

# Heriot Community Council

Minutes of meeting, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2025

Present: John Williams (Chair), Frank Connelly, Helen Brinkworth (minutes), Sue Sharp, Helen White, Cllr. Fay Sinclair, seven members of the public, PC Mark Froud

Apologies: Gavin Whittaker, Cllr. Hannah Steel, Cllr. Neil McKinnon.

1. Presentation by Galileo Empower of Longmuir Renewable Energy and Biodiversity Project as part of the scoping stage. This proposal is on the same site as the Rowantree application, which was refused planning consent after a lengthy appeal ending in 2014. Heriot CC objected together with 6 neighbouring CCs. This scheme lies within the exclusion zone for the Eskdalemuir Array.

Website: <https://longmuirenergy.co.uk/>

\*Link to presentation has been requested (HB)

Planning application may be submitted at the end of 2025.

JW: Requests from HCC to Galileo Empower

- Montage of the battery storage and further information
- Montage of the solar panels
- Request to be a consultee on the viewpoints.
- Request that Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) be extended to 3kms
- ZTV at 5kms to be provided to assess Residential Impacts
- Road Access Point to be reviewed owing to the dangerous stretch of road

## 2. Police Report

- a. PC Mark Froud, Community Police Office for the Galashiels area, attended the meeting. He will go to meetings of CC in Galashiels and sometimes Stow and Fountainhall. When possible, he will also attend at Heriot.
- b. Speed limit on A7 changing to 50mph. Public concerns raised: -
  - i. that this will not stop motorbikes from speeding on the A7
  - ii. reports that people have experienced an increase in dangerous overtaking manoeuvres.
- c. Police will carry out speed checks when resources allow, highlight issues to Road Traffic department, will add A7 to their time matrix for weekends road patrol.
- d. Careless or dangerous driving needs to be reported via calling 101. All incidents will be logged. Ideal if dashcam footage or licence plate number can be supplied, but not necessary.
- e. Rural crime. Request to see more rural road traffic patrols and more interaction with local farmers.
- f. Police are targeting quad bike and farm equipment thefts with new initiative of "Stop 24" to allow police to pull over farm machinery between 10pm and 5am where they are showing relevant stickers. Regardless of sticker, suspicious movements of quad bikes will be stopped.

## 3. Minutes of July 17<sup>th</sup> accepted

Issues arising: -

- a. HCC members have received community input about improving the B709 near Macfie Hall
- b. Carry forward issue of the discontinuation of the copper phone lines. There is a local need to improve mobile signal through additional masts or the use of the Emergency Service Network mast at Corsehope. Both copper and fibre are vulnerable to line damage or power cuts resulting in loss of Wi-Fi phone calling, broadband and online TV/radio service. Cllr. McKinnon agreed to raise this issue with SBC infrastructure department

#### 4. Wind Farms

- a. Scawd Law.
  - i. The application has been modified to include a fallback position of 6 wind turbines if the 8 turbine plan is unacceptable. The application assumes one pair of eagles at the location, but 4 pairs are reported to be present. Walkerburn are host CC to lead on response.
  - ii. JW. Drafting response to the Additional Information to be circulated. This will mainly concentrate on LVIA issues, as per HCC Objection in 2023.
  - iii. John Campbell to review HCC response to Additional Information for a modest fee (to be agreed) .
- b. Greystone Knowe.
  - i. Reporter has made a site visit and was escorted to some local viewpoints, residences and Fountainhall access route by Gavin Whittaker. We now await the Reporter's Decision and Report to Ministers.
- c. Torfichen
  - i. Additional Information has been submitted to ECU. This wind farm is along the Heriot border and so in Midlothian. The site boundary adjoins that of Wull Muir. We are continuing to cooperate with Moorfoot CC (host CC). Response will be drafted shortly, but as the AI does not deal with the CCs Objections in any way, the response will point to the CCs Objections.

#### 5. Roads

- a. GW has produced aerial and ground photos of B709 between the hall and school. Photos forwarded to Cllr. McKinnon for submitting to SBC.
- b. SS: Between hall and school there are 4 areas of roadway with potholes running alongside. HCC would like to see these sections repaired. Road could be improved with properly built passing places. The B709 is collapsing downslope near to Heriot Toun and may require underpinning. Suspect extensive problems with the road structure since the installation of fibre to the school many years ago and would like an engineer visit. Cllr. Sinclair agreed to make request for a site visit.
- c. 50mph speed limit of the A7 is an 18-month trial from April 2025 to September 2026. Discussion about how this will be enforced and assessed. How does the community perceive it, and can the community provide feedback into the result?
- d. Cllr. Sinclair: SBC are to provide an evaluation of the 50mph trial after September 2026.
- e. HCC action: advise community to report dangerous driving incidents to the police via calling 101.

- f. SS action: set up an email address to be used by the community to provide HCC with feedback on incidents and general views about the speed limit change. HCC will collate this information into a report to SBC.

## 6. Community Funds

- a. Raeshaw Estate has agreed to donate £15,000 of funds, but we are still waiting for funding to arrive. These funds are currently being used for windfarm responses, but other options have been suggested. Allocation of these funds is completely at the discretion of HCC.
- b. HCC has received a microgrant request from Heriot Country Kids after school club for £1118 to cover costs of annual insurance and healthy snacks for the remainder of 2024-25 school year. Additional information was requested and provided: they will be increasing fees after summer holidays and staff have been tasked to look at additional fundraising opportunities to help cover rising costs. HCC agreed to funding allocation. FC to provide payment.
- c. HCC requested a short report on the Art Courses that were recently run. FC to action.
- d. Suggestions for new uses of community benefit funds. SS proposed that funding can be used to provide training grants, similar to a scholarship. Action for FC to raise this suggestion at wind farm panel. Cllr. Sinclair advised HCC to consider whether this will pay for course fees or transport costs – HCC should draft specifications.

## 7. AOB

- a. Lord Borthwick, who was a previous member of HCC and well-known member of the community, recently passed away. JW to send official condolences on behalf of HCC.
- b. Land acquisition and playground improvements: HCC have been in contact with Foresight (the landowners) about whether it is possible to acquire some of their land next to the playground. Community consultation will happen if this is confirmed as available.
- c. Skip proposal for Heriot Station: alternatives were discussed for removal of tubes from trees that were planted along the train line and bonfire waste. In addition, there are numerous green tubes on hedging by the roadside to be removed from the planting done by BAM.
  - i. Volunteers offered to remove the bonfire waste. Action point for HC and Chris Nichol
  - ii. A recycling option called TUBEX with a base in Edinburgh has been located to take the green tubes. Action point for HB to investigate.
- iii. Action point for Cllr. Sinclair to find out whether SBC have any intention to remove the green tubes from hedging at Heriot Station and Falahill Cottages (or indeed elsewhere on the trainline).
- iv. Action point for HB to organise a 'work gang' to remove the green tubes from hedging assuming SBC will not be doing this.
- d. Stow post office business is for sale
- e. Provision of shelters at bus stops. HC to investigate whether we can acquire land near to Hangingshaw bus stop for the provision of a bus shelter. Also enquire whether a bus shelter is wanted at Stagebank and/or a path to link the 2 locations.

	<b>Action point</b>	<b>Owner</b>
02/05-01	Discontinuation of copper phone lines	NM
02/05-02	Scawd Law: Draft response to Additional Information	JW
02/05-03	Submitting photos and aerial surveillance about B709 and request B709 site visit to survey road for undercutting	GW, FS and SS
02/05-04	Advise community to report dangerous driving incidents to the police via calling 101. Can go on Facebook/website and via email group?	All HCC members. HB and GW
02/05-05	Set up an email address to be used by the community to provide HCC with feedback on A7 incidents and general views about the speed limit change. Notify via Facebook/website and email?	SS and GW.
02/05-06	Chase up and report on Raeshaw funds	FC/JW
02/05-07	Microgrant payment to Heriot Country Kids	FC
02/05-08	Request short report on Art Courses (can we use this for website please)	FC
02/05-09	Take suggestion for training grants to wind farm panel	FC
02/05-10	Message of condolence	JW
02/05-11	Volunteers for removing bonfire waste	HC and Chris Nichol
02/05-12	Investigate option to recycle green plant tubes	HB
02/05-13	Organise volunteers to remove green tubes	HB
02/05-14	Will SBC remove green tubes?	FS
02/05-15	Provision of bus shelters at Hangingshaw and Stagebank plus linking path	HC