

EAST LAMMERMUIR COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT
OLDHAMSTOCKS VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 28TH APRIL 2025

PRESENT: Chris Bruce (Chair, Oldhamstocks) Kelvin D'Arcy Burt (Secretary, Stenton)
Colin Bloomfield (Treasurer, Spott) Wendy Smillie (Oldhamstocks) Anne Lyall (Spott)
Lennox Webb (Spott) Rev Suzie Fletcher (Innerwick, joining remotely) Joanne Legge
(Oldhamstocks resident) Beth Landon (Energy Projects Partnership Manager)

APOLOGIES: Cllr Lyn Jardine (Dunbar & East Linton Ward)

3) Minutes of meeting held on 3rd March 2025 accepted.

4) Matters arising not elsewhere on agenda

- East Lothian Exercise on Referral scheme - this would be discussed next week at the funding meeting. **CBI**
- Belhaven Community Garden - letter of support submitted (to be shared). **SF**
- LHEES Report - feasibility study - Community Council agreed to fund using CWP Energy wind power benefits money. Online briefing on 1st May. Have background information and looked at ways to make it cost effective. Will advise what the right path is to follow and if accepted, will present to East Lothian Council and ask them to work with us to produce a business case and make the council aware there are gains to be made if we work together. EDF looking to use Torness to produce green hydrogen, process releases a lot of heat and could potentially also put this to proposed heat network. **CBr**
- Resilience Planning -**AL** has talked with Spott residents. **CBr** asked if the plan was to create a template for Spott/Oldhamstocks and then share it. Anne said yes.

6) Treasurers Report (CB)

- ELCC balance is £3561.09.
- In terms of community benefits funding applications we are considerably over-subscribed. A financial update on Innerwick hall has been requested from IPWA. **SF** said building work applied for, **QS** to give final figure in May, work to start in June. **CB** said it would take about 2 months to get any funding available for use. **CWP** has committed to Oldhamstocks hall (£345,000 potentially available immediately) if need to draw down future funds will do so.

7) Progressing our Local Place Plan

- Active Travel network - safe crossing point on A1 would link up a path network either side of road. Eastern Green Link fencing - strip over 7km in length went up overnight. Online meeting 29th April, Nick Morgan (ELC) to attend. **EGL1** have suggested an alternative route could be put in but would be difficult. **CBr** & **BL** has met with Planning today, looking at rights of way, core paths etc. She will look at core path maps on council website.
- Biodiversity Group - good at working with developers' ecologists and have written to the Forth Rivers Trust, 5 burns run through East Lammermuir, need to get local volunteers to help map the burns. River guardians sample water and mud to collect invertebrates - a good indicator of the health of the river. If there are enough volunteers interested, could set up a network in villages.
- Public Transport - Supported Bus Services Tender - **LJ** to chase up. **BL** asked about community transport system and was advised there was one in Innerwick but unsure if still available. **SF**

All of these points are in the LPP. Could use community benefit fund for a development officer. EGL suggested buying in help to see these things progressed.

- Upgrade all houses within X km of energy developments to energy performance Band C standard. Direct possible link with heat network. Not imaginable to have a council that supports cheap heating for towns but not rural villages. If intention is EL Heat is to be community owned why not start in rural areas. **CBr**

8) Community Benefits

- Scottish Government Consultation feedback - we believe that more people would have responded if it had been shorter. ELCC Response has been submitted and about 25 people are to be on subsequent advisory group, including our Chair. **CBr**
- NNG supposed to be fully commissioned by June and have already set up a partnership with Foundation Scotland to administer related community benefits. Benefits of perhaps £300,000 pa to be available to coastal communities from Crail to Eyemouth. This seems a low figure, so CBr and Rachel Searle (Foundation Scotland) have asked Paul McLellan MSP to write to EDF Chief Executive Scotland to request a meeting at higher level. **CBr**
SPEN/EGL £3,950,000 available to this end of cable. CBr wants to discuss alignment of all new financial community benefits at a more senior level, Paul McLellan to set up meeting. SSE funding unknown, as no planning permission for Berwick Bank yet. Foundation Scotland will tender to be the lead body to administer fund. Suggested going in as a partnership. UK Guidance suggests that Branxton and any other new substations community benefit would be a one-off sum of £530,000 each. Supposed to start spending during construction as it is OFGEM. When BBWF comes on shore and power goes into substation it will become part of the national grid and so we anticipate the BBWF substation will count as another £530,000 benefit later. At the beginning a lot of money and then a shift to ongoing revenue from offshore wind (and hopefully any BESS or Solar Farms that are built). Suggestion we work with Innerwick householders first to get their EPC rating up to band C and simultaneously progress work on community transport, active travel, biodiversity. Advise we want to do this in first 5 years. **CBr**
LW suggested solar/hot water solar PV, though space in houses may be an issue. KDB said overall work needed to be done on building ie. insulation to move EPC bands.
CBr at 19th May public meeting would like to present what we want to see happen in the next 5 years. Houses up to EPC C for people who are affected by construction, as this is a national system which affects house prices. It was pointed out there are privately rented properties and if rent includes utilities, could be doing a lot of work to the benefit of the owners. Would need to engage a heating engineer in the first instance to advise how to improve heating. Cosyfit and Sustainable Borders were suggested for advice. Innerwick residents should be the first to benefit from upgrade, what about the residents of the Crystal Rig access road who have been affected for 13 years? Inform FOR this is what we want to use CR4 money for. Equally lobby other developers wherever they build in East Lammernmuir to work with residents nearby.
Don't have to decide yet who we want the funds to go through. Two obvious choices - partnership FS and ELCBFT or FS and ELCB with restricted fund agreement for first "x" number of years.
- How to administer £5,000,000? Would need more people to help. After the initial £5,000,000 has been spent and every home up to EPC band C, active travel etc. - do we go much wider in spending the money? At our community conversation meeting on 17 March, 50% of people said money should go to Dunbar/East Linton/Co'path/Cove, other 50% said it should stay in East Lammernmuir as this is where all the construction is. Will not get maintenance engineer for our area,

would need to be with Dunbar/East Linton if feasibility study do-able. The company would be community owned. Would have to get a loan to pay for this, to be paid back from income received from selling heat. Edinburgh interested in buying heat from East Lothian. Companies would be willing to loan money if see interest. **CBr**

Alasdair (Treasurer Dunbar CC) wrote to ask if it was possible to co-link with Dunbar community practice?

Council said big projects need to happen and a joined-up approach was needed. They offered to administer benefits. ELCC said no, rather set up a new board with community council representatives, each deciding what money is used for. Money from Aikengal 2 goes to Dunbar as well as now to ELCC for Oldhamstocks Hall. Feels like time to review how we decide about existing community benefits as we are getting a lot of bids from proposals outside East Lammermuir now.

Sense of what decision is. At 19th May meeting could say community councils have listened to people about community benefits and other ways developers could benefit the area. Wants to present attractive stuff in LPP to spend money and want to challenge ones who are not thinking about putting anything in (eg Battery Energy Storage System developers).

Would like to propose four priorities for use of new financial community benefits;

- any resident affected by construction work/disturbance be supported to bring their home up to EPC band C.
- Active travel - throughout East Lammermuir, a connected network of paths including at least one safe crossing over or under the A1
- some form of public or Community Transport to link us to Dunbar and Co'path.
- An ambitious Biodiversity Net Gain Plan and associated actions.

Suggested that this is how the money available should be spent the first 5 years. After this (on basis it has been done), the area would feel it has benefitted from improvements and happy to look more widely to other improvements in area and beyond.

Members asked for their views. Are the priorities right? And secondly, do we want to manage another £5,000,000?

Opinion was members were not experts in this field or how to find the right organisation to carry this out, suggestion was to appoint an independent body to undertake this role. Familiar with FS and what they do. We set up ELCBFund and ELCBTrust to do something similar in the future but would need the board to meet more regularly and take an active management role. Would have to follow it up with something that was structured and met policies. **CB**

Is this a bigger fish than we want to fry. Put it through a bigger body but restrict funds in first instance. **CBr**

Co'path shop was big investment and needed another level of scrutiny. That is why went to FS. **SF**

Decision; it was agreed that we know what we want to achieve (the four priorities outlined above) - but not yet what the right arrangement is for disbursing funds. Pressure to resolve something is partly from NNG who want something in place very soon, and EGL1 who want to spend during construction (which is now beginning).

Agreed we can work with the funders to develop the best arrangement to deliver the priorities we have agreed. **CBr**

9) Local Energy infrastructure Developments (see eastlammermuirdevelopments.co.uk)

CBr introduced BL, Energy Projects Partnership Manager (managed by FS, reports to the council/developers/ ELCC).

BL said she'd been in post a few weeks and is focusing on familiarising herself with the landscape, the developers and their plans. She has met with ELC Planning to understand the consent process better. She intends to meet with CBr weekly. Onboarding with FS as her employer involves training, meetings etc. BL is keen to meet community groups to introduce herself and has already met with traffic group and is meeting the biodiversity group next week. Looking at ways to improve communication in the area, access to website etc. She is hoping to set up an email list of people interested in being kept up to date about developments in area. Hopefully there will be only one point of contact to access information. Advisory group to be set up with CBr on this, alongside SSE, SPEN, ELC.

What is happening in East Lammermuir is unusual, so many developments in a small area. Role of Partnership Manager is to facilitate a collaborative approach to developments. Developers may want to make a good example as their work could be watched here. There are plans to do a 4/6 weekly blog for FS.

BL met with Sarah McLeary (LPP) to understand process. This will help when meeting developers. BL is keen for not just financial community benefits but for developers to do "in kind" work in the process ie. FOR put in 20 mph when other developers said it wasn't possible.

LW setting standards formally applied to developers, need to abide by them. CBr said may not get mandation but we could bring in by using our soft power.

CBr mentioned ownership of the email list. Once BL has the list of those wishing to be kept up to date about energy partnership, this could be held in ELCC google workspace. Would we be happy to be the owners of this information under GDPR requirements? BL thought it would need hosting. ELCC and ELBF have registration. PB could set it up so one person has back up access to the list which would not be on shared drive. Will proceed on this basis. It would be helpful for BL. Send link to each village and build up a single list.

- Green Energy Developments Public Meeting 19th May Innerwick - asked if anyone can attend please do. SF thinks flyers going out this week. Should Oldhamstocks be included.
DELAP magazines for delivery; could be left at Elizabeth Wilson's or the hall and collected from there. **AL**
- Pitcox BESS - KDB no talk about it in the village.
Can't put in objection as we don't have evidence this is the community view - but can submit suggestions. Use conditions proposed for Braxbess to draft our submission covering concerns about- fire, biodiversity, traffic. **CBr**
Change in height, now going to be 50% higher than in the original proposal.
Concern about increased visibility. **KDB**
Send to ELC as well as to ECU - assuming Council will call in their proposed response on grounds of West Barns CC objections. **CBr**
An analysis of decisions made over the last 5 yrs has been done repeatedly, was about 50/50, however recently very little has been turned down by ECU. **CBr**

- Lorries in our Lanes meeting 31st March - better meeting, communication clearer. Talk about hedgerow and concern about the Thurston Mains to Woodhall road possibly closed 12-26 May, will be a long diversion. **SF**
BL thinks Kirsty Ryder (FOR) keen for her to be involved. **SF/BL to keep in touch.**
- Biodiversity Community Liaison Group - maps for hedgerows. Old hedgerow cut down, how do we know what should/not be taken out? Plans about extractions to be sent to CBr. Some have been taken out because of visibility issues. **WS**
- Accommodation for temporary workers - suggestion that council could encourage house builders with existing planning consent to build now, use this new housing in the area to accommodate workers during their time here, and then return the properties to original purpose. Graeme Marston ELC thinks this is fanciful.

10) Liaison Meetings & Roles

- Torness - Norman Hampshire (ELC) mentioned small nuclear. **SF/KDB**
Remake Britain 1st May 7 pm, Dunbar Town House - future of Nuclear at Torness. Flyer through doors? Everyone had received this but no-one knows who Remake Britain are.
- Tarmac - Cameron from East Lothian Courier contacted CBr about potential redundancies. CBr said that would be a bad thing. **KDB**
- Area Partnership - AGM - same officers and membership as last year. Health & Wellbeing same as last year - considered as part of overall business with no special subgroup. **AL**
Application in for about £300 to support H&WB group from JB. Need to have a chat before meeting. **KDB**
Meeting 29th April to discuss DELAP Place Plan. ELCC contributed information to that at the time Dunbar LPP. Need someone to go along to meeting. **AL**
- Association of East Lothian Community Councils - freedom of information request - each parking warden raised £64,000 making about £40,000 a year from each warden, 3 in area. May be of relevance to forthcoming Parking Charge proposals for Dunbar **CBr**
AELCC Complaints procedure being looked at again. **CBr**
- CAPP - KDB didn't attend but submitted questions. Police Scotland came back quickly. Steve McKinley thought it was out with CAPP. CBr to look at it. **KDB**

11) Correspondence

East Lothian Community Council elections 9th October. Can an election be held on 9th October, has to be no community council meeting for 6 weeks prior. Members step down and then put themselves forward if want to stand again. If more than 2 nominees in a village an election is held, if appointed candidate is notified by letter on 12th October with date of the next meeting. NH or DC or LJ Chair this initial meeting briefly to appoint Chair, Secretary etc.

How to publicise these elections, promised letter from ELC has not been sent, assumption is all going ahead.

September meeting - date changed to 1st September (Stenton)

Where will any elections be held - Stenton still polling station.

Is everyone planning to remain on community council. Joanne Legge could be co-opted as WS has intimated she is standing down. JL also to be invited to the Benefits meeting.

Crystal Rig 4 road closure 12-26 May. Leaflets have been distributed.

Dunbar LPP - plan not registered with council. Formal consultation period underway.

Have asked ELCC to write in support for Plan. CBr to send Alistair Swan a note.

Working with under 18's. If directly involved with under 18's, may need PVG through ELC.

Financial Community Benefits - Journalist from Local Storytelling Exchange contacted KDB. CBr also contacted a few days ago about Valtalia. Not making any comment.

12) Police Report

To be circulated. Laura Jackson to attend meeting 9th June.

13) Local Updates

Innerwick - have access to outdoor centre but delayed. End of May before anything done. **SF**

CBr asked if the water was drinkable as building has stood empty for a long period. SF concerned about testing water, is on list to make sure everything is ok.

First time anyone is in building they are to run the water before use.

Oldhamstocks - SORELL continue to do work. Writing to the Valtalia Board and speaking to journalists. Walk being planned round the boundary of potential expanse of solar farm site to get impression of its size. Focus on women's safety when walking alone along roads. No date for this, want to tie it up with AGM and generate publicity. Want anyone concerned about what is happening to come along. **WS**

Spott - 20mph - might go to NH about this. Doesn't know anything about bridge repair, partly done. Doesn't know what is happening about windows in the hall either requote for different kind of frame. **AL**

Stenton - speed survey 49 responses represented over 150 people. There is an issue and a need for traffic calming of some sort. Enough evidence to force ELC to do a rubber strip survey. CB has chatted with LJ, thinks it will be Alan Stubbs. **CB**

Morag Haddow would be good to speak with too. CB/KDB have done a lot of work in Stenton. AL could replicate this in Spott. AL could discuss with them. **CBr**

Meeting closed.

Next meeting Monday 9th June Innerwick Village Hall.

MCJ

5.5.25