

Heriot Community Council

Minutes of meeting, Wednesday 5th Feb 2023 at 19:00

Present: S. Sharp, F. Connelly, G. Whittaker, J. Williams (Chair), Cllr. Mackinnon, Cllr. Sinclair plus 4 members of the community.

Apologies: None received

1. Minutes of previous meeting: Accepted.
2. Police report: There were no reports of any serious incidents in the area. It was reported that a GPS had been stolen from a quad bike and there had been a recent crash on the A7 north of Stow.
3. Planning:
 - a. *Hazelbank quarry site meeting report*: Both Heriot and Stow & Fountainhall CCs believe that the quarry is operating without valid planning permission. A case has been submitted to SBC enforcement officers, but no action has been taken after two months. A site meeting took place between quarry management and local community councillors, which only resulted in vague reassurances from the operators. Quarry management agreed to attend CC meetings in Heriot and S&F, but have since turned down all offer to meet. The inaction of Enforcement officers is particularly concerning, and Cllr. Sinclair agreed to speak to the relevant officers at SBC in an attempt to initiate some action from them.
 - b. *Update on Borthwick Hall application*: Objections had been submitted on behalf of the CC. There was a strong divergence of views between residents and the opinions of the SBC Roads Officer in his submission that were hopefully being address through a site meeting. [The application has since been withdrawn by the applicant]
 - c. *Roughsware wood consultation*: It was agreed to request that access is made via the B7007/B709, that a greater quantity of broadleaf trees be included, and that amenity access through the woodland area be preserved.
4. Report on A7 Action Group meeting: JW had attended. Little of direct relevance to Heriot, but proposed the Pinesburn windfarm, south of Hawick, were concerning for the difficulty and impact of transporting turbine parts through Hawick.
5. X95 Bus service: A dramatic improvement to the service was in the offing, with an increase to an hourly service and both earlier and later bus services added to the schedule. The timetable requires approval from Holyrood, but this is likely to be a formality. Sue and Helen were thanked for their successful efforts to get these service improvements.
6. Wind Farms:
 - a. *Report on round table discussions about S36 applications*: S36 application are made directly to the Energy Consents Unit, and bypass the local planning system. SBC planning officers had seemingly instructed local councillors to ignore the opinions of residents and to take into account only the officers' reports. JW had attended a meeting with other Scottish groups, run by Alexander Burnett MSP, which included

discussion of this issue. The minister had promised a response by the end of the month. John Lamont MP had also agreed to raise our concerns with the SBC executive.

b. Update on windfarm applications:

- i. Sacwd Law:* No movement since the issue of eagle nests in the vicinity had been raised.
- ii. Wull Muir:* Landscape architect to report in the next few weeks
- iii. Ditcher Law:* Application to be submitted early August for 200+m turbines
- iv. Torfichen:* S36 application to be submitted 'soon'
- v. Greystone Knowe:* Landscape architect has referred this back to the developers and nothing has been heard since.

7. Community funds

- a. Defibrillators and First Aid courses: Funding had been approved and had finally been released by SSE. Defibrillators and enclosures had been purchased by GW. SS will organise first aid courses.
- b. Sports day funding application: The application for £250 was unanimously approved.

8. SBC code of conduct: All the community councillors formally agreed to abide by the code.

9. AOB

- a. Live Borders and Council Consultation: SS had completed the online questionnaire in a personal capacity, but its format (asking users to put issues in order of preference) meant that submitting a community response would be inappropriate.
- b. SBC community plan: Again, this would be effectively impossible for the CC to submit a response on behalf of the community.
- c. Notice boards: It was noted that the notice boards are looking tired and need replacing, particularly at the school. FC to look into possible replacements.
- d. UCI World Cycling Championships: A number of road closures were noted, but these would be widely publicised by the organisers.
- e. Footpath grants: It was noted that up to £450 was available from SBC for footpath maintenance.
- f. New National Park: There were concerns about infrastructure in any proposed new national park from SBC, and the local council was yet to adopt a position on the proposal.
- g. There was a reminder that the community café was open on Sundays from 10am-2pm, and local support would be appreciated.
- h. Videos of numerous community events from around 20 years ago had been sent to GW, but in older tape formats (VHS, VHS-C). There was insufficient general support for transferring the recordings to digital format to allow the recordings to be distributed more widely.

The meeting finished at 20:10