

Heriot Community Council

Call for Volunteers!

During the pandemic, Heriot Community Council has been required to hold our regular meetings online. Regular emails have circulated the agendas and minutes, but it has not been ideal, and has resulted in few people attending our online meetings. We anticipate that we can soon restart in-person meetings at the MacFie Hall.

We hope that, as things get back to normal, some of you will consider taking an active role in what can be described as the “public life” of the community. Heriot relies on volunteers being prepared to give up some time to organise various activities and good causes, with the reward that you gain satisfaction and appropriate experience.

HCC meets six times a year, but some of us also attend other meetings such as the Eildon Area forum, run by SBC to devolve powers to regional groupings of communities. The Scottish Government is committed to supporting communities to do things for themselves, and to make their voices heard in the planning and delivery of services. As a result, community councils are consulted on an increasing number of matters. This includes planning applications, local and regional plans and many other important matters relating to health, education, transport, policing etc. Things that are central to our way of life!

HCC also appoints two members to the Panel for the Carcant and Toddleburn Wind Farm Community Fund, and two members to the Dun law Extension Trust.

There is considerable workload on a small number of volunteers and leads to just a few of us wearing several hats. **There is a real need for fresh volunteers to come forward please!**

Change in the community council needs to be gradual to ensure experience is passed on, but it certainly is needed to ensure the bodies remain relevant and in touch with local views.

Ongoing projects

Headstones

We are currently in the process of applying for funding to repair headstones at Heriot Kirk that have been deemed unsafe by SBC and are currently laid flat.

Playpark

There are ongoing discussions with SBC about the future of the playpark and remedial work to stop the flooding.

Road safety

We are working with SBC to introduce appropriate speed limits where they are wanted. Chevron signs have been placed on the bends by the telephone exchange to try to reduce accidents. The safety of the A7 junction is being reviewed after concerns were raised.

Microgrant Funding

The latest award of the Microgrant was made to the Yoga group, led by Clare Stephen. This funding is being used to purchase equipment for the yoga group to use in the weekly sessions at MacFie Hall on Wednesdays.

Community Groups

MacFie Hall Committee

The work of the Hall Committee has been dominated recently by the complete refurbishment and extension of the Hall – a major undertaking for which the existing members deserve the thanks of the whole community.

Heriot Country Kids

This charity, run by parents of children at Heriot Primary School, continues to provide after school care and, this year, introduced day care sessions during the summer holidays.

Wind Farm Panels

Heriot has greatly benefited from the funding that is available from the local wind farms. HCC works closely with the wind farm panels and promotes the use of these funds.

There are two separate panels because of different ownership of the wind farms.

Toddleburn and Carcant wind farms have one panel chaired by Colin Hood. The other panel is the Dun Law Extension Trust, chaired by Gavin Whittaker. HCC appoints two members to both the Community Panels, so there is an inevitable overlap of people. The panels have a different structure, with the Dun Law Trust benefiting three other local communities who have also have representatives on that panel.

The panels were able to authorise a substantial proportion of the funds required for the MacFie Hall project enabling the Hall Committee to plan with confidence.

Both panels also provided substantial funds towards Heriot Community Broadband on several different occasions, enabling it to be set up initially and then expand to the whole community.

Substantial funds were awarded to the church for repairs and renovations. The panels have given their support to many community projects both large and small, including various groups, the fireworks party, and the new benches that have recently been installed. The two new bus shelters on the A7 were financed by the panels, as was the car park at the bottom of the Nettlingflats road.

Hopefully further projects will come forward soon applying for funds that currently remain unspent.

Past projects



Local improvements

Wind farm funds have been utilised with the help of local members of the community to provide new benches, two bus shelters and refurbish the telephone kiosk for the defibrillator.

Resilience Group

At the start of the covid-19 pandemic, the HCC councillors and Gavin Potter asked for community volunteers to create a resilience group. Leaflets were delivered to all residents in Heriot to detail how to ask for help. Thank you to all the volunteers who performed small tasks of assistance for their neighbours.

Heriot Community Broadband

HCB was set up by the community council, funded by community benefits from the local wind farms, spun off into its own company, and succeeded in providing high speed broadband to the whole community. It has been a major success, has been noted by both the Scottish government and Westminster, and has grown much larger than just Heriot as other communities have joined in. Direct involvement by HCC has now ended with the creation of Borders Online (who continue to provide broadband to Heriot and many other areas in the Borders and South Lanarkshire). Profits of £5000 have been returned to HCC.

We hope you now have some idea of the worthwhile things that service to the community can bring. We also hope that some of you will be encouraged to attend the community council meetings and to come forward to offer your help.

Most of the information we provide to the Community is via our web page <http://www.heriot.info/> or our Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/HERIOTCC/> so please log in or sign up when you have a chance.

Heriot Community Council

John Williams Chair

MacFie Hall Committee

Kate Finlayson Chair

Heriot Wind Farm Panel

Colin Hood Chair

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