



Eskbank & Newbattle Community Council

Minutes of Meeting, Wednesday 8th September 2021 at 18h30 at Edinburgh College.

Community Council (CC) attendees: Brian Wailes (Chair), Robin Barclay (Secretary), David McNeill (Treasurer), Christina Harley, Brian Farrell, Andrew Matheson, Joy Godfrey

Midlothian Councillors: Cllr John Hackett, Cllr Peter Smail

Apologies: Mo Price, Alan Symon, Jane Wailes, Rebecca Lewis, Cllr Stuart Mackenzie

Welcome & Apologies: Brian Wailes (Chair) welcomed all at our first full face-to-face meeting since the start of the Covid-19 restrictions in March 2020, back in our old venue of the Board Room at Edinburgh College, and the resumption of monthly meetings after the summer break. Apologies were received as above.

1 Approval of Minutes & Matters arising: the minutes from meeting on 6th June were proposed by Brian Wailes and approved by Brian Farrell and seconded by David McNeill. There were no matters arising not covered in the agenda.

2 Finance: David McNeill (treasurer) reported that our current balance is £4338 and that we had no recent expenditure over the summer, but intentions to spend (new noticeboards and production of a newsletter).

3 Police Report: Brian Wailes spoke to the newly-received Police Report, which is published on our website (Minutes and Agendas section: *Police Report August 2021*). As is often the case we draw attention to good advice offered. Cllr Peter Smail drew our attention to the Activity Summaries of the Community Action Team Midlothian (MCAT) which are produced monthly, and said he would put ENCC down on the distribution list to receive copies. We note that Midlothian Council are considering taking a radical approach to counteracting Fly Tipping and await further information and action.

3 Planning Issues: Robin Barclay reported on interests and actions on planning issues since our last meeting in June.

21/00180/ADV and 21/00290/ADV applications by Greggs and Starbucks for signage on their fast-food sites by Tesco's.

Totem signage: not granted (a condition within the approval of the other signage). (17th June, 2021)

Comment by Midlothian Planning: *The proposed disc sign would be out of keeping with the characteristics of the locality and would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area (i.e. visibility from the adjacent A7). It would be appropriate to utilise a condition to delete the disc sign from the consented signage scheme.*

This was ENCC's objection, which is quoted by the planners.

20/00652/MSC Dandara application: Residential development (approval of matters specified in conditions 2a,d,g,h, ,3 and 4 of planning permission 14/00420/PPP) (amendment

to layout, numbers and house types approved in terms of planning permission 19/00010/MSC)
Granted (6 July 2021)

20/00869/PPP | Application for planning permission in principle for business park (class 4) and associated works | Land At Sheriffhall South Gilmerton Road Dalkeith. (by Mill Architects, agents for James Barnes, Melville Nurseries Ltd)

This is site e32 (MLDP 201) and MIDLOTHIAN LOCAL PLAN 2017: 8. Settlement Statements: 8.2 A7/ A68/ Borders Rail Corridor should be consulted

Strategic Development Area

ENCC and neighbouring community councils' consultations (comment/objection) are published on the portal.

Decision still pending. No new documents on the Portal since May 31, 2021. That latest document refers to drainage via the A7 underpass and comment mentions: *This structure is owned and maintained by the council and while presently unused may form part of a future walking / cycling scheme.*

21/00416/PAC Land At Sheriffhall South Gilmerton Road Dalkeith. Mixed use of Class 4, 5 and 6 Employment Uses with associated Class 3 (Food & Drink) / Sui Generis Drive Thru. (Buccleugh Property)

Pre-application Consultation agreed - Tue 08 Jun 2021.

Members of ENCC were briefed on the plan in a Zoom meeting on Thursday 1st July by agents Chris Gardner (of Progress Planning Consultancy) and Rebecca Malcolm (Orbit Communications). The terms laid down by Midlothian Council for development at Sheriffhall South is that such development will remain within the green belt until complete and only class 4 employment use is deemed suitable. We were not persuaded of the need for either Class 5 and 6 use or a drive-through restaurant on the site and made those views clear in conversation and confirmed in a follow up email to Rebeca Malcolm, who had handled communications with us on this consultation (copied to Midlothian Duty Planning Officer). She also provided follow-up clarification that it was intended that the units would be leased to users and ownership retained by Buccleugh, and that Buccleugh would manage the site (green space, trees, etc). They admitted that they had overlooked the provision of a cycle path from the King's Gate through the site to the A7 as specified in Midlothian Council's conditions (see site e32 (MLDP 201), MIDLOTHIAN LOCAL PLAN 2017: 8. Settlement Statements: 8.2 A7/ A68/ Borders Rail Corridor).

21/00352/DPP Erection of two dwellinghouses; formation of access, car parking and areas of hard standing and associated works. Land 25M South West of Deaflawhill Cottage Dalkeith By Yeoman McAllister Architects for Mr Ian Dickson (application validated 24 June 2021).

The site is within Bonnyrigg and Lasswade CC ward but close to the boundary of ENCC ward (the near neighbour notified, Mr Bill Hunter of Deaflawhill Cottage, is a resident of ENCC ward).

We submitted a detailed objection on 20th July (circulated to ENCC for approval) but since this did not appear on the Portal (and has not, to our meeting date) we submitted a brief objection on line as comment, referring to our detailed objection. The principal objection is that it is within the Newbattle Green Space, an area specifically designated by Midlothian Council to be protected from any development as they realise there will be pressure to build in this area. There are other grounds – that the houses will not be connected to a sewer but

have cesspits, which will drain to the Dalhousie burn (behind) which enters the South Esk nearby, and the line of sight for vehicle access on to the narrow Carrington Road fails standards. Communications from Bill Hunter indicate that Planners have indicated areas of objection to the agents and they have been given until 17th September to reply. Other communications from him indicate that ENCC objection (and Bonnyrigg & Lasswade objection, submitted July 16th) need to be checked by the planners for “sensitivity” before publication on the Portal.

Note: Both ENCC and BLCC “consultations” are now published in full on the Planning Portal.

4 Environment: Joy Godfrey reported on the meeting of ERIG on June 25. At the time of this meeting (September 8th) no minute of that ERIG meeting was in the public domain since it had not been approved at a subsequent meeting following circulation of a draft to attendees. Joy circulated that draft to ENCC members in July (it is not appropriate that ENCC publish the ERIG draft minutes, but the minute has been released since our meeting, following the ERIG meeting of September 13, and can be found here on MSP Colin Beattie’s website: <http://www.colinbeattiemsp.org/esk-river-improvement-group/esk-river-improvement-group-meeting-minutes-11am-25th-june-2021-microsoft-teams>).

Since meetings of ERIG are held quarterly we think that three months is too long to wait for reports on issues which concern the community, and will ask if there is some way a draft minute can be published quicker following meetings of ERIG. Joy states that ENCC needs a way to create more community engagement on this - for example asking the community to help form the questions we (through Joy) ask the ERIG members – and suggested using a Facebook page to do this. The meeting approved that suggestion.

It should also be reported here that ENCC member Rebecca Lewis (who could not attend tonight) is a trainer with the group *Riverfly on the Esk* and has submitted (by email) that Riverfly on the Esk are a local community group that have now joined up with Esk Valley Trust. In a recent public meeting SEPA announced after months of communication with them that they would be willing to work with them to help cover more areas of the Esk. This is a huge step and a bit of a leap of faith for SEPA. The trigger levels have been an issue in the past as well. However Riverfly on the Esk hope to receive them soon. It should be acknowledged that a lot of hard work by members of our community has gone into getting Riverfly on the Esk established and recognised by our local agency. This is a first in Scotland! and I hope our local efforts will open the doorway to help this relationship be a flagship for community groups across Scotland, giving us an enormous amount of potential for river monitoring and data gathering on the state of our rivers. Obviously discussions leading to this point have been sensitive to allow trust to be built between relevant parties allowing for a positive working relationship to form. Note that they now have a Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/riverflyontheesk>.

ENCC has contributed a small amount towards the cost of the training packs which Rebecca uses in Riverfly on the Esk to train new members (she is one of very few recognised approved trainers in Scotland).

5 Communications: Christina Harley reported that we aim to distribute a newsletter across our area of about 2,000 houses. The target date for this is of October 2021 is probably not feasible. Christina will look to form a subcommittee to action this and calls for volunteers (not just from ENCC but from the community) to help and/or submit articles. Our noticeboard at Eskbank Toll has still not been refurbished, nor have any new noticeboards been ordered, and we will follow up for progress on this project. Robin Barclay will tidy up the website (over the winter months) which was used rapidly and extensively after its launch in March 2020 to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic and its local consequences, and now needs revision.

6 Roads and Road Safety: Brian Farrell continues to seek an update on Safety Camera deployment at Lasswade Rd/Dalhousie Rd. Lasswade Rd was rejected again but a case was put forward to reassess based on local circumstances including occupation of property at the Dandara site. Also the speed survey by Midlothian Council's Roads Department on Lasswade Road has still not been carried out, despite a replacement for the faulty recorder having been acquired some time ago. Dalhousie Rd will see a further 3-month deployment and offenders are still being caught. Local residents continue to express concerns on speeding on all roads converging at Eskbank Toll but concerns exist that enforcement alone cannot resolve these issues and some "engineering" solution is required. There has been no progress on any plan for some solution of traffic problems at Eskbank Toll because of staff shortages in Midlothian Council.

7 Active Travel: Andrew Matheson had nothing new to report. However he commented that development on the Salters Rd site will sit on top of the NCN path to Whitecraig. He also asked whether the default 20 mph which was in the Green/SNP cooperation agreement would make it cheaper for the council to introduce 20 mph limits in Midlothian. Cllr Hackett wasn't sure. Cllr Hackett also suggested arranging a meeting between Andrew and Brian F to talk to Russell Imrie and/or Derek Oliver about how to better use community input and knowledge in decisions around road safety and the path network.

8 AOB: There was some discussion of potential guests to invite to speak at our meetings, and Roads and Planning Officers were suggested as possibilities. It was also said that objections should be sent to Scotrail's proposed reduction of the frequency of trains on the Borders line.

9 Date of Next Meeting: the next meeting will be Wednesday 13th October in the Boardroom at Edinburgh College at 6.30pm (to 8:80pm).

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm.