

**Minutes of Tweedsmuir Community Council, at Tweedsmuir
Village Hall, on Thursday, November 5 (7.30pm)**

Present: Gavin Parker (chairman), Paul Greaves (secretary), Brian Bushell (treasurer), councillors Lesley Mason, Sarah Northcott and Kaitlyn Roper, Keith Cockburn, Scottish Borders Councillor, and 7 members of the public.

The minutes of the council's meeting on October 8 were approved

01.11 APOLOGIES

Police representative Nicola Craig

02.11 MATTERS ARISING

Broughton School: The secretary reported that the council had written to the school's parent association, offering its support in their attempts to pressure the SBC to replace two teachers who had left. Ms Sue Hope, of the association, had written back, thanking the TCC for its support, and the secretary read out Ms Hope's letter. Councillor Lesley Mason added that she would be attending the next association meeting and would report back on progress to the TCC.

Broadband: Regarding the Scottish Government's recent assertion - via an email from broadband co-ordinator Duncan Nisbet - that Tweedsmuir would not, in all probability, be part of the BT roll-out of superfast broadband, SBC councillor Catriona Bhatia had been in touch with the secretary to say additional funds had now been released for broadband. Ms Bhatia had emailed the secretary to inform the TCC that: "The allocation of these new funds is being discussed at CoSLA. At the last meeting of CoSLA I attended, the case for more investment in rural areas was made strongly by myself and the leader of the Highland Council. The options through Community Broadband are not ideal and put rural areas at a significant disadvantage." She had since passed on Mr Nisbet's email to SBC councillors David Parker and Michael Cook, who are SBC's representatives on the leaders' group at CoSLA.

Minutes: The secretary reported that a copy of the council's October 8 minutes had been sent to Claire Malster, of SBC. These included a commitment by councillors that they would abide by the SBC code of conduct for community councillors, thereby meeting a requirement sought by SBC before any monies due to the TCC could be transferred.

03.11 RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Chief co-ordinator Andrew Mason reported that the questionnaire due to be sent out to the community, asking for ways residents could help with the scheme, was now ready to be distributed. A number of volunteers had come forward to help with this task, and it was hoped that this could be completed by the time of the TCC's next meeting in December.

04.11 NATIONAL PARK/WILD LAND MEETING

The secretary reported that Mr Rob Armstrong, of Denholm, had been in touch asking if the TCC would consider supporting a campaign to make the southern Borders, including the

Tweedsmuir area, into a national park. The overwhelming view of the meeting was that this was an excellent idea, in that it would protect it from harmful development and be a major boost for tourism. The secretary agreed to contact Mr Armstrong to see if he would agree to make a presentation to the TCC's next meeting in December.

Resident Rod Sibbald then revealed details of a Wild Land Area seminar, which he had attended on behalf of the TCC at the village hall last month.

The seminar gathered together landowners, statutory bodies and local communities to discuss the newly appointed Talla - Hartfell Wild Land Area. The new area of 9,355 ha stretches between Tweedsmuir, Talla, Megget, Grey Mare's Tail and Hart Fell. The meeting, hosted by Scottish Natural Heritage and the Southern Upland Partnership, detailed the core principles of an assigned Wild Land Area. These are: perceived naturalness, ruggedness, remoteness and lack of human artefacts. Although the land is not a statutory designation and, as such, carries no legal protection, it is land which has been identified as having special qualities and any planning issues have to pass more rigorous requirements. The assignation of a wild land area is a very positive step for local tourism. The Wild Land Area is open to everyone to enjoy and encourages visitors. It is a valuable tourism marketing tool for local business. The issue of wind farms and a WLA was discussed and it was pointed out that in some circumstances wind farms may be allowed within or bordering a WLA (depending upon the perceived impact on the Wild Land Area). The meeting concluded on a positive note by discussing the potential benefits that a WLA can bring to the region. The Southern Upland Partnership agreed to continue the discussion with all stakeholders to explore what needs to be done in the future to realise the benefits.

The chairman thanked Rod for his attendance.

05.11 GRITTING/SNOW CLEARING

The secretary reported that the TCC had received an email from Mr David Richardson, of SBC, in response to the council's concerns that the area had been downgraded to a tertiary route for gritting and snow clearing. In the email Mr Richardson says that the road from the A701 to the crossroads will now be considered a primary route and that a gritting bin will be provided for Kirk Road. However, any other roads in the village will not now be secondary routes, as they were before, and "will only be treated when extended weather conditions persist, all primary routes have been treated, resources have been committed to treat secondary routes, and resources have become available."

Although welcoming the new status of the road off the A701 and the provision of the gritting bin, the meeting expressed its disappointment that it appeared the village would not be served by the SBC regarding gritting/snow clearing as it had been in previous years.

The secretary asked SBC councillor Keith Cockburn whether Scottish Water had been notified of this change as two of the roads led to reservoirs. Resident Christine Parker also pointed out that, in a severe winter, this would mean children in parts of the village might miss long periods of schooling.

The secretary also reported that a local landowner, Mr Ralph Glatt, had offered his snow-clearing services to help the village this winter, and councillor Cockburn suggested Mr Glatt should contact the council with this offer. Councillor Cockburn also revealed that another

area in the Scottish Borders had bought a gritter/snow plough, and that this might be a way forward for Tweedsmuir.

It was agreed that the TCC should meet SBC representatives to discuss the situation and see what alternative steps could be taken. The meeting could also include Mr Glatt and a representative of the area that had bought the snow-clearing machinery. Councillor Cockburn agreed to arrange this meeting. It was also agreed that the secretary should write a letter in response to Mr Richardson's email, expressing the council's disappointment at the council's approach to gritting/snow clearing in the village this winter. .

06.11 TREASURER'S REPORT/MICROGRANTS

The treasurer reported that he had already received £180 from SBC for the last financial year, and expected the remaining monies due from the council for this year now that Claire Malster, of SBC, had received the minutes of the October meeting (see matters arising). A cheque for £1000 from SSE had been received for the issue of microgrants, and £200 had been paid out in a microgrant to Tweedsmuir Community Company for the purchase of two Portaloo's. £215 had also been paid for the hire of the village hall for meetings since the formation of the Tweedsmuir Community Council in January.

07.11 COMMUNICATION/WEBSITE

Councillor Sarah Northcott revealed there had been 20 responses to the website survey distributed to Tweedsmuir residents. The survey, a copy of which is attached, asked for ideas on how to develop the website, and the responses ranged from using the site to promote a group fuel scheme to enabling car sharing. Sarah said that a sub-committee would now be set up to take this forward. The chairman thanked Sarah for all her hard work in progressing this project.

08.11 POLICE REPORT

Local police representative Nicola Craig was unable to attend but sent a police report, which is attached.

09.11 SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Councillor Cockburn said that he thought the closure of Neidpath corner, Peebles, had gone as well as any road closure could, but recognised that more money needed to be spent on roads in the SBC area. To that end, the councillor said £1m was being diverted from other areas of the council into the roads budget. Keith also brought the meeting's attention to the next Tweed Forum meeting, which will be held on 2 December at the council offices on Rosetta Road, Peebles, starting at 6pm.

10.11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Remembrance concert The chairman reported that Legion Scotland had invited two members of the community council to its Remembrance concert on 11 November at the Old Parish Church, Peebles. The chairman and treasurer volunteered to attend.

Apprenticeship scheme The chairman gave details of a new apprenticeship scheme run by SSE. Councillor Kaitlyn Roper agreed to take a brochure about the scheme to Peebles High School.

Blood donors Anyone wishing to give blood can do so at Biggar Municipal Hall, on Tuesday, 17 November, 2pm – 3.45pm and 5.15pm – 7.30pm. www.scotblood.co.uk

Help to Adapt The chairman revealed details of a new Scottish Government initiative to help people over 60 live independently at home for longer. It offers a Scottish Government loan based on the equity in your house. If you would like expert assistance in planning and undertaking adaptations to your home, see www.helptoadaptscotland.co.uk or call 0330 303 7801.

Tweed Green Councillor Mason said she had been contacted by eco group Tweed Green, who had offered to run a workshop in the village if enough people expressed an interest. The workshop aims to motivate and support individuals to make progress with cutting their carbon footprints and to help people talk constructively about climate change. Should anyone want to express an interest in this, please contact the secretary - pgreavesalex@gmail.com or ring 01899880265

Information evening The chairman revealed that the SSE was holding a meeting to launch its new Clyde Wind Farm Local Community Fund at Broughton Village Hall on Monday, 23 November, at 7pm.

Bus service The meeting's attention was brought to the fact that no-one from the village had used the final two bus services to Edinburgh, which formed part of a pilot scheme to gauge demand for such a service over the summer, run by the Upper Tweed Community Council. There had been four Saturday services to Edinburgh in all, and the first two had been well subscribed by villagers. The secretary described the lack of numbers for the final two bus journeys as disappointing but hoped that any future bus scheme would continue to include Tweedsmuir.

The next meeting of the Tweedsmuir Community Council is at Tweedsmuir Village Hall, on December 3, 7.30pm.