



Eskbank & Newbattle Community Council Annual General Meeting

Minutes of meeting, 3rd December 2020 at 19:00.

Remote attendance by Zoom (due to current Coronavirus pandemic regulations)

1. Apologies and Introductions

Community Council Attendees: Mo Price, Robin Barclay (Secretary), Jane Wailes, Brian Wailes (Chair). Christina Harley, Alan Symon, Joy Godfrey (Associate)

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

Other Attendees:, Brian Farrell (ENCC candidate nominee), Paul Johnson (Midlothian Council-CLL liaison), Jerry Goldwyre, George Mackay, Louise Coleman, Jan Anderton, Tom Donaldson

Apologies: David McNeill (Treasurer)

Brian Wailes, Chair, opened proceedings by welcoming all attendees and thanking all for attending.

2. Minutes of 2019 AGM

The minutes from the previous AGM were reviewed and proposed for adoption by Christina Harley, Seconded by Alan Symon.

3. Chair's Review of 2020

ENCC membership – Several long-serving members of ENCC, including officers, resigned in early March 2020. Krissy McKale resigned in October. The chair thanked them for their contribution and hoped that they would continue to support the work of ENCC and bring forward matters that required attention. Following this, new officials were required, and Brian Wailes was proposed as Chair (accepted), David McNeill continued as Treasurer, and Robin Barclay was proposed as Secretary (accepted).

Coronavirus Resilience – Following these resignations, leaving a depleted council of 8 members, we were swiftly overtaken later in March by the coronavirus (Covid-19) infection crisis and the introduction of emergency measures. The social distancing aspects meant that physical meetings of community councils were suspended until further notice, and any informal face-to-face meetings of councillors could not take place. Since Midlothian Council delegated many aspects of the Covid-19 resilience response to community councils, the main business of ENCC since late March was to engage with that process, and we began to meet remotely at least weekly using Zoom via the internet, and with frequent email exchanges. These initial meetings were informal (March to May) (see our [minutes for this period](#)) but formal meetings were resumed in June which included our

elected representatives and Council-CLL liaison, and were extended to residents (on request, by application) by November.

Volunteers were called for from ENCC-ward residents for the central Midlothian helpline organised by CLL (the CLL liaison for ENCC ward was Sharon Dalgleish) and 32 came forward.

Joy Godfrey began a process of organising neighbourhoods (approximately streetwise) across the ward as local Facebook Groups, which process ENCC endorsed and supported her with (by leafleting, etc) such that the entire ward was covered by these (except for Kippielaw where group managers could not be found). Additionally, some neighbourhoods had already spontaneously organised WhatsApp groups. Other instances of help were provided directly by individual neighbours and relatives for those known by them to require it. Thus, while much informal help was provided, we do not know of any instance where any disadvantaged resident in our ward required help from the central CLL source, and none of our volunteers were called out (information from feedback from CLL).

A campaign to acquire TV sets for all residents of Highbank Care Home, Bonnyrigg Road (isolated in their rooms) with assistance from Esk Valley Rotary Club and generous donations by ward residents resulted in provision of suitable TVs for all who required one, and books and craft materials generously donated by local Tesco's and WH Smith branches were also provided. Books, puzzles, cards, and DVDs provided by residents were also donated to Glenesk Sheltered Housing.

The Website for ENCC (<https://www.eskbanknewbattlecc.org/>) was started in March by Robin Barclay and was an asset for disseminating information of value from many sources to our community during this time. We continue to have our lives affected by Coronavirus and we will continue to post any relevant information we receive on our website.

River Esk Pollution - we supported Joy Godfrey in her monitoring of ongoing pollution in the Esk and for representing ENCC at MSP Colin Beattie's Esk River Improvement Group (ERIG). Joy started 2020 as a resident volunteer on our Coronavirus resilience subcommittee and later agreed to become an Associate of ENCC to represent ENCC on ERIG.

Roads and Active Travel – we have established links with neighbouring community councils through regularly attending Midlothian Federation of Community Councils (MFCC) meetings via Zoom, to discuss and promote ideas. We formed an ENCC subcommittee chaired by Alan Symon to discuss active travel, especially cycling, which includes resident volunteers, and ENCC are represented on MFCC's MTRAP committee (Midlothian Tracks, Roads and Pathways) by Alan Symon. We were disappointed that Midlothian Council did not secure similar funding as neighbouring local authorities for active travel initiatives under Coronavirus initiatives.

Planning – We note that the long-standing agreement from some years back with our neighbours in Bonnyrigg & Lasswade Community Council (BLCC) to redraw our mutual boundary such that it runs along the A7 (Eskbank bypass) from Lothian Bridge to Sheriffhall roundabout has still not been ratified by Midlothian Council (but we anticipate that it will be imminently). This has resulted in housing development by Dandara west of Eskbank being assigned to BLCC as statutory consultee, and we are grateful to BLCC in collaborating with us in relevant comment to Planning.

Communications – Robin started the website for ENCC (as mentioned above) in March which will be our main means of communication with ENCC ward residents.

We have no responsibility for the Facebook group started by Bill Kerr Smith for ENCC whose management was retained by him personally following his resignation from ENCC. We note that it is now retitled as ENCF (F for "Forum"). We will not start any other Facebook group to represent ENCC. Many of us are members of ENCF and so can post to it personally as individuals, so we may individually occasionally comment there or share links to posts on the ENCC website, but we stress that formal exchange of communications with ENCC should be by email or our website contact form.

We have funds for new and replacement noticeboards which will get spent on that in due course. We also intend to produce further newsletters for distribution door-to-door but that has been postponed.

Finances – considerable delays (from months before the Coronavirus crisis) with the Royal Bank in getting account signatories assigned to our current ENCC nominated members resulted in the funds allocated to each community council by Midlothian Council (via receipt from Scot Gov) not being advanced to the ENCC account in March. The account signatories were eventually assigned in May, but since we did not need to call on such funds, we have not had to return any residue.

Our Treasurer (David McNeill) is away on business and unable to join us tonight, but has pre-submitted a report (below)

In summary, it has been an unusual and very busy year for ENCC with the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic and ensuing restrictions and resilience responses and has presented a very steep learning curve especially for new inexperienced community councillors. The Chair paid tribute to the exceptional activities of all involved and thanked members for their contributions.

3. Treasurer's Report

The treasurer pre-submitted a report on the current state of ENCC finances. The full report is included at the end of these minutes.

4. Appointment of Members and Election of Officers.

Paul Johnson, Midlothian Council Communities Team (CLL), performed the function of Returning Officer for the appointment of members and election of officers.

There were 7 vacancies on the Community Council (out of 15 places) and no co-opted members to be put forward for ratification as full elected members. Two members, Mo Davidson and Robin Barclay had served their full term of 3 years. Both agreed to put themselves forward for re-election. A nomination had been submitted for one of the vacancies. As there were more vacancies than nominations, nominee Brian Farrell was accepted and duly elected for a three-year term, and Mo Davidson and Robin Barclay were also confirmed as duly elected for new three-year terms.

Nominations were then sought from the new council for one-year Office Bearers for 2021, as follows:

- Chair: Nomination: Brian Wailes. Prop. Robin Barclay, Sec. Christina Harley
- Secretary: Nomination: Robin Barclay. Prop. Alan Symon, Sec. Jane Wailes
- Vice-Chair: Nomination: Alan Symon Prop. Robin Barclay, Sec. Mo Davidson.
- Treasurer: Nomination: David McNeil. Prop. Alan Symon, Sec. Christina Harley (in his absence – his willingness had been pre-notified to Brian Wailes, but it needs to be confirmed)

As there were no other nominations, all candidates for offices were elected.

5. Constitutional Amendment

Paul Johnson commented that a previous proposal to establish the possibility of designating up to two Community Councillor positions as “Digital Community Councillors” (who could contribute by email if unable to regularly attend meetings) had been somewhat overridden by circumstances, and that Midlothian Council now regarded as legal the participation of community councillors through remote attendance at meetings via the internet, and that their votes were binding

6. Next AGM

It was agreed that the December timing of the AGM was not ideal and it was proposed that the AGM should aim to be held earlier, ideally in October. This proposal was carried unanimously.

7. Meeting Concluded

There being no further business to conclude, the AGM was closed at 19:28.

ESKBANK AND NEWBATTLE COMMUNITY COUNCIL
DETAILS OF BANK ACCOUNT TRANSACTIONS
FROM DECEMBER 2019 TO DECEMBER 2020

BALANCE OF ACCOUNT DECEMBER 2019	£2667.78
MONEY RECEIVED FROM MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL 26/3/2020	£940.00
BALANCE OF ACCOUNT AS OF END MARCH 2020	£3116.05
PAYMENT TO CHURCH OFFICE FOR COVID 19 RESILIENCE LEAFLET 01/06/2020	£54.50
BALANCE OF ACCOUNT AS OF 01/06/2020	£3061.55
PAYMENT TO ONE DALKEITH FOR LITTER PICK EQU (TESCO GRANT)	£393.77
BALANCE OF ACCOUNT AS OF 01/07/2020	£2667.78
OUTSTANDING PAYMENT FOR ENCC WEB PAGE TO MR R BARCLAY OF	£87.54
WHEN THIS PAYMENT IS MADE THE BALANCE OF THE ENCC BANK ACCOUNT CR	£2580.24

DUE TO COVID 19 RESTRICTIONS THESE ACCOUNTS HAVE NOT BEEN VERIFIED BUT
HOPE TO HAVE THIS DONE BY JANUARY 2021 MEETING

DAVID R G MCNEILL TREASURER 02/12/2020