

**Cockburnspath and Cove Community Council Meeting, Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025 7pm in  
Cockburnspath Village Hall**

**Minutes**

- 1 Apologies and Attendance:** Rev S Fletcher (Chair) online, P Hood (Vice Chair), S Hope (Treasurer) online, H Brewerton (minutes), M Given, K Tulloch, A Blackwell, Cllr J Andeson, Cllr C Hamilton, Member of the Public (MOP). Apologies: J Fairbairn.
- 2 Recent Co-opted Community Council Members:**
  - 2.1 Details of names, addresses and electoral roll numbers are available from the secretary on request. (They are not published due to GDPR regulations).
  - 2.2 Distribution of Constitution and signing of Code of Conduct: New co-opted members signed the code of conduct.
- 3 Conflicts of Interest and Additions to Agenda:** Conflict of Interest: Rev S Fletcher regarding the Sea Cadet funding. Additions to Agenda: Cockburnspath & Cove recycling of medical pill packets funding application. Fulfordlees domestic water funding request. Pickleball equipment funding. P Hood expressed concern on behalf of the CC on hearing that C Morrison was in hospital and wishes him a quick recovery. The CC offers their support to help to him and the family.
- 4 Minutes of Previous Meeting:** All approved. To be signed by the chair on her return.
- 5 Police Report: April:** M Given reported that most of the April report was for Eyemouth but that there was a report that boxes were stolen in Hay Terrace. It was noted that a caravan was stolen from Callendar Place recently and it is expected that this will be in next month's report. M Given highlighted that there is a report of people scoping out the Eyemouth Community Garden with the intent of taking items and wanted the allotment association to be aware. **Action: M Given to inform N Simpson about this.**
- 6 Matters Arising**
  - 6.1 Required Election: K Tulloch stated that it has been 4 years since the last election and therefore under the constitution the CC are obliged to stand down and hold an election this year. The CC has lost a number of members over the last year and with a few new members who can only act as co-opted members for 3 months until they become elected members, it means there are only 5 members that can vote on matters arising. The suggestion is therefore that the CC stand down after the meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> June and carry out the elections over July whilst there is no meeting, with the hope that they can resume for their August meeting with more voting members, as any new members at that point would be full members with voting rights. It was ascertained that all 5 current members would still stand for election; Rev S Fletcher, P Hood, M Given, S Hope and J Fairbairn. J Graham will be standing down. The CC ideally needs 10 members as a full cohort which will help prevent any future cancellations of meetings. K Tulloch went through the process; if more than 10 members are nominated then the election will be balloted to choose the new 10 members. If 10 or less then all nominated candidates will become members. A discussion took place on timescales around this and the hope is that the process can be completed before August's meeting but if it goes to ballot then the next meeting after the summer would be September. It was advised that current CC members start recruiting for new members. Rev S Fletcher raised concerns around the current issues within the village and would like to be able to complete the process before August so that they can support other groups with critical issues such as the threat to the nursery. Discussions took place around having a zoom link available for everyone to attend virtually to make the monthly meetings more appealing to more members. All agreed to go ahead with the election and stand down after the June meeting. K Tulloch offered to act as the Returning Officer. **Action: All CC members to recruit. Rev S Fletcher to organise advertising the elections. Cllr J Anderson to bring nominations forms to the June meeting and provide the link to online forms.**
  - 6.2 Threat of Nursery Closure: A Blackwell updated: Parents from Cockburnspath, Cove along with parents from other nurseries affected, raised concerns around the policy around Scottish Borders Council (SBC)'s motion to mothballing, as to whether it fitted with legislative

framework, which led to the Scottish Government reviewing the legislation. A new motion at a special SBC Executive Committee meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> May overturned the April 15<sup>th</sup> motion to mothballing and sought to bring stability to communities affected over the next year. This meeting passed a new motion to explore a compromise alternative which is to merge the nursery and early years primary into one class. They stated this was ground breaking and had not been attempted by any other local authority in Scotland. There is no policy and no national framework or guidance to organise it, but despite this, councillors agreed to fast track a three-week parent consultation which started on 12<sup>th</sup> May, and plan to roll it out this August. The first step in this consultation was a meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May with a Quality Improvement Officer in Cockburnspath school with parents mostly directly affected (parents of nursery and primary 1,2 and 3). There was a robust discussion around the issues and challenges, and an openness as to how it might work but serious concerns over the timescales in which it is being undertaken, consult, plan and deliver a groundbreaking new model of education for our children in 3 months. Five nurseries in the SBC area are affected - The parents are working with other nurseries affected. A Blackwell's view is that SBC carried out a major U-turn on their draft mothballing policy but are now proceeding without any policy. They have flagged their concern with our MP and MSP who are raising these concerns with Scottish Government. Our MSP has had a written question with our first minister's questions. John Lamont is raising the concern with the Care Inspectorate around statutory level of staffing. The concerns are that SBC at director level is trying to reduce the level of staffing. A Blackwell stated they don't know what the next steps of the consultation are. SBC claimed this new motion would bring stability to the community but it has extended instability to the nursery as well as the school. Parents need to choose now where their child will attend nursery and this uncertainty might mean they will actively look elsewhere as they don't know what level of service there will be, making the nursery and primary school even less sustainable. Parents feel that SBC are unwilling to look at other, more flexible alternatives, but there is hope that now there does seem to be an expression of interest in exploring these options (such as extending provision for 2-year-olds, and integration of after school care), giving a proper flexible package. This is being sold as our opportunity to bring ideas to the table, but it is unclear how this would work as it will take proper discussions over a number of months. Cllr C Hamilton noted she cannot understand how SBC can close Cockburnspath nursery, when the distance is so great between alternative nurseries. She is also unsure what stage the working group is at and recognised the need to think of the staff too. She does not think the consultation period is realistic. She is happy to support A Blackwell and all parents affected. A Blackwell stated it isn't clear if the working group involves parents or not, but that it should. Cllr C Hamilton stated it is not Scottish Government policy to close rural schools. She advised parents to commit to the local nursery and school to keep it open. Discussions took place. A Blackwell met with a Care Inspectorate representative yesterday who assured her they would be looking at these proposals with high scrutiny, and suggested that the timescales for the new policy were challenging. A Blackwell finished by saying that she is shocked at how poor the work that has been done by SBC and doesn't feel SBC will give the same scrutiny as the Care Inspectorate will. For example, the financial analysis was not accurate so they cannot prove this is a cost saving exercise. She noted her thanks to the CC for their support and how quickly they responded when all this began and for funding for flyers and banners. She hopes the next step in spending the funding will be to build a positive campaign around the nursery and school role in our community.

- 6.3 Cockburnspath and Cove Place Planning (follow up to Community Action Plan): forwarded to June meeting
- 6.4 Mercat Cross – Update: Discussions took place around the pursuit of finding who owns the cross. A Blackwell offered to look into various alternative options through her work with National Museum of Scotland. She noted that historically the community would be expected to own the Mercat Cross, as it is a cross for the burgh but that this is an unspoken ownership. She explained that if the cross is ownerless then they may be able to follow the same route as found treasure. When treasure is found it belongs to the Crown who give up their right to it and allocate

it to an accredited museum service. She noted there is also potentially a way to gain advice from Historic Environment Scotland (HES) who might be able to liaise with SBC on our behalf. Discussions took place. **Action: A Blackwell to look in to this and other options.**

6.5 Funding Applications Panel - Community Support - ongoing

6.6 CC Funding – timeline: Rev S Fletcher asked if the timelines for the funding panel were suitable when some people might need funding quicker than waiting for the deadlines from the panel. She asked if the 4 rounds of panel meetings in the year were the correct amount. Discussions took place and it was agreed to leave this until later in the year to discuss.

6.7 Participation Agreement re Caretaker Report – Update: P Hood, S Hay and N Simpson met with 4 people from SBC. S Hay gave a presentation and then they went on a tour round the village to show them what S Hay does as Caretaker, and the areas of difficulties, such as the steep banking. SBC were impressed with what S Hay does, and S Hay feels positive having met the contact person he will speak to at SBC. P Hood noted that there is no written participation agreement as yet. She also noted that one of the SBC representatives is in charge of community projects which will be useful for the Caretaker Project development.

6.8 Walking Festival: Ongoing

6.9 50 Year Community Council Celebration: to be held next Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>. K Tulloch and P Hood have prepared a list as requested from SBC of what the CC have achieved over last 50 years, most of which has been in the last 12 to 15 years. **Action – Rev S Fletcher to attend the celebration event.**

6.10 Cockburnspath Community WhatsApp Group: S Hope suggested that a one direction type WhatsApp! Channel of which each group within the village would have access, might improve communication across Cockburnspath for those that don't use Facebook or see the notice boards. All agreed this would be a good idea. **Action: S Hope to investigate setting up the channel.**

6.11 Annual Reports: Rev S Fletcher noted that they need to do the last reports to funding panels before the CC stand down in June. **Action: S Hope to liaise with previous treasurer to finalise these reports.**

## **7 Funding applications**

7.1 Various Green Funding Applications

7.1.1 Patio Door Replacement, Cove: Agreed by email (for minute records)

7.2 Transport Costs to Tynningame farm for nursery and primary school attendees: Agreed by email (for minute records)

7.3 Funding for banners and flyers for campaign against Nursery Closure: Agreed by email (for minute records) A Blackwell noted she hopes to use the rest of the funds for more positive flyers about what is good about the nursery.

7.4 Sea Cadets – Dunbar: A discussion took place around what percentage of the attendees were local. It was decided that £3000 would be the correct amount of funding to give them. All agreed.

7.5 Cockburnspath & Cove recycling of medical pill packets of £145: A Blackwell stated that this works well in Cove and feels it would be a great idea for Cockburnspath and would be located in the Village Hall. All agreed to the funding.

7.6 Pickle ball new equipment £32.79: All agree with the stipulation that any future applications will only be granted if the activity is inclusive to all members of the community. **Action: S Hope to put in writing along with the funding**

7.7 Fulfordlees enquiry around funding for private water supply: This enquiry was rejected by Foundation Scotland. The CC discussed and determined that more information is required about this enquiry. **Action: P Hood to find out more information from applicant. Rev S Fletcher to speak to the landowner.**

## **8 Planning:**

8.1 Cove collapsed wall. No issues

8.2 Kinegar cement blanking. No issues.

## **9 Correspondence: main points covered in meeting.**

## **10 SBCCN/BAP feedback: n/a**

**11 SBC Councillor feedback:** Report received after the meeting

**12 Community Councillor feedback:**

- 12.1 Rev S Fletcher noted that she has been asked by Foundation Scotland if the CC would be happy to add the management of the new NNG community benefits to the current Dronehill panel, extending the panel, to prevent multiple panels, as many of the attendees of this panel are from the same areas. P Hood noted that the Dronehill funding model is a good model in practise to use for the new community benefits but did not like the idea of using the same panel. Discussions took place. **Action: Rev S Fletcher and S Hope to bring more information to next month's meeting.**
- 12.2 P Hood noted that SBC have been in touch regarding the way CCs are managed when the CC is dealing with difficulties. Currently, SBC become involved, to support and review the CC. They would like to change so that another CC will take on this role rather than SBC. P Hood has responded to SBC to state that it should be SBC's responsibility as CC's rules are set by SBC and monies received from them to run the CC.
- 12.3 P Hood noted there have a number of surveys sent out that need to be responded to.
- 12.4 P Hood has attended a number of zoom meetings. There is one coming up soon called "commitments of open and trusting grant making" on June 10<sup>th</sup>. This might be useful on how to deal with benefits and might be of interest to funding panel members.
- 12.5 Responsibility of Defibrillators: this needs someone to check it monthly. A discussion took place. It involves a bit more involved than just checking it. **Action: Rev S Fletcher to ask S Hay to take it over temporarily until after the election process.**
- 12.6 S Hope asked if the CC could hold their meeting at different days during the week. A discussion took place and it was determined that Wednesday evenings fit best with the hall. It was noted that a zoom link will be made available to everyone in future for those who cannot attend in person.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting of Cockburnspath and Cove Community Council will be held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> June at 7pm at Cockburnspath Village Hall. Members of the public are welcome and encouraged to attend.**