

AGM 2023 Minutes

Appendix 1 Annual Report by the Chair

The Participation Event Report at Item 10 will enlighten you about the majority of our work over the last 12 months – I certainly don't want to repeat it here. So this will be a fairly brief Chair's Report.

Annual Events

We supported the following annual events:

- In May, as usual, one of the Common Rides, passed through Crailing and Nisbet. I tried to calm the nerves of the Callant, Gregor Paxton from Wester Ulston, with a generous helping of fine malt at the usual engraved Quaich presentation. However, I think that's why he has Henchmen!
- Armistice day wreath laying, at Eckford cemetery and Crailing War memorial went ahead as usual. Thanks to Peter Jeary for laying the Eckford wreath.

Council Business

In an effort to make our meetings shorter but progress business faster, we moved to 2 monthly-cycle for Council meetings, where possible on the second Monday of the month. This is working well. It included one closed meeting in October to progress the public consultation data. We meet alternately in Eckford VH and Lothian Hall Crailing.

We have been trying to improve our administration; it has been a huge benefit having Godfrey Spalton as acting minute secretary. He has introduced an action status document so that nothing gets forgotten even if the topic stretches over several meetings.

We have ditched the requirement to submit a list of all correspondence to the CC meeting and instead circulate to interested parties.

Vacancy advertising has not proved effective in increasing the number of our councillors but it has brought a few more residents to the monthly meetings, and to volunteer to help with one or two projects. We continued to run with 2 councillor vacancies in both Eckford and Crailing, and the role of Secretary and Vice-Chair have tempted no-one. (I will report on this in more detail at Item 10.)

Planning applications We commented on 7 planning applications that were advertised locally through E-News and Noticeboards. Views are now collated by local councillors who are responsible for local publicity, and who draft a response for the Chair to forward to SBC Planning.

Networking Groups We attend to regular networking events, Cheviot Area Partnership and Cheviot Place Making Working Group. To this is being added a Cheviot Community Council monthly "chat" session to facilitate sharing experiences. We'll see how this goes before committing to long-term attendance. There are several other groups on-line that we could attend, but time is limited so we are selective.

Consultations – After the post Covid flurry, consultations have reduced to a more sensible level. Most of these we advertise on the E-News facility of the website and forward to all CC councillors; strategic matters we have agreed mainly to leave to the Cheviot Partnership to comment. More local services, such as bus services we may comment on as a council or as individuals.

Webinars and training - There are many webinars and free training that can be accessed and are circulated to us. These are forwarded to councillors. Most of us have boned up on Local Place

Planning because of our interest in this form of development and funding, and because some of our residents are keen to use this type of project. We see it as a potential opportunity to fund some of our intended projects.

SBC Support - We continue to receive good support from our SBC Councillors Scott Hamilton, Pam Brown and Sandy Scott. It has been particularly helpful to welcome Pam to most of our meetings. One of the successes in the last 12 months, with SBC Councillor support, was the repair of a water drain that had been leaking down the Ulston Road for years, with consequent dangers in winter.

In addition to Local Councillor support, Emma Husband our Community Engagement Officer, Gillian Jardine our Community Co-ordinator and Fiona Benton at the Bridge have all helped us enthusiastically start our community engagement activities, with Fiona being particularly supportive with getting the Lothian Hall Committee back on its feet.

Communications

I set up a small What's App group in Nisbet after the village summer tea party. I would urge the other 3 areas to consider one. It's very quick way of spreading news and getting help, is well used and never abused.

We prepared an information leaflet to all households with information on contacts with the CC, with Resilience co-ordinators and emergency numbers, plus links to the website and CC e-mail account. It was well received and led to a flurry of residents joining the Oil Purchase Scheme and requesting E-News, but no more volunteers for the CC! More on this later at Item 10!

Thanks – so finally I turn to thanks

Paths - **Charlie Robertson** is a stalwart in this area. He keeps an eye on all our paths in terms of maintenance, signage, and benches, and sources funding for improvements. He's currently walking in Dumfriesshire so a very keen walker too!

Sheila Campbell - looks after the Website and administration of the email account. I could not cover in the absence of a secretary if it were not for having Sheila to hand, exercising initiative on improvements and helping me out when I'm bamboozled by the system.

Jane Vickers - administers the Oil Purchase Scheme, quietly and very reliably. We are lucky to have volunteers like Jane who just get on with the job – and do a right good one into the bargain.

Thanks too to our 4 resilience co-ordinators – Charlie Robertson, Mike McFarlane and Mike Seivewright and Simon Gregg up at Ulston (and yes there is a vacancy in Crailing!). And to Malcolm McGregor for co-ordinating the defibrillator business in each village.

Finally, **Peter Jeary**, our Treasurer for all the time I've been on the CC. Peter is calm, proficient, and able to balance good housekeeping with good humour when facing those occasional unexpected demands – such as another bench! I want to say how much we have all appreciated the huge amount of work you have undertaken for us, and on the Neighbourhood Fund Committee at Cheviot Area level. We are very sorry indeed to see you leave but understand that everyone deserves a break! Thank you, Peter.

Dinah Faulds

Chair CEN Community Council

2022-23