

Heriot Community Council

Minutes of meeting. Held online on 12th Feb. 2024

1. Present: John Williams (Chair), Frank Connelly, Gavin Whittaker, Helen Carter, Helen Brinkworth, Cllr. McKinnon, Cllr Steel and Thomasina Smoor (Raeshaw Estate) plus 1 member of the community.
2. Apologies Cllr. Sinclair, PC Proud, Sue Sharp
3. Minutes of previous meeting. Agreed with minor amendments.
4. Police report. No rural crime had been reported, and the Police report mostly concerned incidents in Galashiels – it is not clear whether this represents an absence of rural crime or under-reporting. JW reported that the Police are intending to attend the next HCC meeting.
5. Damage by storm.
 - a. There had been an offer of a standby generator from Raeshaw Estate for the Macfie Hall to protect against future power cuts. The Macfie Hall Committee is also looking into solar panels, and seeking additional information and experience from the community.
 - b. It was reported that the broadband connectivity has still not been repaired in the Heriot valley.
 - c. A discussion followed about applying for funds to pay for a mains power connection to the Heriot Broadband mast. It was agreed that the CC would be willing to apply for funds from either the community fund panel or the Dun Law Extension Trust. John agreed to Liaise with Marty to take this forward.
 - d. It was pointed out that, with the discontinuing of copper wire telephone connections, the loss of broadband will also means loss of telephone for users. Cllr Mackinnon agreed to look into this from the SBC perspective, but it was pointed out that this is a national issue.
6. Windfarms
 - a. Wull Muir. Decision to allow this to proceed is to be challenged in the Court of Session by Raeshaw Estates. Heriot Community Council will not be involved in this action. In view of the financial exposure, HCC would not consider being directly involved unless it is fully insulated from the costs.
 - b. Greystone Knowe. JW had sent a report round to the community – people from the Heriot and Fountainhall communities gave evidence about the impact on local people. John Campbell KC is working through a final submission. Arrangements for site visits by the Reporter are yet to materialise.

- c. Other windfarms:
 - i. Torfichen application has been delayed until May
 - ii. Ditcher Law is in abeyance
 - iii. Long Croft: no updates.
 - iv. Scawd Law: information is not being updated.
 - d. JW had prepared a paper discussing the impacts of windfarms on local communities and had submitted this to MSPs. The argument is largely about how the present system is heavily weighted against local people in inquiries.
7. Community funds
- a. An application from Christine Connelly for funding towards art classes was approved in full, with suggestions for arrangements being proposed to allow for wider participation.
8. AOB
- a. Mike Sommerville had submitted an informal request for community funds to be used to resurface the road between Macfie Hall and School. GW responded that community funds cannot be used for road maintenance as this is a statutory responsibility of the local authority. Cllr. McKinnon kindly agreed to raise the issue with SBC Roads.
 - b. Playpark – no progress has been made as GW reported that the landowner is yet to commit in writing to selling the land. No application for funds will be made until this is in place.
 - c. HB pointed out that the power line is down at Shoestanes farm due to tree damage in recent storms.
 - d. An application for two houses at Nettleingflat was rejected by Planning Officers, but this is being appealed by the applicant.
 - e. JW would appreciate phone numbers of HCC members he doesn't have contact details for.
 - f. HC reported that people who lost power in recent storms can claim for meals - https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/storm_eowyn_compensation.aspx
 - g. HB reported that the C11 road to Fountainhall has damaged verges. HB to report to SBC via their 'report it' page. *[For information: a multitude of common issues can be reported directly to the council at <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/report>]*
 - h. Replacement location for the bench – Helen had received no suggestions.
 - i. JW reported that he intends to stand down as Chair at some point – others need to consider whether they would want to take it up. GW agreed to speak to one person who, it was suggested, might consider joining the CC.

The meeting closed at 19:50