



Dalkeith and District Community Council Meeting, Tuesday 13th April, 2021,

ACTION

1. Present and Apologies.

Community Councillors Ann Stewart-Kmicha (Chair), Andrew Watt, Shona Haggie, Cllr. Margot Russell,
Dr. Alison Burke, Dalkeith Country Park for item 3
By phone; Mr. J. Henderson

2. Welcome and Introductions.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Dalkeith Country Park developments.

The Chair introduced Dr. Alison Burke, the estate manager for Dalkeith Country Park to update DDCC on the current plans and developments. She began by squashing any rumours that the Palace was to be used for a Donald Trump library. Nor was it planned to be a hotel as no hotel operator had expressed any interest. Possibilities that are being looked at are using it as a centre for creative endeavour providing spaces for workshops and display for emerging artisans. Other possibilities might be to rent it to another university or another tenant. In Fort Douglas jumping pillows are being installed this year and the intention is to keep adding something new each year. Also to create a covered facility so that it could be a year round attraction. The current development with Go Ape is a partnership that is in development and it is hoped it would be open by July. In the field next to it a camp site will be experimented with in July to explore the potential of such a development. In the park in general there had been a huge increase in visitor numbers and associated vehicle traffic. This had led to deer being attacked by dogs, and the ancient oak forest being considerably disturbed. Parking charges were being introduced and all money raised will go towards improving the roads, footpaths and infrastructure in the park. The boundary wall requires considerable re-pointing and repair which is a major expense. Such numbers mean it is now necessary to take measures to protect the SSI, the Dalkeith beetle, and the lichens that are in the park which are slowly being destroyed by car emissions and dog urine. A grant has been applied for to fence in the old wood; in the interim, temporary measures to keep the public out have been disregarded. Volunteer days are being restarted; there are campaigns against invasive species such as giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed. She said there were significant historical events that happened in Dalkeith and these should be made more widely known. Currently there were significant problems with poaching. Visitors need to be kept safe but at the same time the park needs to be protected and respected. One area being explored is how the park and the community can be brought closer together. A film promoting these ideas is to be produced. Co-operation between the park and the community is needed to tackle issues such as river pollution and invasive species.

One suggestion made was that Midlothian's Rangers might be trained up to provide some training courses for the general public in the park. It was even suggested that the Rangers might base themselves in the park one day a week or something similar. Dr. Burke said she was open to any suggestions of that nature to explore what might

be possible. Problems arising from increased dog walking were discussed, especially where dogs were not kept under control and potential problems that might cause to livestock in the fields. One measure under consideration would be to have a dedicated area where dogs could run free but everywhere else they would have to be kept on a lead. Dr. Burke said that what should be kept in mind was what the park should look like in 100 years time. But she wanted all the people of Dalkeith to be involved identifying the way forward for the next ten, twenty years.

The Chair thanked Dr. Burke for her attendance and said that DDCC would maintain contact. She agreed to circulate Dr. Burke's email address to members.

ASK

2. Approval of Note of last meeting

The note of the March meeting was approved.

3. Planning

(Cllr. Russell absented herself for this item.)

- a) *One Dalkeith building.* They have submitted a planning application to create a door opening where there is currently a window. This will allow them to create separate areas which would each have their own entry.
- b) *Lidl* has applied for permission to erect two illuminated signs in connection with their expansion into the former Peacock store.
- c) *Extension.* An application for an extension to a house in Easter Langside had been submitted.
- d) *Pre-application notice at Salters Park.* This proposal indicated that Class 6 use would also be applied for on land currently zoned for Class 4 and 5. DDCC had not received any notification of this so contact had been made with the consultants who had sent copies of the documents already on the planning portal. Some local residents had also not received any details because it transpired that the consultants were using an erroneous address list used in a previous pre-application notice for this site. Because this is a major Change of Use a public consultation has to take place. The consultants were proposing to hold a consultation event on Thursday 27th May. In the current restrictions it is planned this would be online with a telephone option being provided. It was also possible that by that time there might be some relaxation of restrictions making some form of physical exhibition possible. It was pointed out that the consultants had stated to the Planning Officers on the 29th March that DDCC had been consulted but their email received on 13th April said that this was their official notification to DDCC. The consultants had requested a decision by April 19th but because of Covid working restrictions, had been informed there might be up to a two month delay. This might impact the timing of the proposed public consultation. DDCC had received representations from residents raising concerns over the way in which it was proposed to carry out the public consultation. DDCC had concerns over how easy it would be for all residents to respond because of digital limitations. On examination of the documents submitted it was pointed out that a section of the A6106 had been included along with two small parcels of land on the other side of the road. It was pointed out that the consultants had stated to the Planning Officers on the 29th March that DDCC had been consulted but their email received on April 13th said that it was their official notification to DDCC, leaving DDCC only six days to make comments to the Planning Dept. It was agreed that the relevant Planning Officer would be written to expressing these concerns. A local resident also expressed concern regarding the noise that would be generated, especially at night, preventing good sleep.
- e) *Extension at Forthview Place.* This was an application submitted some time previously that had now been validated.

AW

- f) *Cafe in Ironmills Pavilion.* The dance studio that had commenced operating in the pavilion following its refurbishment had submitted a further application to have a cafe facility there. This was in the first instance for adults waiting for youngsters attending a dance class but could also be available to other visitors to Ironmills Park. It was agreed this was a welcome addition to the park but it was felt that good waste facilities were necessary to prevent the park becoming littered with paper cups etc.
- g) *Trees on Ironmills Rd.* One tree was to be felled because it was now in a dangerous condition. Seven further trees now required attention but full documentation had not yet been received.

It was proposed that SH would take on checking the planning applications and ASK would demonstrate RAMPS to her.

4. TTRO

- a. Woodburn Avenue was to be closed for a number of days to allow for resurfacing work.
- b. Double yellow lines. These were being proposed in connection with the construction work going on for the new Aldi store. (There was also discussion going on with Dalkeith Arts and Art Club in connection with various artworks being developed - and sheep!).
- c. Cllr. Russell also mentioned that a two day closure of the High St. at Crystalsmount was shortly to be implemented.

ASK

5. Community Council Priorities for 2021/22.

In view of the time it was agreed to hold this item over until the next meeting.

6. Councillors' reports.

Cllr. Russell.

- a. *Council Meetings on Zoom.* Cllr. Russell asked for feedback on the use of Zoom to allow members of the public to observe full Council meetings. It was pointed out that so far this had only been done for the Planning Committee. The Chair said she was waiting for response from the Midlothian Federation of Community Councils.
- b. *Duke of Edinburgh's Award.* The recent sad death of Prince Phillip had prompted Cllr. Russell to enquire how the D of E Award Scheme was progressing in Midlothian. She was happy to report that uptake and achievement were good and a wide range of opportunities for service in the community were being taken on by the young participants. The overall success rate for 2018/19 was 61%. New resources were being procured to avoid any youngsters being disadvantaged during the Covid restrictions. Some great achievements had happened through the D of E Award, giving youngsters renewed self-confidence. It also provided great opportunities for volunteers.
- c. *Youth Crime.* Cllr. Russell reported there had been an increase in youth criminality. She would be discussing the situation with the Area Commander; some descriptions had been received which might prove helpful. She had also spoken with some young people in Waterfall Park about the situation and how it could be improved. One problem was finding activities that today's young people want to take part in. Cllr. Russell confirmed she was also looking into reports of incidents in Woodburn Drive in order to prevent repetition of what had occurred in the past. She also confirmed it was the intention to re-introduce street workers and explore other new ventures in conjunction with the Police and local sports clubs. Various training opportunities, e.g. cycle

maintenance, were being explored and funding sought.

7. Police report

Report had been circulated. The Chair said that, when compared with the format of previous reports, she was disappointed with the generalities in the current format. Sgt. Michelle Lindsay was attending the MFCC the following week and might be in a position to say if this was a new policy regarding reports for CCs. She said she would prefer a report with more specific information. Once a response had been received from Michelle Lindsay, it might be worth sending a copy of a previous one to show the current CPO what was more useful to us.

8. Reports from meetings

On ascertaining that there was nothing urgent from any meetings that had occurred, it was agreed to leave this item. ASK would circulate MFCC minutes, and the ERIG minutes

9. Consultations

SESTRAN consultation. It was proposed this would be done by email and ASK would circulate the document.

ASK

10. Matters arising from previous minutes and not elsewhere on agenda.

- a) *High St. Tweak.* Attendance at the two workshops that had been arranged had been very disappointing. A range of options had been presented and attendees asked to give their comments. It was felt that not all the proposals would lead to increased footfall in the High St., which was the ultimate aim of the project. It was pointed out that there were already some changes planned for Jarnac Court through Midlothian Council, but grave concern was raised because the Community Council had not been involved in any of the discussions. It was not clear how DDCC should raise their concerns but as a first step it was agreed to ask the Council's Head of Place for an update as to what was being planned. He had already dealt most efficiently with the pigeon nuisance. It was agreed SH would attend the Wednesday evening follow up meeting. It was noted that many of the new shops opening recently were hair dressers and beauticians, while Santander Bank was closing and quite probably Semi Chem. ASK agreed to respond to Santander's published footfall figures as they included an eight week period when the branch was closed for refurbishment.
- b) *1-3 Buccleuch St.* The Planning dept agreed that permission had not been sought but wondered if any planning harm had been caused. It was agreed to express DDCC's concern over the siting of this sign in that it was too close to the traffic lights and it distracted from a historic building in the town. ASK agreed to draw up a response and circulate it among members for approval.
- c) *Award.* Volunteer Midlothian run an annual award called Active Volunteering. ASK had nominated the Guerrilla Gardeners and this was retrospectively approved.
- d) *30mph signs for wheelie bins.* The response had been that these could not be put on lamp posts and possibly not on wheelie bins. A definitive statement was awaited.
- e) *MVA AGM* This had taken place.

SH

ASK

ASK

11. A.O.C.B.

- a) *Easter eggs.* Virgin Media had donated 100 Easter Eggs which had been distributed to a variety of people, young and old, who might otherwise not have

received one.

- b) *Access to Vogrie*. The person involved in outdoor education at Vogrie was seeking assistance in getting better transport to Vogrie, bringing the young people in the morning and returning them in the evening as some families without a car found it very difficult to arrange transport for their children. ASK agreed to contact the other three Community Councils involved to see if a joint approach might be arranged.
- c) *Poppy Appeal*. A request for someone to co-ordinate this in the area had been received. ASK felt that the British Legion or Cllr. Peter Smaill, the armed forces champion, might be suitable places to find an appropriate person. AW agreed to reply to the request along these lines.
- d) *Death of the Duke of Edinburgh*. It was agreed that the Chair should write a suitable note in the Book of Condolence that had been arranged by Midlothian Council.

ASK

AW

12. A.O.C.B.

ASK

13. Date of next meeting

Tuesday May 11th 2021 at 7.00pm on Zoom.