



## Minutes of Meeting, Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December at 18:30

### Boardroom, Edinburgh College Midlothian Campus

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**Community Council (CC) attendees:** Brian Wailes (Chair), Brian Farrell (Depute Chair), Robin Barclay (Secretary), David McNeill (Treasurer), Christina Harley, Jane Wailes, Gordon Chisholm, Rebecca Lewis, Barbara Mackie, Joy Godfrey (Associate)

**Elected Representatives:** Cllrs Stuart Mackenzie, Bryan Pottinger, Peter Smaill

**MLC Representative:** Paul Johnson (CLL)

**Police Scotland (Dalkeith):** Sgt Michele Lindsay

**Residents:** none

**Apologies:** Mo Price (ENCC), Sally York (Associate),

**Welcome & Apologies:** The regular monthly meeting followed on immediately after ENCC's AGM which had started at 18:30 and lasted approximately 1 hour. Brian Wailes (Chair) welcomed all. Apologies were received as above.

**1 Approval of Minutes:** the draft minutes from the November meeting were proposed by Brian Farrell and seconded by David McNeill. There were no amendments or matters arising.

**2 Police Report:** Sgt Lindsay spoke to the quarterly report which had been submitted in writing by PC J Martinez and published on the ENCC website.

On the problem with noisy drivers apparently doing circuits on local roads she advised that residents should report these (via 101 calls) so that at least these can be logged and the extent of the problem noted, and action planned (if not taken immediately). She advised that there had been recent interactions with local farmers and landowners over rural crime, security and police initiatives. She also reiterated that householders should be vigilant over house and outbuilding security, especially in the dark nights and in the run-up to Christmas when gift shopping may be stored. She highlighted antisocial behaviour on buses and actions taken. Residents should report bad traffic behaviour. ENCC advised her that the police should consult the road crossing (lollipop) wardens on traffic behaviour around Eskbank Toll, especially on the best times to observe repeat offenders. Replying to a question she said Dalkeith Police Station desk is manned "most of the time" within office hours.

**3 Elected representatives' reports:** As a new initiative Brian Wailes (ENCC Chair) asked if our MLC ward Councillors, Cllrs Stuart Mackenzie, Bryan Pottinger, Peter Smaill, all present, would like a regular slot at our meetings to report/raise anything they wanted to bring to our attention, rather than commenting on matters we raise. He then invited them to present.

Peter Smail warned that the forthcoming difficulties in setting the Council's budget in light of a predicted shortfall of around £11 million in funding from what is deemed necessary to maintain current commitments will probably require drastic action to be taken.

Stuart Mackenzie largely agreed, and said that as well as the inflationary pressures in pay and materials there had been, e.g. long-term large scale systemic problems in remedial work where an overhaul of job reporting, standards, etc were required. He also said that the road speed consultation had been completed and that proposals for adoption of 20 mph zones will soon come before the council and were likely to be approved. ENCC councillors said that some footpaths (e.g. parts of Bonnyrigg Road) were too narrow and would not pass current standards if proposed. ENCC also stated that the Council's Contact Centre needs to be made more responsive. Examples were clogging-up and failure of on-line brown bin opt-in payments, and complaint phone calls about repeated missed bin collections not dealt with. Cllr Mackenzie stated that contact is now digital by default but phone contact should still work as required. Measures to improve contacts are ongoing. There seems to be uncertainty over who is responsible for signing off on completion of matters raised.

Bryan Pottinger also expressed concern over audit of work completed by subcontractors. He also stated that people experiencing difficulties due to the cost-of-living crisis need face-to-face consultations with, e.g. welfare rights officers and other competent advisors, rather than interacting on line. Venues such as libraries and warm rooms may be set up by the Cost-of-Living Crisis Group to host such advice, and those need publicity.

**4 Planning:** The question of whether the placement of the SUDS pond on Dandara's southern development site off Lasswade complies with regulations has not been addressed. A planning officer who was by arrangement supposed to have met with an ENCC member immediately prior to this meeting to discuss various matters did not turn up. The walking routes from this site to Lasswade Road are still of concern – no pavement connection or road crossing have been provided. In response to a telephone question the East of Scotland Land Manager has stated that high environmental/biodiversity standards are now expected of new developments, so Dandara might, for example, incorporate "hedgehog highways" for garden/boundary interconnectivity (as they have done at some of their developments elsewhere in the UK). Since he was present, Paul Johnson was asked whether CLL and/or Planning had progressed plans to advise and train Community Councils in Midlothian on the preparation of Place Plans for submission to Midlothian's new Local Plan under the new NPF4 planning regulations about to be implemented. Paul said he had no new information on this but will look into it. Robin Barclay stated that there had been no new planning applications within ENCC ward notified in recent weeks that were of any concern (the weekly Midlothian application lists received by email are circulated to all ENCC members). ENCC members expressed a wish to invite Peter Arnsdorf, MLC Head of Planning, to address one of our meetings soon. Suggestions for topics/questions should be sent by ENCC members to Robin (at the Secretary email address) to compile a list which could be submitted to him.

**5 Environment:** New comments by Joy Godfrey on ERIG meetings are included in our annual summary in our AGM 2022 report. The minutes of ERIG meetings are published on MSP Colin Beattie's personal website ( <https://www.colinbeattiemsp.org/esk-river-improvement-group> ). Gordon Chisholm has pursued Scottish Water who have effected repair (hardcore/gravel) of the riverside path between Newbattle Abbey Crescent and the A7 by the Sun Inn which was eroded by the recent sewage leak outflow there. It is not clear whether such work is complete. Christina Harley reports that sewage is still leaking down Newbattle Road and that Scottish Water said they were waiting on traffic management to enable their access to make repairs. The expected traffic management and repairs did not take place, and Scottish Water will not clarify what is happening.

**6 Traffic/Roads/Road-Safety/Active-Travel:** Brian Farrell stated that within the MTRAP residential streets programme he has given notice that within the Newbattle Abbey Crescent/Weir Crescent/Dundas Crescent developments the road surfaces are still the original 1970s provision and urgently require attention/renewal. This should be considered but Brian does not expect all would be done simultaneously but a priority order should be drawn up.

White line road markings require attention in multiple locations – maybe especially on the road by Newbattle Abbey College.

Schools crossing lights need to be fixed (has been reported many times to no effect) – the crossing (Lollipop) patrols have also expressed their concerns (and about bad driver behaviour). New schools signage is to be rolled out across Midlothian, which may remedy this.

Brian Farrell reports that many bus shelters are in bad condition, mucky and graffitied. He suggests that their maintenance should be given to a contractor, as in Edinburgh. It is noted that a culprit responsible for most of the graffiti on bus shelters locally had been caught and will be prosecuted.

We are still waiting on the active travel survey by MLC to be published. On core paths, opinion was expressed that paths should help develop routes to where people want to go, such as e.g. the town centre, railway station, parks, instead of a sometimes-interlinking set of paths that may take you from one development to another but not to such centres.

There was some discussion about paths giving access to Ironmills Park, especially restoration of the path to the bridge which is closed because of landslip. This has been raised many times within ENCC and in meetings between ENCC and representatives of Midlothian Council in the years since the landslip eroded that path and the bridge was closed to deny access to the path for health & safety reasons (and MLC liability). No solutions or prospect of a solution were proposed.

**7 Communications:** The ENCC noticeboards displays were updated before this meeting. It was noted that while the new noticeboard by Newbattle Abbey Crescent is in good condition and easy to operate, the older noticeboard by Eskbank Toll leaks badly and its lock is difficult to operate – and its replacement with one similar to the one by Newbattle Abbey Crescent should be considered.

**8 AOB:** David McNeill asked Cllr Mackenzie to expedite payment of the promised contribution by MLC towards the purchase of a second defibrillator, for location at Newbattle Abbey Crescent. David has had positive discussion of linking it to continuous power sources at control boxes for street lighting circuits. Those have been identified. Christina Harley reports that the volunteer who was supposed to provide anticipated training (on behalf of St John's Ambulance) failed to notify a date for this and suggests that it be rearranged in the new year and possibly include residents interested in the Newbattle Abbey Crescent device as well as the device at Eskbank Trading.

**9 Date of Next Meeting:** the next meeting will be Thursday 9th February 2023 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.