

# Innerleithen and District Community Council

## Minutes of the meeting held 3 April 2023

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

**Apologies:** Lesley Johnstone, Andy Weir, George Brown.

**Absences:** None.

Three members of the public were present. 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: Ylva. Seconded: Sheila.
4. *Election to unfilled offices.* The office of Vice-Chair remains vacant. Given the absence of three members of IDCC, it was decided to elect an office-bearer at the next meeting.
5. *Notification of any other competent business (AOCB).* Ylva raised one item.

### Business

1. *Public forum:*
  - a. *Parking at events.* A member of the public reported parking difficulties along Traquair Road during the recent Scottish Downhill event. He said that Scottish Downhill received an event license without appropriate traffic management plans in place and he expressed concerns about an accident. Cllr. Pirone and Cllr. Tatler said they would have had to seek council advice on safety action. **ACTION: Cllr. Pirone will pick up this issue with her contacts in the police force, although she noted that some smaller-scale events are held to be responsible for their own traffic management plans if the police do not require road closures.** The member of the public asked about the possibility of accessing SBC funding for new trailhead signage regarding parking. Cllr. Douglas noted that Peebles has

recently set up a retailers' association and he said that Innerleithen could do likewise, which would establish leadership for applications for such funding.

**ACTION: Susan will contact local retailers about setting up a retailers' association.**

- b. *Traffic at the top of Traquair Road.* The same member of the public reported traffic problems at the top of Traquair Road, particularly with regard to logging lorries and buses and an inability to see around the corner. Because this part of the road is functionally part of the High Street, he said it should have double-yellow lines. Cllr. Tatler repeated his point from earlier meetings, which is that traffic infringements are a criminal issue in the Borders, meaning that the responsibility for enforcement lies with the police, who lack the resources to deal with it; but if it were to be decriminalised, enforcement could be delegated to parking wardens. **ACTION: Cllr. Pirone will raise the issue of Traquair Road parking for the Community Action Team to look into. Cllr. Douglas urged anyone who sees a vehicle parked on double-yellow lines to phone 101; this will also generate statistics that bring issues to the attention of the CAT team. Daniel will write to Scottish Borders Council on behalf of IDCC to express support for the decriminalisation of traffic infringements and the employment of wardens.**
- c. *Broadband.* The same member of the public complained about the lack of fibre to the premises for local businesses based around Station Yard and food stores' warehouses. He said that residential premises nearby have fibre connections, but not business premises, which have to struggle with 6-7mB upload—not sufficient for video calling. **ACTION: Cllr. Tatler mentioned that BT Openreach have a programme of installing new infrastructure for greater capacity and said that he will find out where Innerleithen sits on that programme.**

## 2. New business:

- a. *Speeding at Cardrona.* A member of the public reported, via correspondence, that many drivers in several hotspots in Cardrona are regularly breaking the 20mph speed limit. He has been in contact with Cllr. Pirone, who has shared statistics which show a widespread drop in speeding across Cardrona although not necessarily in the hotspots of concern. Cllr. Pirone has visited the gentleman's residence and understands that traffic is indeed fast at his part of the road; the concerns are serious. **ACTION: Cllr. Pirone will investigate the possibility of installing a pop-up bobby in the area as well as signage urging drivers to slow down. She has also discussed the community speed watch scheme with the gentleman and encouraged him to take part.** Cllr. Douglas noted that there is resident signage already on the road, though technically this is not compliant with regulations and should not be placed on public infrastructure. He also said that due to the fact that the road is not a through road, it is likely that the speeding drivers are residents of Cardrona or delivery drivers. Susan said that the member of the public could take the issue to the Cardrona Village Association.

### 3. Councillors' reports:

#### a. Cllr. Pirone:

- i. *Antisocial behaviour at Waverley Mills.* Cllr. Pirone raised this issue with the police after a recent incident. Police were aware of residents' feelings and attempted to calm the situation. They have the names of some of the people involved but it is difficult to take further action without firm evidence of the behaviour. Evidence-gathering of future incidents may be done via the installation of private CCTV that catches offenders in the act. More broadly, Cllr. Pirone has asked police about what else they could do regarding youth engagement in Innerleithen. She urged everyone to call either 999 (if threatened by an incident) or 101 (to report an incident) or to visit the Police Scotland website to record an incident in writing. The issue, of course, is that crowds have usually dispersed by the time police officers arrive at an incident, but reporting incidents is always useful.
- ii. *Mobile CCTV units.* Cllr. Pirone said that Scottish Borders Council is about to procure mobile CCTV units, as the police currently have, which will allow for greater security across the Borders.
- iii. *Community Speed Testing.* Cllr. Pirone said that police are preparing the community speed testing scheme, drafting communications forms which will soon be sent to community councils for feedback.
- iv. *Live Borders.* SBC has agreed to give Live Borders more funding for energy costs; the charity is struggling financially at the moment. There is a broader review of Live Borders services underway, which will impact on leisure facilities across the region.
- v. *Housing Association cases.* Cllr. Pirone has been paying attention to the resolution of difficulties and preferences among Housing Association tenants. She is hopeful that the people involved will get homes they want and all relevant issues will be sorted out.

#### b. Cllr. Douglas:

- a. *Tweeddale Area Partnership meeting.* The most recent TAP meeting discussed placemaking as well as the Climate Action Network, which is offering funding (via the Sustainable Development Fund) for projects that take measures to address the climate emergency. The meeting also made decisions on funding for local organisations, including the Silver Band (£1800) and the volunteer programme at St. Ronan's Wells gardens (£3771)—with congratulations to both organisations.
- b. *Closure of public toilets.* Cllr. Douglas said that fourteen public toilets are due to close across the Scottish Borders, although they are not new closures; they are facilities that have been closed throughout the Covid period. Although none of the closures will affect Innerleithen, Peebles might be affected by closures at Kings Meadows and the

station carpark. However, Cllr. Douglas said that Common Good might be able to maintain the Kings Meadows toilets, and the station carpark has also been taken on by SBC, so the issue is not yet settled.

- c. *Cycling championships*. The championships are coming up in August and there will be lots of forthcoming information, including dialogue with community councils.
  - d. *School buses*. Cllr. Douglas was involved in a meeting in early April regarding school bus services. There have been problems with pupils' behaviour across the Scottish Borders; small groups of people are causing damage and panic among other students by smoking and using spray cans on school transport. All of these issues are being looked at and may result in the banning of particular individuals from school transport. Regarding problems with the X62 service: these were affected by delays from Edinburgh, but the timetable issues seem to be resolved now and monitoring is ongoing. Cllr. Douglas has also been looking at school bus transport for next academic year. He said that there should be enough room on the buses for all students who are supposed to use these services, and the issuing of new bus passes to ensure that the right students are on the buses to which they have been allocated. Finally, he said that the teams responsible for coordinating the school bus routes will be communicating more with parents going forward.
  - e. *Temporary flood defences*. The flood defences on the multi-use path are still temporary; Scottish Borders Council is still trying to devise a proper scheme to repair the riverbank and protect the path.
- c. Cllr. Tatler:
- a. *Bridge at Leithen Crescent*. Cllr. Tatler noted that the scheduled repair work has been done.
  - b. *Hall Street facilities*. Cllr. Tatler and the other councillors have been working closely with representatives of The Hub CIC to get this issue resolved. He said that progress *is* being made, and that he and the other councillors regularly remind the full council that Innerleithen needs permanent facilities, not just temporary facilities for cycling events. There will be a meeting on 12 April looking at facilities for the town, with an eye towards the long-term needs that would help with the numbers of cyclists Innerleithen receives. SOSE will lead this meeting, with SBC in attendance alongside invited stakeholders—although, very unfortunately, the Hub representatives are not able to attend. Cllr. Tatler said that the meeting will require thinking about short-term, medium-term, and long-term needs, with the Hall Street facilities falling into the short-term category as the vision is clear.

Representatives of The Hub CIC were in attendance and explained that they became involved with refurbishing the hall Street facilities when lockdown restrictions were lifted in July 2020, anticipating an inundation of cyclists. They approached Scottish Borders Council at the time, thinking that the building—which already had drainage—could be refitted in a matter of weeks. Since then, however, there have been many meetings regarding the refurbishment, as well as the involvement of SOSE and Oberlanders Architects, but still no lease from SBC. SBC won't arrange a community asset transfer because the building is too close to council ground, but nothing can be done without a lease—or even a lease agreed in principle. This has been a frustrating, disheartening, and embarrassing experience for all involved, resulting in an impossible situation: SBC are asking The Hub CIC for a license for drainage via Scottish Water, but The Hub can't get the license because SBC won't arrange it. The planning package for refurbishments is ready to go with architects and building warrants, etc., but it can't be submitted without a lease, which was first discussed 19 months ago—and SBC are saying they are too overworked in that department to get the lease turned around.

Cllr. Tatler said that the community asset transfers process needs updating. **ACTION: Cllr. Tatler will ask for the April meeting to be put back by one week, so that the Hub representatives are able to attend. The Bike Shop will also be invited. Cllr. Tatler will report back on the outcome of the meeting.**

- c. *Common Good meeting.* Cllr. Tatler said that the recent Common Good meeting was looking at how to improve the Memorial Hall grounds, after the Memorial Hall user group came up with suggestions that have been previously minuted.

#### 4. *Matters arising from the previous meeting:*

- a. *King's Coronation funding:* George was in touch with Innerleithen Church of Scotland regarding cooperation on funding for a public event. However, the Church has declined IDCC's support, as the planned Church event was to be open only to over-60s and any funding application for the coronation must be freely available to all members of the public. Given that the funding application deadline is next week and IDCC has no plans for arranging an alternative event, no application will be made. **ACTION: issue closed.**
- b. *New noticeboard at The Bike Shop.* The noticeboard has arrived and has been put up, and now The Bike Shop is asking about payment for a sum of approximately £280. The noticeboard was chosen without input from IDCC, and appears to be smaller than the previous noticeboard. IDCC also received no input into its installation or notification that it would happen. Susan is concerned about the policing of the noticeboard with regard to community

notices. Cllr. Douglas noted that the original board was the property of IDCC, and that the agreement between The Bike Shop and IDCC was for the provision of a community council noticeboard regardless of payment. The shop has previously had a key to unlock the noticeboard, but only for convenience: it is IDCC's noticeboard, as is the one at the Coop. **ACTION: The Bike Shop will forward the invoice for the noticeboard. Susan will ask Jackie Couchman about the terms of the agreement with The Bike Shop.**

- c. *Horse-riding*. As Andy sent his apologies for this meeting, this issue will be carried forward to next month's meeting.
- d. *Warm Spaces*. Daniel reported that the "warm bank" arranged in cooperation with Innerleithen Church of Scotland made good inroads into providing a refuge for people in need of a warm place to be during the daytime in winter. It ran for four weeks throughout March, in four-hour blocks, and had around 80 attendances during that time, although (as expected) these fluctuated depending on the weather—the colder days at the beginning of March were more heavily attended than the springtime days at the end of the month. If the Warm and Well funding is made available by SBC for the winter of 2023-24, IDCC may want to revive this project. **Issue closed.**
- e. *SPEN cabling upgrades*. Gordon met with representatives of SPEN to discuss their plans on getting upgraded cables from Yair to Innerleithen. The cables will be taken along the main road, as much as possible on the verges. Work is ongoing and future meetings will be held as work progresses. **Issue closed.**
- f. *Placemaking*. Gordon has been trying to get people together for a meeting at the end of April. He has created an email group called PM in the innerscc@gmail.com contacts service, but so far responses have been very limited. Susan asked whether it might be better to get a survey running, rather than trying to pin people down to a meeting. Cllr. Douglas said that an online survey on Innerleithen Online could be useful to get ideas coming through, which will allow support and funding from SBC to kick in. Gordon said that the Community Trust is keen to get involved but doesn't want to initiate and lead the project. The stumbling block is with galvanising people around the *possibility* of placemaking—there is a sense that it is asking a lot. One possibility would be to conduct a survey online, which is also accessible at stalls and in shops via a QR code so that people can fill it out on their mobile devices. Cllr. Douglas said this is a good idea, because we would need to gather data first in order to unlock further funding. Colin suggested that we should illustrate what is possible so that people can see what the ideas are, and this will help to encourage them to commit to a meeting at another date. **ACTION: IDCC will confer about questions to put into an online survey.**
- g. *Brodies Mill redevelopment*. Ylva said that funding has come through for the completion of an initial design by the end of May. The Caerlee Mill Heritage Trust—the working group responsible for the cultural and historical side of the redevelopment—will work with the designers on producing the content.

## 5. Standing items:

### a. *Planning report:*

- a. *St. Ronan's Mount, Traquair Road.* No objections.
- b. *WHP Telecoms.* IDCC received a pre-planning application consultation document regarding the installation of a 25m-high telecom tower close to the top of the Minch Moor, near the Cheese Well, directly beside the Southern Upland Way. The proposal caused some concern about its impact on an area of beauty and a major asset for hillwalkers in the locality. **ACTION: Daniel will write to WHP Telecoms on behalf of IDCC, to express disapproval of the proposal. Cllr. Douglas will post the documents on Innerleithen Online to raise public awareness. Colin mentioned that the Scottish Borders Rangers Service has an obligation to maintain the SWA within SBC boundaries. Daniel will contact them as well as TVTA and other walking groups, along with the Traquair Hall committee, to make them aware of the proposals and encourage them to provide feedback.**

b. *Police report.* No report was received prior to the meeting. When received, it will be circulated with the agenda for next month.

c. *Treasurer's report.* No further updates aside from the noticeboard costs.

### d. *Wind farm updates:*

- a. *Scawd Law:* Colin has submitted representation to support the application, following IDCC deliberations on various issues. A community liaison group meeting was to be held, regarding the administration of community benefit funding and recognition of communities in proximity to the development. Arranging a date for this meeting took three weeks, however, making attendance difficult. But there will also be a virtual meeting with representatives of IDCC. Additionally, Colin is keeping track of the application online and responses are coming in on technicalities such as the effects on golden eagles. Other community councils within the Scottish Borders have also offered responses.
- b. *Leithenwater:* Public exhibition promotional materials have been sent and are being received, advertising a public exhibition later in April.

### e. *Campaigns updates:*

- a. *Anti-dog fouling.* No further updates, pending Daniel becoming a signatory to the IDCC bank account.
- b. *Cycling on pavements.* Observed incidents of cycling on pavements throughout March were around 3%, though Daniel noted that there was a recent uptick (on the first weekend in April) probably due to the Scottish Downhill event.

10. AOCB:

- a. *Notices against washing bikes in the river.* Ylva has noted that people are washing their bikes in or near the rivers. There used to be signs around waterways to say how sensitive the environment is, but these have disappeared. She asked whether some of those signs could be refreshed and/or replaced. Cllr. Tatler said that SBC will put up signs at the Ley and at the Cauld, outlining the “dos and don’ts”—they’re coming soon. **Issue closed.**

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

- a. Fiona Benton, regarding a potential conference for SBCCN
- b. Harry Whitmore, regarding South of Scotland Community Housing
- c. Jenny Cairns, regarding the FLS Plan for Glentress, Cardrona and Cademuir
- d. Denise Brydon, regarding the UCI World Cycling Championships
- e. SPEN update from Allan Johnston (see Appendix).

12. *Thanks and congratulations.* Cllr. Pirone and Susan thanked the Innerleithen and District Operatic Society for their performance of *Shrek*. The consensus was that the show was fantastic—great value with wonderful performances and set design, and great communal energy around being able to gather together for live theatre after a long delay.

13. *Forthcoming events.* None.

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

**Next meeting:** Monday, 15 May 2023, 7.15pm, Memorial Hall Council Chamber.

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix

## Correspondence from SPEN, courtesy of Allan Johnston

On 10th March representatives of Innerleithen and District Community Council, Walkerburn Community Council and Clovenfords Community Council met with Jerome Bell and Sean Gavaghan from SPEN to receive an update on the route of the underground cable from Yair to upgrade the Electricity Supply to Yair, Peel, Innerleithen and Walkerburn.

Jerome Bell is the project lead on this and he explained that the current overhead 22kV supply is somewhat outdated and prone to outages for various reasons such as Bird Strikes and Tree Branches falling on the line.

Finance is now in place following a protracted local campaign to upgrade the network to make it much more resilient and tendering work is expected to commence before the end of this year with a target completion by the end of 2025.

As recent as this week further design and financial approvals this week for the modernisation plans for Yair – Innerleithen, so switchgear will be getting ordered for Yair Bridge Primary substation. These are the 1st steps in the major project roll out.

The most cost-effective route is to bring the cable from Yair Substation to the Innerleithen Primary using the road network a total of 18 Km. The road network route is guaranteed to be the quickest route to ensure completion by the due date however, there will be a certain amount of disruption to traffic while the work is carried out. This will be minimised with the work being worked on 200m sections.

The priority at this time is to remedy the issues at Walkerburn by connecting Walkerburn to the Innerleithen Primary first and carrying out additional work on the Walkerburn substation.

Resident of all three areas can be assured that although disruption is inevitable planned outages will be well communicated in advance and vulnerable businesses, institutions and individuals will be offered equipment to keep them on supply. Such people will be contacted directly by SPEN.

Residents are requested to have patience while this work is carried out. The result on completion will offer a “city” level reliable electricity supply to the three areas with the overhead network maintained as an emergency backup.