partnerships

Councillor Aitchison explained that there is no doubt that the power of community councils will increase. By summer 2019 people will need to consider where Community Councils fit into the Eildon area. It will be important to tie down official regulations and the roles/responsibilities of the Community Council members.

Sue Sharp kindly agreed to attend the area meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> June. Information will be shared after the meeting.

Councillor Aitchison then shared with the meeting information about the Community Fund.

- £500,000 pilot -> Scottish Government, budgeting 1% decided at Council level and as such the SBC will be asking Community Councils what they want to spend their budgets on.

Scottish Borders Council will consult over summer and will collect the Community Council views on how this allocation of the budget should be spent. 1% will be decided by democratic local arrangements. The question of Community Council priorities as it rolls out was raised and this issue will need to be addressed.

Councillor Aitchison encouraged the Community Council to engage with the Scottish Borders Council in driving this programme forward. A discussion took place on the effective roles of the Community Councils in Eyemouth and Newcastleton. Members of Heriot CC requested links to Eyemouth Community Council for possibly sharing of good practice.

## 6 **AOB**

- a. Skip hire** – Sue Sharp asked if members were still wanting to arrange the hire of a skip for the village. It was agreed to proceed with this.
- b. Hall Committee** - café being held to raise money for funds
- c. Eco Shop at school** – A microgrant request for £250 was granted.
- d. Mini Book Bank** – official author came along
- e. School Astroturf and Afterschool club** – funding for the astroturf is awaiting confirmation from SBC. Raesaw Estate has provided substantial funds for this.

- f. **Volunteers** – required to sort post box and sort broken chair at bridge.
- g. **Biking event.** Motocross in Heriot round to catering app for hall Motorhomes staying overnight. Approximately 60 entrants over the Saturday and Sunday of the 27<sup>th</sup> July.

**End of Meeting: 8.45pm**