

Eskbank & Newbattle Community Council

Minutes of Meeting, 5th March at 18h30. At Edinburgh College, Dalhousie Road

Community Council (CC) attendees; John Webster (Chair), Robin Barclay, Jane Wailes, Brian Wailes, Krissy McKale, Christina Harley, Alan Symon.

Elected Representatives; Cllr Peter Smaill, Cllr John Hackett.

Other attendees ; Margaret Watson, Drew Watson, Gerry Goldwyre, Janet Reid, Andrew Reid, Robin Spinks, C Hadley, Andrew Matheson, Rob Coleman, Joy Godfrey, Luska Jerdin, Michael Aubertel.

1 Apologies & Introductions; John Webster (Chair) advised that 5 Community Councillors and Associates had resigned in the last few days. (B Kerr-Smith, M Davidson, S Goldwyre, L Seath, T Joshi) J Webster was about to resign and suggested he therefore should not chair the meeting. J Webster asked to postpone the meeting as being the best way forward. He emphasised that the 5 had given great service and commitment to the Community and expressed his thanks to them.

A Symon asked the 2 Midlothian Councillors advice on protocol. J Hackett suggested the meeting could proceed but be an informal meeting with no decisions made.

A call was then made for nominations for Chair. Brian Wailes was nominated by A Symon and seconded by R Barclay. B Wailes took the chair, thanked J Webster for his great service and wished the 5 other leavers all the best. J Webster left the meeting.

Apologies were submitted from: M Price.

2 Approval of Minutes & Matters arising; as this was an informal meeting it was agreed no minutes should be approved. Approval of minutes from 6th February meeting is therefore delayed.

3 Active Travel; A Symon reported that the Eskbank Newtongrange cycle path would not now go ahead. The owner of the field had been impossible to contact re purchasing part of the field. Funding of £250k had then been re-allocated to Penicuik Town Hall.

4 Planning Issues; C Harley advised that Place Plans have the potential to empower communities but Scottish Government (SG) need to agree changes for that to happen. Consultation on the process runs to Autumn after which SG will report. ENCC had recently signed the Declaration of Kinlochard which calls on SG to give Local Place Plans weight, make them integral to the development of new Local Development Plans and have a meaningful influence on decision-making, particularly with regard to climate change and the loss of biodiversity. Work on Place Plans is due to commence in 2021. Cllr Hackett warned we need the Place Plan failing which developers can run roughshod and develop anywhere. Midlothian Council is short of Planning staff right now but Cllr Hackett assured MC are committed to having the staff to support residents with this process.

Kippielaw Primary School; Cllr Smaill said there is no planning decision on this to date. He noted the SG Budget has delayed Sheriffhall roundabout improvements by one year or more, which will have a detrimental effect on traffic created by new housing in Midlothian.

Cllr Hackett will host a gathering of PTAs and other groups to discuss MC's Learning Estates Strategy. ENCC will be invited to this. C Harley asked if Kippielaw School is approved does this open floodgates for housing development. Cllr Hackett said no.

5 Communication; R Barclay advised the Newsletter will have to be postponed meantime due to CC resignations. Privacy Policy will be reviewed by the new committee. The Eskbank Newbattle community forum Facebook is controlled by Bill Kerr Smith and will remain with him, it is not an ENCC Facebook page.

R Barclay will investigate setting up an ENCC website and has expertise in this area. B Wailes said this would be good for storing documents and having these available to enquirers.

6 Dalhousie Road; Cllr Hackett advised that he had identified £18k of funding for MC to drop the kerbs of all junctions on both sides of Dalhousie Road. This will be hugely beneficial for wheelchair users. Work starts on 9 March. The entrance to Dalkeith Country Park will also soon be wheelchair friendly. Janet Montgomery suggested funds should be available to improve safe crossing at Eskbank roundabout.

Cllr Hackett noted that £25k pa used to be available to each Councillor for environmental improvements but this has gone and instead Scottish Government have introduced participatory budgeting. Cllr Hackett & Cllr Smaill believe this will be a long slow process and benefit won't be seen for many months or even years.

7 Police; K McKale had today been to a presentation in Penicuik re Police Scotland Contact Assessment Model (CAM). A pilot has run in Glasgow involving assessing each call to 101 and involving not just police in responding but other council departments. A Police Scotland website has a lot of info on this.

The meeting closed with B Wailes reiterating that the Community Councillors who had resigned had done a lot of work for the community and we are all very grateful for their efforts.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm.