

Ettrick & Yarrow Community Council

Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 2nd December 2024 in Yarrowford Hall

Present: Alison Renwick (AR) (Chair), Miranda Alcock (MA) (Treasurer), Jane Telfer (JT), Paul Scott (PS), Elizabeth Williamson (EW), Jonathan Rowley (JR), Councillor Leah Douglas (LD), and 8 members of the public Diane Rowley (Minute taker)

1. Apologies

Kirsty Irving (KI) (Secretary), Karen O'Brien-Barret (KO), Councillor Caroline Cochrane (CC) John Wildish (JW) (Vice-Chair), John Davidson (JD), Councillor Elaine Thornton-Nicol (ET-N)

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 7th October 2024 were proposed by EW and seconded by JR.

3. Matters arising (Not on agenda)

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

John Wildish has taken the decision to step down from his role as Vice Chair and has been replaced by Jonathan Rowley.

4. Police Report

A Police contact has been assigned to engage with the Community Council – Crawford Laing.

Two incidents pertinent to this area were reported: -

1. 14/10/24 – 2 windows were smashed and a door damaged at the Pavilion at the playing fields at Ettrickbridge
2. 17/10/24 – a male was hit by a lorry at Ettrickshaws Farm, Selkirk

Action: JR offered to engage with Police Scotland (Crawford Laing) to ensure a police report is available prior to each meeting.

5. Councillors Reports

Selkirk Christmas lights switch on is 7th December with Christmas market.

6. Financial Report

MA delivered the financial report and provided copies:

Bank balance at 1st December 2024 was £13,575.38

The SBC Support Grant for Community Councils has been received. We paid for the poppies out of our grant.

Action: MA to chase the path maintenance grant

7. SP Energy Networks – Proposed Cross Border Connection

The Ettrick & Yarrow Pylons Action Group (EYPAG) has been working tirelessly to engage with the Community on the proposed cross border connection. Following SPEN's meeting with SBC, SPEN has agreed an extension for the completion and return of consultation forms to Monday 23rd December 2024. A request has been made to SPEN to include the interested parties in the responses. A supplementary submission from Nature Scotland and the Tweed Valley has been submitted on the impact the proposed cross border connection will have on existing cycling routes. John Lamont, MP has offered his support.

SPEN reported to SBC that only 200 feedback forms had been received so a 'big' push from the Community Council and EYPAG Action Group is needed to ensure everyone has a say.

Action: the Community Council to complete a response form on behalf of the Yarrow and Ettrick community

It was reported that several people on the EY news and views mailing list had not received the email with the survey, but it wasn't clear why.

Action: PS to work with KI to understand problem with emailing the questionnaire, and KI to resend it to canvass opinion amongst valleys residents as to whether residents are Supportive, Neutral or Opposed to the Cross Border Connection proposal from Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN).

SPEN reported at the Caddonfoot Consultation meeting that a number of 'hotspot' areas had been highlighted including the Tweed Valley, Yarrow Valley, Ettrickbridge and Newcastleton. SPEN have agreed to review these areas of concern and to look at alternatives i.e. underground cabling.

Action: Councillor LD to liaise with the Community Engagement Team on a considered response to SPEN

Anyone interested in contacting the EYPAG should use the email–
ettrickyarrowpag@gmail.com

8. Ettrick Flooding

Construction work has now been completed on flood prevention; however, the road was flooded over the weekend (1st December). This was possibly a cause of ground flooding rather than from the river.

Lord Napier has offered a foot access route through his grounds should the road become impassable by car.

Action: effectiveness of the construction work to be monitored by the Community Council and concerns raised if the situation worsens

9. Update from EYCDC

The EYCDC holds its annual AGM at Yarrow Hall on Tuesday 4th December at 7.30 pm.

The EYCDC has been nominated for a Regeneration Award. Representatives from the EYCDC will attend a ceremony in Glasgow on Thursday 6th December.

Various funding opportunities are being considered including bunk rooms, energy efficiency schemes. Vicky Davidson will update the Community Council on progress.

Replanting of the marshes at Ettrick have been successful and walking routes in this area will be considered.

10. Community Resilience Planning

There are usually four Resilience Co-ordinators covering the valleys (Ettrickbridge, Upper Ettrick, Yarrow Valley, Upper Yarrow). MA attended an annual Council run event 'Preparing for Winter'. Various topics were discussed including whether village halls should have access to a generator. SPEN will provide temporary generators should there be a long-term energy outage – but village halls may need upgrading to be able to run them. SPEN will visit halls free of charge to assess what electrical work is required to run their generators.

Action: MA to compile a briefing note to email out to Co-ordinators

Action: JT to check with Mark Nichol on his position as Resilience Co-ordinator for the Yarrow Valley

The role of the Co-ordinator is to provide a link between the Council and the area. One of the key tasks is to develop a Community Resilience plan for the community council area. This is challenging for such a rural area as Ettrick and Yarrow.

Action: MA to look at developing a Resilience Plan for the EYCC area with the other resilience coordinators when they are all in place.

Action: MA to inform the Resilience Co-ordinators of any training events

11. Teviot Wind Farm – Muirhall Energy

The Teviot Wind Farm – Muirhall Energy is situated 8 miles south west of Hawick. The number of turbines has been reduced to 53, giving a total installed capacity of approximately 350 MW. Planning consent is expected in Spring 2025, construction is planned to start in 2029 and the wind farm will be operational from 2033.

A Community Company will be set up to consider community benefit funding. The Company will consist of 24 members from the 12 surrounding Community Councils. From the 24 members, 12 will be Directors of the Company. Discussions took place on putting in legal protection should the site be put on the market prior to the wind farm being operational.

It was decided unanimously by the Community Council to become signatories of the Company.

12. Planning Applications

All planning applications can be viewed on the SBC website.

13. Correspondence

Three letters were received:-

1. Craik Forest – Land Management Plan Revision – initial scoping – to gather information from stakeholders in order for the Land Management Plan to be revised. This plan form the framework for the Craik Forest over the next 10 years.

Action: AR to liaise with Teviot Water Community Council on a response regarding improvements to the footpath up to the waterfall

2. A 50mph trial speed limit will be implemented on the A6088, A708, B6357 and A7 north of Galashiels. The trial will last for 18 months, starting in April 2025, and will monitor road traffic accidents in these areas.

Action: LD to address the concerns with the Council the necessity to enforce the speed limit

Action: LD to advise the Community Council at the next meeting on how the signage will impact the area along these roads

3. Center Parcs Scotland

An option agreement has been secured for 1000 acres of land north of Hawick and South of Selkirk for a proposed Center Parcs holiday village, subject to planning permission.

Center Parcs requested that they would like to meet with Community Councils the week commencing 10th February 2025. It is envisaged that 2 representatives from the Community Council attend the meeting and provide feedback to the Community Council members.

Action: 2 representatives from the Community Council to be agreed

13. AOCB

JR raised an issue with the Council regarding the disposal and booking in system at the refuse and recycling centre in Selkirk. He felt that the impact in the change would result in fly tipping across the region.

Action: LD to take the concerns back to the Council and report the outcomes at the next Community Council meeting.

The Community Council approved a grant application from EYCDC to cover planning fees for the establishment of a safe footpath from Kirkhope Steading into Ettrickbridge.

Dates of future meetings, all at 7pm;

Monday 3rd February 2025, Kirkhope Parish Hall

Monday 7th April 2025, Yarrow Feus Hall

Monday 2nd June 2025, St Marys Hall, Cappercleuch (AGM & Meeting to follow)