

Community Council - Chair's Chat August 2023

In October 2022, I wrote about the Community Council's public engagement activity involving a leaflet drop to every household. The leaflet contained useful contact information (I hope it's still handy in every home – new one coming soon!) and it asked residents three questions:

- What do you like about the area?
- What don't you like?
- What would make your life easier if it was changed?

At the same time, we gathered population data in Crailing, Eckford, Nisbet and the Ulston areas, by asking supplementary questions when we were able to chap doors and talk to householders directly.

Since the community engagement, we've analysed responses and drawn up an action plan, comprising short-term and longer-term projects, to address issues by raised by residents and community councillors. We committed to tackling the short-term projects over 12 months and are half-way through that programme.

At the AGM in May, I gave a presentation of the detailed findings. It was good that some residents attended to find out what we are doing on your behalf. You can view the presentation by going to this link on the Community Council website . <https://www.craisingeckfordnisbet.co.uk/community-resources> - select Community Council, then Minutes then 22 May 2023 AGM presentation (part 1 and part 2) but I'll also give a very brief summary here.

Findings

We learnt a lot about the Community Council, our households and residents.

Community Council – What We Found

- We needed to change our administration methods and IT support to cope with a committee that has long-term vacancies (specifically no secretary and no vice chair)
- We needed to share responsibilities for action amongst all the councillors and try to co-opt "experts" to help with limited time projects
- We need to make procedures easy for all councillors to use, with modern methods of dissemination, storage and openness
- We need to communicate better with our residents
- We are not representative of the population as a whole – all councillors are retired so views of working adults and children are not represented at first hand

Residents – What We Found

Population

- 51% of residents live outwith villages so important for us to contact village and rural residents
- Children mainly live outwith villages and make up approx. 11% of our population
- Working age adults make up approx. 47% of our population (the largest group) and are more likely to be in the rural areas than the villages
- Retired adults make up approx. 42% of our population, and are mostly situated in villages

What we've learnt about the households

	CENCC Area	Leaflet distribution areas			
		Crailing	Eckford	Nisbet	Ulston
Total number of Households	278	65	81	93	39
But in the four main settlements only		27	22	31	23
164 Households indicated age groups					
School age children	26	4	3	13	6
Working age adults	107	14	30	47	16
Retired adults	97	17	30	31	19

- In general:

- The major settlements are populated by older and retired adults
- The outlying areas have most of the younger families

Main settlements are taken as TD5 8LN & 8LG, TD8 6TW & 6TP, TD8 6TE & 6TR, TD8 6TF

Note how many households are in the “rural” areas, outwith a village. For example, in Eckford only a quarter of households are within the wrap of the village, where as Nisbet’s is nearer 33% - a third.

What Residents Want

- Residents like the status quo, and it’s peace and quiet – most said they would make no major changes
- There were no strong dislikes; people toiled to find dislikes
- There were suggestions for minor improvements to make life better – some were supported by groups of households but mainly topics were raised by one or two households

Community Council – What We’ve Done and What We Are Doing

- Created an Annual Calendar of recurring events and 4 main reviews – IT and Website; Oil Purchase Scheme; Resilience and Defibrillators; Footpath Maintenance Path development. This is designed to ensure good governance – in short so nothing “gets forgotten” and we ensure value for money
- Drew up Short Term Projects Plan of matters identified by residents and councillors
- Created a Longer Term Opportunities List – suggestions that will require longer-term action

Successes to Date

- Lothian Hall new committee established in May 2023 now running regular community events
- Published Guidance Notes to households on how to assess their current and future options to access >30mB/s superfast broadband
- Published advice to households on reporting potholes
- Crailing Road safety issues - Secured support of John Lamont MP and Rachel Hamilton MSP in progressing these matters. Petition raised and presented to SBC, hearing date in late September
- Secured a presentation on the Kalemouth Bridge Closure, with help from SBC Councillor Sandy Scott, for our next meeting on 11 September in Eckford Village Hall, open to all
- Nisbet 20mph signs location – raised with SBC councillors, and currently gathering names for a petition
- Boundary changes in Wester Ulston – lodged suggestion request with Jenny Wilkinson, Clerk to the SBC, matter to be raised as part of the SBC Community Council Review
- Reviews under way on IT-Website and Oil Purchase Scheme to be reported at our November meeting

There is still a long way to go – however I hope this update serves to let you know we are taking matters raised from the community engagement seriously and are working on completing the short-term projects.

If this article has peaked your interest in these projects, and you would like to help, or to be an admin secretary or vice-chair or fill the councillor vacancies for Crailing (1) and Eckford(1), do please get in touch or come along to our next meeting on 11 September in Eckford Village Hall at 6.45pm, when the update on the Kalemouth Bridge will be presented by Stuart Muir from SBC.



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