

UPPER TWEED COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held 17 May 2021

Via Zoom due to Covid-19 Restrictions

- Present** Simon Edwards (Chairman), Stephanie Jackman (Secretary), Andrew Beveridge, Chris Lewin, Rosalind Birchall, Nick Shapowal and Christopher Lambton, Councillors Heather Anderson SBC and Eric Small SBC plus two members of the public.
- 01.04.21** **Apologies**
Penny Wedderburn Scott
- 02.04.21** **Minutes from last Meeting (held 15 March 2020 via Zoom). Comments by email in advance.**
The Minutes were agreed.
- 03.04.21** **Matters Arising from previous minutes (via Email)**
No specific comments but one or two spelling corrections, noted and actioned by the Secretary.
Rosalind Birchall wished that it be noted, with regard to the roll out of the Covid Vaccine, a number of people in the area were unhappy that they were currently being sent to Motherwell to receive their injection, including a number of elderly people, and that travelling such distance was causing some anguish.
- 04.04.21** **Planning Applications**
The Chair made comment regarding two applications, details of which he had emailed out to Committee Members in advance, The Manse and Manorvale.
Regarding The Manse, the Treasurer appraised the meeting of his response to the Chair's email stating that he was not happy with the proposed changes, which included a loft conversion, two dorma extensions and the addition of 2 bedrooms, as it would considerably change the appearance of this typical 1960s house with its irregular fenestration. He suggested there were no architectural qualities and that the planning application was not appropriate. His views were noted but other members of the Committee felt the property would be improved, as it was not considered a wholly attractive property to start with. Regarding Manorvale, a holiday home, the Committee were informed the original application for dorma windows was withdrawn as the owners now wish to build an extension. It is understood that the immediate neighbours do not object. The Treasurer commented that there were a number of errors on the Form as well as the associated documents. He further more suggested that the reconfiguration of the internal layout did not seem very wise as it did not conform to construction standards and questioned why we were shown this element of the proposal as we cannot object to this part of the application, it was suggested by Andrew that any anomalies or irregularities like this would be picked up by Building Control. The Chair made comment regarding grass cutting, now not undertaken by the Council, as the owners of Manorvale were asking about the grass verges. Following a discussion of these applications Councillor Heather confirmed that all technical

procedures would be checked and all aspects would need to be captured in the Building Warrants as necessary.

05.04.21

Microgrants

The Chair informed the meeting that no new applications have been received but he had received a letter of thanks from a family who had benefited that enabled their daughters to complete Mountain bike courses and one parent to complete a Mountain Bike Safety course, much to the delight of them all. The Chair also raised the question regarding the requirement for support to the Community in terms of Drivers and the UTC Drivers. Rosalind had been unsure of the procedure for supporting the cost of transport to take someone to the Dentist and had wished for approval from the Chair when the Chair was on leave. Following a discussion it was agreed that the Covid Support Fund could be used for this purpose and an email to all Committee Members could quickly achieve agreement.

06.04.21

Police Report – emailed prior to the meeting

There were no particular comments on the content of the report but it was unanimously agreed that the new format was much better and gave a better overall perspective. Councillor Heather observed that West Linton had appeared to be a ‘hot bed’ of disturbance and unsavoury activity involving the younger element and that the local Community had engaged to address the situation and it would seem to have had a positive effect as all had gone quiet again.

07.04.21

Treasurer’s Report

The Chair gave the report, as the Books have yet to be passed to the Treasurer, stating that there was no change to the financial position as he had reported last month. He was now just waiting for the Bank Statement and on receiving this would be handing the books over to Arthur Lucas to audit and on completion of this would hand everything over to Nick Shapowal, the new Treasurer. The Chair also made mention that the two proposed additional signatories to the on-line account, Rosalind Birchall and Stephanie Jackman, should have been contacted by now, both confirmed they had been, and although the whole process has taken longer than anticipated and was still not in place it was anticipated this would now not take long.

The Chair at this point raised the matter of the proposed Extra Ordinary General Meeting to agree the change to the UTCC Constitution regarding the practice of holding our meetings via Zoom. It had been understood this was required and necessary approval sought by Scottish Borders Council but the Chair had since found out that this was not necessary and the practice can just be adopted and annotated as such. He further mentioned that he hoped we would soon be able to meet in person but that this may not be till August when it is anticipated Village Halls will reopen but clearly dependent on how the easing of lockdown restrictions progressed. The Chair further confirmed that the AGM will be held via Zoom on 21 June 21 and that he would be writing to Julian Birchall to invite him to once again to be our Presiding Officer.

08.04.21

SBC Councillors’ Report

Councillor Heather reported there had been two full Council Meetings during the last period with Budgets passed and 4 of the 5 Amendments sanctioned. The new Tweeddale Area Partnership held a meeting on 30 March to discuss the applications for Community Fund Grants. A sub-committee meet weekly in advance of the Area meeting in order to assess the applications for funding and make their recommendations by scoring them. Applicants are publicly questioned and some are refused, there is no Councillor

involvement and so far it seems to be working very well. Councillor Eric reported on Planning in particular the Quarry Application with the applicants agreeing to a Public Meeting in May. He commented that there was not much more to report on apart from the new Cycle Ways on the High Street in Peebles, aimed at encouraging more cyclists, that has inadvertently caused controversy with the cycle lanes available for use by drivers when there are no cyclists. Comment was then made regarding South of Scotland Enterprise where some big decisions are to be made. There have been a series of proposals for the Borderlands and these have now all been signed off. All of the detail is on the Website with proposals from the respective 5 Local Authorities and funding provided for in a joint venture between Scottish Government and the UK Government. The Chair further mentioned he had received an email from Rob Dickson regarding the draft Visitor Management Plan within the Tourism in the Community project that he will issue out to all Committee Members.

09.04.21

Any Other Business

Tour O' the Borders: The Chair advised the meeting that the Tour O' the Borders Road Cycling event would be returning on 5 September with its respective road closures.

UT Community News: The Chair made mention of a plea for help he had received from Brian Bushel with writing the 'news' for the Community News. The News covers Broughton, Skirling and Tweedsmuir and its aim is to report on local news matters so organisations are being encouraged to submit information regarding events and activities, anything that would help in pulling this together would be appreciated.

Forestry: The Chair commenced by saying that we should all be aware there are a number of Plantation proposals running currently – Glencotho, most advanced been on the go since 2018; Cardon Farm proposal on the table for over a year and most recently Stobo and Broughton Hope. The Chair confirmed he had submitted our comments to RDS Forestry regarding Broughton Hope, that he had also spoken to them as well as Jemima Elliott the landowner. It was well understood that any business must have commercial liability and the comments received via the Facebook page had alluded to personal criticisms. Christopher commented that he was very interested to understand the process of notification of the Forestry proposals, as it appeared to be rather a dysfunctional process particularly in terms of inviting comment. Some of these proposals had come to the Community Council for comment and others had not. Councillor Heather commented that she considered there were a number of concerns here, but more generic concerns regarding encouraging large scale forestry on an almost industrial scale with little consideration to the 'pay back' for communities. She expanded to say that applications were coming in, all in accordance with Scottish Government guidelines for submitting such proposals, but due to a lack of management of the process there was no collective mapping, little consideration for community benefit, lack of bio diversity and as applications were viewed on a 'stand alone' basis, little regard for the strategic impact when looking at the schemes together. In addition no real consideration as to whether we actually need all this forestry and she further expressed a concern that this was in fact not a good scheme either for communities or the environment and she had real concerns. The Committee learnt that the new Land Use Partnership were looking at the bigger strategic picture and Andrew commented that diversification for land use was leaning heavily towards tourism or industrial forestry. A fairly lengthy discussion ensued suggesting that the system of notification of applications was not consultative enough and it was not the case

that any rules were being broken, that the case for bio-diversity, tourism and the like was not encouraging, but in particular what the real effects on the environment would be and especially the cumulative impact of all the applications. Councillor Heather suggested that Community Councils should get together as there was a real need for the bigger picture for the whole of the south of Scotland to be seen and how all these isolated applications join up as she considered the Scheme had not been clearly thought through by the Scottish Government. Chris suggested that Forestry Scotland be invited to make a presentation to the Tweeddale Area Partnership and Councillor Heather also commented that the Council were drawing up a Woodland Strategy paper looking at how we manage this from a local perspective in particular with a view to improving engagement, improving the 'intelligence' of the schemes and also consideration for Amenities. Finally Councillor Heather agreed that she would take an Action to approach Forestry Scotland with a view to making a presentation to Tweeddale Area Partnership.

10.04.21

Date of next Meeting – 7pm, Monday, 17 May, 2021, via Zoom.