

Ettrick & Yarrow Community Council

Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 4th December 2023 Yarrowford Village Hall

Present: David Currie (DC) (Vice Chair) – Standing in as Chair for the meeting, Miranda Alcock (MA) (Treasurer), Elizabeth Williamson (BW), Kirsty Irving (KI) (Secretary), John Davidson (JD) , Councillor Elaine Thornton-Nicol (ET-N), Councillor Caroline Cochrane (CC), 25 members of the public

1. Apologies: Alison Renwick (AR) (Chair), Karen O'Brien-Barret (KO), Councillor Leah Douglas (LD), Jane Telfer (JT), John Wildish (JW),

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 2nd October 2023 were proposed by MA and seconded by JD.

3. Matters arising (Not on agenda)

- Ettrickbridge roads department – ET-N has submitted
 - New Woodland Creation – Action: AR to contact Andrew Dixon re Nether Phawhope.
 - EW confirmed that the electricity supply at the Glen Café will remain on to supply the defibrillator there.
 - St Marys Loch - toilets – **ET-N to update**
- Wemyss & March representatives to be invited to February meeting to discuss -
Action: KI

4. Police Report

No police presence

Nothing in police reports for October / December for either valley – member of the public surprised by this as had reported crimes to the police re St Marys Loch –

Action: KI to follow up

5. Councillors Reports - ET-N

CC - Currently budget planning

Town development meeting (includes TD7 postcode including valleys) which was due to be held in November was postponed, new meeting date still to be set. **Action – KI will communicate this once received.**

Toy appeal for Ukraine – toys to be handed in to Post office in Selkirk till 6th January '24

6. Financial Report

MA delivered the financial report and provided copies:

Bank balance at 1st December of £10,500.01

SBC support grant to Community Councils has been increased by 10%

Community paths maintenance grant has been increased from £450 to £600.

SBC to continue to reimburse the Community Council for hall hire.

Also SBC to increase insurance premium to cover defibrillators.

In April SBC will ask for an asset register – **Action: MA**

CC added that all Community Councils are in a different financial position due to possible wind farm funding, and acknowledged the work the communities do.

7. Ettrick Flooding

B709 has now been closed to vehicles due to flooding 20 times since September '23 to present. The flooding is likely to stop emergency vehicles getting through if needed therefore this needs to be addressed with some urgency.

DC and AR attended the open public meeting which was held in The Boston Hall 27th November '23 which was well attended and productive.

Vicky Davidson has kindly provided details to the Community Council of exactly where the areas are affected.

DC suggested that dredging is still possibly the answer to the problem in the long term however SEPA need to permit this to happen and the cost of work would need to be funded. The river was last dredged in 1970's.

Recent placement of 70 dumpy bags is hoped to work but is only a short term measure.

There is a relief road that could be used with work to be done but permission would be needed from the landowner, this is not suitable however for pedestrians to walk at night.

More signage is needed to alert road users to the possibility of flooding on the road.

A measurement sign would be useful to show depth of water to allow road users to make an informed decision as to whether they should enter the water.

E T-N read out an email from Duncan Morrison (SBC), which outlined the plan of the placement of the dumpy bags and also that he has funding for steel shutters to stop flooding getting through.

SBC have undertaken surveys but these have not involved any local knowledge on the subject.

Action: ET-N has a meeting set up with David Robertson (CEO of SBC) and will raise this issue with him and report back, also to request further signage.

JD raised the point that the salmon levels in the river are depleted, River Tweed Commissioners (Jamie Clark) are concerned about this and this may be a way forward. – **Action: JD to follow up**

Action: ET-N to set up a meeting with SBC representatives, SEPA and River Tweed commissioners

Members of the public also raised their concerns over the possibility of emergency services not being able to get through the flood water. ET-N has spoken to Chief Fire Officer for Scottish Borders who assured her the emergency services would get through if required.

8. Tour o' the Borders

Current agreement with Hillside Outside (HO) / SBC / E&Y CC is that the race will not take place in 2024 but may return in 2026.

HO to provide a monthly update to E & Y CC - *Not received.*

HO will meet with affected businesses to overcome trading issues - *Not actioned.*

HO to donate £1000 to the community - *Not actioned.*

Survey available online only to gauge public opinion as to whether the race should take place again.

It was agreed that the survey should be sent out to all households along the route in paper format as well as being available online, this has not been the case with the letter only providing the web link to direct to the survey online. It also comes to light that not every household has received a copy, with some households receiving 2 copies.

It was agreed that some of the questions within the survey are misleading, eg. Question 8 asks how long the roads should be closed for – 5,7,9 hours with no alternate options available to say the road should not be closed.

Action: ET-N asked for a copy of the current agreements in place, to request that the survey be extended to 24th December '23, also to find out why a large number of residents along the route have not received a letter about the survey.

Ettrick & Yarrow Community Council are keen for this event to go ahead but on open roads.

DC encouraged anyone who has not completed the survey to do so before the closing date of 9th December '23

It was agreed we have to wait for the results of the survey before any further decisions can be made.

13. Update from EYCDC

Vicky Davidson AGM to be held on Tuesday 5th December in Cross Keys Inn, Ettrickbridge

3.5 hectares of Sitka spruce was acquired along with the marshes which at the time was land locked but felling has now started and re planting will take place over the next 2 years to plant broad leaf and native trees.

1 business unit still to let at Kirkhope steading

Community development plan is now 10 years old and keen to take forward. It was previously agreed that EYCDC and E&YCC would work together on this but questions may differ and may need to be more specific for E&YCC.

It was agreed that only one survey should be sent out to ensure community engagement.

Action: Vicky Davidson to draft questions for E&Y CC to review and agree.

14. Community Action Plan

Action plan survey questions need to be agreed.

CC urged that action plans should be joined up with Selkirk Community engagement plan.

Action: MA to meet with Vicky Davidson to discuss

15. E Y CC Website

This is being progressed, however will be carried over to next meeting to update.

16. Planning Applications

No planning applications have been received.

17. Correspondence

A number of complaints have been received re the number of road closures in Ettrick Valley, these have been passed onto CC Leah Douglas

18. AOCB

James Hogg statue – requiring maintenance, fence has been broken since last storm and statue

Action: MA / Vicky Davidson to speak to James Hogg Society to apply to Community Council for grant.

Action: CC to obtain quote from Criminal Justice Team

Telephone box at Glen Café has been shut down by British Telecom – opportunity to purchase the box from BT for £1. This needs to be instigated by a community group, not an individual. Residents happy for the phone not to be active but would like to maintain the box. **Action: ET-N to look into why the phone line no longer active as community should have been notified.**

19. Grant applications

3 X Grant applications were discussed and approved as follows:

- Kirkhope Horticultural Society awarded £1000 towards the improvement of access to community woodland.
- Ettrick Forest Sports & Recreation Club awarded £2734 to replace & extend fencing surrounding sports field.
- Ettrick & Yarrow Community Development Company awarded £400.80 towards the funds for producing 5000 tear off maps of the valleys.

Dates of future meetings

Monday 5th February 2024, Kirkhope Parish Hall, 7pm

Monday 1st April 2024, Yarrow Feus Hall, 7pm

Monday 3rd June 2024, Boston Memorial Hall, 7pm (AGM)