

EAST LAMMERMUIR COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT OLDHAMSTOCKS VILLAGE HALL ON TUESDAY 3RD DECEMBER 2024

PRESENT: Chris Bruce Chair (Oldhamstocks), Colin Bloomfield Treasurer (Stenton), Wendy Smillie (Oldhamstocks), Anne Lyall - remote (Spott), Kelvin D'Arcy Burt (Stenton), Mitch Stevenson (VCEL), Naomi Barnes/Bob Fleet (Belhaven Community Garden Steering Group), Mr & Mrs Sanderson (local residents), Rev Suzie Fletcher, Cllr Lyn Jardine (Dunbar & East Linton)

APOLOGIES: Lennox Webb (Spott)

Belhaven Community Garden - Naomi Barnes/Bob Fleet presentation

The land was gifted by the Warrender Estate in 1905 for the purpose of supporting public health and the Deeds specified that land should not be used for hospital buildings. Use has to be limited to agricultural or pleasure purposes only. The hospital closed March 2024, and the aim of the group is to retain the community garden using a community asset transfer process (Community Empowerment Act 2015). It is not a private purchase.

The garden consists of an orchard (apple, plum, pear and cherry trees), herb/wildflower gardens, beehives, food polytunnels, a sensory garden. Equipment can be hired at a charge, skills and knowledge are shared. The main volunteer group meet on Saturdays and over the last 2.5 years have put in about 150 hours a month. Food produced is sold to local businesses.

Groups using the garden include The Ridge rural skills, adults with learning difficulties and dementia carers. People meet others and do activities for their own wellbeing and physical fitness. There are outdoor cooking and biodiversity projects ie. Pledgehog, to raise awareness of the plight of hedgehogs. Dunbar Grammar School pupils engage in weekly work experience at the nursery school where a garden has been created.

The garden is included in Dunbar's LLP. DELAP and Belhaven Brewery are local funders. NHS Lothian Health Board (who manage the land on behalf of Scottish Ministers) had the land surveyed and will price it as development land, the group would prefer it priced as agricultural land.

The group need to present a good social benefit case to retain the gardens and negotiate the best price. Doug Westwater is helping with the business plan, they have various people lined up to help and have spoken with the council and politicians but need to engage with GP surgeries. It is a viable community project. The NHS have said they won't put it on the market yet, as they don't have an agreed process in place to consider Community Asset Transfers. Have the draft from NHS Lothian, expect proper document in March. Chris Bruce encouraged Naomi and Bob to engage with NHS Board members directly as they may make the ultimate decision about use of this land.

Ideally, BCG would like a partnership which would create a health and wellbeing hub on the site, whatever is built there the garden is an asset.

Leasing the land is not an option, if leased BCG would have ongoing bills but no means of financing this on an ongoing basis.

There have been successful cases in Grampian and Fife where funds have been raised, and the land transferred to community ownership.

ELCC were asked for their support, it was agreed that a letter of support would be submitted. **SF to write letter.**

MS will include a feature on his social media.

4) Minutes of ELCC meeting held on 29th October accepted.

7) Treasurers Report ELCC

- ELCC Balance £3991.69
- Fred Olsen approved applications received in November, should get money through in December to fulfil applications.
- In terms of Spott CA windows replacements, Clemency Shadbolt is trying to get performance figures from manufacturer for the whole double glazing, as current value is for glass only.

8) Police Report

- Circulated, nothing to add.

9) Local Updates

- **Innerwick** - Hall etc getting there. A lot going on at the school, staff off etc. **SF**
- Community Council members - SF got a few people in mind. Agreed the vacancy be advertised (newsletter/social media) and the advert updated. **CBr/SF**
- **Oldhamstocks** - village hall. Flower show committee asked OCA if the hall would be there next August (2025) for flower show. Can assume it will be.
- **Spott** - 20 mph limit. Morag Haddow wrote to Clemency at Spott Community Association to ask her to contact community council to make the application. MW thought she may be able to adjust some peripheral things. ELCC to support request if SCA can demonstrate local community support.
Raise this at Spott meeting 10th December. **AL**
Concerns about the crack on the Canongate Bridge have also been raised by SCA and Richard Miller at ELC advised he will update ELCC in due course
White line painting - need to apply to the Council Roads Dept. Raise at SCA meeting and ask Clemency to write to ELC. **AL**
- LW is abroad, but has advised he will attend ELCC meetings after Xmas.
- **Stenton** - white lines - spoke with Alan Stubbs a while ago, still nothing. **KDB**
20 mph not being adhered to. Stenton has had the rubber strip speed sensors on the road in the past, but information has not been shared by ELC, SCA considering a freedom of information data request. Need speed bumps. **KDB/CB**

10) Progressing our Local Place Plan

There are a number of key priorities mentioned in our Local Place Plan which are in danger of stalling. CBr rehearsed an idea from WS that Community Benefits could be used as an LPP Implementation Fund, and asked to discuss several possible priorities;

- Active travel ie. people need to feel safe on paths and if walking on public roads. In Stenton, LPP specified paths which could be developed and improved. For other villages LPP is less clear on detail of desired paths. In terms of the Connecting Dunbar community project, a lot of money has already been invested in consultant fees to create a plan. One choice in the LPP was to make an A1 footpath crossing at Dryburn/Innerwick/Thurston. However, investigatory drilling for the EGL1 cables has commenced this month and at present the opportunity to create an underpass not going to happen. There is a danger that the different plans/projects are not aligned but communities want the paths on either side of the A1 joined up (no one wants a 2nd bridge to nowhere). **CBr**

- Recent Lorries in our Lanes meeting - from developers' and BEAR Scotland points of view, it seems the Thurston Manor junction being re-done is more important than the active travel crossing. LPP keen on making sure there is a crossing. **SF**
- Active Travel - it was agreed that it would not be appropriate to give this work responsibility to the local volunteers who form the Traffic Group, as that focusses on construction traffic and mitigating any potential effects. Suggested we form a sub-group to steer work on Active Travel infrastructure. Invite key players to discuss. **CBr**
- Biodiversity - WS attended meeting in November. Presentation by Fred. Olsen Renewables team for Crystal Rig 4. Also discussed CR1 repowering and solar farm proposal. Traffic/transport issues ongoing. Issues with the council to be resolved about pinch points on access route ie. hedgerows. FOR ecologist involved, FOR taking commitments seriously, talked about habitat management. Biodiversity group agreeable for ELCC site visits in the new year. **WS**
- LPP has 'hills to sea' as a whole concept, we need to identify what issues need to be left as it is - species etc. The group felt if someone employed to do the work the biodiversity community group could oversee it. This could be used in implementing the LPP. At earlier meeting, Jason Ormiston was very engaged. Need someone with time to oversee it.
- If developed to reference local authority's own biodiversity strategy, could be presented to ELC in terms of what we would like done. **LJ**
CBr to invite BCLG to develop a proposal
- Public Transport - better public transport links between East Lammermuir villages and Dunbar (and Cockburnspath). As lead for the Supported Services process, Diana Murray (ELC) is talking to bus companies about tenders. Not likely that the 253 Borders bus would divert from A1 via Dunglass as previously. Unsure if bus for Oldhamstocks and Innerwick area would be demand responsive or as a timetabled service covering the 4 villages and journeys planned around several bookings. We have repeatedly asked that ELCC be included in early-stage planning. Tender January to March. **CBr to write to Diana (cc LJ).**
- More Community Benefits Funds
- If (as seems likely) we are going to receive more community benefits need to engage more people in discussions. CB/Helen Taylor-Brown/CBr have produced a flyer to send to small local groups in East Lammermuir area inviting them to attend a meeting proposed for February 2025. ELCC need to review/develop criteria of what community benefits are used for, if we are to fund broader East Lothian priorities and developments.

11) Local Energy Infrastructure Development (see eastlammermuirdevelopments.co.uk)

- Graeme Marsden new ELC link - invite to next meeting. **CBr**
- Energy Project Co-ordinator, 27 applications. Foundation Scotland gave 9 applicants to be considered. Meeting 4th December to draw up shortlist. Interviews 12th December (Innerwick). Developers and Graeme agreed it was primarily a community decision to appoint the right person for the role. They will do a stage for community involvement after the interviews. Would it be better to invite candidates to the village hall to meet the community and then ask them back a few hours later for interview. **CBr**

WS/LJ/SF suggested candidates make a short video of introduction and experience and what they thought mattered to the community. Hopeful by next ELCC meeting appointment will have been made and new co-ordinator could attend. **CBr**

- SSE/SPEN/FOR renewables engagement. **GM/CBr** to form steering group.
- Branxton Sub Station - East Lothian Council Planning Committee approved 5th November, and included 2 additional planning conditions requested by ELCC which were proper recognition of biodiversity and traffic groups. Subsequent planning applications will go to Energy Consents Unit, but we will seek to lobby for inclusion of similar or better planning conditions for any and all developments. **CBr**
- Lorries in our Lanes meeting - Tommy Deans (BEAR) contacted about process and said it would be up to developers to approach BEAR with proposals. Following meeting TD got developers together, think he took on board the urgency of the meeting. Developers happy to engage with group about traffic management. About 30/40 people attended. **WS/SF**
- Temporary Workers Accommodation - Debbie (SPEN) could give rough estimate of what is likely to be required and the phasing but needs contractors to say how many extra sub contractor staff will be employed. Need parallel figures from SSE. Paul McLennan very interested and promoting a model used by SSE in North of Scotland (where they are responsible for National Grid infrastructure). This could result in 600/700 people needing temporary accommodation in the local area. Will see if GM up for taking lead on this. **CBr**
- Springfield Solar Farm - up to 50,000 solar panels in proposed development. A model showing the actual proposed dimensions of a single solar panel currently outside Oldhamstocks village hall. Energy Consents Unit received a request from Springfield Solar Farm (Votalia) and wanted to know what the environmental impact assessment should be. ELCC to submit response - **CBr to draft**. SORELL (Save Our Rural East Lammermuir Landscape) will send out survey for completion. WS is member of SORELL steering group.
- KDB - Newlands Hill Windfarm. Council objected, developer Belltown Power anticipate a public enquiry will take place in due course. ELCC will be invited and will prepare case. ELC will be present. **CBr**

12) Liaison Meetings & Roles

- Torness - Half yearly public meeting, site manager not available but his deputy ran the meeting. Looking at life extension of 2 years so could be 2030 commencement of de-fuelling. Question asked about EDF using the site for other manufacturers' micro/modular small nuclear reactors. Answer; EDF looking at options for developing their own reactor set up on site. Staff currently employed there will undertake many of the decommissioning jobs. Discussed biodiversity on the site, looking at something similar along the lines of Tarmac. **KDB**
- Tarmac - liaison meeting 4th December. Ask about core path. **LJ to attend.**
- Area Partnership - meeting cancelled, now 9th December. **SF to attend.**
- Association of East Lothian Community Councils - AGM 11th December. **CBr to attend.**
- Community & Police Partnership meeting 12th December - **any issues to be raised pass to KDB.**

13) Correspondence

- Community benefits from Transmission Infrastructure - Dr Alasdair Allan, Acting Minister for Climate Action looking at UK Government guidance on building sub-station/pylons and what communities should get. Explained why transmission

infrastructure has to grow. Matthew Barton (SPEN) previously attended a session at Innerwick and explained well about where Branxton Substation was to be and why. He seemed to really understand system. Ministerial Group going to return with set of action points and meet again in 6 months. **CBr**

- Rob Fryer had been given the rough cost of Oldhamstocks hall rebuild and timescales of when it will be done. Discussions with Oldhamstocks CA group ongoing. **CBr**
- East Lothian Heat Network / LHEES - Have met person from Viegand Maagoe (Danish company) undertaking feasibility study and we are confident we have got someone credible to do the work. Until a feasibility study done the project is not going to move forward. If heat can be piped from Oxwellmains as far as Portobello and to Edinburgh, it then becomes a financially viable project. Also need to start doing work on what would/would not work in Oldhamstocks, Spott, Stenton, alongside Insulate Innerwick.

CWPEnergy Aikengall2a community benefit money, of around £95,000 to be used for a feasibility study - agreed. CBl said the concern is purely regarding the financial risks of ELCC committing to fund this. ELCC don't think we should be funding this if Community Wind Power change their mind about funding the project and pull out. Recommend going ahead but clarify that ELCC will not take responsibility for funding £95k if they withdraw. Will draft reply and let everyone see it. **CBr**

- The Space CIC Dunbar
Consultation 27th November. **MS**
- Belhaven Hospital Site
Talks with NHS understanding around community-based services which could be provided, may have to work with North Berwick. **LJ**
- Community Wealth Building (February 2025 session)
Council lead is Angela Lamont. Carla Allen, Community Assets Transfer, is working with her. CA is another point of contact and will be at this session. **CBr/WS/MS to attend.**
- Dunbar Business Park
AL attended public consultation event last month where plans for proposed retail site were on view. Another event is due to be held mid-December.

14) Proposed 2025 Meeting Dates (Mondays, 19.30)

13th January / 3rd March / 28th April / 9th June / 28th July / 8th September / 27th October / 1st December. Dates to be circulated. **CBr**

AGM's for East Lammermuir Community Benefit Trust and East Lammermuir Community Benefit Fund Ltd. To be held 19.30 Monday 13th Oct 2025.