

**Minutes of Tweedsmuir Community Council, at Tweedsmuir
Village Hall, on Thursday, March 5 (7.30pm)**

Present: *Mr Gavin Parker (chairman), Mr Brian Bushell (vice-chairman), Mr Paul Greaves (secretary), councillor Ms Kaitlyn Roper, councillor Ms Sarah Northcott, councillor Mrs Lesley Mason, Scottish Borders Councillor Willie Archibald, Mr Steve Sloan and Mr John Thomas, of Borders Forest Trust, and Mr John Wallace, artist. 11 members of the public were also present.*

01.03 APOLOGIES

None.

02.03 MATTERS ARISING

Minutes of the community council meeting on January 29 were approved.

Tour of the Borders

Chairman Mr Gavin Parker said all residents should have received a letter indicating the times local roads would be closed when the tour takes place in August, although a number of people present said they had not received the letter. The secretary said this could be raised when a representative of the Tour visits the CC at its next meeting in April.

Whitehill Brae Windfarm

The secretary confirmed that the CC letter opposing the application by 2020 Renewables to build 14 turbines at Whitehill, now lodged with the Scottish Government, had been sent to the following: The Scottish Government, MSP Christine Grahame, MP David Mundell, local SBC councillors Keith Cockburn, Catriona Bhatia and Willie Archibald, and all members of the planning committee of the Scottish Borders Council.

Mr Greaves said he had received responses from Ms Grahame and Mr Mundell, acknowledging the CC concerns, but no response had been received from any members of the planning committee. The committee will shortly have to send its recommendation to the Scottish Government as part of the decision-making process.

SBC councillor Willie Archibald said councillors were unwilling to offer any response at this stage, but the vice-chairman said a simple acknowledgement of the email would have sufficed.

Resilient Communities

The chairman said he had attended a recent meeting of the Federation of Village Halls where the resilient communities programme was discussed. An offer was made there for a resilient communities representative to come to one of the CC's meetings to explain the programme. Councillors agreed that the secretary should arrange this.

SSE windfarm

The chairman said that representatives from the SSE Clyde windfarm had offered to come to the CC's meeting in April to discuss the windfarm fund and the latest on plans for the Clyde extension. The meeting agreed this should go ahead.

Pothole on A701

The chairman reported that the pothole had been filled in and offered a vote of thanks to the SBC for carrying out this work. However, a number of concerns were raised that the surface had deteriorated since the infill and the hole had reappeared. The secretary agreed to raise this with the council.

Talla signs

Following the recommendation of the CC last month, the chairman reported that the SBC had put up road-ahead closed signs at the Tweedsmuir crossroads during the recent heavy snow, warning drivers that Talla Linns was unsuitable for traffic. Councillor Sarah Northcott suggested that the signs had been left up too long and wondered if there was any mechanism by which they were put up or taken down, while the vice-chairman thought the signs should have been put up at the bottom of the Linns, rather than at the crossroads. The secretary added that the resilient communities programme would include this and the item could be raised again when a representative from the organisation visits the CC.

Gritting

The SBC has agreed to reinstate gritting from the crossroads to the church provided a number of overhanging trees are trimmed. The SBC appealed for residents to organise this, and Mr Rod Sibbald, who lives along the lane, said he was willing to help undertake this. It was agreed that the secretary would contact the SBC to ask for a site meeting when the trees that need to be trimmed could be identified.

03.03 BORDERS FOREST TRUST

Two representatives from the trust - Mr Steve Sloan, chairman, and Mr John Thomas - attended the meeting to outline and discuss the organisation's plans for its Talla/Gameshope site. Mr Sloan said the land was 'iconic and important' and that the trust had been delighted to purchase it in 2013 after an earlier attempt to gain ownership had failed two years earlier. He added that sheep had now been taken off the land in preparation for tree planting, which will be largely natural hardwoods, and the area had been fenced. He added that stiles would be included for access by members of the public as the trust was extremely keen to encourage walking and other leisure pursuits on the site. One of the points of the meeting, he said, was to discover what the local people wanted included at the site. Mr Thomas suggested educational classes, focusing on the vast diversity of plants on the land, could be held at the bothy on the site, while a member of the public suggested parking would be needed for visitors. Mr Sloan said one of the trust's ideas was to link the Talla site with two other pieces of land the trust owns nearby to create a 'Wild Heart of Southern Scotland.' The secretary welcomed this idea as it would attract tourists to the area and, consequently, help plans to reopen the Crook Inn in the village. Following the discussion, it was agreed the trust would supply dates for a site meeting with any villagers who wanted to attend.

The chairman thanked Mr Sloan and Mr Thomas for their attendance.

04.03 THE SAME HILLS PROJECT

Mr John Wallace, a filmmaker and video artist based in Annandale, attended the meeting to outline the project. He explained that the Same Hillside is a video art project, exploring the upland ecosystems around the headwaters of the rivers Annan, Tweed and Clyde, and the relationships humans have with these rivers. He said that during 2015 he would be filming and interviewing extensively in the area, and the resultant films would then be presented as an installation in Berwick, Annan and Glasgow, and near the sources of the rivers. In collaboration with Professor Pete Smith of Aberdeen University, he would be interviewing people who live or work in, or visit the area, to gather their recollections of how things have changed over the years, how they've used the area for work or leisure, and their feelings about the rivers and 'wild places.'

As part of the presentation, Mr Wallace played two short films he had uncovered during his research. They showed Tweedsmuir in 1943 and 1951, and included shots of the source of the Tweed, Tweedsmuir school and Carlowse Bridge. Afterwards, Mr Wallace asked for anyone who knew some of the people featured in the films to contact him, and he was also extremely interested to receive any old photographs or other artefacts from local people to include in the project.

After a fascinating presentation, the chairman thanked Mr Wallace for his attendance.

05.03 COMMUNICATION/WEBSITE

The vice-chairman read out a letter which will be distributed to all residents in the CC area, asking them how they would prefer to be contacted regarding CC business. After a number of suggested changes, it was agreed this letter be sent out, with a two-week deadline for responses. The letter would also include contact details of all councillors and the date of the next CC meeting.

Regarding the proposed new website for the CC, councillor Northcott said she had attended a digital engagement workshop at Napier University, which was attended by many other community council representatives. One of the things she had taken from the meeting was that it was vital to discover what the community wanted from the website, and how the CC should engage with other organisations, in particular with the Tweedsmuir Community Company. It was also important to discover what councillors were willing to contribute to it. With the busy nature of this month's agenda, Ms Northcott suggested the item should be discussed next month when more time would be available.

06.03 GLENKERIE WIND FARM PANEL

The chairman said it had been suggested at a recent panel meeting that two representatives from the Tweedsmuir Community Council should join, bringing the village's allocation to four (Mr Gavin Parker and Mr Duncan Davidson sit on the panel at present as residents). The chairman said the CC would have to make an official approach to the Upper Tweed Community Council, which currently runs the panel, and the meeting agreed that a letter should be sent to Mr Chris Lewin, UTCC chairman, requesting this move.

07.03 CONSTITUTION

The chairman said the CC had still not been constituted because Upper Tweed Community Council was still disputing the boundary of the new body. A meeting has been called by Scottish Borders Council with the UTCC and the CCT to resolve the matter, and the meeting agreed that the chairman should attend.

08.03 CLEAN-UP

It was agreed that a clean-up of the area should take place on the weekend of April 11-12, and there were a number of volunteers for the litter collection from councillors and members of the public at the meeting.

09.03 NAME OF COMMUNITY COUNCIL

It was agreed that the CC should be called the Community Council of Tweedsmuir to prevent any confusion with the Tweedsmuir Community Company. This would, however, require approval by the Scottish Borders Council.

10.03 SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Councillor Archibald reported that the Tweed Forum had met in Peebles on Wednesday, March 4, and had included reports from the police and the NHS. Mr Archibald urged the CC to attend future meetings and said the organisation was a great benefit to the company. He cited funds available for community projects and brought the meeting's attention to the £10,000 grant won by Clovenfords CC for play equipment. The secretary said the CC had not been notified of the meeting until the day of it, but intended to attend future meetings. The next one is planned for May 27.

Mr Archibald also reported that the SBC planned to install permanent traffic lights at the corner of Neidpath Castle, Peebles. There were temporary lights there at the moment.

10.03 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Menzion Road

The vice chairman reported that the road was in poor condition, with many potholes, and said they had caused a broken suspension on his car, for which the SBC would be issued with a compensation claim. It was suggested that there should be a Tweedsmuir-wide review of potholes, while the secretary asked what long-term plans the SBC had for the Menzion Road, which is built on peat and is used by forestry trucks. The secretary agreed to contact the SBC's Jason Hedley regarding the road, while SBC councillor Willie Archibald agreed to bring the matter to the attention of the council.

Carlowse Bridge

The secretary asked Mr Archibald if the SBC would, as promised at a meeting with the community in June last year, supply a full breakdown of all the costs in relation to the Carlowse Bridge repair. Mr Archibald agreed to raise this matter with the council.

Community workshop

The chairman of the Tweedsmuir Community Company, Mr Duncan Davidson, brought the meeting's attention to a community workshop set for the village hall on March 21. The aim of the meeting is to draw upon the experiences of individuals, rural groups or communities to inform and inspire residents of Upper Tweed and others on the scope for projects that can develop, invigorate and support the community. A number of speakers from other community groups will be present. The meeting begins at 10am.

Broughton petrol

Councillor Mason told the meeting that there was now no petrol available in Broughton as the present owner of Broughton garage had decided to concentrate on repairs only.

Police

It was reported that a community police officer, PC Nicky Craig, has been appointed for the area, and would take up her post on March 9.

The next meeting of the CCT is on April 2, at Tweedsmuir Village Hall, on April 2.