

Skirling

community council

Annual General Meeting Minutes

Thursday 30th May 2024, 7.30pm, Village Hall

Present: Andrew Clark, Esther Daborn, Robert Laird, Ross McIntyre, Isobel Hunter, Sara Van der Vat, Paul Barlow, Alison Leite, Councillor Eric Small

Apologies: Katy Miller

The passing of Ian Storie – CC sad to hear of this and shared some memories. A condolence card was sent to the family.

Approval of Minutes of 28th March proposed: RL : Seconded: RMc

AGM Business

- Office Bearers & Co-opted Members (All) PB agreed to become an elected CC member. RL suggested Robert Armour is interested in joining and AC suggested Iain McFarlane. Perhaps they could become co-opted members?

Action: RL and AC to invite them to the September CC meeting.

- Adoption of the Code of Conduct: ED had circulated the code of conduct prior to the meeting: All agreed to abide by it.

Action: SV to inform SBC of this minute

- Annual Accounts: SV reported these have now been audited by KM.
The remaining CAP money has been allocated into micro grant funds.
Two more youth bursary grants have been distributed.
There is £500 for plant tubs although it was noted that most volunteers do so at their own expense (volunteers were thanked.)
There is a total of £2,000 left. See attached for full account details:

Funding (SV)

Path maintenance grant – email 24th April – These funds are allocated annually. £600 is available to communities to claim in December this year. Based on the fact that SBC might fund part of repairs to Skirling/Broughton path, ED suggested funds might be used for maintenance of Skirling Mill cinder path which has become a bit dilapidated.

Action: AC will ask Grant Erskine to give a quote for this, including repair of verge by Castlestones.

Action: ED will ask Douglas Ford and SBC about the possibility of funding some of this.

AL mentioned that they reported lorry damage in front of the Old Farmhouse in March to SBC.

‘Edge rutting on a damaged verge’ Confirmation - RDE011861 to be investigated over the summer.

Action: ED to check with Douglas Ford if SBC likely to link this to any other maintenance of the path

Police matters - The report was noted. IH commented that the first Speed Watch trial group has commenced.

Community Action Plan Progress reports from Themes (All)

1. Safe Skirling – RMc / AC/ ED-

- RMc reported on the recent Joint meeting of Community Councils regarding speeding issues. Napier University has volunteered to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the 20mph signs. This has been welcomed.

Regarding Speed Spy, a case study has been requested to use as an example of how the data may be used. This will be helpful to secure future funding.

Councillor Thomson has passed contact details of Chris Wood and RMcI to Sgt Harrison who wishes to discuss the speed survey with them. (Our three Tweeddale Councillors now meet monthly with him)

Action: RMc will pass the case study findings on to Colin from the windfarm and Sgt Harrison.

- Pavements have been provided throughout the village through end of financial year funding. There were objections by some residents to plan A (end of Skirling Mill path to Tintock) as there was a concern they might lead to flooding issues. Plan B (Carmichael bank to War Memorial) went ahead, along with Burnside.

ED asked if the flashing sign at Burnside is working now the trees are in leaf. It is. She also checked is the one at the Green from the upper village direction is working. Agreed it was working.

- AC asked about the return of Pop up Bob as not been in Skirling for a while.

Action: ED will contact PC Carsley about Pop up Bob.

2. Well connected Skirling PB reported on the Path to Broughton . He arranged a visit of Susan Gray, SBC Paths Officer, and Lesley Muirden (volunteer) on May 29 2024.

SG commented on the new finger post. It needs a Tweed Trails logo.

Action: PB will contact Scotways to arrange for their logo to be added to the finger post we where the path starts from The Green.

Present from Skirling: Paul Barlow, Bob hunter, Esther Daborn, Mike Leite.

The general conclusion is that this path is quite tricky, with several gates, livestock, a fordable stream at the Skirling Boundary. On the Broughton side there is a sheep field, a stand of pines and a bank of gorse.

What can be done to make it more accessible? SG suggested gradual change will work best.

Skirling needs to team up with Broughton CC to make this a success.

SBC might help with

- Up to 2-3 days labour over the year. For example, repairing a stile at the first fence from The Loan land. Providing signage with wording discussed with owner e.g. ‘Please respect this right of way. Livestock in field, please keep dogs on lead’.
- Providing supplier details for small circle arrows to go on fence posts at gates to confirm direction of path

Other suggestions –

- For the area of conifers, path wardens could be requested to clear timber. Alternatively, since many are ready for harvest, Scottish Forestry might be requested to harvest trees, replant and fence.
- Path wardens might make the third gate stock proof (and therefore openable). At the moment, it is necessary to go through the gate.
- In the denser areas of conifer, individual trees might be marked for felling to create a walking line.
- At the burn, walkers might ford, using a stick to test depth and for balance. If landowners in agreement, SBC might consider construction of a gated bridge about 6 metres long. SV suggested contacting Ross Robertson about this possibility.
- To raise general interest and raise funds, Skirling and Broughton might consider a festival that takes place on alternate years at alternate villages. Walk the walk and celebrate.

Actions; AL will correspond with Tess Goodwin to bring Broughton on board and will arrange another informal walk with interested Skirling residents so more people can learn the route (Possibly August/September).

PB will send RL a map of the route so he can discuss with the landowners and work with them.

3. **Skirling Community Life** KM asked ED to report that the group have made contact and will arrange a meeting. The priorities will be Social events, then the Play area, Energy Efficiency and Parking. ED suggested Andy Leigh might be interested in volunteering.

Action: KM to contact AL

4. **Environment and Heritage** IH reported the Environment and Heritage Theme Progress. First meeting held on 5th May. Attendees: Isobel Hunter (Co-ordinator), Bob Hunter, Fritha Langford, Rory Macleod, Katy Miller, Mike Thomson, Stuart Walpole. Apologies Kevin Long
A good first meeting, setting out some priorities and how they might be tackled along with some longer term aspirations

- Flower tubs – Tub adoption set up and group advised that they can claim up to £20 per tub. Windfarm microgrant to be used. Joyce Clark will work with Caron McDonald.
- Planters beside speed signs – one for the 40mph sign at Skirling Mill and two for 30mph have been purchased. Locations now cleared with SBC (Samantha Elliot). They should be fully contained between pole and fence line
- Heritage Signage- Katy and Isobel to pick up on the work they started before the Community Survey took priority
- Tree planting- young trees are readily available at the moment along with grants...plan out what we want where consistent with current planting and look to get working parties out in the autumn. Mike and Fritha
- 750 years of Skirling (with theme 4) - 2025 marks 750 years since the first mention of Skirling in the archives in 1275. Idea to have some kind of village celebration in June. Schedule in exhibition of paintings, maps etc from the Wheeler Carmichaels. All were in favour
- Loan walkways –
Pond maintenance - Kevin to work out what is needed to restore it and call on working party(s) Too much nutrient from fields??

Path maintenance - Mike has a pile of excellent clinker which would really help on some of the muddy paths...just need to get it up there and spread (working party needed).

Also possible idea of people adopting a section of path in the lower section to keep strimmed once in June then again in early September maybe. Stuart, Rory, Mike and hopefully others.

Bird boxes put up

- Long term plan for community orchard and recreation area – awaiting creation of Community Trust to hold land - Probable purchase of marshy field beside Skirling Mill...could be developed for biodiversity with pond, marshy area, fruit trees and board walks...access from current roadside path via bridge over the stream.
- Slightly pie in the sky scheme but not as mad as it sounds. Tamworth pigs with moveable electric fencing to dig over the felled area around the burn up The Loan. Fritha to investigate

5. **Sustainability and Resilience (All)** –Robert Laird and Nick Smart have both had to step down. It was suggested Barbara and/or Andy Leigh might be interested.

Action: ED will inquire and invite them to the next meeting.

When discussing flooding issues, RL suggested the pipes below the road at Carmichael Bank have silted up and need to be cleared (The council have cleared this before).

Action: ED will follow up with Douglas Ford and see if Duncan Morrison is coming out to further assess the problem.

Village Maintenance

- In response to complaints about the finger post, lamp post at the side of The Green and the road round the green - Fix my street has dealt with potholes and the sign has been replaced. The lamp post remains broken.
Action: ED will follow up.
- **Walk Around with TW3 30th April (ED/AC)** – Meeting with Douglas Ford – Small Schemes Officer. Viv Thomson to make a list. Topics covered
 1. Uneven ground at Telephone Exchange noted. Needs to be levelled out and seeded – DB has contacted PG to request this, **Action: ED to keep an eye and report if no action**
 2. Lamp post repair to be followed up
 3. Flooding consultation – Duncan Morrison (Flooding officer) to visit. See note under CAP 5 above. His advice will be conveyed to Resilience Group considering tar path between Tintock and Skirling Mill path.
 4. The bus stops will be painted.
 5. Picnic benches – 3 have arrived. One will remain at the top of the village (subject to agreement of Mrs Short) and two will be brought to The Green.
Action: AC happy to move them.
 6. Tar gravel path outside Goatfoot.
 7. Graveyard – sent photos to Douglas Ford who has taken over from Neil Pringle to deal with this.
 8. We forgot to mention Skirling Mill path and extending the parking at Carmichael Bank.

Correspondence received

- 1) Planning applications Old Joiners Shop - request for CC observations. No observations made.
Councillor Thomson kindly sent the link to the [National Planning Framework 4 \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)
- 2) Stobo Resident Action Group (StoboRAG) have raised concerns about the Forestry project at Stobo Hope because of the dominance of sitka spruce in the planting. They are crowdfunding for a judicial review to challenge the decision by Scottish Forestry to approve a 10 square kilometre coniferous forest to be planted by the Stobo Estate in and around the Upper Tweeddale National Scenic Area. Meeting commented that preparation for planting has already taken place.
- 3) UTCN – Tweedsmuir is preparing a windfarm application for 3 years funding to cover printing for Tweedsmuir, Broughton and Skirling. Skirling has agreed to be included and requested 125 copies.

AOB

- ED asked about the possibility of overloading electricity sub-station at Skirling Mill. There are now two Air source heat pumps, plus electric car charger. RMc advised that there is a registration process that residents need to follow to ensure power companies can do required load calculations.
- RMc complained about the declining mobile phone coverage in the area.
Action: ES said he would look into the issue of Mobile Phone Drop Off with the Infrastructure Team.
- PB reported that Village Hall Groups are looking for a Project manager.
- SV proposed storage of CC materials on the Cloud using a Google Drive (with access for specific persons). A two factor authentication would be required to observe GDPR requirements. All agreed.
Action: SV to set up
- AC advised the CC that the abandoned property at Waulkmill has been vandalised. The meeting regrets that all the efforts to contact the owner via lawyer and relative have come to nothing. It is thought best to turn to the SBC Empty Homes Officer as advised through our MP.
Action ED and AL will pursue this issue with the Officer in charge of Empty Homes. AL will visit and take pictures.

The meeting closed at 9pm

Next meeting Dates 2024: 26th September; 28th November.