

Minutes of Meeting: Damhead and District Community Council

The Conservatory, The Steading Restaurant
Wednesday 19th October 2011, 7.30pm

1 Apologies

Present:

Constance Newbould (Chair), Helen McKay (Treasurer), Natalie Frankish (Secretary), Joanne Gillies, Henry Marsh,

Apologies for Absence:

Neil Johnston, Matthew Marshall

Residents in Attendance:

Graham Buchanan, Stuart Clark, Lyn MacKinnon, Gordon Marshall, Kate Marshall

2 Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were proposed and seconded via email, have been circulated to residents and will be posted online.

Future minutes will be approved by at least 4 members of the DDCC before they are circulated.

Matters arising

Website: There have been ongoing access problems with the DDCC website which has prevented the minutes of the last meeting being posted online.

Traffic Survey: Jo has the draft of the survey undertaken by the previous DDCC, with the most up to date version likely to be on the DDCC website. It is hoped that the online version contains resident's suggestions for improvements as individual survey responses have not been retained.

Letter to Residents: The letter/ form to gather information from residents has been drafted and will be sent to residents before the next meeting.

Correspondence with Councillor Imrie: Constance has contacted Councillor Imrie to obtain confirmation of the starting balance for DDCC and to clarify MLC responsibilities in relation to hedge cutting on the Old Pentland Road. No response has been received.

3 Treasurer's business

The Community Council bank account has been reactivated with a starting balance of approximately £84. Constance, Helen and Natalie are the signatories for the bank account.

A cheque has been sent to settle the outstanding bill for the Council's website domain name.

Donations

The DDCC welcomed two donations of £100 from residents. DDCC members noted that it was important that the donated funds be used for something tangible, such as an event or project, not for DDCC overheads. It was agreed that residents should be given a say on how this money should be spent.

Action: Natalie to contact residents and ask for their suggestions on how donated monies should be spent.

Insurance

Helen explained that the ASCC will be closing at the end of this financial year and as such, were no longer able to process requests for additional insurance coverage for events. It was agreed that public liability insurance was essential if the DDCC were to plan any community events (including the spring clean up) in the near future. The Chair agreed to raise this with Laurence Reid at Midlothian Council and the Treasurer agreed to investigate other options for reasonably priced insurance.

Action: Constance to discuss with Laurence Reid, the options for insurance following the closure of the ASCC insurance scheme.

Action: Helen to investigate other options for reasonably priced insurance.

MLC Grant

The DDCC discussed issues surrounding the MLC Grant for 2011/12. Helen noted that the application required a copy of the DDCC constitution, a statement of the number of residents in the area and the submission of bank accounts.

It was suggested that the grant money, once secured, would need to be used by March 2012. However, this was disputed based on communication between the previous DDCC and Midlothian Council. It was agreed that clarification on this issue was needed.

Action: Helen to gain confirmation from Midlothian Council as to when the MLC grant money is to be used by.

Helen also noted that the grant application now required the DDCC to submit a Equal Opportunities Policy or adopt the Midlothian Council's Equal Opportunities Scheme. In discussion, it was noted that adopting the Midlothian Council Scheme did not seem appropriate for the DDCC as parts of the document were not relevant to the work of the Community Council. However, it was acknowledged that a section of the document, relating to a strategy for community engagement, did fit with the role of the DDCC and it was agreed that this be used as a basis for formulating a DDCC specific Equal Opportunities statement of intent.

Action: Jo to pull together a Damhead and District Community Council Equal Opportunities Statement and circulate to DDCC members for comment.

4 Adoption of Midlothian Council's Equal Opportunities Scheme

Please see above point under 'MLC Grant'.

5 Traffic volume and speed

At the last meeting of the DDCC it was suggested that the DDCC focus on a smaller number of key issues regarding traffic volume and speed problems, rather than a large number of individual issues. For example, the DDCC may focus on speed limits throughout Damhead or pavements in the area. It was suggested that this be discussed when Neil and Matthew are in attendance. In the meantime, it was suggested that previous communication with MLC regarding traffic volume and speed be collated.

Action: Natalie to compile previous communication with MLC and share with other DDCC members

Traffic Volume Study

It was noted that a traffic volume study had been conducted when ASDA was being built. Since opening, the volume of traffic on the Old Pentland Road has significantly increased. It was noted that to avoid the traffic at the Straiton junction, more cars were now using the Lothianburn junction to exit the Old Pentland Road.

Road Repairs

It was noted that the Burnside road had been marked for resurfacing and repair for the second time, yet no repair works had been undertaken to date and no timescale for the works have been communicated.

Action: Constance to contact MLC and ask for a timescale for works.

6 Road flooding

Old Pentland Road

A number of residents had contacted DDCC to raise their concerns in relation to flooding near Pentland Cemetery on the Old Pentland Road. The flooding is a result of choked drains and is hazardous to drivers. It was noted that a former member of the DDCC had contacted Ricky Moffat at MLC with regards to this problem; however no action has been taken by MLC. Constance agreed to contact Mr Moffat again and if not satisfied, try further up within MLC.

Action: Constance to raise this issue with Ricky Moffat at MLC.

A703

Residents raised concerns regarding water running from the pipeline area of the A703 resulting in localised flooding of the road and deposits of silt on the east side of the road and pavement. This has caused both problems for drivers and for pedestrians who have been forced to walk on the road.

In addition, concerns were raised with regards to a build up of water from the Boghall Burn running behind the houses immediately before the traffic lights on the A703 at the Bush junction.

The Chair agreed to raise these issues with Ricky Moffat of MLC and seek confirmation as to whether or not action will be taken to address these matters. It was also suggested that SEPA or SCE be contacted for advice on this matter.

Action: Constance to contact Ricky Moffat with regards issued raised.

Action: Constance to seek advice from SEPA and/or SCE

7 Planning applications

Hillend Carwash

It was noted that the Hillend Carwash was now closed. The Chair noted that according to the online planning application for this business, the owner had 30 days from September 20th to put in place the conditions of planning. The Chair has decided to hold off writing to the Council about this issue (as per minutes 03/08/2011) – preferring to wait until the 30 days had passed to see if the necessary changes had been made. It was noted that the changes had not been made, but as the carwash was no longer operating, there was no need to submit a letter to the council unless this situation changes.

Action: DDCC to monitor status of Hillend Carwash and should the carwash resume operation without addressing the planning conditions, Constance will submit a letter to MLC.

Car Dealership – 25 Damhead

An article in the Midlothian Advertiser regarding a used car business at 25 Damhead was discussed. It was noted that a dealership had existed at this address for a number of years and that a retrospective license for dealing cars had been granted by the Council. The article outlined the planning poser faced by Midlothian Council with regards an application for a showroom for cars. Neil Johnston, a DDCC member and neighbour of the dealership, had sent an email prior to the meeting withdrawing from discussing this matter and noting that, as a neighbour, he had no objections to the dealership.

The DDCC discussed whether or not it should comment on any planning application lodged by the dealership. It was noted that when this DDCC was formed, it was agreed that it would not involve itself in the private planning applications of residents, unless the proposed project was detrimental to the community as a whole. The DDCC were satisfied that the proposed business would be small in scale and have little impact on the wider community. It was also noted that so long as the dealership's neighbours had no complaints, it needn't be an issue for the DDCC. However, it was agreed that situation be monitored and any planning application made by the dealership at 25 Damhead be reviewed.

Action: DDCC to review any planning application made by the car dealership at 25 Damhead.

8 Police report

Please see attached report.

The local crime report for September 2011 noted a total of 12 recorded incidents, of which 2 had been solved.

Incidents of note included:

- The yard at McKenzie Timber Merchant was entered through an insecurity and fuel stolen from 4 vehicles to the value of £1300, overnight between the 8th and 9th of September
- On the evening of 29 September, 56 bales of hay (valued at £224) were set alight in the field next to Old Pentland Cemetery. Youths were seen nearby shortly before.

Any residents with information on the above incidents are encouraged to contact PC Eccles (PC 4243E) at Loanhead Police Station - 0131 440 0506 or call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

The crime report for September indicated that there had been no reported vehicle accidents in the Damhead area. It was noted by residents that a car accident had occurred in the Damhead area and concern was expressed that this was not mentioned in the police report. It was agreed that an email should be sent to PC Eccles to ask whether this accident has been reported and whether it fell within September or October's reporting period. It was also agreed that the DDCC would request monthly crime reports from PC Eccles and post on the website.

Action: Natalie to email PC Eccles regarding car accident.

Action: Natalie to request monthly crime reports and post on website.

9 Newsletter / Website

It was agreed that the DDCC would produce a newsletter for residents.

Natalie explained that there had been ongoing problems obtaining access to the DDCC website to upload information. It is also not possible for residents to access the website at present. Natalie is in contact with Midlothian Council regarding this, who have advised that Midlothian Voluntary Action (MVA) be contacted for assistance with this matter. The contact at MVA returns to the office on Thursday 20th October and Natalie has requested that he contact her on his return. It is hoped that the problem will be resolved quickly.

Action: Natalie to email DDCC members for suggestions for newsletter content.

Action: Natalie to liaise with MVA regarding ongoing website access problems.

Action: Natalie to email residents with link to website once it is live.

10 Any other business

Constitution

Stuart Clark presented a reformatted DDCC constitution. Constance has a copy of this. It was noted that any changes to the constitution could only be made a special meeting, such as an AGM, with all DDCC members present. It was also noted that, as per the minutes of the last meeting, any comments regarding changing the constitution were to be sent to Jo and that the Constitution was to be reviewed in six months (from date of last meeting).

Action: Any comments on the DDCC Constitution to be sent to Jo

Small Grant Funding

The deadline for a small grant available to community councils was Friday 21st October. It was agreed that due to this deadline, the DDCC would not be able to apply at this

time. Helen agreed to contact the funders to obtain advice on the next round of applications.

Action: Helen to contact funders regarding future funding application rounds.

Pavements

A number of residents highlighted the problems facing pedestrians in the area, with a large number of pavements being in need of repair or upgrade. It was noted that pavements throughout Damhead, particularly on Old Pentland Road, were sloping towards the road and crumbling away. As a result, pedestrians (including those with pushchairs and wheelchairs) are being forced to walk on the road. The DDCC noted that this was unsafe and unacceptable and that improvement of pavements must be a priority for the DDCC.

Action: Constance to contact MLC (Ricky Moffat / Dave Kenny) to discuss action for pavement improvement.

Action: Henry to contact Nick Gibsone regarding Beech Hedge before IKEA junction.

Traffic Lights

A resident raised concern over the traffic lights at the junction at Ikea/Costco. At present, there is no repeater light on the far side (entrance to Old Pentland Road) as you leave the junction from the Loanhead side. There is however, a post for the lights.

Action: Constance to raise this issue with MLC (Ricky Moffat / Dave Kenny)

Signposts

A resident mentioned that a previous DDCC had discussed the need for signposts in Damhead, including for the Burnside etc. The DDCC agreed to discuss this matter with Midlothian Council. It was also agreed that this may be something we would want to use the donation monies for, and that 'signposts' should be an option given to residents.

Action: Constance to contact Midlothian Council regarding signposts.

Action: Natalie to include 'signposts' in the email to residents

11 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the DDCC is to be held in January 2011, arranged by doodle poll.

Midlothian Councillors will be invited to attend future meetings.

Action: Natalie to send 'doodle poll' to DDCC members.

Action: Natalie to inform Midlothian Councillors of next meeting date and invite them to attend.

The meeting terminated at 9.30pm