



Minutes

Thursday 30th January 2025, 7.30pm, Village Hall

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

Apologies: Katy Miller.

Approval of Minutes of 28th November – Proposed - RMc Seconded - RL

Police matters

- Police Reports for November and December 2024 were discussed.
 - It was noted that 'Your Police Survey for 2024/25' is open, <https://consult.scotland.police.uk/strategy-insight-and-innovation/your-police-2024-2025/>
 - It was raised that there are concerns over children's behaviour at Peebles High in particular anti-social behaviour in Peebles Park particularly at lunchtime. It was also discussed that female students feel unsafe predominantly in the school toilets.
Action: DB will follow up on these concerns and asked PB to contact him with further concerns/information.
- Update on matters discussed with PC Gary Beaumont at November meeting (ED) –
 - Pop up Bob had been placed opposite Skirling House for a few weeks and is now to be redeployed to Broughton.
AC asked if a member of the community can have the keys as before so he can be moved around the village. DB stated moving him around does make a difference.
Action ED to request PC Beaumont to provide keys next time Bob is deployed
 - PC Beaumont has been out checking for speeding and has spoken with a few drivers and stored offenders' details for future records.
 - Speed Watch – very much still live however only one community council is still involved with another £500 funding needed for the speed gun. If the remaining funding is raised there will be a 3-month trial and PC Beaumont will be notified this in due course. However, there are issues because a lot of people have pulled out of the programme due to the need for volunteers to be vetted as well as the extensive training required.
 - PC Beaumont had followed up on the request for 2 speed camera signs with no success. He spoke with The Safety Camera Unit and Phillipa Gilhooley who has stated that it is not proportionate given there are already suitable measures in place in Skirling for traffic calming.
 - PC Beaumont will continue to carry out as much mobile patrol as possible in the area.

Funding (SV)

- Current balances £450 left. Micro grants £1000 GK £873 SBC fund £400 left. Work on the village Green to remove trees has been completed. There is an outstanding balance owed for the work carried out. It was agreed this will be covered temporarily by the CC.
Action; SV will request the top up from the Windfarm.

- Youth Bursary Fund needs a top up as there are now more families with children in the village than before and the number of applications will increase. The amount per bursary will be reduced to £200 to manage this, but SV will also request more funding from Windfarms to meet the increased demand for this valuable resource. **Action SV**
- Windfarm application deadlines are April, June and October.

Community Action Plan

CAP Annual Report - ED reminded the meeting that the CAP Annual Report is due at the end of March. This will coincide with the Litter Pick event which is when we launched the CAP Groups last year. A brief discussion suggested topics to be covered include the establishment of the Skirling Community Development Trust, the progress on the Drove Road path access, the progress on pavements, the joint Community Councils discussions about Speed Spy, Environmental and Heritage matters and Community Life social events. There have been many discussions about the burn

Action: PB will draw up a report document to be filled in by each subgroup. When complete this will be disseminated through the village website and the newsletter.

Community Development Trust (SCDT) (SV/IH) First meeting held Tuesday 28th January was well attended with volunteers coming forward. IH will be a Trustee for one year. Setting up the Trust has been a logical follow on from the launch of the CAP- providing a legal entity for fund raising and purchase of assets. Following a recruitment drive, the membership of SCDT sits at 30 and a quorum of 15 attended the meeting. It is hoped more members will join from across the community as the Trust gets established. The meeting allowed members to clarify any issues and agree next steps which will be circulated to members and published on the village website. A vote of thanks was given to the three current trustees for the work done to date in establishing the Trust and tribute was paid to David Galbraith who played a critical role in initiating the process of developing the CAP.

Progress reports from subgroups

Theme 1: Safe Skirling – RMc / ED /AC

- Pavements - following GH's offer to tar the missing link between the end of the Skirling Mill Path and the end of the Green, the CC had decided to request two sections: Skirling Mill path end to Kirkbrae and the top of the village from Burnside to Nobles. Some consultations with residents has taken place.
ED reported on responses on the end of Skirling Mill path to KirkBrae section. They were positive in the main, though there were reservations that it was such a short section, that SBC would not want to bother. The consensus was in favour of cinder as tar might encourage people to park on pavements. SBC will not pay for cinder as its difficult to maintain. DB suggested we could be waiting a long time as funds are short.
For the upper section of the village, AC acknowledged it may be tricky to complete the path up to J Nobles. IH suggested making a path elsewhere e.g. around the field. For this land ownership would need to be identified.

Action: A formal meeting will be arranged with residents involved to resolve more concisely. RL will look into cinder funding from wind farm.

This led to considerable discussion about the burn – which will be reported in section 5 Sustainability and Resilience.

- Maintenance of Skirling Mill Path – of the two quotations (Grant Erskine £3,500.00 / Steven Irvine £13,701) it had been decided to thank SI and go for Grant Erskine. **Action: AC to notify.** It is too late to apply for the SBC path grant this year, so a windfarm application will be made for the April 18th deadline. **Action: ED to prepare application with SV**
- **Speed spy data (RMC)** PC Beaumont has been sent the relevant data as requested. The requested case study has also been shared although it needs refined. PC B keen and supportive with the work RMC has been doing here. DB also indicated it will be beneficial in better targeting the limited resources of the police. **Action: RL to check the cost of this tool can be funded by the wind farm. DB said if the request is declined the CC should let the councillors know and they can contact windfarm to communicate displeasure.**

Theme 2: Well connected Skirling

- Skirling to Broughton path working group report (RL, AC, MJ, HC, MD and AD) No update.
- PB is arranging with Neil Birch to put the new ‘heritage’ sign up.
- Schedule of works (AL/ HC) no update.
- Bus services update ED / DB. ED had collected more detailed bus usage data and forwarded to Councillor Thomson as requested. DB reported that companies are tendering and there are viable propositions.
- Declining mobile phone coverage in the area (RMC) Reached out to Mundell, who recommended letters were sent to major mobile network providers. As yet he has not received a satisfactory response.

Theme 3: Skirling Community Life

The following events have taken place with the help of the hall committee:

- Advent windows, including a grant to hire a local artist to decorate the hall windows.
- Christmas tree decorating- An event to encourage families to come along for crafts, coffee and mince pies.
- Wreath making: an evening of fun with mulled wine and mince pies.
- Carol singing: An excellent evening with music and a quiz. Fund raising for charity.
- Christmas Eve social: A chance to get together with nibbles and mulled wine.
- Burns Supper (ticketed): A 4 course meal and entertainment.
- Soup and a tale with theatre group Braw Clan will be held on February 13th. (Subsidised by Windfarm and Community Lunch funds)
- Other events planned for the spring include a live music evening, litter picking (30th March) and a celebration of 750 years since Skirling was first mentioned (to possibly take place on 14th June 2025)
- Now that the SCDT is established it is hoped the community park can be moved forward. DB said he will keep the CC in the loop of funding opportunities for this.
- The hall was open during Storm Eowyn for the residents affected by the power cut.

Theme 4: Environment and Heritage

The group had met up and volunteers helped with maintenance in the wooded walk area. Twelve bird boxes have been donated to the village and an owl box. **Action: IH will set a date to put them up soon before nesting takes place.**

- Slabs for flower tubs by speed signs (AC) This will be completed by the Spring.

Theme 5: Sustainability and Resilience

- Membership of subgroup – PB has volunteered to lead as nobody else has come forward.
- Building resilience at the top of the village to divert water and reduce risk of flooding suggested by HC in November – ED reported that she had contacted Tweed Forum for advice and received contact details for consultants we might approach. JBA <https://www.jbaconsulting.com/jba-offices/at> their Edinburgh Office, Or Cbec <https://www.cbecoeng.co.uk/>. RL and AC were clear that there was no level ground at the top of the village suitable for such treatment and it was hard enough to get the fields to drain at Galalaw.
- Thermal Heat Surveys plan. As agreed at November meeting, ED notified Tim Crick of the CC's proposal to let residents have contact details for the Heat Survey Team in Broughton and make their arrangements individually but received no response. As a member of Theme 5 group, Andy Leigh was approached to make a link with Broughton, but declined. He is more concerned with the Burn which he has observed at Kirkcroft and The Old Church
- Watercourse inspection report prepared by Calum MacDonald had been circulated to School House, Tintock, KirkBrae and the Old Church and discussion arose in the course of consultations about the path route.
- Mike Thompson raised concerns about erosion of the burn outside his home. He is concerned about his wall.

There was significant discussion about maintenance of the burn ranging from digging out to leaving to nature. Some balance is required in the maintenance and AC is happy to uplift waste. The erosion outside School House would best be served by using boulders to shore up the burn.

Action ED will forward this concern to Douglas Ford. DB suggested Duncan Morrison should also be contacted. The topic should be addressed again when the meeting of residents about the path route takes place.

Village Maintenance

- Graveyard Gravel and metal railing (AC/ ED) Douglas Ford tells us that the gravel work plan we requested has been approved. AC has obtained a quote from David Gardner for £250 plus vat. AC will now obtain this in writing for ED to send on.
- Repair of footbridge on Splash Road (ED) The latest update is that this will be done in the new financial year.
- Skirling resident heating system not working. AC reports that the situation is improving.

Correspondence received

- **Report from Tweed Forum** included notes on The Biggar Water Restoration project, a collaborative effort led by Tweed Forum in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). Working on two selected sites, it aims to restore the river's natural form and habitats - to improve the ecological health of Biggar Water but also enhance the surrounding greenspace, boost public access, and build local resilience to climate change impacts. 2024 Feedback received has been positive and we look to delivery in summer 2025. Visit tweedforum.org/our-work/projects/biggar-burn-restoration-project/ for more information.
- **Safety of Lithium-ion Batteries Campaign** – sent from the Parliamentary Advisor to the charity Electrical Safety First (ESF). ESF and Lord Foster launched this campaign in June last

year to ensure the safety of Lithium-ion batteries – prevent them catching fire and jeopardising lives and property. There are four issues

- That e bikes and e scooters and the Lithium-ion batteries used to propel them are subject to independent testing before being marketed. Currently this is not the case.
- That regulations are made to ensure the safe disposal of the batteries. Currently this is not the case resulting in fires in bin lorries and waste disposal sites.
- That charging kits and conversion kits used on the bikes are also safe. Currently regulations do not cover this.
- That online marketplaces through which many goods are sold nowadays are subject to the same safety regulations as high street shops. Currently this is not the case.

The meeting agreed to support this initiative. **Action ED to contact indicating support**

- **Scottish Borders Council, Community Council Scheme Review** - the review was completed November 2024. It is open for Public Consultation (Friday, 24 January 2025 to Wednesday, 23 April 2025), [consultation link](#) . ED indicated we have been sent an email with attachments
- **Review of Non-Financial Support to Community Councils** – SBC in the process of establishing the working group who will take the work forward. We will find out the representative for the Tweeddale group at TAP on 4th Feb.
- **Constituency Boundaries Scotland** has published its Additional Proposals for constituencies and Revised Proposals for regions for consultation on Friday 24 January 2025, for a one month period lasting until 24 February 2025. Tweeddale is in *Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale* with a changed boundary but name unchanged. <https://consult.boundaries.scot/>

AOB

- AC asked if the bottle banks had been emptied as there was overspill after Christmas/new year. They have since been emptied.
- AC reported there is a blocked pipe from Donmarie to John Nobles blocked pipe- AC reported it. Phoned again and they will come back out.
- DB would like to make communities aware of The Peeblean which is a collation of latest news, events and community activities from Peebles and around about. Users can subscribe via email and do not need to use social media.
- Car in burn at Skirling Mains – The police and SEPA are aware.

End 21.05.

Meeting Dates 2025: 27th March, AGM 29th May, 25th September, 27th November