

Tweedsmuir Community Council

Minutes from the meeting of Tweedsmuir Community Council (TCC) Thursday 4th April at 7pm, Tweedsmuir Village Hall & via ZOOM

Present:

Lesley Mason (LM, Vice Chair), Debbie Cullen (DC, Secretary), Frances Leckie (FL), Eric Small (DB, Scottish Borders Community Councillor) and 2 members of the public.

01.04 Welcome and Apologies

Apologies from Carolynn Hoy (CH).

02.04 Minutes of the last meeting

Accepted as correct.

03.04 Matters arising not covered in the agenda

- **Badlieu Forest Plan** – response received from Scottish Woodlands

DC reported that a summary of consultee feedback regarding the above plan and response from Scottish Woodlands had been received. The comment made in response to the request by TCC that access and walking routes be identified within the plan was –

'No core paths are located within the woodland that would require signage and, given the limited scale of forestry activity planned for this period, there is no intention to create paths. The Scottish Outdoor Access code will be upheld.'

In the summary of feedback SBC had raised the -

'Possibility of bridal gates or stiles to facilitate public access. Aspirational route planned for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. One possibility is a route alongside the A701. This will follow the eastern boundary of the woodland.'

Scottish Woodlands had responded –

'Bridal gates will be considered if any gates require replacement. Communication will be maintained with SBC Access to stay informed of the aspirational route and adaptations to the plan will be discussed as the route becomes finalised.'

Following discussion, it was agreed that TCC should make contact with the Access Officer at SBC to inform of the community's interest in access to this area and future plans.

Action:

DC to establish the contact details for the SBC Access Officer and make contact to facilitate communication regarding future planning re: Badlieu Forest Plan.

- **Onshore windfarm infrastructure planning processes**, response from Scottish Government

DC reported on the response received regarding the above. The response confirmed TCC's understanding that any such connection would be subject to separate planning regulations and process, currently the reserve of the UK Government, as and when this situation (the need for a connection) arose.

Unfortunately, the response didn't acknowledge/address the issue of the difficulties faced by communities regarding consideration of and responding to planning applications when such information is not available.

- **Enquiries re: Local recycling facilities**, response re: local recycling facilities.

LM reported having contacted SBC regarding -

- the possibility, given the distance of Tweedsmuir from bottle recycling facilities of kerbside collections or the siting of a bottle bank in the locality. SBC had responded that kerbside collections were not and would not be offered at any locations across the council area. With respect to the siting of a bottle bank, Tweedsmuir was at the 'edge' of the collection area, but the possibility of a local bottle collection point would be considered.
- the possibility given the distance to the recycling facilities at Eshiels, the possibility of periodic collections of large items at a discounted rate. SCB responded that this was not a service that could be provided.

Following discussion, it was agreed that -

- the possibility of using microgrant funding to support the periodic uplift of items and transportation to Eshiels be investigated.
- if such a service could be organized whether SBC would consider waiving/reducing the charges for a commercial vehicle, hired by the community to use of the Eshiels facilities.

Actions:

- **LM** to contact SBC regarding the possibility of a waiver/reduction in charges where the above service instated.
- **ES** to contact SBC in support of the above.

- **Local Place Plans and Community Action Plans**

Following the last TCC meeting **DC** had contacted SBC regarding the relative status of Local Place Plans and Community Action Plans in relation to SBC planning decisions.

From 2025 SBC have committed to considering Local Place Plans in relation to any planning applications regardless of whether any comments are received from the community in relation to an application.

Feedback from SBC suggests that Tweedsmuir's Community Action Plan (CAP) should be referenced, where applicable in relation to comments on planning applications and would be considered. However, with a number of additions Tweedsmuir's CAP could be enhanced to fulfil the requirements of a Local Place Plan (LPP).

Information on SBC's website is being updated to support communities to 'retrospectively' fit their existing CAP's into LPP's if they wish to do so.

Actions:

- **TCC** councillors to note the information needed to supplement the CAP to fulfil the requirements of a LLP (email previously circulated).
- **DC** to monitor SBC website to note when updated info. becomes available and bring back to future meeting.

04.04 Planning applications

• **Oliver Forest Windfarm**

TCC expressed concern that given the relatively low number of residents who attended and gave feedback to TCC at the recent windfarm exhibition it was difficult to gauge the feeling of the community regarding this proposed development.

In response to a request for comments TCC received a small number of written comments.

Concerns appear to focus on a number of areas, which following discussion, it was agreed would be incorporated into TCC's response to this development.

These are –

- the significant visual impact of the proposed turbines, they will be visible from virtually all properties in Tweedsmuir and those approaching the area by road from the north and south along the A701.
- the cumulative negative visual impact of these turbines when added to those already associated with the 2 operational and further consented windfarm (Whitelaw Brae) in such a small geographical area.
- this planned development is contrary to the views of residents expressed in Tweedsmuir's Community Action Plan with respect to preserving the unique landscape of the area and the development of low level tourism.

It was noted that concerns had been raised regarding the potential impact associated with the as yet unspecified supporting infrastructure required to facilitate connection to the Grid. However, as this is subject to different planning regulations and processes any objection in this regard will not be considered as material to this application.

Similarly, concerns had been expressed regarding the impact on wildlife, water supplies and drainage. However, these concerns will have to be addressed by developers in their response to statutory consultees e.g. SEPA, NatureScot etc.

Several residents had also queried the need for additional renewable energy generation capacity within Scotland, given Scotland's energy requirements and the UK Governments intention to continue to develop fossil fuel generation. However, these were felt to be issues outwith the scope of the knowledge and expertise of the Community Council and would not be included.

With respect to the mandatory Community Benefit Fund associated with this development concerns were expressed that aside for this financial Fund the establishment of this wind farm will deliver no other tangible benefit to Tweedsmuir. It was agreed that a request be made for access and paths within the windfarm area to be specified and incorporated into the plans.

Action:

DC to draft response to circulate to TCC Councillors prior to submission (in writing, by post) by 19th April 2024.

Communication had been received from another Community Council within the SBC area, regarding the possibility of collaborative working between Community Councils in relation to responding to planning applications re: renewable energy.

Action:

DC to respond expressing TCC's interest in such an initiative.

05.04 Treasurer's Report

- Report can be viewed at [PDF Document . 55 KB](#)
- An independent examiner still needed to 'sign off' the TCC's accounts.

Action:

LM to contact the previous examiner and enquire whether she would be willing to continue in this role.

06.04 Grant applications

- Application to **Ventient Microgrant Fund** for £70 from Tweedsmuir Village Hall for a Film Night. **Approved.**
- Application to **SSE Youth Bursary** for £200 for horse riding lessons. **Approved.**
- Application to **SSE Youth Bursary** for £200 for swimming lessons. **Approved.**

LM presented an A3 version of the flow chart recently developed, summarising the grant application processes. This had been shared with the SSE and Ventient Fund Managers windfarms and the Ventient Windfarm Panel.

It was agreed that it could be circulated by Fund Managers for use by others in the benefit area should they wish to do so. Modifications to reference their particular areas could be made on request to the TCC.

Action:

DC to confirm the above to Ventient and SSE Fund managers.

07.04 Police report

- The report for March '24 yet to be received.

08.03 Scottish Borders Councillors' report

ES reported that –

- One of the mobile library vans has been retired from service as no longer road worthy. Efforts are being made to expedite delivery of the 2 new vans already on order, but it is likely that in the interim visits maybe reduced to 1x month. Details to follow.
- Extra funding has been allocated to 'Live Borders' to support payment of the living wage. This is necessary to enable them to continue to attract grant funding.
- Although Council tax has been frozen the costs associated with most other council services have been increased.
- A contract has been agreed for the roll out of CCTV in 7 towns across the Borders over the next 7 years, partly to offset the reduction in the community policing teams.

DC reported having received no contact from PC Vivienne Carsley, J Division, Community Policing Team following her response to an initial email from PC Carsley regarding attendance at a TCC meeting.

- **FL** informed that urgent repairs were being undertaken to the roof of the Crook Inn building to prevent further water entry. Some time ago mention was made of funding being available to carry out a feasibility study re: future of the building and this needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Actions:

- **ES** to speak with PC Carsley re: attendance at Community Council meetings
- **ES** and **FL** to make enquires about possible support for an option appraisal re: Crook building.

09.04 Community Action Plan

Nothing to update.

10.04 Destination Tweed

Nothing to update.

11.04 Biggar Medical Practice

LM reported having recently attended a meeting of the Medical Practice Patient Group. The main items discussed were –

- Carnwarth Surgery has recently closed it's list to new patients and therefore patients are now registering with the Biggar Practice.
- The Practice has notified the Health Board that urgent decisions need to be taken regarding the capacity of the practice to meet the needs of patients. Skill mix has been changed to increase the number of available appointments.

- However, the lack of suitable additional accommodation is significantly hampering efforts to increase capacity to deliver timely and effective services.
- Car parking capacity is a serious concern with vehicles frequently being damaged. The possibility of installing CCTV covering the car park is being considered.

12.04 Consultations

SEPA consultation re: Potential Vulnerable Areas – see agenda for details.

13.04 Items for information

Disrupting Digital Dumpers – see agenda for details.

14.04 Forthcoming Events

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

15.04 Any other business

- **Recruitment of a new Lord Lieutenant for Tweeddale**

Anyone interested in making a nomination please contact the secretary.

- **Forthcoming TCC AGM**

The next meeting of TCC will also be the AGM. There is a vacancy on the Community Council. Anyone interested in joining the council either as a full or co-opted member – please contact a member of the council.

- **Re-siting of the defibrillator**

It had been agreed at a previous meeting that the defibrillator currently located at the Village Hall would be better sited at the Wee Crook. Some discussion took place regarding how this will be facilitated.

Action:

FL to seek clarification from Tweedsmuir Community Company regarding the process for enabling this move to take place.

- **Visit to Stanhope**

A number of people joined a guided tour giving an insight into the work of the Stanhope Estate. Feedback had been very positive. Thanks were expressed to Carolynn Hoy for facilitating the visit.

- **Portrait of the King**

Community Councils had been offered the opportunity to order a free official portrait of the King. **LM** had made a successful application. The portrait when delivered will be hung in the Village Hall.

- **TCC AGM**

The Community Council's AGM will take place in May. There is currently a vacancy on the Council. If you are interested in joining the council to help represent the views of the community and respond to the opportunities and challenges impacting on Tweedsmuir please get in touch with the Secretary or any other member of the council.

16.04 Date of next meeting

Meeting & AGM - **Thursday 2nd May 2024 at 7pm.**

**Any agenda items, please forward to 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