

EYCC Chairs Report

Monday 5th June 2023

This being my first AGM as chair I would like to start by thanking my predecessor Phil Grant for all his hard work and time spent as Chair – I am now very appreciative and aware of the commitment, volume of work and diplomacy which accompanies the role! I would also like to thank Clive Whittingham and Fiona Hewson, both members of the community council, who have stood down during the year, their contributions have been very much appreciated.

There continues to be several ongoing issues which the community council are actively involved in addressing, one of these has been the Tour of the Borders and its impact on the local community and businesses, which I am very pleased to say has moved on in a very positive way with communication led by the community action team from Scottish Borders Council, namely Kenny Harrow and Erin Colman, resulting in the event moving elsewhere for the next 2 years allowing time for more consultation and community engagement prior to any agreement for its return to the valleys. Progress is also being made on the issues surrounding St Mary's Loch, overnight campers and associated anti social behaviour with improved communication between all parties involved, hopefully improvements can continue to be made. Road Traffic issues on the A708 have also been addressed with several areas of improvements having been implemented through the Road Safety partnership. This will of course continue to be monitored. We do still have ongoing issues with flooding in the Upper Ettrick but work is very much in progress to continue to apply pressure to hopefully resolve this satisfactorily. I would like to point out this is just a few highlights of the varied items of discussion for the community council.

Whilst on the subject of ongoing issues the proposal for a windfarm in the Ettrick valley has raised a high level of community concern, this is obviously a very emotive and personal issue for all involved, whatever the views held, but I am very conscious it has led some individuals to accuse the community council, and therefore its members, of being corrupt. I wish to take this opportunity to strongly refute this and to re-iterate we are all volunteers who have put ourselves forward to act impartially and in the best interests of our whole community. I, personally, find it very sad that certain individuals feel the need to direct such insults against us as individuals, and is something we should not tolerate.

Going forward we have plans to greatly improve our methods of communication with plans underway for a new and improved website, digital signposting and community consultation. I strongly believe good communication, in whatever form is of huge importance and benefit to our community as a whole. I would also like to see improved community engagement and hope our community will find us to be more inclusive.

Finally I would like to thank every one of the team here who make up the community council, offering up their time and experience, especially Miranda, our treasurer (and much more!) and Kirsty who was somewhat thrown into the role as secretary but does a brilliant job which is very much appreciated.

Thank you all for listening and I look forward to the next year, hopefully in a very positive manner.