

Damhead and District Community Council Meeting

The Steading, 22nd September 2014

Minutes

1. Attendance/apologies

In attendance: Constance Newbould (Chair), Lorna Goudie, Ailsa Carlisle (secretary shared), Helen McKay (treasurer) and Julian Holbrook

Members of the community

Stuart Clark, Gordon Marshall, Kate Marshall, James Telfer, Stuart North, Helen Mitchell, Sue Gray, Stuart Thomson, Ian Milne, Kate Holbrook, Gareth Derbyshire, Lynne Derbyshire

Apologies: Councillor Andrew Coventry, Jo Gillies, Arlene Somerville, Mrs Somerville

2. Police Report. - only one crime to report. Overnight on 12/13 August a container at Hillend Ski Slope was broken into. Rubber tubes were stolen but recovered nearby. No vehicle accidents had been reported.

3. Minutes of last meeting.

Actions points

- Weight restriction on Burnside and Old Pentland Road. PC Derek Frizzel had responded to our request to have a weight restriction on the minor roads. In his view the bridge was not weak and did not require a weight restriction. See information from previous meeting at end of minutes.

ACTION: Constance will ask for the bridge at the bottom of the Burnside to be tested.

- DDCC noticeboard. The owner of the Secret Herb Garden is content for a sign to be sited in a public area of the car park

ACTION: Constance will contact Graham Kitching about a noticeboard.

- Neighbourhood plan.

ACTION: Julian to send out edited version (without images for the moment) for comment to DDCC by Monday 20th October. Hard copies will be handed out to people without email addresses. Comments will be considered at a meeting on Tuesday 21st October by the neighbourhood plan group at Kate and Gordon Marshall's at 7.30pm. The final version will be printed by Midlothian Council (check), one for each household

4. Chair's report.

Neither of our complaints over planning applications has been taken into account. The conditions on McKenzies' woodyard consent are rather restrictive but the issue will be enforcing them. Haig Hamilton also got planning consent. They claimed that there has been only one accident in the last two years which we doubt.

5. Treasurer's report.

The '14-15 grant has been received, bringing the reserves to £955.65. Julian suggested that we use the grant available next year to compile basic information about the community to use to in response to planning applications.

6. Climate Change Group.

ACTION: Julian will circulate details of venue and date for a meeting to discuss whether we want to form a Climate Change Group.

7. Community Resilience.

We agreed to hold an informal meeting (concurrent with the Climate Change meeting) above, to discuss how to identify people who could help. There was a discussion around help for elderly neighbours in the area.

ACTION: Julian will circulate details.

8. Federation Meeting

Midlothian Council has brought out a new amended scheme for community councils. There is a meeting in Dalkeith on this subject on Wednesday which one of the DDCC councillors will attend. Midlothian Council have also brought out changes to the Community Council grant award scheme.

Julian would like good maps for our community to capture local knowledge. Citizen science – go out to places and record things – birds, insects, flowers etc. This was thought to be a good use of next year's budget.

ACTION: Ailsa to send out grant template to Helen and Kate Holbrook.

9. Fingerposts

Kate Marshall asked that some of our funds were used to install fingerposts to show the location of the holdings we agree that it was not simple. Royal Mail hold the website Consignia with the relevant information.

ACTION: Helen and Kate to review the previous plan in late October.

10. Planning

Helen McKay has responded to consultation about Calderstones expressing concern about safety at access to and from the A702.

The A701 realignment has not been included in the National Planning Framework (NPF3). This is positive as once it is in there it would be extremely difficult for it not to go ahead. The road will be discussed at Midlothian Environmental Action meeting on October 2nd. If we have enough objections there will have to be a Public Enquiry. It is important to get our Neighbourhood Plan finished.

In the worst case we need to have thought out what we'd like to achieve by way of planning gain e.g. access roads, community hall, pathways, cycle paths. This should be considered as soon as possible so we are prepared.

ACTION: Constance to attend Midlothian Environmental Action meeting on 2nd October.

There was considerable discussion about the way to influence planning decisions. Despite scepticism, we should continue with our efforts. In particular we need to complete the Neighbourhood Plan.

Kate Holbrook suggested we prepare in case we ever wanted to take up the community's legal 'right to buy'. There was general interest. This will be a main agenda item at the next meeting. It would be useful if the agenda is sent out some days before the next meeting to get more people to attend the meeting, particularly if the right to buy option is discussed.

ACTION: Kate H to invite the relevant Scottish Government expert to the next meeting on Dec 1st, or sooner – on 21st October Neighbourhood Plan meeting.

Film Studio – discussion around this planning application.

ACTION: Lorna to find out date of consultation.

11 AOB.

- The winter clean up will be held on 2nd November. At the same time information will be collected about gaps and new stretches of hedging. **ACTION:** Ailsa to ask Jo to organise equipment, Helen to organise drinks etc.
- Midlothian Open Doors. **ACTION:** DDCC to find out about including Pentland Graveyard next year.
- Winter planting. **ACTION:** Kate H will find out if funds are available from Scottish Government for tree planting.
- Replacement of hedges where they have been removed for the water pipe. **ACTION:** Ian Milne will forward information about Scottish Water specification.
- Drain covers at the bottom of Burnside need to be replaced and drains to be cleaned out. **ACTION:** Constance to email Russell Imrie and Andrew Coventry about drains and pavements, which were scheduled for upgrading in Spring 15.

Next DDCC meeting 1st December at 7.00pm at The Steading.

Addendum

Information about road improvements in the Damhead area which we received from Police Scotland recently.

Subject: Report from David Sharp, Midlothian Council in relation to the Damhead area

Ailsa - in relation to the subject of road improvements in the Damhead area, I have now received an e mail from David Sharp, Midlothian Council. Can the following information be passed for the attention of the members who attended the meeting on Monday 7th August 2014?

David Sharp did respond to me by e mail on Monday 7th August but I had not received it by the time I finished duty on that day.

Mr Sharp's e mail contained the following information:

Mr Sharp has mentioned that Midlothian Council is looking at the Damhead area for possible improvements but there are limits to what is achievable and what resources might permit. Also some government guidance and the experience of Midlothian Council would go against some of the requests from Community Councils regarding speed limits/weight limits/signs.

One of Midlothian Council's main priorities is to reduce accidents and they try to do this by treating the worst accident clusters. There aren't any clusters on the roads within the Damhead Community Council area, although there is one on Trunk Road at A702/A703 junction, Hillend, and that would be for Transport Scotland to decide whether any changes are appropriate. There are about 5-6 clusters of accidents on the A701 nearby, so these would have higher priority for investigation and treatment (if appropriate) than roads in the Damhead area itself. The section of National Speed Limit on the A703 was looked at in

Midlothian Council's Speed Limit Review and it was decided not to change it. There could be scope to reduce the current speed limits in connection with other changes in the area, but these are not a priority at present. As usual drivers need to remember that the maximum speed limit is not a target and they should drive much more slowly if circumstances require it such as poor visibility and possibility of vulnerable road users.

Further weight restrictions are unlikely - there isn't a weak bridge that needs them and they are difficult to introduce or enforce for other reasons
- for example there usually has to be an exemption for access, which means that big lorries can get onto the road despite the restriction.

Cameras for enforcement in Scotland are mainly under the guidance of the Scottish Government safety camera programme. This wouldn't support cameras here unless there were more reported injury accidents and more speeding than at present.

Flashing signs are deemed a traffic calming measure and therefore are applied at locations where speeding and injury accidents occur in combination. There have been a few circumstances where ward councillors have sourced other funds where communities feel strongly. The evidence for benefits from such signs is limited.

Regards,

Constable Derek Frizzel,
Penicuik Police Station,
Bog Road,
Penicuik,
Midlothian