

# Damhead & District Community Council

AGM 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2018

## Chair's report

We have had another busy year with one thing and another and I would like to thank all the committee members for their hard work with the various matters. Some of the Council initiatives take some time to read through and then compose a suitable response. John has attended the Federation of Community Council meetings regularly in order to keep up to date with many of these initiatives. John has also done a sterling job with the web site and keeping up to date with all the planning applications. Thanks also to Jo and Helen for their work behind the scenes in maintaining the minutes, finances and organisation.

Last year we had the usual round of planning applications to reply to and also to try and get Midlothian Council to enforce some of the planning conditions on various existing planning consents.

Namely: Haig Hamilton who still continues to flout the conditions and is not forced to address our main concerns about the mud on the road and the state of the Old Pentland Road which is being eroded away by the heavy vehicles. A thank you to Neil Johnston for his continued assault on the Council re this matter. My letters to the Council have been met with a simple confirmation of my email but nothing more!

The Film Studio disappointingly got support from the Scottish Ministers despite our campaign against it. Currently there is an issue with the removal of part of the chimney at Jacaranda Cottage where there had been a barn owl. This had been highlighted in the Bat Survey. The Police have been informed and are taking it forward.

The realignment of the A701 - Despite all our efforts to prevent this going ahead it does still seem to be progressing. RPS have carried out the various drill holes to determine the suitability of the ground in order to be able to obtain a cost for the road and to suggest the best route for the road. Funding still appears to be sketchy to say the least with the Council having put £4M aside for it but the estimate for the road is approx. £20M. They will receive some funding from the 'City Deal' but not sure how much this will be. We can only hope the detailed engineers report comes back with a much higher figure due to ground conditions. Midlothian Council's main argument for the road is to facilitate future housing requirements but by their own admission the current MLDP has sufficient housing requirements to meet the Scottish Ministers needs and we are led to believe there won't be such a requirement going forward - once all the baby boomers have passed on!!!

We did have one success in having the new Avian Centre proposed by Edinburgh University moved to a much more suitable site at the back of Bush House.

Also last year we managed to part pay for a preloved bus shelter for the A703 and also managed to have the 40mph speed restriction extended beyond the cottages and bus stop which is where it should have been to start with!

We also purchased and had erected the new Noticeboard beside the cemetery where we will display past minutes and other relevant documents.

We held our two litter picks as usual and collected a huge number of black bags of rubbish but this is a never-ending battle with folk just chucking their cans and plastic cups out of car windows. There is also a surprising number of other items discarded!

The summer gathering at Pentland was great fun although again it rained and you would never have guessed it was mid-summer. Unfortunately, we never managed the winter gathering around Christmas, but on the 24<sup>th</sup> March we held a spring meeting at the Steading to try to update the WRI book on Damhead. We didn't get very far but had a very enjoyable few hours talking of past events and looking at old photos of the area. Most I had never seen before and we will make an effort to scan some for posterity.

The summer gathering this year will be on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June at Pentland. Surely we can have one year of just sunshine!

We are hoping Julian can arrange a bus trip to some other Community Council's this May.

We have also had a meeting with Roslin and Bilston Community Council to discuss the redrawing of the Community Council boundaries in light of all the new housing in the area. This initiative is ongoing.

Constance Newbould

Chair