

Heriot Community Council

Wednesday April 21st 2021

Online Zoom 6pm

Minutes

Present: John Williams, chair. Frank Connelly, Sue Sharp, Helen Brinkworth, Gavin Whittaker

CLRs: Harry Scott, Euan Jardine

Members of the public: (part) Angela Fletcher, Mike Pettit

1. Minutes of previous meeting:

The minutes of the 3rd February meeting were agreed without change.

2. Police reports, Update from SBC Councillors:

Although there was nothing of note in the police report, Cllr Scott had spoken to the police about road markings at the approach to the B709 and both had noted that faint markings and a slight rise in the road made observation from vehicles hazardous. Painted double lines would improve the signage at the hazard. The police will submit a report and Cllr Scott has advised Brian Young at SBC. A response is awaited.

3. Treasurer report:

Currently £5325.65 in the bank of which, £1231 remains ready to use with the remaining monies ring-fenced for awards from Dunlaw grants (£2798), Foundation Scotland (£65), Nettlingflat car park maintenance (£730) and graveyard repairs (£500). The 'green' account, the remains of which had been allocated to the Macfie Hall project was now empty and a discussion on closing it followed. It was suggested that a new RBS 'community' account, which allowed online transactions, might be more appropriate and opening one with a token amount may be advantageous in future. Cllr Scott agreed to review the annual accounts.

Action: Frank to investigate new RBS account

Action: Frank to supply formatted accounts to Cllr Scott

4. Planning applications – Broadlaw Quarry, Nettlingflat house:

Broadlaw Quarry;

Pollution levels had been noted and responded to by Skyora but there were still concerns over gases when dispersed. Mike Pettit raised a concern over gas levels as he has noted the rocket motor size can be easily increased from the proposed 3 tons to 7 tons. There was likely to be some inefficient burning resulting in toxicity increases and whilst some noise concerns remain, the developer had committed to advising pedestrians/ drivers etc. on test days. There remains concern over wildlife and livestock and the effect on them. The developer had declined to share results of any test and we have suggested a simulation and will press the point at the next opportunity. With the quarry gates now locked, parking for walkers etc. was restricted and if the development goes ahead, new resources will be needed.

Action: Sue to liaise with Outerston farm regarding any concerns about development

Nettlingflat House;

It was noted that a development by the same neighbour had been refused two years ago and this felt like development creep. The house was likely to be a holiday let.

Action; Gavin to liaise locally for views of neighbours

Action; Helen to put application on Facebook

5. Teacher changes at Heriot School

A report circulated by Lesley Munro had left parents upset and frustrated both at the lack of agreed process and the report content. Cllr Scott noted that after a lengthy discussion with Lesley Munro, he thought the principle of the decision was a reasonable operational decision. Cllr Jardine also noted a further recent meeting that included Stow representatives (yet again excluding both Heriot and Fountainhall PTA representatives) had included information regarding clubs and competition, which Heriot parents would have found useful during this time. It was agreed by all that the communications surrounding the whole process could have been much better.

Action: Helen to liaise with Cllr Jardine regarding setting up another meeting for PTA

Cllr Scott asked everyone if they would review and promote reviews by parents of the proposed new Galashiels Academy campus and it was confirmed that whilst some pupils had already been consulted on this there would be further consultations in due course.

6. Eildon Area Meeting Report

The report had been circulated but contained little of interest for Heriot Community.

Heriot Underpass

Whilst SBC accepted responsibility, a meeting with them regarding the underpass was awaited but would not take place until Covid restrictions allowed.

Roads

There was some discussion on the new 40mph road signs and their visibility and also whether the speed was suitable as opposed to the 30mph requested. At least now a reduction in the notified speed limit was in place. Cllr Scott noted that after studying the raw speed test data it was notable that there was none showing speeds in excess of 40mph and the majority of vehicles passing the school area were between 20 – 30mph. It was confirmed that the school area would receive a refresh of road-markings and rumble strips and that it currently had the 20's plenty signage and flashing 20mph signage at school entry and closure times. It was also noted that speed enforcement was general impractical and that a speed measuring system had been installed to measure the impact of new signage. There remain concerns about speeds and the potential for accidents at school times and outside school hours/at weekends when children still use the school and grounds facility and transit the general area.

Action: Gavin to liaise with Philippa Gilhooly regarding another meeting.

Action: Gavin to research 20mph (schools frontage) data

SBC Consultation/Community Empowerment

The letter sent to Scottish Ministers and circulated to all CC's and SBC by Colin McGrath, Chair of SBCCN, had been studied and whilst sharing in the spirit of the letter contents, there were concerns that already overloaded Community Councils would have little appetite for more work. SBC seems to be pushing back to communities for ideas on how to operate but had so far failed to produce any clear guidance or interpretation of the changes themselves. Cllr Scott suggested that whilst Heriot had a small Community Council it is none the less more active than many others. It was felt that the Eildon meeting reflects the imbalance between SBC and the communities which seems to be indicative of the lethargy felt overall. Typically this meant that a Community Council could react quickly to spend £200 but the bureaucracy in SBC meant it could not.

7. Wind Farm Scoping Consultations & Planning Applications

Scawd Law and Greystone Knowe developers have requested details of the printers we use to enable them to erect large weatherproof montages locally for the community to view. It is expected that formal applications will go ahead in the summer.

Ditcher Law – A response had been submitted by Oxton CC

Community involvement in Windfarms was being investigated and whilst there are many grants available for support activities and assistance from various bodies, including the Scottish Government, it was hoped that initial discussions might be offered by one of the expected developers. Meanwhile a fuller CC discussion and community survey might help clarify our wants. A survey is currently under development

8. Community Funds/ Bus shelters/ Graveyard repairs – carried to next meeting

9. AOB

A query on Community elections noted that SBC had deferred elections for 12 months. The hall would not be available for use until at least August, in line with SBC directions on Covid.