

Tweedsmuir Community Council

Minutes of the meeting of Tweedsmuir Community Council (TCC) Thursday 1st June 2023 at 7pm, Tweedsmuir Village Hall & via ZOOM

Present: Gavin Parker (GP, Chair), Mark Cullen (Treasurer), Debbie Cullen (Secretary) Frances Leckie (FL), Carolynn Hoy (CH), Drummond Begg (SBC Councillor) and 7 members of the public.

Richard Callaghan, Outreach Development Adviser, Peebles & District Citizens Advice Bureau joined the meeting and spoke about his role – to make CAB more accessible, through local delivery, across the west of the Borders. He is responsible for an area stretching from Walkerburn to West Linton.

Monthly advice 'surgeries' have recently commenced in Skirling, Broughton. This service will be extended to Tweedsmuir, on the first Thursday of the month, from September, at Tweedsmuir Village Hall 10:00 – 11:00 am. Ideally appointments should be booked in advance, by contacting the Peebles office on 01721 721722, or via Adminuser@peeblescab.casonline.org.uk. However, anyone needing to access the service urgently can 'drop in'. Residents for Tweedsmuir are also welcome to book in to one of the 'surgeries' in other localities if this is more convenient.

Details of the services being offered across the locality to follow.

01.06 Welcome and Apologies

No apologies received.

02.06 Minutes of the last meeting

Agreed as correct.

03.06 Matters arising not covered in the agenda

- Resilient Communities Lead
DC reported that Lesley Kirkwood (**LK**) had confirmed her willingness to continue as a co-opted member of the Community Council as Resilient Communities coordinator. **LK** to establish, and feedback to the council on the costs associated with moving the Defibrillator from the Village Hall to the Wee Crook.
- Signage on A710 adjacent to the Crook – Pedestrians crossing.
SBC have responded to inform that they will check this request against their eligibility criteria for signage. If it does, this will be actioned but there is likely to be quite a lengthy wait for installation.

04.06 Planning applications

A lengthy discussion took place regarding the planning proposals relating to the proposals for the Wind Farm developments at Oliver Forest (temporary meteorological mast, see agenda for link) and Menzion (temporary lattice mast, see agenda for link). The main points arising from the discussion were –

- The Community Council recognises the significant contribution wind generated energy can make to achieving carbon neutral energy production.

- The current planning process considers each planning application on an individual basis and in doing so fails to consider the cumulative effect of multiple windfarms within a locality. Tweedsmuir is a small geographically dispersed community. There are already 2 established windfarms within the Community Council boundary with a 3rd under construction. Scoping is now underway for two further substantial Wind Farms. This level of windfarm development is felt to be disproportionate for a community the size of Tweedsmuir.
- The windfarm developments are in addition to the significant amount of Commercial Forestry established and currently being expanded in Tweedsmuir, despite local objections.
- Tweedsmuir's recently reviewed and updated Community Action Plan highlighted that residents really value the beauty of the landscape and stressed the importance of retaining the unique, unspoilt and special landscape of the area. The progressive 'industrialisation' of our community through siting of Wind Farms and the operation of Commercial Forestry is significantly impacting upon community life and the community's ability to remain a vibrant and sustainable community.
- Another priority highlighted by residents through the Community Action Plan was the need to develop Tweedsmuir as a place to visit to experience the unique environment, heritage, and culture. Plans are under underway to develop small scale sustainable tourism, contributing to the sustainability of the community. The siting of the proposed additional windfarms, on the main access route into Tweedsmuir and potential overlooking the iconic Talla Reservoir, will have a significant visual impact across the community with a significant negative impact on the landscape for local people and upon our ability to attract visitors to the area.

Given the above, it was agreed that TCC would wish to register objections to siting of the masts.

- The proposal to for a telecommunications mast at Talla (see agenda for link) was discussed and an objection will be submitted to SBC.
TCC have subsequently received several objections to this proposal on the grounds of significant visual impact for residents, visitors, and potential visitors on an iconic view of Talla Reservoir, in an area of natural beauty, associated with numerous heritage features and site of special scientific interest. TCC to respond to SBC with these objections. This application is at the pre-planning stage and consequently comments from the public cannot be lodged via the SBC Planning Portal but can be forwarded to Julia Marshall at j.marshall@whptelecons.com
- No comments have been received or were made re: the application for an extension to the dwelling house at Hearthstanes – see agenda for link.

It was noted that SBC usually invites comments from TCC on planning applications impacting the area and TCC respond where appropriate. TCC are happy to receive comments/objections from members of the community as it can inform TCC's response. However, if individuals wish to comment they should also do so via the SBC planning portal as TCC's comments/objection will only be considered as a single response, however many residents may be behind it.

Actions:

- **DC** to draft and submit responses to the planning applications to SBC.

05.06 Treasurer's Report

MC had circulated his report to councillors before the meeting - follow links to view -

<https://www.tweedsmuircommunitycouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/April-2023-Finance-Report.pdf>

<https://www.tweedsmuircommunitycouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/May-2023-Finance-Report.pdf>

As the format of the document had been revised, **MC** gave a brief overview of the current financial position.

Prior to the meeting, **MC** had also circulated a document highlighting issues requiring consideration at this meeting.

The outcomes of the discussion are summarised below.

SBC Funding

- The documentation needed to trigger release of the grant payment from SBC has been submitted.
- It was agreed that going forward the Village Hall Committee Hall would raise an invoice to TCC for hire costs quarterly to avoid an annual 'carry over' deficit.
- The Zoom licence is currently used by a number of Community Groups including TCC, Tweedsmuir Community Company, Village Hall and associated hires, Upper Tweeds Community News committee etc. It was agreed that TCC will continue to fund the zoom licence with a review of usage before the end of the financial year.

SSE Clyde Borders Funding

MC has contacted the Fund Manager Colin McMillan who has agreed to action a payment of the next tranche of grant funding (£2,300)

It was agreed -

- that the grant funding from SBC would be 'split' equally between the Youth Bursary grants and Microgrants. This apportionment to be subject to ongoing review.
- the limit for Youth Bursary application would be set at £200 (formerly £250) and £250 for microgrants. This reflected the fact that Youth Bursary awards benefit individuals whereas microgrants are generally for activities that support a number of individuals or the wider community.

Ventient Glenkerie Wind Farm

MC has contacted Colin Dempster, Fund Manager regarding the process for drawing down the next allocation of funds and is to speak with Colin on his return from holiday.

Other comments

- It was agreed that to ensure transparency, wherever possible grant applications should be considered and minuted at TCC meetings.
- Young people should be encouraged to submit their won application for a Youth Bursary award, with the support of an adult when required.

- It was agreed that the requirement for Grant recipients to provide feedback regarding the benefit derived from the award should be reinstated and shared within the community e.g. via meeting minutes etc. as a way of trying to publicise the grants and encourage applications for grants from across the community.

Actions:

- **MC** to inform SSE regarding initial allocation of funds between the Youth Bursary and Microgrant Funds.
- **MC** to contact Colin Dempster on Colin's return from leave re: drawing down grant funding for the current year.
- **LM** and **DC** to try and make information about eligibility criteria and application processes clearer and more accessible.

06.06 Grant applications

Application for £250 to SSE Youth Bursary to attend an outdoor activity camp. Grant for £200 (the revised upper limit). **Approved**, subject to receipt of grant funding from SSE.

07.06 Police report

Links to monthly report and a letter explaining restructuring of Community Policing Teams –

<https://www.tweedsmuircommunitycouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Tweeddale-East-and-West-May-2023.pdf>

<https://www.tweedsmuircommunitycouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Community-Structure-Scottish-Borders.docx>

08.06 Scottish Borders Councillors' report

DB reported that –

- Despite enquiries he had been unable to update on the issues of access at Hillhouse.
- A review of the floods in the Upper Tweed is underway. Anyone with queries about this please contact **DB**.
- **GP** asked whether **DB** still wished to receive information about resident's experiences of Social Care provision. **DB** confirmed he would. **DB** also reported on discussions taking place with NHS South Lanarkshire re: Boundary issues relating to Health Provision. **LM** queried whether these discussions included supporting the case for reprovision of larger/more suitable Health Centre premises in Biggar. **DB** reported that whilst aware of this matter, issues of Health Service provision lie with the Scottish Government not with SBC and therefore support should be sought from SNP members rather than SBC councillors.

09.06 Crook Inn

Actions are still being taken to secure an operator. It was agreed that this be removed as a standing agenda item. But could be reinstated as/when the need arose.

Update: The Wee Crook will be open during the summer starting on Friday 9th June – Friday – Sunday 10:00am – 3pm for breakfast rolls, soups, scones and traybakes, tea, coffee and cold drinks.

10.06 Community Development update

LM reported that the grant funding for her post as Community Development Officer has now come to an end. The activities associated with this post have therefore halted although discussions are taking place regarding future plans/sources of funding.

11.06 Community Action Plan

A meeting, involving members of the TCC and members of the community, took place last week to identify and agree priorities arising from the CAP. The outcomes of this meeting to follow.

MC sought clarity regarding 'ownership' of the CAP and the TCC's plan for delivery.

MC expressed concern that as the Commissioning organisation TCC has an obligation to the community to ensure delivery and as a community councillor he was not assured that there was a robust plan to deliver. **GP** informed that delivery should be regarded as a joint venture between the TCC and Tweedsmuir Community Company and one of the objectives of last week's meeting was to identify which community organisation would lead/be responsible for the delivery of which elements of the plan.

MC expressed concerns regarding Tweedsmuir Community Company's ability to deliver given the uncertainty around funding for the position identified in the CAP as needed to take delivery forward. As a result of this discussion, to give clarity, it was agreed that the Community Company would write to TCC making explicit it's intention to work collaboratively with TCC in the delivery of the CAP. It was agreed that **MC** would take the lead for the CAP within the Community Council and Tweedsmuir Community Company would identify a Board member with this role and to liaise with TCC via **MC**.

12.06 Biggar Health Fair

LM reported this is taking place on 26th August 2023 involving local representatives from Health, Social Care, voluntary and charitable sectors. A list of attendees has been circulated to community councillors.

Action:

Suggestions for other possible attendees should be forwarded to **LM** asap.

13.06 Consultations

- Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership (CPP)- see agenda for link.
- Draft Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028 – see agenda for link.

14.06 Items for information

Starlink, the low-level satellite broadband provider, is currently offering set up to those living in rural areas at a reduced rate. Information can be found on the Starlink website. *Note: This offer has now been withdrawn.*

15.06 Forthcoming Events

<https://www.tweedsmuir.scot/events/>

Saturday 24th June: Ride to the Sun, cycle event. Many cyclists can be anticipated in the area between 10-12pm.

16.06 Any other business

None raised.

17.06 Date of next meeting

Please note - There is no meeting in July. The next meeting is therefore Thursday 3rd August 2023

**Please forward any agenda items to The Secretary –
tweedsmuirsecretary@outlook.com**

www.tweedsmuircommunitycouncil.org.uk Contact: Tweedsmuirsecretary@outlook.com

Chair: Gavin Parker Treasurer: Mark Cullen Secretary: Debbie Cullen

Other Councillors: Frances Leckie, Carolynn Hoy, Lesley Mason

Resilient Communities contact: Lesley Kirkwood