



Royal Burgh of Haddington and District Community Council

Date & Time: Tuesday 10th December 2023 7pm

Location: Knox Academy

Present:

Jack Worden (Vice Chair)
John Hamilton (Treasurer)
Morgwn Davies (Correspondence Secretary, Planning Liaison Officer)
Susan Forgie (Minutes Secretary)
Malcolm Vickers
Stuart Pe-Win
Robert Moran
David Barrett
Christine Read
Christoph Crepaz
Mandy Harrington (VCEL)
Robert Flood (Knox Academy)
Phoenix Hill (Knox Academy)
Cameron Richie (Journalist - East Lothian Courier)
George McGuire (Councillor)
Tom Trotter (Councillor)
Shamin Akhtar (Councillor)
John McMillan (Councillor)

Apologies: Therese Laing (Chair)
Erica Muirhead
James Graham
Betsy Fowler

Item	Topic	Action
1	Welcome And Apologies JW opened the meeting.	
2	Adoption of Minutes Minutes of the meeting on 14/11/2023 approved	



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3	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>Voice</p> <p>JW - since Voice is interesting, it is not a recording device which was why the HDCC was interested in it initially. Should not pursue further now.</p> <p>Climate & Ecology Bill</p> <p>MD - emailed Kenny McAskill MP but there was no vote and therefore no debate. HDCC features on a list of organisations which includes city councils who support the bill.</p> <p>Resiliency Plan</p> <p>JW - HDCC needs to pay more attention to this. He asked if the community council was properly prepared. Need to come back to this.</p>	JW



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4	<p data-bbox="256 479 539 510">Community Reports</p> <p data-bbox="304 557 1177 667">a. Knox Academy - PH reported that the school had raised over £1,000 for Children In Need with throwing sponges at the headteacher raising the most money.</p> <p data-bbox="352 701 1177 1077">RF reported that the school had finished the prelim diet. The Enterprise Team had sold tote bags at the LAC Market raising further funds. The 1st year students sold products they made at the Festive Fair. Christmas dances are now taking place and a Christmas concert will take place on 21/12/2023. There are 2 performances (at 2pm and 7pm). P7s and local care homes will attend and HDCC members are welcome. S3 Modern Studies have set up a food bank collection point for Lammermuir Larder. Elaine Gail from OCK has had a planning meeting with senior students to discuss the Burns' Supper.</p> <p data-bbox="352 1115 1177 1182">George Adam from the Scottish cabinet visited the school for a Q&A with modern studies students,</p> <p data-bbox="304 1283 1007 1314">b. Haddington and Lammermuir Area Partnership</p> <p data-bbox="352 1348 1177 1415">JW attended meeting on 3/12/2023 which was concerned with funding applications.</p> <p data-bbox="352 1449 1177 1516">SPW - lots of good causes were funded, especially the Bridge Centre and Haddstock projects.</p> <p data-bbox="304 1554 970 1585">c. Tenants and Residents Association Updates</p> <p data-bbox="352 1619 1177 1729">SPW said that he had had quite a few emails about the license being withdrawn from a flea market that was fundraising for breakfast clubs.</p> <p data-bbox="352 1762 1177 1872">SPW said that the deadline for objections from HDCC had been extended until 15/01/2024. There is a public meeting on 16/12/2023 at 10:30 at the West Church.</p> <p data-bbox="304 1906 1177 2011">d. CAP - note circulated this morning. GM said it was a quiet meeting which agreed to take forward plans to tackle problem driving over Christmas, DB reported a flashing speed light was</p>	



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	<p>in place at Knowes Road but was not connected yet. GM said there is one on Whittinghame Drive.</p> <p>e. Blooming Haddington</p> <p>Last meeting discussed ideas for 2024. Planted 4000 crocuses.</p> <p>f. Haddington Heritage Project</p> <p>JW - application going into the Turtledon trust to preserve medieval graffiti at St Mary's. The group are developing and submitting funding applications to revise and improve the geo app for tourism in the town. This is part of more comprehensive plans to link into travel companies and designing a tour that would be attractive to tourists from the USA. The geosite is amateurish and a lot of work has been done to tighten it up and make it more professional.</p>	



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5	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>a. Letter from lady in USA who is getting married at Winton asking about visas etc. MD directed her to the relevant authorities. JM asked MD to send him the person's name since he believed he might have met her on a previous visit..</p> <p>b. Correspondence from Paul McLelland MSP putting forward the idea of having a national park is u8nder consideration.</p>	



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<p>6</p>	<p>Councillors' Corner</p> <p>Roads</p> <p>RM - potholes in Weymss Road are very deep TT to look into.</p> <p>Corn Exchange</p> <p>Concern that after the Christmas Light Switch On the crowds went into the Corn Exchange and not to local business. JM said this was a clear gesture from the Brunton Theatre to the town and they put on a free band for dancing.</p> <p>There was a discussion about where the monies raised by the Corn exchange prior to the Brunton Theatre taking it over went and did it go into the Common Good Fund. JM explained that the Corn Exchange has not been treated as a Coomon Good Fund asset. This being reconsidered and the legal background is being looked into. Building was acquired in 1975 from the former town council, but not as a common good asset.</p> <p>Concern was raised about the high cost for the community to hire the Corn Exchange from the Brunton Trust for events. A community organisation had been quoted £950 for a 4 hour hire. JM explained that this is a community rate and is 50% of the commercial cost. This includes costs for staff and a share of the rent for the building. The Brunton are investigating the possibility of running a free bar with a minimum spend.</p> <p>JW asked how much the annual lease was worth. JM said this may be commercially sensitive but he will try to find out. MD asked if the lease was exclusive and do the Brunton trust receive all of the fees. JM confirmed this was the case, but no one knows how long the lease will be for. JW wondered how much it cost to hire the Corn exchange before the Brunton trust since it is so difficult for community organisations to afford the high fees. DB said it seemed to be being used less and less for community purposes and more for commercial uses. CC pointed out that if it weren't for the Brunton the Corn Exchange would likely be closed due to lack of staff.</p> <p>JW said that it would be useful to have published rate cards for commercial and community rates.</p> <p>DB pointed out that the HCDT had taking over the Corn Exchange as</p>	<p>TT</p> <p>JM</p>
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	<p>their top priority, JM said that after the Brunton have moved out of the Corn Exchange it would be helpful to set up a community management trust to take it forward. DB suggested the hybrid model used in Perthshire where the council retains ownership, but the community shares the building.</p>	



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7	<p>Treasurer's report</p> <p>JH presented the treasurer's report to the committee.</p> <p>Balance On 18/10 was £29,739.</p> <p>No monies were received £3081 was made.</p> <p>Dec 2023 - £27,802 Out - £100 (for elf suits and sweets)</p> <p>Armistice wreath reimbursements have been made.</p> <p>MV said that Athelstaneford was £15k short for the park and asked if it would be appropriate for them to apply to the CC for money. JW and JH agreed that it would be.</p> <p>JW said that there had been a great turnout for the Christmas lights, and this could have been exploited to collect money/donations. GM pointed out that if money is to be collected, the audience must be told in advance. JW the Events Group are looking into how it could raise funds from events.</p>	



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8	<p>Licensing & Planning</p> <p>Planning</p> <p>MD there are 2 major planning applications.</p> <p>Newlands Hill Windfarm</p> <p>MD - the HDCC has time to decide at its next meeting and read a statement about the alternative ways the HDCC could view the application.</p> <p><i>The final proposal consists of 17 turbines and a battery storage facility, including 15 turbines with 200 metre tip heights, and 2 turbines at 180 metres. As we move towards a decarbonised network, storing clean energy and discharging it when most needed, allows us to help balance the grid network so it remains stable and runs efficiently.</i></p> <p>Points to consider.</p> <p>We are not party political on the Community Council but as Thomas Mann said, "everything is political", this development more than most.</p> <p>It impacts on international treaties, international politics, on all the COPD meetings, on national UK politics, Scottish politics, and council politics.</p> <p>If as consensus accepts that climate warming is an existential threat to human life, then accepting 15, 200 metre turbines dominating the view from Haddington of the Lammermuir Hills would surely be a price worth paying.</p> <p>But can a nation of 5.5 million in a global population of 7.9 billion really have an impact on CO2 emissions? Scotland emits 41.6 million tonnes of CO2e against a world total of 37.15 billion. That is 0.1% of the world's total. (Population is 0.07% of world population. I would also think we should consider that Scotland generates more renewable electric energy than it needs. Most of the renewable energy generated by the new developments in East Lothian are going to be sent south to England. Scotland in 2020 exported 37.3% of its electrical generation to England and Northern Ireland. Does this matter? Maybe not, but in England there has been effectively a de-facto ban on on-shore windfarms from 2015 to September 2023, only 20 on shore wind turbines have been built in the whole of England in that time. Newland Hills Wind Farm has 17.</p> <p>If we believe that global warming is an existential threat and that Scotland should aim to reduce its carbon footprint, regardless of how small that impact might be, then there is no reason to object to this development. The impact on the Lammermuir and the views from Haddington are not important in the context of global warming.</p>	
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	<p>Building wind turbines near the top of the ridge line is the best place to build them.</p> <p>CC said they should fix the grid before building more wind farms. JW this is a major issue in terms of COP22 but in terms of this particular site HDCC should represent the views of the local people affected by it. MD said a decision should not be influenced by Community Benefits. MV argued that HDCC should listen to the community and if they are supportive then this be reflected in our discussion. MD pointed out that the local community is not in our CC's ward. MV asked if HDCC knows what the community view is. MD explained that there was a small community group against it.</p> <p>MD said that the issue is the perceived importance of the existential threat of the climate crisis. JW said HDCC needs to look at the overall perspective. Some people would like the wind farm to be somewhere else. MD asked JW if he was suggesting that HDCC don't comment on the application. JW said yes, he doesn't believe HDCC is in a position to offer an opinion. JH argued that HDCC should only be considering whether it wants the sight lines disturbed and this is what it should be commenting on. JW asked if there is sufficient information to make a decision and MV if HDCC can limit its decision to disruption of view, even though it does not know what the people of Haddington think.</p> <p>MD said he has sent out links to the documentation but couldn't see a link with a view from Haddington. He pointed out that they will be visible and have a huge impact on the view and that is the only consideration for HDCC. JW argued that HDCC is not in a position to make a decision and should not make a comment but encourage members of the public to do so. JM said that Gifford is not making a comment but encouraging individuals to do so.</p> <p>It was agreed that HDCC would not take a view on the planning application.</p> <p>MV said that the applicants have been very active and engaged with the local community and have changed their strategy according to these discussions.</p> <p>Herdmanflat</p> <p>MD - Three options.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lodge Objections to Development. Listen to the local residents who are opposed to the development, because of traffic congestion, loss of green 	



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	<p>spaces, loss of trees, environmental impact, noise and light pollution, and aesthetic impact.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Don't comment on the planning application at all. 3. Submit a response to the Planning Department supporting the development. It is a sympatric development that does not over develop a brownfield site, as few trees as necessary will be removed, new trees will be planted, there will be active travel corridors though the site, a new community building and 145 houses for the elderly and disabled. This housing is much needed. <p>JW there is a lot of documentation with this application and community councillors should look at in depth and come back with an informed opinion at the next meeting.</p> <p>East Fortune Farm</p> <p>MD - a retrospective planning application received for a change of use (agricultural building to shop) and asked if HDCC should comment. CC argued that there are either rules or not. No retrospective planning permission should be allowed.</p> <p>DB said that the community council has fairly limited influence since the developer can appeal to Scottish Government, but the community council can't protest a decision. JW said that comments by HDCC is not as effective as those made by individuals. MV reported that Athelstaneford had raised 444 objections to the proposed family park.</p> 	



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9	<p>Community Council Subgroups</p> <p>EVENTS JW - The Christmas Lights was a great success and gave thanks to all the volunteers who made it possible. The date of the next meeting is Monday 29th January 2024</p> <p>Town Centre CC - still need to form the group and a date has been set for a meeting in the middle of January. Funding has been found for shop front decoration and there is a detailed plan. Leisure & Sports will contact all the shops.</p> <p>JW said that the Town Centre group might look at DB's idea about appointing a fund raiser.</p>	
10	Any other business	

Next meeting: Tuesday 9th January 2024, Knox Academy @ 7pm