

Tweedsmuir Community Council

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

Present:

Lesley Mason (LM, Vice Chair), Mark Cullen (MC, Treasurer), Debbie Cullen (DC, Secretary), Frances Leckie (FL), Carolynn Hoy (CH), Viv Thomson (VT) Scottish Borders Councillor and 2 members of the public.

Ruth Semple and Rebecca Todd - Statkraft UK Ltd joined the meeting and presented their latest plans for Oliver Forest Windfarm and provided an update on the next in person public exhibitions, scheduled to take place over 5 (Tweedsmuir Village Hall) and 6 March (Broughton Village Hall).

They reported on changes to the design of the windfarm following feedback received following the initial consultation. The main changes being –

- a reduction in the number of turbines from 10 to 7.
- a reduction in the tip height from 250m to 200m.
- amendments to the siting of the turbines to reduce the visual impact.

Members of the community will be receiving an invitation to the public exhibition and the TCC would encourage residents to attend to view the updated plans, including visualisations of the turbines etc.

A discussion took place regarding the likely options for connecting this windfarm to the grid (pylons etc.) if permission for the windfarm is granted. Ruth Semple reported there is likely be a significant time lag (a number of years) between planning decisions being made regarding the windfarm and a planning application in relation to connection of the windfarm to the grid. TCC expressed concern that it was very difficult for the community to consider the impact of the windfarm without any information regarding the 'connecting' infrastructure, which has greater potential impact than the turbines. The community is therefore being asked to comment on these proposals based on incomplete information.

LM enquired whether any of the comments made during the consultation regarding creating access routes across the proposed site had been considered.

Ruth Simple reported that this would be raised although any decision to formalise access beyond that provided through the Scottish Outdoor Access Code would rest with the landowner who would need to balance any formal access with their commercial forestry and windfarm operations.

TCC subsequently agreed, if it were possible, it would be helpful to produce a simplified map of the area, indicating the location and size of the existing and planned windfarms to enable consideration of the Oliver Forest development in the context of other existing/planned developments.

Actions:

- **DC** to write to Mairi McAllen, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity Scotland, copied to Christine Grahame, MSP expressing concern regarding the disconnect between planning for windfarms and planning for connectivity to the grid and the negative impact this has upon meaningful community consultation.
- **DC & LM** to try and develop a map of current and planned windfarms across Tweedsmuir.

01.02 Welcome and Apologies

None received.

02.02 Minutes of the last meeting

Accepted as correct.

03.02 Matters arising not covered in the agenda

Access across Oliver Field Forest. Following the last meeting TCC contacted Hearthstones Estate regarding access associated with the establishment of the above recently designated area of commercial forestry. A response had been received from the land owner, stating that all the obligations regarding access as set out in the original planning proposals had been met. It was agreed that TCC would review the documentation and in the event of any further queries contact Hearthstones Estate.

04.02 Planning applications

- Badlieu Forest Management Plan & Certification Scoping Process – information previously circulated to the community via email.

After discussion it was agreed that TCC would respond requesting that consideration be given to establishing walking routes within the Forest area, ideally supported by waymarking and interpretation.

- Pre- application consultation for the installation of 4NO. proposed photovoltaic (PV) arrays at 22539 GLENLOD HILL, BY GLENKERIE WINDFARM, TWEEDSMUIR, BIGGAR, ML12 6QL NGR: E:308075, N:628221.

The purpose of this application is to provide a power source to a recently approved base station. No comments made.

Action:

DC to draft response re: Badlieu proposals.

05.02 Treasurer's Report

Links to the reports for Dec '23 and Jan '24 can be found at -
<https://www.tweedsmuircommunitycouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Dec-2023-Finance-Report.pdf>
<https://www.tweedsmuircommunitycouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Jan-2024-Finance-Report.pdf>

Microgrants

- **MC** presented a summary sheet summarising the micro-grants awarded over the last year.
- **LM** presented - a letter to be circulated to all young people in the community under 18 years old explaining the purpose of the SSE Youth Bursary Fund and encouraging them to make an application.
- It was agreed that the information re: making a grant application given on the Windfarm and TCC website is not always easy to access/follow and making the process more transparent could help increase uptake.

LM presented a draft flow chart outlining the process for making an application for a Community Grant.

- A discussion took place regarding the 'fixed' costs associated with running the Community Council and the need to ensure these are covered by TCC's SBC Grant. These include - web hosting, zoom license, admin costs e.g. stationary.

It was agreed that payment for the defibrillator pads should be made from the SBC Grant and not funded from a Community Windfarm grant. The costs recently covered by a Ventient windfarm grant will therefore be transferred back to this fund from the SBC Grant.

- Spending of up to £100 was agreed to cover the cost of printing additional copies of the Community Action Plan.
- **MC** queried the process for auditing the TCC's end of year financial accounts as it had been reported that the person who had previously undertaken this task no longer wished to do so.

Actions:

- **MC** to 'convert' draft grant application flowchart into sharable document.
- **MC** to modify the SSE Youth Bursary Form – removing unnecessary info.
- **DC** as TCC rep on the Ventient windfarm panel to discuss with Niome Lucjan, Community Fund Advisor, the potential for clarifying/simplifying the information regarding Community Grants on Ventient website.
- **MC** to transfer funding for defibrillator pads from the SBC Grant to the Ventient windfarm fund.
- **LM** to make informal enquiries regarding finding someone to audit TCC's end of year accounts.

06.02 Grant applications

It was agreed that going forward, the names of applicants would not be included in the minutes.

- Application for £77.50 to Ventient Microgrant Fund to support attendance at SCOTO Conference 29/2 & 1/3 2024. **Approved.**

07.02 Police report

The report from December '23 can be viewed at -

<https://www.tweedsmuircommunitycouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Tweeddale-East-and-West-December-2023.docx>

08.02 Scottish Borders Councillors' report

- **VT** reported on the ongoing need to report potholes and other road issues via 'fix my street'. Anyone experiencing specific issues in relation to road conditions that they have raised with SBC but not received a response should contact Viv.
- The 'Small Schemes' programme is ongoing but running behind schedule.
- The budget setting process for the coming year is underway as the council tries to identify how the shortfall in funding can best be managed.
- The Community purchase of Broughton Knowle Wood is progressing well.
- The Crook site has been designated as a 5G hub, work to establish this is underway.
- An invitation has been extended by SBC to TCC representatives to a meeting to discuss local planning processes later this month.

MC to attend. **VT** to feedback that, if possible, given the timing and location attendance should also be offered via zoom.

- **MC** raised concerns about the number of acronyms, with no glossary contained in the recent SBC documents sent for consultation see item 12.02.

09.02 Community Action Plan

LM reported having commenced in post as the Community Development Manager. This is a fixed term post for 2 days/week over 40 weeks, funded by an SSE Community Grant for one year. The focus of the role is to take forward the delivery of the Community Action Plan.

10.02 Destination Tweed

LM reported that regular meetings are taking place between key partners. The section of the path through Tweedsmuir is under discussion with the landowners and it is hoped to have a final agreed proposal for the route in the next month. Funding is in place so once the route agreed and the necessary permissions secured work should commence towards the end of the year.

11.02 Community Council Website

Discussions are ongoing to secure a web developer to support the work required to update the site.

12.02 Consultations

- **Scottish Government's Democracy Matters** – info circulated with the agenda.
- **Draft Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) and Delivery Plan for the Scottish Borders.** Feedback is being sought on the draft strategy and delivery plan setting out the long-term shared vision and proposed actions for improving energy efficiency and decarbonising heat in buildings across the local authority area. The draft documents and appendices are available to download here:
<https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/lhees>
The consultation will remain open until the 8th of March 2024 and can be found at -
https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/housing/lhees_consult_2024/
- **The Regional Land Use Framework** - The RLUF has been developed with the input of many stakeholders across the region to date. All organisations, communities and individuals to comment on the Consultation draft and closes on 23rd February 2024. Details can be found on the Regional Economic Partnership website at:
<https://sosrep.dumgal.gov.uk/whats-happening>

13.02 Items for information

- Vacancy for Panel member for the Ventient (Glenkerie) Windfarm panel - details on agenda.
- The Big Plastic Count – details on agenda.
- Bright Green Nature Microfund – The purpose of the fund is to support individuals, families, or small school groups to restore or preserve nature on a small scale. Info. Can be found at - www.brightgreennature.org
- The British Redcross have a Winter programme of activities for Older People. Details can be found at www.borderlinks.co.uk

14.02 Forthcoming Events

- Info about forthcoming events can be found at <https://www.tweedsmuir.scot/events/>

15.02 Any other business

- Borders Forest Trust (BFT) are organising a range of activities through their center in Moffat and exploring the potential for bringing some to Tweedsmuir. They may also be interested in supporting Tweedsmuir in developing walking routes, interpretation etc. Details to follow.

They have requested support from TCC regarding construction of a bridge at the Bothy at Gameshope.

- **CH** asked whether TCC anticipated any interest from members of the community in visiting Stanhope and with the support of the gamekeeper finding out about the activities and wildlife of the Estate. It was felt this would be of interest.
- It was noted that refurbished Starlink – satellite broadband receivers are now available, reducing the set up costs to access this service.
- TCC have been contacted by the newly appointed 'Unpaid Work Manager' regarding the potential availability of those subject to a Community Payback Order undertaking unpaid work for the benefit of communities.

Actions:

- **LM**
 - to draft letter of support to BFT regarding siting of a bridge at the Bothy at Gameshope.
 - to liaise with Gamekeeper at Stanhope regarding Estate visit.
- **DC** to contact the 'Unpaid Work Manager' regarding a visit to Tweedsmuir to discuss opportunities for unpaid workers within the community e.g. in the Crook Garden.

16.02 Date of next meeting

Thursday 2nd March 2024.

If you have any agenda items, please contact the secretary.

Tweedsmuirsecretary.outlook.com

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

Vice Chair: Lesley Mason Treasurer: Mark Cullen Secretary: Debbie Cullen

Other Councillors: Frances Leckie Carolynn Hoy

Resilient Communities Coordinator: Lesley Kirkwood - resilienttweedsmuir@gmail.com