

**Minutes of Tweedsmuir Community Council, at Tweedsmuir
Village Hall, on Thursday, May 14 (7.30pm)**

Present: Gavin Parker (chairman), Brian Bushell (vice-chairman), Paul Greaves (secretary), councillor Sarah Northcott, councillor Lesley Mason, and 13 members of the public were present.

01.05 APOLOGIES

Councillor Kaitlyn Roper.

02.05 MATTERS ARISING

Minutes of the community council meeting on April 2 were approved.

Constitution

Chairman Gavin Parker reported that the issues surrounding the boundary of the new Tweedsmuir Community Council had now been resolved and he hoped the new constitution would be completed shortly.

Communication

Councillor Sarah Northcott said that a website for the new CC had been created, but that it was still a work in progress. She added that she had met with Duncan Davidson, chairman of the Tweedsmuir Community Company, which is, at present, also constructing a new website. The meeting was constructive and, hopefully, will ensure no duplication of roles between the two sites. Vice-chairman Brian Bushell reported that 43 households, out of a possible 80 (although only 70 currently occupied with the remainder either holiday homes or unoccupied), had responded to the CC's request for contact details in order to set up a communication database. That database had now been compiled, and was used to send out notification of the annual general meeting. The chairman thanked Sarah and Brian for their efforts, and also thanked Kaitlyn for setting up a Facebook page for the CC.

Fruid Road

The meeting heard that work on repairing the road had now started.

Border Forest Trust

The secretary said he had contacted the Trust to inform it of the CC's preferred date - May 30 - for a site meeting regarding plans to develop Gameshope, but had not, as yet, received any further details ie time and venue. When details are available, the secretary said these would be sent out via the new database.

03.05 RESILIENT COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME

Ms Carol Turnbull, of Scottish Borders Council, attended the meeting to give a short presentation on the programme, which was set up in 2011. She said she hoped Tweedsmuir would join the scheme, and set out some of the advantages:

The programme, which helps communities prepare for an emergency, offers a direct link to the 'bunker' - SBC's 'crisis' hub. This would be via a main co-ordinator for the community appointed as part of the scheme.

There is also equipment on offer ie shovels, salt bins, crampons for shoes etc, and all community involvement in the scheme is covered by the Community Council's insurance. Following an agreement with the Red Cross, first-aid training is also available, usually taking the shape of two-hour courses. Also, under the fiscal work order imposed by the judicial system, SBC has a department called the Criminal Justice Social Work department - manager John Fyfe - which can make manpower available for unpaid work on various community projects.

Ms Turnbull said the communities decided what emergency to prepare for. This could range from a missing person, forest fire, to a major road accident. Exercises are often held to ensure that the community's emergency plan can be worked out and is clear.

To take the scheme forward, a main co-ordinator and a couple of deputies would need to be appointed by the community. Leaflets would then be distributed, explaining the scheme and asking for more volunteers. Relevant equipment would then be given to the community and a plan worked out for future development of the scheme. This would include setting up a 'core tree' which is a list of telephone numbers to ensure as many people as possible are contacted in time of emergency.

Ms Turnbull said a number of schools throughout the region had become involved in the scheme, and that groups in the programme also used the SB Alert scheme to communicate with one another and the council. She urged residents to look at the Alert scheme online.

The chairman thanked Ms Turnbull for her presentation, and the meeting overwhelmingly voted to take the matter further.

04.05 SUPERFAST BROADBAND FOR TWEEDSMUIR

Following April's meeting of the community council, Mr Bob Murrison, of Community Broadband Scotland, had visited the secretary to outline ways forward re superfast broadband for the village. A summary of that meeting is attached at the end of the minutes.

The secretary then reported that he and the chairman had attended a meeting called by CBS at Eskdalemuir community hub on May 13, regarding the possibility of joining a multi-community superfast broadband aggregate scheme, stretching from Yarrow and Ettrick to Tweedsmuir in the west. A similar scheme has already been set up in the Western Isles, offering residents there up to 30mg speeds. At the Eskdalemuir meeting, Mr Murrison said if all the areas agreed to go ahead, it would be around 12 months to get the scheme underway, and that the project would be headed by the Southern Upland Partnership. A steering committee of representatives from the areas involved would also need to be set up.

At the CC meeting, residents agreed that the project should be explored further, with the possibility of arranging a village meeting with Mr Murrison to further expand on the plans.

05.05 SCHOOL TRANSPORT

The secretary said he had reported the CC's concerns over school transport to Mr John Dellow, of Scottish Borders Council. He had promised to look into the matter, and pass on our concerns to the bus inspector. Councillor Lesley Mason said the inspector had travelled with the Tweedsmuir schoolchildren recently and had agreed that the present arrangements were not acceptable (schoolchildren from Tweedsmuir spend three hours on the bus each day getting to and from the school in Peebles). The secretary said he was awaiting a reply from Mr Dellow on any progress.

06.05 SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Concern was expressed that there was no SBC councillor at the meeting, and that no apologies had been given. The secretary agreed to look into this matter.

07.05 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Police

The secretary said he had contacted the community police officer for the area with a list of dates of the CC meetings, but had had no reply, and, consequently, there was no police report to present to the meeting. The vice-chairman asked the secretary to pursue this matter as it was important that the council receives updates from the police, and that it would also be beneficial for the community to meet its community police officer.

Carlowse Bridge

Councillor Lesley Mason reported that there were signs of masonry deterioration in the newly refurbished bridge, and that this should be reported to the SBC. She also pointed out that the nearby field and the footpath needed to be reinstated as agreed. Councillor Northcott added that the drainage system in place for the bridge did not seem to be working correctly, with large puddles appearing on it when it rained. The secretary agreed to raise these matters with SBC, and also ask why there had been no response to a request, made in January, for costings re the bridge's refurbishment. This had been promised at a meeting with the community in June last year.

Whitehill Brae windfarm

Resident Rod Sibbald said that the SBC was set to consider the planning application for Whitehill Brae windfarm in August, and urged the council/residents to ensure their concerns were raised again with SBC councillors before then. He also pointed out that the SBC's landscape officer had decided to oppose the Whitehill plans. The chairman thanked Mr Sibbald for his input. The secretary added that members of the public now had the chance to speak at SBC meetings considering planning applications, but would check with the SBC whether this was the case with the Whitehill application in August.

Tweedsmuir litter clean-up

The chairman thanked everyone who had taken part in the clean-up, which had been a great success.

Tweedsmuir Community Council logo

The vice-chairman suggested that residents should be contacted for any ideas for a logo for the new Community Council, which could be used on letterheads and on the website when established. The meeting agreed that this was a good idea and should be taken further.

08.05 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Although the CC had only been formed in January, the chairman explained that the annual meeting was being held due to SBC rules that stipulate that CCs must hold an annual meeting to coincide with the council's financial year. The SBC had informed the chairman, however, that there was no need for any election of officers.

The chairman reported that the Earlshaugh windfarm project was planning to present its plans on how it intended to connect the windfarm to the grid. This presentation would be at Tweedsmuir Village Hall on Wednesday, 3 June (12-8) and Thursday 4 June (12-7). He also reported that the CC was now able to make microgrants - up to £250 - on behalf of Glenkerie windfarm community fund, and that details of how to do this would be circulated to the community by the secretary.

The chairman said windfarms were a major issue in the area, and reported that one of the CC's first tasks was to express its opposition to the Whitehill Brae windfarm proposed near the centre of the village. The chairman thought it would be a good idea to ascertain residents' views about windfarm development and proposed that the CC undertake a community consultation to that effect. He also promised that the CC would maintain pressure on the SBC over the issue of school transport, and would also continue to press the council for a full breakdown of the cost of the Carlowse Bridge repair. He also thanked, councillors Brian Bushell, Sarah Northcott and Kaitlyn Roper for all the work they had done in ensuring the CC communicated fully with the community. The chairman added that he thought the presentations at the CC meetings so far had been very informative, and also thanked everyone who had taken part in the recent litter collection in the village.

09.05 TREASURER'S REPORT

The treasurer reiterated what he had reported in April in that the following monies would be accruing to the community council in due course: £540 per year, and a pro-rata amount of £180 to take into account of the fact that the community council formed before the end of the last financial year. The treasurer said, therefore, that once the constitution had been approved, the next financial year would see £720 lodged into the CC's account. The treasurer also reported that he was in the process of opening an account for the CC at the Bank of Scotland in Peebles. Each cheque would need two signatories, but there would be three signatories for the account. All needed to be office-bearers, and the chairman/secretary/treasurer agreed to carry this out.

The treasurer explained that the CC had to appoint an independent examiner for its accounts, and resident Morag Roper kindly agreed to take on this role.

The next meeting of the TCC is at Tweedsmuir Village Hall, on June 4 , 7.30pm

Broadband meeting with Mr Bob Murison, of Community Broadband Scotland, at The Oak House, Tweedsmuir and Paul Greaves, secretary, Tweedsmuir Community Council, Duncan Davidson, chairman Tweedsmuir Community Company, and Andrew Mason.

Broadband Community Broadband Scotland is an organisation set up to provide answers for broadband improvement to the five per cent of Scotland that will not be covered by the government-backed superfast broadband scheme (www.digitalscotland.org.uk).

Bob said it was unclear whether Tweedsmuir would be included in the scheme, although Broughton would be. BT were 'exploring solutions' for the Tweedsmuir area, but Bob suspected this would eventually mean no provision via the scheme.

CBS would be willing to look at possible solutions for the area. These may include:

1 Aggregate scheme: This entails CBS bringing areas together to form one large area, which makes it more viable for commercial companies to become involved. How the scheme works is simple. CBS puts the superfast project out to tender to the commercial sector. A supplier is agreed and then carries out the work, with residents paying a monthly amount to that supplier for broadband provision (this amount has to be competitive with rates on offer generally). All maintenance is carried out by the supplier. There is a project of this nature muted for the Yarrow and Ettrick area and Bob thought it might be possible for Tweedsmuir to join this.

2 DIY scheme. This is where the local community provides the scheme, with help from CBS. There is one already in existence at Stobo, and Bob thought it might be possible for Tweedsmuir to join this. Stobo's broadband is supplied by Edinburgh University via masts at various points from the city to the village. The scheme is being expanded, and Stobo already supplies broadband to Carlops and is looking to expand further into Midlothian. With a mast on top of Broad Law, it might be possible to supply Tweedsmuir.

3 BT provides the scheme, but the local community, with CBS help, pays for it directly. Bob was unsure how much this would cost, but thought it would be worth asking BT for a quote.

3 Campaign to have the area for the government scheme extended from Broughton to Tweedsmuir, writing to all councillors, MSP and MP as well as BT. Bob was unsure this would be successful and guessed all that might happen is a referral to CBS. This, however, might be worth doing in conjunction with exploration of the other options. If successful, this option would certainly be the most simple. We could argue superfast was vital for the development of the Crook Inn, local businesses and farmers, now that much of their administration work is online only.

Bob also thought it would be worth carrying out a survey of all residents' broadband reception at the moment. This, he said, would help when deciding what type of broadband would be best suited for the area. CBS would provide funds and forms to do this.

The types of broadband are:

Superfast: CBS would look into whether the area could tap into superfast facilities already set up at local windfarms and Scottish Water. Provision for the village would be via what's called a street cabinet. If, as one resident was told by a BT engineer, a fibre optic cable is going to be laid along the valley, this would obviously make life a lot easier. This, however, is not mentioned on the Digital Scotland website when you put in a Tweedsmuir postcode.

Wireless: With the upgrade of the area's mobile reception to G4, this could be an option.

Satellite: This would mean all properties would be covered, even the most remote, but the reception is not ideal and not up to superfast standard. Andrew said he had had satellite before and added that he would hate the idea of having to return to it.

Bob said he would be willing to attend a Community Council meeting, or a meeting set up specifically for broadband provision, at a later date.