

Innerleithen and District Community Council

Minutes of the meeting held 9 January 2023

Present: Susan Meikle (Chair), Gordon Daly (Secretary), Daniel Davis Wood (Minutes Secretary; Treasurer), Ylva Dahnsjo, Colin Williams, Cllr. Julie Pirone.

Apologies: Sheila Daly, Lesley Johnstone, Cllr. Marshall Douglas, Cllr. Robin Tatler.

Absences: Andy Weir, George Brown.

One member of the press was present.

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Administration

1. *Welcome remarks from Chair.* Susan welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised attendees of the fire safety procedures for the Memorial Hall.
2. *Attendance, absences and apologies.* These were noted as above.
3. *Minutes from previous meeting.* Proposed: Gordon. Seconded: Ylva.
4. *Election to unfilled offices.* The office of Vice-Chair remains vacant. Given the absence of four members of IDCC, it was decided to elect an office-bearer at the next meeting.
5. *Notification of any other competent business (AOCB).* Colin raised one item.

Business

1. *Public forum:*

- a. No members of the public were present.

2. *New business:*

- a. No new business was brought forward.

3. *Councillors' reports:*

- a. Cllr. Pirone:
 - i. *Flooding.* Councillors have been doing a lot of work in response to the flooding damage over the festive period, with a focus on Walkerburn

and Tweed Green in Peebles. They are asking for public feedback on any further damage to do with flooding, eg. potholes, so that all necessary repair work can be identified. They are also investigating further measures on flood prevention, such as the state of the release valves near Peebles and the use of emergency generators for pumping activities in flooded areas. The Tweed Valley is next on the Scottish Government's list for a flood defence scheme, such as the one at Grangemouth, but there is currently some wrangling over the prioritisation of funding for this scheme, and there is nothing that SBC can do on its own to implement the scheme. From funding to completion, this would be a five- to ten-year programme. However, further updates are dependent on Scottish Government decisions regarding the allocation of funding.

- ii. *Peebles High School*. All local representatives have asked the council and officials if they can host one or more public sessions with the community to take back comments and feedback. These sessions would take place in Peebles as well as Innerleithen and Walkerburn. The councillors are concerned about delaying the development of the new school, but they also want to make sure that the community has been adequately consulted on facility and the needs it will serve. Colin raised the possibility that the open-plan nature of the development is an issue for school staff and parents of students at the school, given the possibility that excessive noise contributes to disruptive behaviour. Cllr. Pirone said that this is somewhat true, though she stressed that the open-plan aspects were related to breakout groups for students, not classroom spaces as such. Daniel expressed concerns that the open-plan system will also disadvantage deaf students, who require enclosed spaces to minimise background noise, and he pointed out that there are a number of primary-aged deaf students in Tweeddale who will attend the new school in years to come. Cllr. Pirone also mentioned that the dining space and theatre/hall would be smaller than before, though this will be mitigated by having a rotation system in place for the presence of different cohorts of students using these spaces at different times rather than all at once. Colin emphasised that it is important to take time to get the facility right for the community, because it has an excellent reputation for serving a variety of needs and it should continue to do so.
- iii. *Budget survey*. SBC is currently running a public survey to seek input into the budgeting process for the next financial year. Cllr. Pirone said that is important for everybody to contribute, to state their needs and priorities—and not just for things that don't currently receive funding, but also for things that should continue to receive funding. The deadline for responses is mid-February.
- iv. *Community speed testing*. Cllr. Pirone has not seen any results from the 20mph consultation as yet. **ACTION: Cllr. Pirone will report back when she has seen the consultation results.**

- v. *Speeding at Traquair and Kirkhouse*. Cllr. Pirone reported that the pop-up bobby was installed as planned at Kirkhouse. She said that he makes a clear visual impact, though he will be moved to a different location after several weeks, to stop people from getting used to his presence. She anticipates that the average speed for motorists will drop for the duration of his presence in Kirkhouse.
 - vi. *Hall Street carpark*. Cllr. Pirone has not received an update on the scheduling of this work. **ACTION: Cllr. Pirone will seek an update on scheduling and report back next month.**
- b. Cllr. Douglas sent his apologies for this meeting.
 - c. Cllr. Tatler sent his apologies for this meeting.

4. *Matters arising from the previous meeting:*

- a. *Horse-riding*: Susan and Cllr. Pirone agreed not to contact Haughhead Stables, after their intention to do so was pre-empted by the publication of an article in the *Peeblesshire News* and a backlash on Facebook. Daniel has established contact with members of the horse-riding community, identified mounting blocks that might be acquired and installed on the path, and begun the process of applying for funding for this purpose. **ACTION: Susan and Gordon will contact Andy, to connect with Forestry and Land Scotland to discuss the re-implementation of brakes on trails. Gordon will also contact EWS and TweedLove to bring them into this discussion.**
- b. *Drainage on Hall Street*. Discussion of this point at last month's meeting resulted in a plan to produce a list of community contacts, to be displayed on local noticeboards so that members of the public will know who to contact with regard to relevant issues. Daniel drafted the list and sought input from IDCC. The list will soon be put on display. **Issue closed.**
- c. *Warm Spaces*. Daniel has begun the process of applying for Warm Spaces funding and is in contact with the Church of Scotland as a possible venue. The Church is already running a temporary warm bank on Wednesdays—a service that is currently being used by a number of families. **ACTION: Daniel will report back on seeking funding to expand the Church's warm bank service.**
- d. *Hall Street facilities refurbishment*. As reported last month, the Hub CIC will be leading the facilities refurbishment project in conjunction with Adrenalin Uplift. Plans will be out when they are ready. **ACTION: Gordon will invite representatives of The Hub and Adrenalin Uplift to next month's meeting.**
- e. *Placemaking*. Daniel produced a list of community groups and other organisations to be invited to a public meeting on placemaking, ideally sometime in February. He sought IDCC input into this list, to avoid leaving out any parties that should be approached. **ACTION: Daniel will circulate this list**

to IDCC, and IDCC will arrange ways of approaching these parties via correspondence. Daniel will also establish a poll to find a suitable time and date for the public meeting, which will allow these parties to have an input.

- f. *Street lighting*. Daniel will be speaking with Alex Young of the lighting team later in January. He will raise the issues of lighting on St. Ronan's Terrace and Morningside. He will specifically mention the problem of the design of the new lighting—the light shines straight down, rather than in a cone shape, so that there are black spots between the light poles. There is also a light missing on St. Ronan's Terrace, causing one spot to be entirely black.
ACTION: Daniel will seek public input into lighting issues via Facebook, and report back on his conversation with Alex at next month's meeting.
- g. *Mountain Bike Innovation Centre*. Ylva reported that the working group met on December 6 and has decided which route should be taken in terms of finding a design company. There will be another meeting at the end of January to finalise the design brief. **ACTION: Ylva will report back on the January meeting next month.**
- h. *Brodies Mill redevelopment*. Susan could not find a written record indicating that SOSE promised 35 parking spaces at the redevelopment, rather than the 21 spaces mentioned in the planning application. Cllr. Pirone agreed with Susan that this was definitely mentioned at a SOSE meeting in September.
ACTION: Gordon will ask a SOSE representative to attend a future meeting to give an in-person update. Ylva will forward the details of her SOSE contact.

5. Standing items:

- a. *Planning report*. No submitted plans required IDCC feedback.
- b. *Police report*. The police report was circulated prior to the meeting; no comments were made, as few incidents in the report applied to Innerleithen.
- c. *Treasurer's report*. Daniel has submitted all documentation to the Bank of Scotland, to become a signatory to the IDCC account. He has also met with Jackie Couchman to obtain papers relating to the anti-dog fouling project.
- d. *Wind farm updates*:
 - a. *Scawd Law*: Colin reported that Fred Olsen Renewables has submitted its planning application to the energy consents unit of the Scottish Government. It involves eight volumes of paperwork, all of which are available for public consultation in The Allotment. A summary is also available for download from the Fred Olsen Renewables website, along with the detailed documentation. Colin noted that the application submission was advertised in the *Southern Reporter*, but not in the *Peeblesshire News*. This is unfortunate, since the statutory notification period for public responses ends soon, on February 13. Colin reported that Fred Olsen might be amenable to a one-month

extension of this period. He also said there will be an informal drop-in public consultation in Walkerburn on January 25, and it's possible that a similar event could be held in Innerleithen around the same time.

Colin's initial response to the application is that it is competent, and that Fred Olsen is a reputable wind farm operator. He expressed concerns over the visuals of the development and the details of the community benefit scheme. The development will comprise eight turbines on Scawd Law, 180m from base to tip, as well as site access tracks, site foundations, transformer housing, a wind monitoring mast, a 12 MW battery storage facility, etc. Each turbine will also have a light fixture, as is required for any structure over 150m in height.

The community benefit scheme would see Fred Olsen paying a sum of £5,000 per MW per annum into a fund which would be shared between the various communities affected by the development. This would come to approximately £240,000 per year, or almost £8.5 million over the 35-year lifespan of the development. However, the distribution of these funds among communities is at the developer's discretion. The developer is also open to shared ownership for those communities that opt into this aspect of the benefit scheme.

Colin emphasised that Fred Olsen believes that the installation of MTB tracks and multi-use trails around the development should not form part of the current application. Fred Olsen has published a memorandum of understanding, in which it is promised that these tracks *will* be part of the development, but the developer's position is that the details of tracks should be reserved for a *second* planning application which will be submitted after the current one has been approved. Colin mentioned that this benefit is over and above anything to do with the community benefit funding, and that the relevant documentation for the tracks appears in appendix 20.3 in the documents held at The Allotment.

Colin pointed out three further aspects of the application to note:

1. Fred Olsen makes a point of saying that there is an intention to support the local supply chain, but there are no details on how this might happen (eg. a list of local contractors to approach, an assessment of contractors' suitability for various services).

2. The application says that the development site lies wholly within the Walkerburn Community Council area. This was indeed the case when the development was first proposed, but it is no longer the case: an access track and a construction compound would both be sited within IDCC boundaries. As a result, the IDCC area would be a host community for some infrastructure, even if that infrastructure doesn't include the turbines. Cllr. Pirone said that Innerleithen's stake in any community benefit funding would probably depend on whether the construction compound is temporary or permanent.

3. The application does not currently acknowledge the golf course as a destination in its own right for mountain biking. It says that there would be little to no visual impact for users of the golf course, but cyclists who begin a downhill run above the golf course will be close to turbines—within about 800m—so the impact will be significant.

ACTION: Colin will ask Fred Olsen Renewables for an extension to the deadline for public responses. He will also ask them to arrange a drop-in session in Innerleithen around the same time as the Walkerburn drop-in, towards the end of January.

ACTION: Susan will keep the application documents in The Allotment, where they will be made accessible to members of the public. Daniel will produce a leaflet for display on noticeboards, informing the public of the plans and inviting them to submit their feedback.

ACTION: at the February meeting, IDCC will discuss the following questions: (1) Do we support this development? (2) Do we want to make the case to SBC that Fred Olsen Renewables should include details of MTB tracks and multi-use trails in the current application? (3) Do we want to take up the offers of community benefit funding and community ownership?

- b. *Leithenwater:* At the December meeting, it was agreed that IDCC should seek the views of another community close to a Belltown Power development, to get a realistic sense of what the Leithenwater development might involve. **ACTION:** Ylva will write to a community council located near a Belltown sites, to ask for their experiences.
- c. *Cloich Forest:* Gordon has given Colin the SEI details for the development submission. **ACTION:** Colin will look at the plans and report back next month.

e. *Campaigns updates:*

- a. *Anti-dog fouling.* Daniel has a contact at Eshiels who will distribute waste bags when they have been sourced. New waste bags will be sourced once Daniel is a signatory to the IDCC bank account.
- b. *Cycling on pavements.* Daniel reported a December incidence rate of 3.8%. He noted that IDCC had received recent correspondence from a member of the public, who described a group of cyclists on the pavement on Leithen Road. The correspondence asked for signage to be installed regularly along Leithen Road. IDCC has previously agreed to discuss new signage if the incidence rate rises above 6%. The Leithen Road carpark may be a hotspot for cycling on pavements, however, so the localised incidence rate may be higher than 3.8%.

10. AOCB:

- a. *Flood damage to the banks of the Tweed.* Colin noticed that part of the banks of the Tweed has been washed away. The damage appears on the multi-use path, just after the rise in elevation near the Haughhead Bridge. ACTION: Cllr. Pirone will ask Neil Pringle to investigate and see if anything can be done.

11. *Correspondence.* The following correspondence was circulated prior to the meeting:

- a. David Robertson (Acting SBC Chief Executive) regarding the SBC budget survey, Ross Sharp-Dent (SBC Waste Management) regarding the SBC waste and recycling survey, and Lynne Cuerden (SBC Democratic Services) regarding the Tweeddale Citizen of the Year scheme. ACTION: Daniel will publicise all three of these on Facebook, with a request for public input.
- b. SBCCN regarding the next meeting on January 18. ACTION: Susan will try to attend the meeting on behalf of IDCC; otherwise, Gordon will try to attend.
- c. Jill Westwood from CAB, regarding the CAB's new campaign: Big Energy-Saving Winter. ACTION: Gordon will circulate this correspondence.
- d. SPEN update from Allan Johnston (see Appendix).

12. *Thanks and congratulations.* None.

13. *Forthcoming events.* None.

14. *Items to be taken in private.* No items were taken in private.

Next meeting: Monday, 6 February 2023, 7.15pm, Memorial Hall Council Chamber.

Chair: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Appendix

Correspondence from SPEN, courtesy of Allan Johnston

Update received from Trevor Weddell, Head of Supply, SPEN:

I am dropping a quick note to you to pass over information to the community in regards to works that have been ongoing over the past 2 days at the end of the High Street/ Bridgend. We had two instances of fuses blowing on the LV network from Lee Pen s/s which interrupted customers and for this I would like to pass on my apologies. Due to the time of year with the festive period fast approaching we did not want to risk customer being impacted again especially on the festive holidays, we took the reactive decision to carry out some invasive works to add in a new LV switching point to a) reduce the risk to the customers of further interruptions on the low voltage network and b) to provide a more accessible testing point to find the actual fault.

I am happy to report that the staff last night completed the new low voltage link box / switching point and also found and permanently repaired the low voltage cable fault which was the initial cause of the two interruptions earlier in the week. I had a report from site last night that some residents were calling into question as to why we were doing this work now, especially with Christmas around the corner but as I have explained above the last thing we want is a protracted cable fault during the holiday period with customers impacted by an unplanned outage. Please pass on my apologies for the works/ barriers on the street, we have passed the details to the reinstatement contractor first thing this morning to get the holes backfilled and completed for the end of the week.

Other works that are ongoing just now is that we have installed 120 bird flight diverter devices to the 22kv overhead line to date and another 250 were due to be installed this week. The devices are slowly being delivered to us and we are installing them as we receive them, investment wise the devices are £70 plus vat each so hopefully these devices will make a difference to the bird related transient trips. We are also currently in the midst of changing a secondary substation at Bridgend in Innerleithen so there will be some civil works being carried out there over a two week period by a company called Kelbourne who are creating a plinth for a new secondary substation as part of our investment programme.