



**Minutes of Meeting, 7 pm on 3rd December 2020.
Held by video-conference due to Covid-19 social distancing restrictions.**

Community Council (CC) Attendees: Brian Wailes (Chair), Robin Barclay (Secretary), David McNeill (Treasurer), Alan Symon Mo Price, Jane Wailes, Christina Harley, Brian Farrell and Joy Godfrey (ENCC Associate and ENCC representative on ERIG)

Elected Representative: Cllr. John Hackett, Cllr. Peter Smaill

Midlothian Council CLL Communities Representative: Paul Johnson

Residents: Gerry Goldwyre, George Mackay, Louise Coleman. Jan Anderton, Tom Donaldson

Apologies: Brian McGuff (Midlothian Council CLL – covered by Paul Johnson).

Welcome and Apologies. Brian Wailes (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended special welcome to Brian Farrell, elected to the community council at the preceding AGM. Robin Barclay and Mo Price were re-appointed. All begin new three-year terms. Residents who had applied to attend by Zoom were welcomed.

1. **Approval of Minutes and Matters Arising.** The minutes of the meeting of November 12th 2020 were proposed for adoption by Jane Wailes and seconded by Christina Harley. No matters arising not covered by items on the agenda were considered.

2. **Police Report.** The report for the previous quarter from the Community Policing Team was submitted by Constable Grant Grey. It was received just prior to the meeting and many attendees had not had an opportunity to read it before the meeting.

We note (from the report) that:

General Crime prevention advice along with domestic/commercial Crime Prevention Surveys can be provided (Free) by speaking with your local Community police officer in person or by contacting your local Community policing team DalkeithCPT@Scotland.pnn.police.uk **01316545524 or 101**

While crime in general had gone down during lockdown, we noted that there had been a recent spate of break-ins to sheds and garages where bicycles were stolen, and to houses (doors or

porches) to obtain vehicle keys for theft of motor vehicles.

As the report states, clearly the dark nights have proven good cover for “ne’er do wells” and residents should ensure that their property & curtilage is as secure as possible. The theft of high value bicycles has increased drastically across the UK & police regularly find that a £5000 mountain bike has been protected by a £5 lock. Obvious deterrents work well & the installation of intruder alarms, security lighting & CCTV go a long way in preventing theft – however these measures *must* be *maintained & operational* to afford any protection. Residents should avail themselves of the aforementioned Crime Prevention Surveys if they need advice.

We should compile Community Policing advice and contact details for publication on our website.

While we recognise that interaction between Community Policing and Community Councils has suffered during lockdown, partly because Chief Inspector Arron Clinkscales, the Area Commander in Midlothian, has ruled against police use of Zoom videoconferencing on grounds of security (preferring Microsoft Teams). Midlothian’s Community Councils are only just getting to grips with using Zoom, and we do hope that we will be able to engage with representatives of the Community Policing team at a meeting by Zoom, soon.

3. **Roads & Paths.** The chair thanked Brian Farrell for his contribution as a resident in getting the 3-month speed enforcement deployment by the East of Scotland Road Safety Unit Camera on Dalhousie Road. Brian, now on the community council, reported that the deployment on Dalhousie Road was having a noticeable effect, and he still hoped for a deployment on Lasswade Road if a speed survey supported that. He also stated that the Scottish Safety Camera Programme had a campaign on “Street Lights Mean 30” and had been supplying bin stickers for wheelie bins (successfully used in Pathhead recently). They would be willing to supply stickers to us if we can get residents to support a campaign. It was unanimously supported that Brian get a supply of these stickers for, initially, distribution to residents of Dalhousie, Bonnyrigg and Lasswade Roads for affixing to left and right sides of blue and grey bins, with distribution to Newbattle and Abbey Roads of any surplus. Community Council volunteers would distribute these to residents. The Safety Camera Unit emphasised that these should not be affixed to fixed street furniture such as lamp posts (we have since heard from Midlothian Council that they will not object to them being affixed to lamp posts). It was also emphasised that bins should not be left out, blocking pavements, any longer than required – but the appearance of these once a week would still be a reminder to drivers of the speed limit in force and hopefully encourage them to observe it.

Alan Symon reported back from ENCC’s subcommittee on Roads and Travel that the residents on that committee who were keen cyclists (for commuting and leisure) were disappointed that their well-presented submissions to Midlothian Council on measures that could have been considered under the recent Covid-19 “Spaces for People” initiative appear to have gone unheeded, and they were becoming increasingly frustrated at the failure of anyone on Midlothian Council to listen to them. Their main priority is the establishment of safe cycle routes from Eskbank and Dalkeith to Edinburgh, to interface with Edinburgh’s cycle infrastructure. It was suggested that the Federation (MFCC) MTRaP subcommittee might be somewhere such initiatives could be submitted “as a start”. Cllr John Hackett said he was keen to establish a group within Midlothian to liaise and support active travel, comparable to groups which operate in East Lothian and Scottish Borders, and to listen to proposals coming from the community and act on

them. For now, Alan will pursue ENCC’s priorities with MTRaP.

4. **Environment.** Our elected representatives confirmed that there were no plans to implement a booking system for rubbish disposal at the Stobhill Centre, and that it was unfortunate that Council Officers had distributed some leaflets stating that a booking system would be introduced, without authorisation from councillors. They also indicated that the Centre at Penicuik would reopen soon but that, because traffic cannot queue there, it might be necessary to introduce some system to resolve that.

Joy Godfrey reported back from the last meeting of the Esk River Improvement Group (ERIG) convened by MSP Colin Beattie. We also receive minutes of these from his Parliamentary Assistant but have been reluctant to publish those ourselves, so are pleased to learn that they are now available publicly on Colin Beattie’s website at <http://www.colinbeattiemsp.org/esk-river-improvement-group>. At that meeting Nathan Critchlow-Watton (NCW), Senior Manager, Water and Land Unit, SEPA gave a presentation on Fish Barriers which speculated on the removal of the weir at Lothian Bridge. We have been contacted by the resident (in ENCC ward) who owns that weir to say that they have never been consulted or contacted in any way by SEPA about this weir and that they would not give permission for it to be removed as they have plans for it. They deplore this lack of consultation so we (ENCC) should make ERIG aware of this situation. There were a number of questions which we want to put to SEPA and Scottish Water but rather than pose them at a meeting we should submit them in advance to give those bodies time to prepare a reply instead of being unable to answer such questions from lack of information when posed unannounced. Robin and Joy should collaborate in preparation of such questions.

Joy stated that Scottish Water do not think they can do anything to mitigate the outflow into the South Esk near the Sun Inn which allows sewage to overflow into the river during periods of heavy rainfall. Since they had asked whether ENCC could ask Bonnyrigg & Lasswade CC to collaborate on their “3Ps” campaign on what not to flush down toilets, they do recognise that the recent increase in new housing to the east of Bonnyrigg is contributing to sewage within that system (despite

new housing employing SuDS ponding for collection of surface water instead of admixing it with sewage).

This (ENCC) community is concerned at the number and extent of sewage releases into the South Esk, and is alarmed by the prospect of further house building which may use this sewage system, possibly a further 300 houses by Cockpen (development plot HS11) and up to 1000 houses by Taylor Wimpey between Hopefield and New Polton Hall. We are concerned that scrutiny of the reports by SEPA on the adequacy of sewage infrastructure, obligatory consultees in planning, are outwith the responsibility far less control of our local authority, Midlothian Council, and are entirely under the control of the Scottish Government, who fund SEPA. Representations on this should therefore be made to the Scottish Government through our MSP, and not to our local authority who have no responsibility for these matters.

We in ENCC are concerned that sewage release into our rivers is unpleasant on many levels but is fundamentally a health hazard, comparable to how coastal bathing waters are deemed unhealthy, by release of potentially dangerous faecal microorganisms into recreational waters. We are concerned that there does not appear to be any monitoring of our river systems for this despite suitable tests being available (they are applied to coastal bathing waters). Such tests could answer directly whether there is cause for concern in our rivers and how much they contribute to contamination of coastal waters (instead of this being speculated on it could be answered directly). We would like to ask SEPA that if they have carried out such tests on river water can they release the results, and if they have not can such a system of tests be implemented.

We would further like information from SEPA and/or Scottish Water on how the capacity of sewage systems for a given load of residential property numbers is calculated, and what measures they will take if house building plans exceed the capacity of existing sewage infrastructure. We would like detailed information on the current capacity of local sewage systems, bearing in mind that these operate across Community Council boundaries so that effects seen in one ward may be the results of activity in a different ward. We should invite representatives of SEPA and Scottish Water to come to talk to us on this once meeting

restrictions are lifted, and discuss this with our neighbouring community councils.

5. **Planning.** There were no new developments of interest at the time of this meeting. The agreement between ENCC and Bonnyrigg & Lasswade CC made over two years ago over the change of boundary (essentially to run along the A7, incorporating land to the west of Eskbank off Lasswade Road, and east of the A7, into the ENCC ward) is finally to be ratified at a special meeting of Midlothian Council on December 15th. This will mean that ENCC is the designated consultee by the planning department when it comes to development in this area (instead of BLCC, as has happened with the recent Dandara development). It was noted that Midlothian's planning officers have been reporting comment by neighbouring community councils on recent development applications.

6. **Communications.** We have funding for replacement of our current noticeboard (which leaks and has a sticking lock) with a better designed water-tight affordable one – and enough to fund two more. We should identify suitable sites for those, preferably in Kippielaw and Newbattle Abbey Crescent, then place an order for them (check that they are of a suitable size). We do not require planning permission for those but will need permission from site owners, and need to check whether they will be wall-affixed or free standing. Midlothian Council's Works Department may be available to undertake setting them up.

ENCC should consider publication of a Newsletter in 2021, maybe to coincide with resumption of normal face-to-face meetings – and use that as part of a recruitment drive for new community councillors to get our numbers up towards our maximum of 15.

7. **AOB.** Since some residents are asking for copies of the weekly planning digest that we get from Midlothian Council (available for anyone to look up on their website's Planning Portal), it should be posted on our website that if they supply their email addresses that can be forwarded to them via a mailing list.

Community Fund disbursement is now assigned to councillors and suitable projects are sought.

8. **Next Meeting.** The ENCC's next scheduled meeting will be on Thursday February 4, 2021 by Zoom. Residents who attend must use video so that they can be recognised.