

Minutes Heriot Community Council Meeting December 2nd 2020

John Williams (Chair), Frank Connelly, Helen Brinkworth, Sue Sharp, Gavin Whittaker

Cllr Jardine, Cllr Scott (SBC)

Sam McMillan, Rosemary chambers (Coriolis Energy)

Apologies Cllrs. Anderson and Aitchison

Meeting took place on Zoom, following guidance from SBC (David Parker 28th Oct.) about how CC meetings should be held. Access to the meeting was available to the public, two members of the public attended.

1. Minutes of October meeting – adopted
2. Greystone Knowe. Update and presentation from Rosemary Chambers, Sam McMillan (Coriolis).
 - a. Rosemary described the companies (Coriolis and ESB) and their structures.
 - b. Project introduced in 2018, scoping starting 2020, with a presumption for 15-18 turbines, 180m in height.
 - c. An online ‘consultation’ was held, 500 households were contacted and 131 separate users visited the website as a consequence. The material is still available online.
 - d. The proposed timeline for the development is for application submission to take place in 2021 (Q2 or Q3), with an anticipated decision by the Scottish government in 2022-3.
 - e. The community benefit fund was described as potentially worth £280-350k per annum ‘to local communities’. Cllr Scott pointed out that current Scottish government guidance (possibly *rule*, it is not clear which) is for the community benefits to be spread beyond the local communities, which would diminish the amount to Heriot. There was no clear answer as to whether this approach would apply here. Some developers allow other areas to bid for community funds.
 - f. There were questions about whether we should consider shared ownership. This was regarded as a major step by all parties, requiring a large investment. Although grants are available it is a complex area that would require independent advice.
 - g. A question from the public arose about who owns the land of the proposed development and how much they will benefit personally. Three local landowners who will continue to own the land (Brockhouse, Pirntaton and Haltree). It was reported that smaller turbines can yield £25k per turbine per annum for the landowner.
3. School issues:
 - a. SBC have proposed a meeting with parents / carers on Monday pm. The Parent Council have asked for their proposals, but nothing has been sent. There has been no response to a request for all three schools involved to have equal representation in zoom meetings. Cllr Aitchison, Christine Grahame and Connect have all been

involved, but there is still a lack of clarity. It was reported that this approach runs counter to the spirit, if not the letter, of the Parental Involvement Act, and there was a fear that Monday's meeting will be classed as consultation, when the decision has, for all practical purposes, already been made. Overall, there has been a serious lack of meaningful information and consultation.

- b. Cllr Scott asked Steff Potter (Chair of the Parent Council), what they want, and was told that they want information about the advantages of the SBC proposals. There was serious concern that Stow and Fountainhall schools will have a Principal Teacher in place, but Heriot will not, putting Heriot at a disadvantage in future decision-making. Steff stated that, at the minimum Heriot needs a PT – i.e. someone to fight Heriot's position. SBC have promised that closure of Fountainhall (as the smallest school) is not currently on the cards.

4. Police report

- a. Brief comments were made on the police report, but no police presence at the meeting. The police refuse to work with Zoom due to security concerns, but might work with Teams as a medium for future meetings. Concern had been expressed in email correspondence from community councillors about the under-reporting of accidents. Cllr Scott noted that all accidents reported to the police are recorded and the use of sirens and blue lights does not necessarily indicate a serious accident. Harry to persevere on information on traffic issues.
- b. It was agreed that the community council doesn't need to know the details of all accidents, but we do need to know that all accidents are reported back to SBC. Cllr Scott advised that the CC should pass reports back to councillors. Accidents, it was noted, are not recorded by SBC, but by police. The opinion was expressed that we need a channel to send reports back to SBC and add to their information.

5. Eildon area report

- a. Sue reported that there had been a good discussion about funding opportunities, and Jenny Mushlin (Stow and Fountainhall CC) made an impassioned appeal for the X95.
- b. The opinion was expressed that there were poor answers from SBC to feedback to questions. Cllr Scott didn't believe that the area partnerships currently worked very well, as its operations fall between the large-scale SBC work and the small-scale CC work. Suggestions for improvement were for the chair to rotate around a range of CC Chairs, and it also needs its own budget. BUT, it also requires people to get involved and contribute to the work of the committee.
- c. Buses – discussions are still ongoing in respect of the X9 service. There is some limited reassurance from Holyrood, but no long term plan.

6. Roads

- a. School speed limit – there is still no mandatory 20mph adjacent to the school. 20mph limits in villages became mandatory for a trial period following a decision by Scottish government. The CC finds this situation frustrating as it provides protection

for areas that do not need it, while ignoring an area that should clearly be made safer. Scottish government funding was given for village roads, and for the previous 20mph limits outside schools, so the CC was left asking why it not spent on these issues. Cllr Aitchison is currently attempting to address this issue, and Cllr Scott agreed to follow up with him.

- b. Opinion was expressed that better passing places should be installed on some narrow sections of the B709. The road isn't wide enough for two cars to pass safely in places, so road edges become damaged, which makes the road situation even worse. Cllr Scott was of the opinion that this was unlikely to be addressed in the current financial climate.

7. Windfarms

- a. Scawd Law. Application is currently planned for March, with a public exhibition in January. There had been no response to Chair's reply to the developer's request for us to publicise this event.
- b. Greystone Knowe – discussed previously.
- c. Ditcher Law - information about this highly impacting scheme, comprising 220m tall turbines, was only received by accident and even directly local affected community councils not consulted. A standard reply had been received from the Energy Consents Unit following contact from the Chair. It is not clear whether the developer or ECU should be consulting with locals – the onus *appears* to be on the developers, but it is not clear *when* that consultation should take place.
- d. The Chair had been invited to Oxton CC meeting to provide information, without passing any opinion on the application. There was some local anger at the scheme and lack of consultation, but Oxton has now made contact with the developers.
- e. Auction procedures for energy bidding have been changed - onshore wind can now be involved in bids for CfD. There are now three S36 windfarms in planning in the local area – probably the first of many given the changes to the economic viability.

8. SBC Local Development Plan

- a. Plans for Heriot exactly the same as previous Local Development Plans, and there are no obvious or significant changes. Public consultation will continue through to January.

9. Community funds

- a. Bus shelters – thanks had been expressed for the ones we have, but we now have a request for more.
- b. Specifically , a bus shelter at either Hangingshaw and Stagebank had been requested. It was agreed that we would explore this, but there would likely be just one at best, ideally with a footpath between. Cllr Scott suggested a community grant application with matched funding from the windfarm. GW to follow up.
- c. The kiosk refurbishment is under control, slower than anticipated, but progressing
- d. Graveyard. Sue to continue following up
- e. Nettlingflat cattle grid - GW to explore.

- f. Fireworks – Due to a misunderstanding, Heriot Country Kids had taken the fireworks donations from last year and used them for running costs. In view of the difficulties that HCK are facing, a compromise for return of the money is being developed. GW to follow up with HCK

10. AOB

- a. Tom Myers has been ousted as SBC planning chair, the new chair so far appears to be less impressive in respect of housing planning.
- b. Meetings – dates for 2021 will be broadly the same as last year and will avoid windfarm panel dates. It was suggested that we might hold some on Zoom in future even if covid restrictions are lifted, particularly during winter. It was agreed that this was something to consider.
- c. Survey – taking the original community fund survey, the highest subjects that are yet to be addressed are paths, winter provision and the playpark. Also to consider community transport and housing development. In short, there are a substantial number of topics from the last survey that could be included in a proposed survey. It was noted that we can apply for funding for professional assistance with the survey and development plan. The aim is to have information that informs the Community Council decisions over a long period, and also assists the development or action plan.
- d. Foundation Scotland – GW and FC expressed concern that they are taking too much of a proactive role in deciding how to spend funds. One of the points made last night was whether a unilateral change the terms by FS means they could allocate funds as they see fit, and ignore the wishes of the panel. There appear to be changes in the terms of what we can do that we weren't aware of. GW and FC to liaise with Colin to voice concerns.
- e. Money left in free funds is just under £1k.
- f. Money was reimbursed to GW for expenses related to bus shelters, winter parking, etc.
- g. Soutra isle car park waste dumping – the car park is within Midlothian, so the issue of dumped goods at the car park should be raised with them. SA to liaise with Midlothian.

The meeting finished at 20:06