

Heriot Community Council

Minutes of meeting 20th September 2023, 7:00pm

Present: G. Whittaker (acting Chair), S. Sharp, H. Brinkworth, Cllr Sinclair, Cllr Steel.

Apologies received from J. Williams, F. Connelly, Cllr. Mackinnon. Nothing from Cllr. Jardine.

1. **Minutes of July meeting** – accepted as accurate.
2. **Police report** The latest briefing from the Police had been received, with the overwhelming majority of crimes occurring in the Galashiels conurbation. No rural crime was reported, but the police had been checking a number of vehicles along the border in an effort to deter travelling criminals.
3. **Planning** – Hazelbank Quarry. A meeting had taken place between a number of council officials (including planning officers and road safety officers), Councillors, Community Councillors from Heriot and Fountainhall, and with the assistance of John Campbell KC, acting on behalf of Heriot and Fountainhall. The meeting was protracted, but the conclusion was that, as SBC planning have accepted that work has commenced on the quarry in accordance with the planning permission, no further action was needed other than to enforce the road safety aspects of the work. The noise and dust monitoring would be addressed by SBC. The CC representatives contested that the work had disturbed wildlife, including nesting peregrines in the breeding season, but the planning officers were not willing to consider these material breaches of the planning consent.
4. **X95 Bus service** - The CC welcomed the improvements to the frequency and number of buses on the X95 service. This had improved the ability of School pupils from Galashiels to engage in afterschool activities. There were still concerns about the absence of an early service to Galashiels, and that the last bus to Heriot from Edinburgh departed at 19:30. Border Buses consider the route to be viable, however, and further improvements may be possible.
5. **Windfarms** – there had been little movement on any of the windfarm applications
 - a. S36 Applications. The issue of the public being excluded from representation in S36 applications, and councillors being ordered to ignore representations from their constituents was raised at the meeting to discuss Hazelbank Quarry (Item 3 above). Attempts are being made to ask questions about this at Holyrood, as the SBC practice is not universal across Scottish council areas. HCC regard this approach as highly undemocratic.
 - b. Wull Muir – the landscape architect has lodged an objection based on the same criteria that caused the previous version of this project to be refused by the Reporter.

- c. Torfichen – and exhibition had been held, but was reported to have been very poorly attended.
 - d. Ditcher Law – Photomontages were shown to the CC, which highlight the significant scale of these proposed turbines. It was not clear that any Heriot residences would be directly affected, and in the absence of any formal request from Oxton CC for assistance, the discussion of this proposal was brief.
6. Community Funds –
- a. The defibrillators had been delivered and were installed at Nettlingflat and Crookston. Once the defibrillator cabinet is installed at the hall, the units can be wired in to the mains.
 - b. Sue was considering dates for the first aid courses – these would probably take place at the end of Oct. or the start of Nov.
 - c. Helen raised the issue of the battery and pads needing replacement at the telephone kiosk. Gavin agreed to look into buying these.
7. AOB
- a. Notice boards. There was no update, but it was reported that Natasha was arranging a new school sign and it might be possible to get a combined sign and notice board.
 - b. Playpark – Gaving to contact Cllr Mckinnon to check on progress,
 - c. A question was raised about the new telecom tower on Dod Law. This appears to be a telecom mast for use by the emergency services.
 - d. SS reported that she had met with C. Grahame MSP to discuss the energy certificates for properties which are proposed for owners wishing to rent, sell or lease properties. These requirements would be particularly onerous for owners of older rural properties that are far from economic to bring up to the energy rating required.

The meeting finished at 20:35