

# Innerleithen and District Community Council

## Minutes of the meeting held 29 September 2023

**Present:** Susan Meikle (Chair), Daniel Davis Wood (Minutes Secretary; Treasurer), Colin Williams, Andy Weir, George Brown, Ylva Dahnsjo, Cllr. Marshall Douglas.

**Apologies:** Cllr. Julie Pirone, Cllr. Robin Tatler.

**Absences:** None.

One member of the public was present. No members of the press were present.

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### Administration

1. *Welcome remarks from Chair.* Susan welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting was held on MS Teams due to the late cancellation of the meeting planned for 4 September in the Memorial Hall.
2. *Attendance, absences and apologies.* These were noted as above. In addition, Susan noted that Gordon, Sheila, and Lesley have all tendered their resignations from the Community Council. This leaves IDCC with a current membership of six, which makes it difficult to ratify decisions because two absences would mean that we are without a quorum. Susan hopes to grow the membership and noted that the member of the public who was in attendance is looking ahead to being co-opted as a member of IDCC.
3. *Minutes from previous meeting.* Proposed: Daniel. Seconded: Daniel.
4. *Election to unfilled offices.* The office of Vice-Chair remains vacant. Gordon's resignation also means that the office of Secretary has been vacated. Daniel will take on the office of Secretary on a temporary basis to be reviewed at the first meeting in 2024.
5. *Notification of any other competent business (AOCB).* No items were raised.

### Business

1. *Public forum.* No members of the public were present.
2. *New business*
  - a. *New meeting times.* Daniel conducted a survey of IDCC members to agree a new meeting time, as moving the meeting times might allow new members to join. **It was agreed that IDCC will now meet on the last Monday of the month at 7.15pm.**

- b. *Remembrance Sunday*. Susan asked about plans for Remembrance Sunday. Cllr. Douglas confirmed that road closures are in place, in both Innerleithen and Traquair, which will allow members of the public to walk from the Church of Scotland to the memorials but will not allow a traditional parade. The Church of Scotland has set the schedule for the event and the road closures have been organised around the timings of this schedule. Susan was hoping for Brownies and Rainbows to gather with a larger crowd, but such an event would require a different type of permission and new licensing. The plan remains for everyone to gather at the memorial, though the road will be able to use for walking. **ACTION: Daniel will arrange the purchase of wreaths for these events.**
- c. *Walking Festival*. Correspondence was received from Denise Brydon, regarding expressions of interest for hosting the Scottish Borders Walking Festival in 2025 or 2026. Susan thinks we should make a bid to become the host for one of these years, together with Walkerburn. Susan has already taken this idea to Walkerburn Community Council. Although her suggestion initially wasn't received with enthusiasm, because hosting the festival is a huge undertaking, discussions in Walkerburn seem to be warming to the idea of doing a smaller festival, possibly just for a weekend. Walkerburn CC will come back to IDCC with a response once they have decided.
 

Innerleithen did host the festival in 2013; George was chair of the group that organised it. This mostly involved organising buses for drop-off transportation, and volunteers to lead group walks. Daniel noted that there is still about £1300 in the IDCC bank account, earmarked for activities related to this festival. It might be possible to use this for weekend events associated with the festival. **ACTION: we will await a response from Walkerburn before putting in an expression of interest for 2025-26 and/or moving forward with plans for a weekend event.**
- d. *Hillside Outside parking facility*. Correspondence was received from Hollie Marshall of Hillside Outside, regarding measures that are being taken to address public complaints about the handling of previous Hillside Outside events. Susan was pleased to report that Hillside Outside have taken our suggestions onboard with regard to parking and other difficult areas of public management for an event in early October. **Issue closed.**
- e. *Phone boxes*. Daniel contacted BT in response to newspaper reports that suggested that IDCC could adopt the two phone boxes, on the High Street and Ballantyne Street, at a cost of £1 each. In fact, only the Ballantyne Street phone box is available for adoption as BT imposes a threshold on adoption (a phone must make fewer than 52 calls per year to be adopted) and the High Street box is still above this threshold. **ACTION: Daniel will pursue adoption of the Ballantyne Street box, as a trial run for the eventual adoption of the High Street box. Daniel will also request that BT clean up the High Street box, and an up-to-date document showing the most recent usage of the phone inside.**

### 3. *SBC Councillors' reports*

- a. *Cllr. Douglas:*
  - a. *Tweeddale Area Partnership*. The partnership has set up a flood group, which communities are invited to join. The group will not look at flood prevention, but rather flood warnings and coping with the danger of impending floods. Volunteers who wish to be involved can contact the partnership.

- b. *Scawd Law Wind Farm*. The application for the Scawd Law development was supposed to be looked at by the SBC planning committee in October. But this is unlikely to happen and the timeframe will be extended, due to the need for new reports from the energy consents unit and landscape architects.
- c. *Erosion repairs*. Repairs on the riverside are underway between Innerleithen and Walkerburn. The bags have been taken out and piles are being driven in, to build out the riverbank and secure it. Technically, the work in the river should be finished by the end of the month. There will then be groundworks done on the riverbank, but not within the river. Colin and Susan were concerned about local media reports regarding the Community Trust's handling of complaints about the repairs; these were misattributed to IDCC. **ACTION: Daniel will write to the Peeblesshire News to request a correction of the record.** Andy noted that the area of the multi-use path that was under threat of erosion is the most-used stretch of Sustrans path in all of the Scottish Borders. It's a valuable asset and one that is important to repair, so praise is due to everyone who acted on this.
- d. *Annual accounts*. At the most recent full council meeting, annual accounts were audited and accepted without modifications.
- e. *CCTV*. SBC is considering installing CCTV in seven Borders towns. Innerleithen may be consulted on whether members of the public want to be in this scheme.
- f. *Short-term lets*. The legislation for the licensing of short-term lets has gone through. From now on, all short-term letting properties will have to be licensed. Costs for property owners are not onerous (about £300 for a two-year license) and the legislation will make sure that short-term lets are properly regulated. Andy noted that Innerleithen is in a difficult situation, in terms of needing properties to let for the numbers of tourists who come to the town, but also needing accommodation for local people. It would therefore be a healthy thing for the town even if short-term lets turned into long-term lets, to free up housing for residents of the community.

b. *Cllr. Pirone:*

- a. Cllr. Pirone gave her apologies for this meeting.

c. *Cllr. Tatler:*

- a. Cllr. Tatler gave his apologies for this meeting.

4. *Matters arising from the previous meeting:*

- a. *Placemaking*. Daniel attended an online placemaking meeting in July, which brought together placemaking groups from localities across Scotland. It was generally useful to hear how placemaking has unfolded in areas closer to Innerleithen (eg. several groups from Dumfries were represented) but ultimately it did not tell us anything we didn't already know. **ACTION: Daniel will pick up placemaking correspondence as he fills in the office of Secretary for the remainder of the year.**

- b. *WHP Telecoms*. Daniel was unhappy to report that the telecommunications mast to be installed on the Minch Moor has received planning approval from SBC. Colin confirmed this. Daniel had submitted two formal objections (one on behalf of IDCC, one as an individual) and had reached out to TVTA and the Southern Upland Way rangers to persuade them to issue their own objections, but they did not engage with the process. Cllr. Douglas reported that such planning applications must receive at least five objections within a certain timescale in order to go to the planning committee. This application received only four (although it received nine or ten others after the deadline for responses). He emphasised that many applications are now only advertised online via SBC, not necessarily in the *Peeblesshire News*, so we need to be vigilant about these things and perhaps coordinate a wider community response in future. **Issue closed.**
- c. *Brodies Mill redevelopment*. Ylva reported that a representative of the architectural firm (Bright) would like to attend the next meeting of IDCC to discuss the redevelopment. Bright have been given the contract for the exterior artwork, signage interpretation, and interiors, and they seem to still want our input and ideas from people who worked at the mill. They also want more input on the Alexander Brodie phase of the mill, which isn't covered in much detail in historical documents, although Ylva is contacting archivists for assistance. **ACTION: Ylva will invite Bright to the next meeting of IDCC or the one after that. She will emphasise that this is a public meeting which might be publicly reported, so Bright should prepare remarks with this in mind.**
- d. *Littering*. The issue of the placement of bins on the High Street seems to be satisfactory for now. Issue closed. George is in ongoing contact with Campbell Johnston regarding trees in Victoria Park. **ACTION: George will report back on the trees at the next meeting.**

5. *Standing items:*

- a. *Planning report:*
  - a. Update on two objections to High Street redevelopments. Daniel objected to two redevelopment proposals for the old Post Office and the village store, on behalf of IDCC. **ACTION: Daniel will report back if SBC responds to objections.**
  - b. No objections were raised on the following planning applications: Former Gas Works, Princes Street; 83 High Street; Maneesha, Pirn Road; 5-2 Peebles Road; Land Northeast of Glenormiston; 61 Leithen Road; and Vale of Leithen Social Club (Liquor and Licensing). There have been a number of public objections to the Former Gas Works redevelopment, though IDCC does not have an agreed position on this. Daniel has objected as a private individual. Andy said that he thinks the IDCC process of using email discussion to respond to planning applications is working well. Generally, IDCC members are advised of planning applications as soon as possible and have the opportunity to comment before the deadline for objects closes.
- b. *Police report*. The police report for August was received prior to this meeting and has been circulated with these minutes.

- c. *Treasurer's report.* Daniel has become a signatory to the IDCC bank account after twelve months of pursuing RBS. He is now in the process of gaining access to internet banking.
- d. *Wind farm updates:*
  - a. *Scawd Law.* No updates on the Scawd Law development, other than what was reported by Cllr. Douglas above. There is still a Memorandum of Understanding between Fred Olsen and the Innerleithen Community Trust regarding shared ownership, stipulating community benefits of £5,000 per megawatt generated.
  - b. *Leithenwater.* Colin has been in email contact with the developers, who have confirmed that they are going to do community consultation events in Eddleston on the morning of 14 November and Innerleithen Memorial Hall in the afternoon, probably between 3.00pm and 7.00pm. They will do further events at the Peebles Rugby Club on 15 November. They intend to talk about community benefit, the administration of that, and also community shared ownership. They are offering 1% free shared ownership plus another 4% that could be invested on at cost, and then another 5%, which would be on the market value of the wind farm. But they are still working up more detailed proposals for these elements. **ACTION: Colin will check in with them at the end of October.**
  - c. *Communications.* Ylva asked for an update on formal communications with developers regarding community benefits and shared ownership. Colin said that at the moment the Community Trust receives formal communications, and IDCC could ask for regular updates on the basis of those. However, he noted that there is some reluctance for updates to be given in a public forum while they are up in the air. Cllr. Douglas said that communications and other agreements should not be run solely through the Community Trust, nor should the Trust receive all funding from community benefits. **ACTION: George will request communications with the Community Trust at the next Trust meeting in October. Daniel will follow up on this request in writing.**
- e. *Campaigns updates:*
  - a. *Anti-dog fouling.* No updates further to last meeting.
  - b. *Cycling on pavements.* No updates further to last meeting.

6. *AOCB.* None.

7. *Correspondence:*

- a. Correspondence was received from: Marion Livingston of the Scottish Borders National Park proposal; John Henderson of SBC, regarding two road closures; and Denise Brydon of the Walking Festival, as discussed above.

8. Thanks and congratulations:

- a. George gave congratulations to Durty Brewing on the opening of their new venue.

9. Forthcoming events:

- a. None.

10. Matters to be taken in private:

- a. None.

NEXT MEETING: 30 October 2023, 7.15pm @ Council Chamber, Memorial Hall