

Skirling Community Council

Thursday 24th November 2022, 7.30pm, Skirling Village Hall

Minutes

Present: Esther Daborn, David Galbraith, Katy Miller, Robert Laird, Councillor Eric Small, Andrew Clark, Sara van der Vat, Isobel Hunter, Ross McIntyre.

Apologies: Alison Leite, Francesca Bell.

Appointment of minute takerKaty Miller and minute checkerIsobel Hunter.

Approval of September 29th Minutes proposed.....Andrew Clark. Seconded.... Ross McIntyre.

1. Community Speedwatch

- Speed limit signs in the village – update (ED)
 - I. As far as we know, the speed limit zones within Skirling Village have now been agreed: 30mph (Eastern exit from the village to the bend), 20 mph (the bend to the Western entrance to village), and a 40 mph buffer (the Western entrance to the village to No 4 Skirling Mill Cottages). The flashing signs within the 30mph and 20mph zones have been installed – including the 4th electronic sign on the Green. The signage for the 40mph zone has been ordered. SBC anticipate being in a position to paint some roundels as well as dragon’s teeth at both boundaries.
 - II. Request for larger village name plates and road safety message: ‘Please drive carefully’ at the Eastern boundary has been accepted. At the west entrance to Skirling the village plates will be moved closer to the 20mph limit when the 40mph buffer is installed. RL asked about moving the “Skirling Village” sign to Skirling Mill at the Western end of the village. SBC have refused this request.
 - III. Interestingly, in one recent email the Transport Safety team leader gave the view that there had always been concerns about 20mph speed limit in Skirling since it is ‘quite a long settlement and the housing density that fronts on to the road is more akin to a 40mph speed limit’. The measurements of traffic speed at the war memorial where people cross the road showed a 6mph reduction in average speeds, ‘but if there is a local feeling that vehicle speeds are still too high with the signing and lining interventions then we may need to collectively reconsider if Skirling is appropriate for a 20mph and should we revert back to 30mph? This is for the community to consider’ – end of statement.
 - IV. Reaching this situation has been a steep learning curve. David and I met with Karen McGrath from Transport Safety at Howes Brae on 19th October. We confirmed that we wanted the 4th electronic sign installed at the Green. We also discussed the working of the electronic signs at Howes Brae since they were not working as we had expected. That is the reason we requested the different kind of sign at The Green so that it would remind drivers to drive at 20, whatever speed they were doing. David also asked about ‘Concealed entrance’ sign for Galalaw. We were told that SBC is not responsible for installing those signs.

There was a lot of discussion about how satisfactory the outcome is. Andrew Clarke asked whether the two obsolete flashing signs could be re-instated, perhaps using wind farm money. There was some reservation about whether these would qualify for such a grant.

Action: ED will discuss feasibility of reinstatement with Transport Safety and see where we go from there

- Community Speedwatch and Speed Gun – update (ED) There is movement in this area. Councillor Pirone told an Innerleithen Community Council meeting that this programme will be reactivated (reported in the Peeblesshire News).

Action: **ES** update when more information is available.

- Request for speed checks – update (ES)

ES has had a negative response from the police regarding speed checks. We are now waiting for the Community Speedwatch and speed gun programme.

Action: ES to update when more information available

- ‘Pop up Bob’ – update (DG)

“Pop up Bob” has had his legs stolen. It was felt that he did work to an extent, but would need to be backed up by actual speed cameras, as people become used to seeing him. An email from a resident of Howe’s Brae was read out, requesting that “Bob” could be placed at Goatfoot, hopefully catching drivers as they come round the corner heading East, where they often put their foot down, and even overtake on the straight heading out of the village. ES suggested using windfarm funding to buy our own “Pop up Bob”.

DG reported that Sgt Corinne Bird commented on the traffic problems at Howes Brae when she delivered Pop up Bob and so did Sgt Vivien Carsley

Action: **ED** – follow up on purchase of Pop up Bob;

DG follow up with Sgt Carsley to provide evidence to use for requesting speed camera team to attend.

- Police report: Nothing applicable to our area

Action: None

2. Funding

- Endowment Funding - update (SV and RL)

RL advised the meeting that a new panel member is required from Skirling. There are around 4 meetings per year, and they can be attended via Zoom/Teams. The meeting agreed that a request for a new member would be circulated via Website and Facebook
(Action SV).

£100,000 has been placed in the Endowment Fund, for future use by the communities, and a further £100,000 will be added to this soon.

SV reported that there is £1700 in the Micro grants fund, after £360 agreed to be used for funding Advent Windows. The current maximum for a small grant is £500 using the Glenkerie wind farm fund. It was suggested that perhaps Clyde Wind Farm/SSE might increase their maximum. It was

suggested that the new contact for this fund, Colin MacMillan should be invited to our January meeting. **(Action SV)**

SBC funds are ring fenced for flower tubs.

- Community Action Plan update - Meeting with STAR (DG, KM, ED)

Meeting on Monday 21st November was informative and it was felt that a Community Action Plan (CAP) would be a good way forward to set priorities for Skirling and help with applying for funding. STAR will send a proposal with costs to DG. The meeting also discussed Place Making. When Skirling's CAP is in place, some funding may be obtained from SBC

Action: DG to circulate STAR proposal when it is received.

3. **Village website** and information dissemination (SV/KM)

SV has updated the village website, and requires funding to pay for hosting - £85.82 for 4 years. SV will send the invoice to KM for checking. The meeting agreed. SV will send an information email to the village contact list, with information about upcoming events, and also ask Lisa to put the information on Facebook.

KM and IH will liaise regarding a new noticeboard for village information.

Action: **SV** website, **KM and IH** Noticeboard

4. **Village Maintenance**

- BT Hut - update (AC/SV/ ES)

Nothing to report. The meeting agreed that progress might be made when the Orphaned Land question is resolved and the repairs might be incorporated into the CAP

Action: none

- Land Registry search for Orphaned Land - update on Scottish Land Fund (BH)

Some progress on orphaned land. Due to high winds, several trees near the road at the western end of the village have been identified as dangerous and must be felled. This has a cost implication for landowners, who must therefore be identified. BH is communicating with GW-C in London.

Action: **BH**

- Children's playground – update (Francesca Bell / KM)

Unfortunately FB was unable to attend. KM brought plans and costings drawn up several years ago (2018?), using the Village Hall garden as a play space. There was some hope that if the orphan land issue was moving forward, there may be a better place for a play park. This could be part of a CAP

Action: **remains work in progress**

- Howes Brae sign - (ED)

ED has looked at the sign at Howes Brae, discussed with Joyce Clark who reported it had been sorted in the summer. SV will take a photo and circulate. Action: **SV**

- Derelict house – Waulkmill (ES)

IH hoping to hear from the Solicitors who look after the property.

Action: **ES** will ask SBC for advice. **IH** to update at the next meeting

- Recent flooding in Village and at the Mount (All)

Flooding at the North end of the Green after recent heavy rain. Drains may need cleared. Sandbags were used to protect several properties. The meeting agreed we should have a training exercise with the flood equipment.

Action: **KM** to arrange training, and discuss Resilience with **BH**. **KM** to check if drains need cleared, and report to SBC if so.

Flooding on the A701 at The Mount is causing frustration, and it was felt that long term traffic lights are not a solution. The road appears to have sunk, and so drainage is not necessarily the solution.

The road will need to be raised. It was suggested that SBC could apply to the Strategic Timber Transport Fund for help with funding for the necessary work. It was pointed out that the heavy lorries passing along that route during the building of the railway to Galashiels may well have caused significant damage. The railway provides no benefit to this area.

Action: **ES** to follow up with Brian Young from SBC.

- Subsidence on path to Skirling Mill - maintenance of the burn (ED/AC)

Two areas where burn has eroded the side of the path. One since early summer, the other in the last month or so. Marked with Bamboo canes in the fenceline. AC informed. There was a discussion about clearing other areas eg at Scravelyn Cottages.

Action: **AC** will clean out and straighten the problematic bit of burn on the path to Skirling Mill.

5. Public Transport

- **101/102 Bus** (ED/ES)

i) Bus survey publicised on Facebook and website. Results also publicised 27th Oct.

www.56degreeinsight.com/101-102-bus-survey

ii) 13th Nov email from our 3 councillors

- The 101//102 route tender out on 11/11/22.
- A number of options are being offered to increase the chances of bus operators bidding for the route.
- Tenders will be received by 28/11/22. These will be evaluated in December. We will be advised in December of progress. We will aim to keep all affected community councils in Tweeddale West informed at each step of the way so that they can share with the respective communities that they represent.
- January 2023 SPT Operations Committee Contract award approved

Action: **SV** will put the result of the bus survey on Skirling Website

A.O.B.

Boundary Commission Scotland – consultation will run from 8 November until 5 December 2022. Members of the public and interested parties can view the Revised Proposals and submit comments on the Commission’s consultation site at www.bcs2023review.com. After considering the responses to this consultation on the Revised Proposals, the Commission will develop its Final Recommendations and submit its report to the Speaker of the House of Commons by 1 July 2023

A.Clark asked permission to remove impromptu tubs at Howe’s Brae. Meeting agreed this could go ahead.

A.Clark raised the possibility of purchasing ‘Scotland loves Local Gift Cards’ for each household in the village. Value to be confirmed. Purchased using Windfarm funding, these cards can only be used in local, independent shops. It would be necessary to find out if local shops are registered for the scheme.

Action: **IH** to ask G. Gardener, member of Biggar Community Council and also Secretary of the Biggar Business Group. **KM** to check if Broughton Store will accept them.

Meeting Dates: November 24th 2022 7.30pm,
January 26th 2023, followed by March 30th, May 25th, all at 7.30pm