

Tweedsmuir Community Council

Minutes of Tweedsmuir Community Council (TCC) on Thursday 5th August 2021 (7.00pm), Tweedsmuir Village Hall and via Zoom

Present: Gavin Parker (GP, Chairman), Brian Bushell (BB), Treasurer and Vice Chairman), Debbie Cullen (Secretary), Lesley Mason (LM), Mark Cullen (MC), Ralph Glatt Heather Anderson (HA, Scottish Borders Councillor) and Eric Small (ES, Scottish Borders Councillor). Guest - Donald Stewart (DS), Business Manager Biggar Medical Practice, and 10 members of the public

01.08 WELCOME and APOLOGIES

02.08 MATTERS ARISING

- **DC** reported that a laptop to support the work of the TCC Secretary had been purchased. TCC related business will be transferred to the new laptop and the new TCC email address will be operational following the September meeting.
- Correction from last month – Electricity services have been connected at the Crook but work is ongoing to connect a water supply.

03.08 BIGGAR MEDICAL PRACTICE

Donald Stewart provided a general update on the practice. He reported that staffing levels had been impacted by COVID due to self isolation requirements and long term sickness affecting a GP following COVID infection. The triage system, introduced prior to COVID to help manage increasing demand on services, had become more important during the pandemic in the context of reduced staffing levels and reduced availability of appointment slots due to infection control measures. Since restrictions have eased demand for appointments has increased with patients presenting with new and/or chronic problems. The practice has also, on occasion, been required to lend assistance (staff), to other practices within Lanarkshire who have experienced severe staffing issues. At the present time it is not therefore possible to offer pre-booked appointments. **LM** outlined the concerns expressed by some local residents who require Community Transport to access same day appointments. There is a concern that patients with a medical need may be reluctant to take up an appointment, unsure about the availability of transport and/or the impact of short notice arrangements on volunteers. **DS** was assured that only those with genuine need were able to register with and access the scheme.

DS acknowledged the issues. He reported that where a patient needed time to arrange transport, if the GP was made aware of the issue, wherever possible flexibility would be offered. **DS** undertook to provide Ann Welsh, Co-ordinator, Upper Tweed Community Drivers, with his number. In the event of a problem (about this or any other issue relating to the practice) he was happy to be contacted and would try to work with those concerned to reach a solution.

A number of questions were then raised by local residents.

- What steps were being taken to increase staffing levels in the practice?
DS reported that staffing levels at Biggar were higher than the regional average and the ratio of GP's to patients is above the National average.
- When would restrictions e.g. access to waiting area etc. be eased within the Practice?
DS reported that no guidance had been received regarding the relaxing of social distancing etc within practices. Restrictions would not be eased until such guidance was received.
- When would the minor injuries unit at Kello be re-opened?
DS reported that the GP's had expressed their willingness to provide their support should the unit re-open and was optimistic that this could happen shortly.

DS reported however, that it was less likely the treatment room facilities would be reinstated in the foreseeable future.

GP thanked **DS** for attending the meeting and **LM** expressed her appreciation for the prompt response by the Practice to her initial query. **DS** informed he would be happy to attend the meeting periodically to provide an update and/or if requested to respond to any specific issues.

04.08 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- Oliver Field: **GP** reported that only those residents considered by Scottish Woodlands to be directly affected by the proposed planting at Oliver Field have been consulted regarding the proposal. When contacted, the agents Mark Hamilton Landscape services on behalf of Scottish Woodlands and Heathstanes Estate informed that following this initial consultation a wider consultation within the community was planned. This has now been scheduled for 2nd September 2021 (details to follow). A representative of the agents will also attend the TCC meeting on that date.
- Quiltburn: **GP** reported that the proposal for forestry planting at Quiltburn had now been entered onto the Planning Register without any process of consultation with the community.

A discussion took place regarding the planning process for new forestry developments with concerns being raised regarding the lack of transparency in the planning application process, difficulties in obtaining information about planned developments and lack of any statutory requirement for developers to inform or consult with local communities.

Particular concerns were expressed regarding the impact of further planting on local biodiversity, infrastructure, leisure access and the paucity of community benefit. It was also felt that no consideration was being given to the cumulative effect of individual planting schemes on the wider area.

GP reported on the consultation planned re: Talla-Wild Land Area Project. Attached is a link to the Position Statement regarding Forestry recently published by the Scottish Uplands Partnership sup.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Position-Statement-on-Forestry-in-South-Scotland-Final.pdf

Actions:

- **HA & TCC** to write to Mairi McAllan, MSP - Minister for Environment, Biodiversity and Land Reform (including forestry) outlining TCC's concerns **TCC** to copy SBC.
- **TCC** to write to the mandatory consultees for forestry planning (Historic Environment Scotland, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Scottish Natural Heritage) requesting information about the criteria used to approve/reject forestry planning applications
- **TCC** to circulate/publicise information regarding the consultation event re: Oliver Field planting.

05.08 TREASURER'S REPORT

Copy attached.

BB reported on information received from Glenkerie Wind Farm Community Fund Panel. The maximum amount that a Community Council can award as a micro-grant to a community group has been increased from £250 to £500. The maximum that can be awarded to an individual remains at £250.

06.08 MICROGRANT APPLICATIONS

None received.

GP reported that SSE wish to progress exploring the establishment of an Endowment Fund to manage the funds in the future and are seeking 2 nominations from the Community to work with colleagues from the Broughton and Skirling areas to take this forward.

Action:

Any member of the community interested in participating, please contact **GP**. Some knowledge/understanding of Endowment Funds would be advantageous.

08.08 POLICE REPORT

Copy of July's report attached.

08.08 SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

ES reported that the main issue of concern locally was the ongoing closure of the public toilets in Broughton. (They also remain closed in West Linton). SBC continue to maintain that the cost of cleaning necessary to comply with COVID requirements prohibitive. They are prepared to consider working with local businesses to fund a 'Comfort scheme' but this has yet to be agreed. **HA** supported the need to ensure facilities were re-opened asap and particularly before the start of the new school term given the proximity of the toilets to the school and the public health impact of the closure.

HA reported that SBC had been taking external advice re:access issues in relation to Hillhall, the outcome of which should be known late August/early September 2021.

Action:

- **ES & HA** to continue to raise issue of toilet closures with SBC
- **LM** to write to SBC regarding toilet closures

09.08 CROOK INN

Following successful grant applications to a number of funders, building work has commenced on The Wee Crook". Progress is being made on the outdoor space, particularly the 'formal garden' with a group of volunteers.

10.08 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

LM reported on -

- the final project plan for the gardens have been received from the Landscape Architect.
- community gardening is currently taking place on Tuesday evenings 7-8.30pm all welcome.
- applications being made to a variety of funding sources to source funding for a range of activities e.g. hard landscaping, tools, planting etc.
- discussions with Broughton shop. Tweedsmuir Village hall will be open on Fridays from 9 to 10 am to allow collection of the "Friday Bakery Treats" from Broughton Village Store Outreach service. Orders must be placed with the shop by 2pm on Thursdays (01899 830456).
Any resident unable to access the village hall can request a delivery to their door. Attached is a flyer with a price list for the foods available.
- A Community coffee morning is planned for September 3rd, details to follow.
- the progress in development of the online eco museum, local volunteers are still needed, please contact **LM** if interested

11.08 LIBRARY SERVICES

At the last meeting it was noted that the new Mobile Library service route no longer included a stop in Tweedsmuir.

In response to an enquiry to the Library Service about this, **LM** was informed that the Library Service had contacted registered users in the community – by email, consulting on the proposed change and received no response. However, no-one locally seemed aware of such a communication.

Action:

LM to feedback to the Library Service regarding the apparent breakdown in communication.

12.08 CONSULTATIONS

- SBC – Review of Community Council Scheme in the Borders.

Action:

DC to draft response for circulation to councillors

- SEPA – Management of Flood Risk - [SEPA's consultation hub](#).

13.08 FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- September 2nd 2021 - Consultation re: Oliver Field. Details to follow.
- September 3rd 2021 – Community coffee morning. Details to follow.
- Tuesdays – Community Gardening at the Crook 7-8.30pm. All welcome, please bring your own tools and gloves, midge repellent advisable.

14.08 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Road closures – A701 Romano Bridge. Thursday 12th April 10-11.30
Tour O The Borders. Sunday 5th September. A701 Broughton to Tweedsmuir 6.40 am – 11.00 am.

**Next meeting of the Tweedsmuir Community Council will take
place on Thursday 2nd September 2021 (7.00pm)
Tweedsmuir Village Hall & Via Zoom**

WWW.TWEEDSMUIRCOMMUNITYCOUNCIL.ORG.UK **CONTACT:** DEBBIE.CULLEN@ME.COM

Chair: Gavin Parker Treasurer: Brian Bushell Secretary: Debbie Cullen

Other Councillors: Lesley Mason; Mark Cullen; Ralph Glatt;

Resilient Communities contact Lesley Kirkwood