

Skirling

community council

Minutes

Thursday 26th September 2024, 7.30pm, Village Hall

Present: Paul Barlow, Andrew Clark, Esther Daborn, Isobel Hunter, Robert Laird, Sara Van der Vat, Councillor Eric Small, Jacque Gass

Apologies: Katy Miller, Ross McIntyre, Alison Leite

Approval of Minutes of 30th May – proposed RL seconded IH

Funding (SV)

- Current balance: £3,040.15 made up of £472.56 SBC grant money and £2567.58 windfarm micro-grant funds. There are currently no funds available for the YBF, but due a top up soon. £178.90 remains ring-fenced for plants.
- The Windfarm application for large tree maintenance on the Green has been approved. The cost has gone up slightly, but RL suggested that this would be accommodated.
- Skirling residents have received their first free copy of UTCN based on Windfarm Funding via Tweedsmuir for a year's supply of copies. Skirling Community Council contributed news of the Community Trust application and the bird survey.

Police matters

- Police Reports for May, June, July noted. No additional comments.
- Tweeddale West Councillors have set up an online Meeting for Community Council Chairs with Sgt Harrison October 24th 7-8.30pm. The meeting agreed that the principal matter of concern for Skirling remains speeding. **ED Action to see if Ross or someone from top of village can attend**
- SV drew attention to a new scam: a text from SBC requiring payment of a parking fine. SBC does not send texts. **Action All to spread the word**

Community Action Plan (All) progress reports from subgroups

1. Safe Skirling – ED /AC

- Joint meeting of Community Councils regarding speeding issues (RMc). No update.
- Pavements - ED reported on actions from May meeting
 - i) To contact SBC (Gary Haldane) to check on the request for levelling and seeding at the Telephone Exchange and seeding at Burnside (photos sent). GH confirms that SBC requested seeding to be carried out. There is little evidence from the photos that seed has been spread. If this is a concern, GH offers to follow up with the contractor. The meeting agreed this should be done. **Action ED**
 - ii) To request planning for further tar paths – GH responded that ‘there are currently no plans for further construction within the current 2024/25 financial year. Any further footway

construction in Skirling will be considered in future budget allocations'. The meeting agreed that we need to keep asking **Action ED**

- iii) To request tarring of Goatfoot kerbed gravel and Skirling Mill path – Donald Scott responded that 'Roads Asset have no budget for improvement works to these sections of unbound footways'.

Based on this feedback ED requested repair of wash out on Skirling Mill Path and repair of Lorry damage reported by Old Farmhouse. DS assessed washout and lorry damage at Skirling Mill path (2nd Aug) and reported there were no issues noted other than the need to dress around the manhole cover with hardcore to regulate the level between the path and the frame. 'This work will be instructed and programmed, taking into account all other competing priorities'.

The meeting discussed the possible use of the SBC £600 Path Maintenance Grant to make good parts of the Skirling Mill path. AC reported that he had contacted Grant Erskine to request an estimate – no response yet. **Action AC**

The meeting suggested that a second estimate should be requested from Irvines (Graham or Euan) **Action ED**

- Pop up Bob – Thanks for John Noble for liaising with PC Carsley for the recent visit. AC reported that it had remained at the Galalaw end of the 30mph section. Perhaps it could move to different parts of the village next time.

2. Well connected Skirling

- Path to Broughton

- i) AL sent a report to the meeting. A joint Walk with Broughton has been arranged for Sunday 20th October. AL will make a poster when she gets home and requests we add this info to the website and Facebook page. Important to encourage as many as possible to participate.

Action AL publish poster and text for website / Facebook

- ii) PB reported that he has been dealing with Scotpaths who have a Heritage sign designed that should be on the way once budget approval has been achieved (for quite a number of signs including this one). **Action PB continue to follow up**
 - iii) PB has been in contact with SBC (Susan Gray) who has spoken with James Taylor (the son) and agreed basic maintenance works necessary for the purposes of having a usable path. SG will coordinate installation of arrow signs that have been printed and delivered to the path wardens. The stile has been rebuilt in a better position. Further work might be done such as clearing some fallen logs. Cattle will still be in the area until end October.
- Bus services for 91/93 – ED reported that a face-to-face meeting of CC chairs with the Transport Manager has been arranged for 22nd October 7-8.30 in Skirling village Hall. **Action ED to invite some folk who use the 91 service to give their views**
 - Declining mobile phone coverage in the area. **Action ES**

i) Skirling Community Life

- KM sent a report to the meeting. The Hall Committee is planning events for this winter: a music night, Christmas Social and Burns Supper. There is a possibility of having a craft fair, a pop-up pub night or café. It is clear that to stream sports they would need funding to cover a TV licence.

- The group is pleased to see the picnic benches. Plans for the Playpark and car park are waiting until the Community Trust is established.
- Broughton Play Park – has already got funding. ES reported that equipment has been removed so that area can be seeded.
- ES suggested that Skirling should also ask for funding for equipment. Although £12,000 is already in the Hall Committee bank account, more will be needed. ES is happy to support a request. **Action KM/ES**
- Broughton plans to develop George V park area to include a pump track, half an all-weather court, community BBQ area, plus paths and planting to make it accessible to all. Skirling was invited to a meeting about this at the end of August. Tweedsmuir has someone on the Committee, but Skirling gets updates from the Parent Council. Broughton have now engaged an architect to draw up plans for community consultation.

ii) **Environment and Heritage**

- IH reported that the clinker for the path remains a mound to be spread out. Need to ask David Gardiner for loan of equipment. There are 20 bird boxes ready to be put up in the woodland. Perhaps a group call out for help? **Action IH**
- 2025 will mark 750 years since the first mention of Skirling in Historical records. I and BH had mentioned to Carmichael that this would be a good opportunity to put together an exhibition from his collection of Skirling memorabilia. This could be accompanied by a village celebration on the Green. The meeting supported this idea and suggested that Saturday 14th June should be offered to him as a date. **Action IH**

iii) **Sustainability and Resilience**

The meeting discussed the report from SBC flood officer Paul Grigor who visited on 8th August 2024, following a recent watercourse inspection by SBC Technician (18th October 2023) and a site visit by someone from Neighbourhoods (11th June 2024)). The conclusion was that there is nothing of major concern. Whilst there was some vegetation in the channel, it is not thought likely to increase flood risk. They will continue to monitor this watercourse.

This information has been communicated to the CC and to residents of Loanfoot, Tintock, Kirklea, and Old Church, with a request to pass on to School House and an invitation to attend this meeting.

Jacque Gass (Tintock) attended and spoke of the Residents' concern with water levels in the burn in cases of extreme weather. (This was why there had been opposition in February to the proposal to build a tar path from the end of the current Skirling Mill path to the School House). The meeting discussed the practice in the past of clearing vegetation in areas of congestion and checking the pipes under the road at Carmichael. SBC had paid Graham Irvine to do this. IH mentioned comment from Ian Barron that the culvert under the road needed clearing out, and longer term could do with its approach being reconfigured. A paper from Bob Hunter agreed with the PG report that regular maintenance is key.

Since PG's report had invited the CC to get back to him with any concerns, the meeting agreed to ask SBC to carry out clearance of vegetation in areas of congestion and check the pipes.

Action ED to request, copying ES for follow up and PB, who has agreed to take Flooding matters further for the CC.

Village Maintenance

Waulkmill – ED had sent photos of vandalism to Empty Homes Officer and in late July circulated Rachel Whale’s response. She had been in touch with the solicitors who are progressing the administration of the estate and will be putting the property on the market as part of that. Once there is a new owner in place, either via inheritance or through a sale, she will be engaging with that person to aid them in bringing this home back into use. However, there are various complexities that will take time to manage.

The meeting discussed the matter and decided it was time to contact RW for an update (perhaps suggest the possibility of a compulsory purchase order?) **Action ED**

ES offered to find out if Community Charge is being paid for Waulkmill, Skirling, postcode ML12 6HB. **Action ES**

Walk Around 30th April (ED/AC) –update on remaining topics covered

- Lamp post repair - done.
- The bus stops have been painted blue.
- Graveyard –maintenance has been discussed and agreed, but no action as yet. **Action ED to request update from Douglas Ford.**

Correspondence received

- Stobo Resident Action Group (StoboRAG) reported some success with challenge of the decision by Scottish Forestry to approve a grant for 10 square kilometre coniferous forest to be planted by the Stobo Estate in and around the Upper Tweeddale National Scenic Area. Extensive herbicide use to be halted.
- ED suggested we might be interested in building on the Community Lunches by arranging a Soup and a Story session with Braw Clan (the Scots Language theatre Company). With Windfarm funding to cover the story teller, these have taken place at Gillespie and Robberton this summer (latest was 25th Sept at Robberton). Free to attendees (who just pay for lunch). **Action ED to find out more**

AOB

- RL mentioned that the pedestrian bridge at the ford on the Splash Road is collapsing. **Action RL to send ED a photo for onward transmission to DF and the relevant SBC department for repair.**
- AC mentioned that he is still to put slabs in place for the flower tubs to be positioned at Speed signs. **Action AC**
- SV mentioned that she is yet to set up the Google drive for shared CC docs. **Action SV**

Meeting Dates 2024/25:
28th November, 30th January, 27th March, 29th May