



**Minutes of Meeting, 7 pm on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020.  
Held by video-conference due to Covid-19 social distancing restrictions.**

**Community Council (CC) Attendees:** Brian Wailes (Chair), Robin Barclay (Secretary), Mo Price, Jane Wailes, Christina Harley and Joy Godfrey (ENCC Associate and ENCC representative on ERIG)

**Elected Representative:** Cllr. John Hackett

**Midlothian Council CLL Communities Representative:** Alistair McDonald

**Residents:** Jan Anderton, Brian Farrell, Rebecca Lewis, Tom Donaldson

**Apologies:** David McNeill (ENCC Treasurer), Alan Symon (ENCC), Cllr. Peter Smaill, Brian McGuff (Midlothian Council CLL – deputised by A McDonald)).

**Welcome and Apologies.** Brian Wailes (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies. The residents who applied to attend by Zoom were especially welcomed at this our first attempt to extend attendance to residents at videoconference meetings.

1. **Approval of Minutes and Matters Arising.** The notes of the meeting of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2020 (an informal meeting noted rather than minuted) were proposed for adoption by Mo Price and seconded by Christina Harley. No matters arising that were not covered by items on the agenda were considered.

2. **Annual General Meeting.** It was noted that Midlothian Council CLL encouraged through the Federation of Midlothian Community Councils that AGMs should be held by video conference wherever possible, with widespread advertising of those to community residents, and obligations in our constitution committed us to holding an AGM. It was unanimously agreed to hold our AGM prior to our next Ordinary meeting, on Thursday December 3<sup>rd</sup>, and to invite residents to attend (by prior application, sending meeting links by email to those who apply). For security, no links will be posted on any publicly visible social media or website.

It was noted that the current ENCC membership has been depleted and there are several vacancies. Residents who wish to get involved in community affairs are encouraged to stand for election at our AGM. Nomination forms should be lodged as soon

as possible and are available on our website at the [About ENCC](#) page (scroll down) together with other relevant documents. We can be contacted for further information at:

[mailbox@eskbanknewbattlecc.org](mailto:mailbox@eskbanknewbattlecc.org)

3. **Questions submitted by residents.** These concerned proposed “speed-trapping” on roads converging on Eskbank Toll, and the recent consultation by Midlothian Council on possible road closures in relation to aiding cycle travel under the Spaces for People initiative administered by Sustrans as part of the Scottish Government’s Covid-19 resilience initiatives.

Cllr John Hackett addressed the **road closures** question by stating that this was part of the second tranche of funding available under this scheme. He admitted that Midlothian’s response to securing a share of the first tranche of funding had fallen far short of what was desirable, partly because of lack of staffing, engagement, dialogue, understanding and because many of the projects submitted were dismissed because they were classified by Sustrans as permanent when they should be temporary to qualify.

He did not comment on the source of the proposals to close roads other than to say they had been displayed on Midlothian Council’s website for around two months and he understood comment had been called for from communities and other interested parties, before the one-week consultation exercise was publicised. He had anticipated the public response against these road

closures, but they were included at the insistence of Sustrans. That response provided evidence to Sustrans of the unpopularity of those temporary road closure proposals and the funding for that component was returned (it was not clear what else was funded).

A further bid, including more permanent measures such as reduction of speed limits, clearer demarcation of transition from trunk to suburban roads, integrated travel plans, is under negotiation. He also wants to see establishment of forums at which the public can interact and collaborate more directly with the Council on these matters such as exist in East Lothian and the Borders but thinks they will not be constituted in the near future. He is aware of MTRAP as a forum run by the Federation of Midlothian Community Councils.

Information on the **deterrence of speeding** on Dalhousie, Lasswade and Bonnyrigg Roads was provided by resident Brian Farrell who has had professional experience in this and maintains contact with those responsible for enforcement. Brian has also taken several initiatives in this respect.

Having noted as a resident consistent speeding on these roads, and having "not got far" with Midlothian Council's roads department, he contacted Chief Inspector Arron Clinkscales, the Area Commander in Midlothian, who is pleased to engage with communities, and learned that these roads are intended for speed enforcement in the local policing plan, as and when resources permit. Brian explained that that would be by hand-held radar, which can only operate during daylight hours when officers can stop offenders at the roadside (and that needs to be visible, for safety). However Brian also maintains contact with Lothian and Borders Police Safety Camera Unit which is van based, operates by recording licence plates of vehicles (no direct interaction with drivers, who are contacted by post), and can operate at any time of day (within the unit's staff hours), and has got an assurance that they will use some of their flexible commitment to allocate some surveillance in the area, starting with Dalhousie Road, but it is not yet known when that will start.

Brian has also opened a dialogue with Midlothian Council's Roads Safety Officer to link the known identification of Eskbank Toll as an accident cluster location with the speeding on the roads feeding

into it, to look for integrated solutions to mitigation. It was also suggested that developers have not been asked to fund and/or build-in mitigation measures such as clear demarcation of road use change, road narrowing, speed-activated flashing signs, etc and these should be introduced as more permanent measures rather than relying on intermittent policing.

It was noted that Abbey Road has also become a rat-run by drivers avoiding Eskbank Toll. It has many children using it as their route to school or nursery, and traffic mitigation measures may be needed there.

4. **Planning.** We were disappointed that a response to Dandara's submitted alterations to their approved plan that ENCC lodged with Midlothian Council (addressed to Derek Oliver) in mid-April had received no acknowledgement or response. Our chair has submitted a new objection by ENCC to this latest application by Dandara (to alter house styles and numbers) and has received considerable advice on the submission procedure by a new member of the planning staff, which we would like to acknowledge. We are also advised that we should address planning matters to Peter Arnsdorf ([peter.arnsdorf@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:peter.arnsdorf@midlothian.gov.uk)), Planning Manager, or the duty planning officer.

We have come to realise that the site of the Dandara development off Lasswade Road is still not within the ENCC ward since the boundary between ENCC ward and Bonnyrigg & Lasswade (BLCC) ward which was mutually agreed to be changed to run along the A7 (instead of the edge of Larkfield) at least two years ago had still not been implemented by Midlothian Council. We understand that this will come up for approval in November. Meantime BLCC have agreed to also submit an objection to Dandara's alteration of plans.

Disquiet has been expressed over the number of tree management applications submitted recently within the conservation area and, in particular, over applications to fell mature trees. One application to fell a mature oak in Ancrum Road has received a lot of comment by residents who are alarmed by the potential effect on the amenity and character of the area. We will contact the planning department to express our concern after we follow upon applications to get further details.

There will be a planning Development Training meeting on November 27<sup>th</sup>. Brian and Christina committed to attend for ENCC.

5. **Feedback from the Esk River Improvement Group (ERIG) meeting** (Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>). This was attended on behalf of ENCC by Joy Godfrey. Joy reported that the Coal Authority stated that too much land was required for siting of a passive treatment plant for treatment of mineral discharge into the South Esk coming from Junkie's Adit and that it would have to be done with an active treatment plant. The cost of that was considerable and it will not be in place before summer 2022, so another year of contamination affecting fish spawning would have to be endured. Forth River Trust asked if water could be released from reservoirs to dilute contamination during low rainfall periods and Scottish water will investigate this.

The Coal Authority are looking at barrier easement to remove weirs and open up fish habitat upstream of Junkies Audit. They would appreciate any information from the community. Residents are invited to help with this through ENCC.

Joy reported that the sewage overflow outlet near the Sun Inn continues to dump sewage related debris into the South Esk. Scottish Water would like to publicise their "3P" campaign (on what not to flush down toilets) in Bonnyrigg where that sewer originates. ENCC will contact Bonnyrigg Community Council to ask if they can help to publicise this to residents.

Suggestions were made regarding getting schools involved to spread the message via children to their parents. Also, Midlothian Council's social media could relay this. Joy will prepare some materials that could be useful for joint working with Scottish Water / Midlothian Council.

Pertinent questions that Joy submitted to SEPA on microbial monitoring of rivers did not receive satisfactory (or any) answers. ENCC will submit them to SEPA in writing. It was agreed in future to submit questions in advance of ERIG meetings so that answers could be prepared

It was disappointing that Midlothian Council yet again failed to attend the meeting, and that ERIG failed to invite Esk Valley Trust.

Joy stated that Dalkeith Country Park plans to construct a "Go Ape" adventure course however

they may be looking to site it in the area that a fish pass is needed and the community needs to ensure we protect the river's interests. Rebecca Lewis warned that construction work needs to be monitored for possible contamination of the river. We learned that Rebecca is a professional ecologist and, among other activities, will be able soon to teach courses on river fly monitoring to interested volunteers monitoring the Esk.

We have not yet had a minute of this ERIG meeting.

6. **Website.** ENCC would appreciate articles of general interest to the community submitted by residents for publication on the website. It was noted that "report-it" and "request service" sites on Midlothian Council's website could be publicised on ours, with other useful contact information.

7. **Council Membership.** A recruitment drive is needed to get new council members.

8. **AOB.** None

9. **Next Meeting.** The ENCC's next scheduled meeting will be on Thursday November 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7pm, and will be preceded by our AGM