



Eskbank & Newbattle Community Council

Draft Minutes of Meeting, Thursday 9th June at 18:30 (for approval at next ENCC meeting)

Boardroom, Edinburgh College Midlothian Campus

Community Council (CC) attendees: Brian Wailes (Chair), Jane Wailes, Mo Price, Brian Farrell, Christina Harley, Joy Godfrey, Sally Smith

Community Police: Sgt Michele Lindsay.

Elected Representatives: Cllr Stuart Mackenzie, Cllr Peter Smaill

Residents: Bill Hunter, Bill Swire, Gladys Kidd, Elizabeth Macauley

Apologies: Robin Barclay (secretary), David McNeill (Treasurer), Alan Symon (Vice Chair), Andrew Matheson, Rebecca Lewis, Cllr Bryan Pottinger, PC Martinez, PC McShane.

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

1 Approval of Minutes: the minutes from the meeting on 12 June were proposed by Brian Farrell and seconded by Mo Price.

2 Matters Arising: None not covered in matters on the agenda.

3 Newbattle Tree Felling: ENCC received reports of unauthorised tree works and felling of around 4 mature trees on a plot adjacent to Old Golf House over the Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend. Residents challenged the contractors who downed tools and fled. Bill Swire (local resident) gave a summary of situation highlighting there was no planning consent (required for Newbattle Conservation Area) and working practices were unsafe with a large branch narrowly missing his car. Planning Enforcement Officer had emailed just prior to the meeting confirming that a substantial investigation was now ongoing and highlighted the potential fines and remedial action required. Local residents are concerned there may be a future planning application for the site. Cllr Smaill informed the meeting that when the plot concerned was sold by the Ancrum Estate the title includes a restrictive covenant that prohibits any building on the plot. The land has recently been sold and the current ownership is not known to local residents at this time with previous owners not disclosing the new name of the new owner. ENCC asked residents to keep us informed and reassured that ENCC would support residents view on future applications for the site. It was noted that Midlothian Council had been very quickly to act on the Monday following the bank holiday weekend.

4 Communications: Christina and Jane circulated the pre-production newsletter for CC to review and comment. Christina has received quotes from Eskbank based Graphic Impressions and sought opinion on the paper quality and finish with examples of these also circulated. The proposed quantity to be printed is 2500 which will allow for additional copies to be placed at Dalkeith Library

and other local gathering points. The production run should be ready within a week of ordering, it is hoped this can be achieved for delivery end of June. Volunteers for assisting with distribution to be sought, hopefully Covid resilience groups will help. It was agreed to purchase the silk finish on the lighter weight paper. Brian W to take responsibility for distribution.

5 Police Report: A written report was received from PC Juan Martinez prior to the meeting (published on our website) but neither PC Martinez nor his colleague PC Tracy McShane, our community policing officers, was available to present the report in person. However, Sgt Michele Lindsay (Midlothian East Side Communities team) attended. Brian Wales shared the Police Report and commended the low crime rate. Sgt Lindsay gave insight into some of the terminology in the report. Brian Farrell raised the increase in graffiti in the pedestrian access from Tesco to the College/Station. The affected wall is the rear boundary of K&I created through compulsory purchase when the railway was reinstated. Cllr McKenzie and Smaill were tasked with trying to find a solution with the owner to enable cleaning or overpainting. There was a suggestion that a commission mural may be a way to prevent further graffiti as happened in Mayfield but again this needs agreement between Council and owner. Sgt Lindsay will inform community officers and endeavour to give attention to the area. Sgt Lindsay left the meeting after this discussion.

6 Finance: David McNeill stated through Brian Wailes that we had a balance of £2817.14. Brian and David have still not resolved the issue of online access to the accounts. Bank statements are now available online but the quest for full online banking remains. Brian Farrell advised that the Treasurers Account with Bank of Scotland offers online access and is aimed at charity and non-profit organisations. Bank of Scotland retain an office in Dalkeith which would also be convenient. Sally York suggested that Starling Bank an online operation may also be worth investigating.

7 Environment: The minutes of the last ERIG meeting were circulated on 7 June. Brian Wailes attended on behalf of ENCC. There was a discussion on the frustration that there seemed little action via ERIG with questions often being left unanswered or not being answered to the satisfaction of ENCC. Some felt that the CSO sewage discharges are one of the biggest impacts for local people and that Scottish Water (SW) should be planning to remove CSO's from use with the aid of developer contributions to improve the network but that isn't the public position of SW. Joy has been impressed by some of the actions looking at the wider river catchment, and praised ERIG as a place where the various bodies report what they are doing. Forth River Trust have funding for a new project looking at the health of the Esks over the next 3 years. Bill Hunter (local resident) advised that all new housing developments now require a sewage pumping station – information gained from the nearby HS11 site. Litter around the college campus and station had previously been raised by local residents. Brian Farrell has been liaising with Nick Croft at Edinburgh College, new bins have been installed around the campus increasing provision and litter picking has been enhanced. There have been 2 awareness campaigns sent to all attendees at the campus. Initial results are positive with marked reduction in litter not only around the station and campus but also to/from the nearby food retail premises. ScotRail have confirmed they have ordered an additional bin for the station area. On a visit to check the area Brian F noted litter build up with the Tesco footprint which was reported and quickly cleared.

8 Roads/Road Safety: No update. The Council Network Speed Review wasn't presented to Midlothian Council as anticipated in May and is now expected to be included for the meeting on 28 June. Brian Farrell is still to arrange a meeting with Sgt Lindsay to discuss the speed survey results.

Following escalation of complaints about public transport information cases and bus shelters to Dr Grace Vickers, council officers have now had "frank words" with contractor Commutaports to complete repairs which have been outstanding for at least 8 months.

In autumn MTRaP will be looking for suggestions for the continued Residential Streets Surfacing Programme. It is proposed that ENCC will put forward the 1970's build estates in the ward for consideration by Roads Officers as road surfacing in these areas are in poor condition.

9 Active Travel: There is no update. Brian Farrell attended the last MTRaP (Midlothian Traffic, Roads and Paths) meeting. The next meeting on 27 June is hoped to give an update on the results of the Active Travel Consultation and production of the new Active Travel Strategy. Attention was drawn to Edinburgh where 4 Active Travel projects have gone to public consultation in addition to construction of the City Centre East West Link being underway. Meanwhile it was noted that Midlothian will take 4 years to add multi-user paths to less than 2 miles of the A7 between Lothianbridge viaduct and Gilmerton Road. Much of the now expired strategy relied upon paths within new development and doesn't provide direct links between Towns and/or to Edinburgh. Multi user paths also lead to conflict walking/cycling conflicts once use increases.

Resident Bill Swire enquired about the path through the woods between Newbattle Abbey Crescent and Dalhousie Road being improved. As the land is privately owned, this would be the responsibility of the landowner (Ancrum Estate).

10 Planning: There are no new applications of note. Following the council election, the Local Review Body will recommence with the first meeting on 20 June. It is anticipated the following will be considered

- 1) The refusal of permission for the two-house development by Deaflawhill. ENCC resident Bill Hunter who owns the property next to the applicant site was in attendance and confirmed the industrial use on part of the site is now subject to planning enforcement. Bill expressed his thanks for ENCC support over the planning application – the site sitting in BLCC. The site has been subject to various planning applications which have all been refused.
- 2) The refusal of retrospective planning permission for the tree house on the roadside boundary with Waverley Road.

Councillor McKenzie confirmed that LRB site visits have resumed after being suspended due to Covid Pandemic.

The Sheriffhall South application is on the agenda to be considered at the forthcoming planning meeting on 14 June. Planning Officers are recommending Approval including the drive thru despite this being outwith the local plan and planning policy. Proposed litter picking condition for a stretch of Gilmerton Road is felt by ENCC to be inadequate. If approved the approx. 70-year-old "plantation" trees will be removed which will fundamentally change the character of the area and contrary to environmental policies within local plan. Comparison made with the adjacent RBS Data Centre which is hidden behind mature woodland. The ENCC objection to be circulated to Ward Councillors prior to meeting.

Local residents have raised concerns over a dog day care and boarding operating from a residential address with associated noise issues. Residents to be direct to Midlothian Council contact centre. Depending upon the number of animals it may not require planning consent.

There has been no (retrospective) planning application as yet by Miller Homes for the works between Newbattle Abbey Crescent and the A7 as part of their agreement with Scottish Water.

AOB: Mo Price informed the meeting the boundary wall on Abbey Road (former St David's High wall) was in poor condition which was a concern to residents. Possibly the wall is the responsibility of the factor for the housing development and their responsibility.

Resident Gladys Kidd asked if ENCC would agree to place in the noticeboard a leaflet advertising the local "Andy's Man Club" – a nationwide Men's Mental Health Charity. ENCC voted to display the leaflet.

As a resident of Newbattle Abbey Crescent, Gladys also highlighted the lack of public transport links to Dalkeith from the estate. The Borders Bus to/from Edinburgh is now 2 hourly and only links to Eskbank Toll – Cllr McKenzie will enquire with council officers to see if a solution is possible.

11 Date of Next Meeting: the next meeting will be Thursday 8 September at 6:30 pm in the Boardroom of Edinburgh College. Meetings are open and residents may attend. We encourage residents to raise points before meetings by contacting us by email or our website form so that we can seek answers to give at the meeting. We will not meet in July or August so the next scheduled meeting will be on the second Thursday in September.