



Minutes of Meeting, Wednesday 10th November 2021 at 18:30 at Edinburgh College.

Community Council (CC) attendees: Brian Wailes (Chair) Alan Symon, (Depute Chair by Zoom), Robin Barclay (Secretary), Mo Price, Christina Harley, Andrew Matheson, Jane Wailes , Joy Godfrey

Midlothian Councillors: Cllr John Hackett, Cllr Peter Smaill, Cllr Stuart Mackenzie

Transcript/minute notes: Luska Jerdin

Apologies: David McNeill (Treasurer), Rebecca Lewis, Brian Farrell

Welcome & Apologies: Brian Wailes (Chair) welcomed all. Apologies were received as above.

1 Approval of Minutes: the minutes from meeting on 13th October were proposed by Mo Price and seconded by Jane Wailes.

2 Matters Arising: Christina Harley requested clarification with regards to Sustrans funding matter included in the October minutes. The issue had been oversubscribed for this funding cycle.

3 Finance: David McNeill had sent his apologies. The account's balance was healthy and there had been no changes in the account since his last report. It was confirmed that Rebecca Lewis had cashed the cheque. Robin Barclay proposed that ENCC apply for the small annual administration grant from Midlothian Council that all of Midlothian's community councils are entitled to (details from CLL were circulated by email). Additional funding for other projects such as purchase of notice boards and production of a newsletter was not required as those will be met by funds already received. It was proposed that David McNeil, treasurer, apply. Brian Wailes informed ENCC that David McNeil planned to order the new notice Board later in November. David McNeil (Treasurer) will apply to Midlothian Council for the Admin grant, and will purchase the notice board.

3 Planning Matters: Robin Barclay had reported extensively on planning issues at the meeting in September (see minutes) and nothing new had arisen on the Planning Portal with regard to those applications. He noted in particular the recent application for two houses by Deaflawhill Cottage (ref: 21/00352/DPP) but understood that the planning department was minded to turn it down as it contravened a number of regulations and policies. However, there were concerns that the site was actively being used for stone cutting (for building materials), a recent activity which may have been intended to enhance its opportunity for development (e.g. as a "brownfield site"), but there was no record of planning permission for that activity. It was agreed that Robin Barclay would contact Bonnyrigg and Lasswade Community Council to suggest that they contact the council with this concern since while neighbouring Deaflawhill Cottage is in ENCC ward, the site itself is in BLCC ward.

At the last meeting the application for a development of 6 houses on Melville Road (ref: 21/00746/DPP) had been discussed (see minutes) with particular concern over access to/from the site between two blind corners and opposite a section of road marked with a central double white line. It

was agreed that while the development itself seemed to be acceptable it was important that particular issue regarding the blind spot is addressed. It was agreed that Robin Barclay would bring ENCC concern to Planning's attention.

Christina Harley reported that she had attended an RSPB COP 26 event on planning and nature. It had raised important issues around conflicts between national and local planning policy and had emphasised for her the importance of NPF4 (National Planning Framework 4). The RSPB have planning officers and can help community groups with planning objections when these are linked to nature and Christina suggested that they may be another support for us.

It was reported that Midlothian's Head of Planning, Peter Arnsdorf, will present to the December meeting of Midlothian Federation of Community Councils (MFCC), and clarification will be sought on what guidance on NPF4 they will provide. There is no date yet for implementation but the Federation meeting may give insight into how we go about developing a Place Plan for this ward. It is required that ENCC work with the community, and processes could be initiated ahead of time to identify priorities for the place plan. Andrew Matheson proposed that ENCC begin to bring together a list of priority projects over the next months, engaging the community on this.

Robin Barclay (ENCC Secretary) will draft a consultation response to the Melville Road plan (ref: 21/00746/DPP) based on Brian Farrell's circulated comments and circulate amongst members, and will contact Bonnyrigg and Lasswade Community Council with regard to the "by Deaflawhill Cottage" planning application to encourage them to ask Planning to enforce removal of unauthorised industrial activity on this site.

4 Roads, Traffic & Road Safety. Brian Farrell had sent his apologies but had a full and detailed report via email outlining the most recent MTRAP report. Alan Symon will attend the next MTRAP meeting although there are no plans which take in our ward. It was reported that there was significant underspend in the budgets and delays in progress which it was suggested was likely to do with the impact of COVID. It was noted that previous intentions to repair pavements on Bonnyrigg Road across from Short's Garage do not now appear to be on any list of intended work. ENCC councillors welcomed the news that speed survey equipment has been installed in Lasswade Road opposite the Dandara entrance with a second set on Bonnyrigg Rd, south of the Bridge. Mo Price asked if it would be possible to ask for someone to attend ENCC to share the data gathered from the speed cameras, including those erected at Abbey Road. It was confirmed by Councillors that this data would be available in the New Year. Brain Wailes suggested a dedicated meeting on road safety when the data was available. It was proposed that Brian Farrell would contact Midlothian Council to invite the relevant officials to a meeting on council plans for Eskbank Roundabout. It was suggested by Councillors that May would be a good time for this as the independent company commissioned to investigate options for the Toll would have reported by then

Jane Wailes asked attending councillors whether Midlothian Council was intending to take forward any specific plans to mitigate the impact of future planned housing development, her interest was whether there were plans that would help the children get to school i.e. new bus routes. Eskbank Toll was a particular concern. John Hackett said that there were very limited engineering options for the Toll and that currently the design helped slow traffic but that there was work ongoing at the Council and he understood that this was a Council priority. He also mentioned that A7 urbanisation had been part of the council's plan for years, but they were waiting on developers contributions to make progress. A general discussion followed on possibilities for diverting or subsidising existing bus routes or establishing a local bus route to support the new housing developments. Brian Farrell should contact Midlothian Council Road officials for a meeting on Road, Traffic and Safety in May next year.

5 Active Travel: Andrew Matheson had in October (see minutes) expressed a desire for more community engagement in Council decisions. Cllr Hackett had suggested arranging a meeting between Andrew and Brian Farrel 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. Andrew also investigated the possible use of an online interactive map to survey the community. He reported that since the last meeting he had spoken to Commonplace– the leading mapping platform experts - who would be happy to work with the ENCC on a 3 month survey and analysis. This would cost the ENCC £2.5K to survey the Eskbank ward, which was costly, beyond the means of ENCC. Andrew suggested that Midlothian Council might wish to support the initiative since for £5k it would be possible to survey all of Midlothian rather than just Eskbank. He also understood from Paul Johnson of CLL that the Scottish Government had a similar scheme called Placebuilder with official support for community groups from the digital planning department - however the deadline for applications was 26th November and it was felt that this was too late to put an application forward. Cllr Hackett offered to raise the idea of Council support for the survey with Council officials. A question was then raised as to whether it was right for ENCC to run the survey, surely there were officials at the Council with whom ENCC could work given that this survey would help the Council with their Place plans. The discussion prompted Christina Harley to raise her concern that ENCC did not appear to be receiving information about central government or local government monies or initiatives in time for ENCC to apply. There should be a contact point or clear process. ENCC members thank Cllrs for their regular attendance as many other community councils do not enjoy support by their elected members, as raised at recent Federation meetings.. It was noted that ENCC had had a liaison link within the Council's CLL previously (Rhona Duncan) but it was understood that after recent revision of CLL only three communities will be directly supported, and ENCC will no longer have an official liaison person who attends ENCC meetings. Joy Godfrey suggested that Colin Beattie MSP's researcher had access to a grants database and may be able to help regarding grant availability. It was also suggested that ENCC might wish to write to local MSPs regarding the lack of support for community councils noting specifically that this was resulting in the local community missing out on funding and opportunities. Christina Harley offered to draft a letter that could be sent to MSP's. Cllr Hackett mentioned that there was a cross party meeting on grant funding and that he would also raise ENCC concerns. It was also suggested that ENCC regularly join other Midlothian community council meetings as a way of gaining intelligence and providing mutual support. However Alan Symon mentioned that this has been explored 6 months ago but nothing has come of it. Christina Harley will draft a letter to MSPs outlining concerns around the lack of Council information on Government funded support for community councils. Cllr Hackett will speak to the cross-party group on Grants noting ENCC concerns.

6 Environment: Brian Wailes had attended the ERIG meeting (13th September) in place of our regular representative Joy Godfrey, and he noted that there was a meeting planned for Monday 18th November that Joy Godfrey would attend. We expect that the draft minutes of ERIG meetings will now be published soon after meetings (on MSP Colin Beattie's Website at <http://www.colinbeattiemsp.org/>) rather than waiting until they are approved at a subsequent meeting, and so they can be discussed at our next ENCC meeting. As outlined in the October minutes it was noted that ENCC member Rebecca Lewis continues with her role locally with the Citizen Science group Riverfly on the Esk and that this work has been very well received. Rebecca Lewis had reported that they are starting to work well with SEPA (see October minutes). Joy Godfrey provided an update on the situation with the Mary Burn and confirmed that she planned to use Facebook to publicise updates in future. There was a meeting of ERIG planned for the coming Monday.

Christina Harley provided an update on the situation with the seepage of raw sewage from the manhole cover on Newbattle Road, close to the junction with Ancrum Road, leading to effluent

running down the road. (See October minutes). There had since been further issues and that it now had been a problem on three occasions this year. She has spoken to Scottish Water who confirmed that there was no current identifiable blockage but that the responsibility rested with Midlothian Council as the issue was a result of intermittently blocked drains which means that rain water was not flowing. Midlothian Council had attended and cleared the drains which has helped.

7 Communications: Christina Harley reported that the communications subgroup had met (Jane W and Christina) and they had agreed format changes to the Newsletter. The target date for a newsletter was Spring 2022. Meantime we should proceed with the purchase of the noticeboard to be sited at Newbattle Abbey Crescent (David McNeill would action). David McNeill will send Christina pictures of the noticeboard he intended buy and Robin Barclay would share his key (with Alan Symon) to allow access for the refurbishment of the existing noticeboard on Eskbank Road at Eskbank Toll. David McNeill should send photos of the Noticeboard to be purchased to Christina. Robin to provide his key to Alan to allow for the dismount and refurbishment of the existing (leaking) Noticeboard.

8 AOB: Robin Barclay proposed Wednesday 12th January for the date of the AGM and Christina Harley seconded. Andrew and Rebecca had been co-opted and Robin Barclay advised that they fill in applications to be formally elected at the AGM. Further new members should be sought. There could be a total of 15 Community Council members – if new applications (not confirmation of co-opted members) exceeded this total then there would need to be elections. It was decided that ENCC should publicise the AGM widely and do a recruitment drive over the next months. Christina Harley suggested that the dates of the meetings and minutes (added to the website) should be publicised via ENCC's email circulation list as was practiced before Covid restrictions. David Wailes proposed that ENCC also make more use of the Eskbank Community Forum Facebook page. It was agreed that short ENCC approved text should be posted with links to minutes advertising dates of future meetings and especially seeking new council members.

Mo Price stated concerns relating to unrestricted parking in Dalkeith which meant it was difficult to park at the Doctor's Surgery.

It was also noted that there has been a Police incident at Lasswade Road involving 2 police cars. A continued message needs to circulate of ensuring keys were kept away from front doors.

9 Date of Next Meeting: the next meeting will be Wednesday 8th December at Edinburgh College at 6.30pm (to 8:30pm).

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.