

Floors , Makerstoun , Nenthorn , and Smailholm Community Council Meeting
on Tuesday 18th June 2024 at 7 pm
Smailholm Village Hall and MS Teams

In attendance

Makerstoun : Andrew Carter AMC

Smailholm : IR, Ian Malcolm IM and Veronica Ross VR and Jane Roberts JR

Nenthorn : David Stark DS, Tony Kime TK on MS Teams

Councillors : Tom Weatherson TW and Euan Robson ER

SBC : Roddy Martin RM (lives in Floors)

Apologies : Ian Topping, Nicholas Biddulph and Philip Green

1. Minutes

Councillors asked for the minutes of the April meeting to be recirculated, but approved them subject to any comments received by end June 2024.

2. Finance Update

No updated statement was presented as PG was not able to be at the meeting – but we are aware that we have now reduced our balances to workable levels after a few years of significant surplus. PG now has a new FMNS bank account with the facility to pay by direct transfer.

3. Reports

Given the upcoming General Election the councillors noted that they cannot make statements that could be seen to have a political content, hence were limited in what they could say.

3.1 Buses.

Hoggs have handed back their contract for Borders buses. An extension has been granted to end September, at which point a new operator or contract will need to be in place. Hoggs have found it difficult to operate given the fall in paying passengers since COVID and the increasing numbers of concessionary travellers the costs of which are not fully met by the Scottish Government. It is expected that the new service will be based on a mix of “on demand” services and a much reduced timetable. The Community Council noted that we have no interest in timetabled services as they do not work for our area, but that we are very hopeful that some form of on demand service might operate.

3.2 Scottish Power Energy Networks

There continue to be many short power cuts throughout the area. These short interruptions to service can be disruptive and damaging. Scottish Power have noted that there are trees close to electric lines and that these are being dealt with – ER asked that any power failures be recorded and passed to him in order to maintain pressure on SPEN to provide a reliable service.

3.3 Police

There were no specific issues impacting the FMNS area noted, however we continue to be concerned by the lack of specific communication with our area.

4. FMNS Leaflet

This is still to be completed. DS noted that the new leaflet needed to provide details of what the CC does, and he provided a copy of the previous leaflet.

Action:- AMC agreed to work with IT to complete a revised draft

4. OWL Microphone

AMC has applied for a grant to buy an OWL microphone. RM noted that this has been received, and that the application is hoped to be determined soon. It has been agreed that the microphone will be used by all CC in the Kelso area and that it will be stored in Kelso library.

5. Place making

AMC updated the CC on the progress made by Smailholm Futures with preparing a Place Plan for Smailholm. The consultants have met with the community and the final written plan should be in place in the autumn. This will include an action plan to further those issues identified by the community.

AMC noted that the benefit of a plan such as this was that it showed what the community wanted, demonstrated the level of support in the community and was in a format that can be shared with SBC and Scottish Government, and is hence a good basis for grant applications.

AMC felt that other communities in the CC area would benefit from a similar planning process, but this has to be led by a team from each community. AMC confirmed that the team in Smailholm would be happy to share their experience with anyone else who wished to see what they have done.

DS and TK noted that while this may be good there are some very challenging issues that the community in Nenthorn are facing.

6. Roads

DS noted that the A6089 has been repaired in parts, but that there are still significant potholes between the Courthill road junction and Nenthorn bridge. DS also noted that the courthill road is still in very poor condition with erosion of the road edges.

TK and DR also pointed out that there is continued water soiling on to the A6089 near the junction at the north end of the village. This was originally thought to be a burst water main, but Scottish Water have reviewed it and say that it is not their main. It may be associated with former local infrastructure, however this water presents a significant hazard in winter and needs to be dealt with.

Action : AMC to report defects to SBC roads team

7. Floors Water supply

Floors estate have not had safe drinking water for a number of weeks, and the issue is not expected to be resolved for at least another 6 weeks. This is a private supply maintained by the Roxburgh estate.

Action : If not resolved in the planned time that CC agreed to write to the Roxburgh estate to ask what action they were taking.

8. Planning

AMC noted that there had been no recent planning applications.

9. AOCB

- 9.1 Smailholm path. Veronica agreed to co-ordinate with Susan Gray at SBC to ensure that a second cut takes place in a timely manner, and that if SBC do not pay the FMNS will and claim via paths grant.
- 9.2 Smailholm Church Yard. SBC maintain the church yard. Part is cut and part forms part of the 25% of SBC areas that need to be kept "wild" for bio-diversity. This is not cut. Veronica noted that the neighbour to the south was not happy with the number of weed seeds blown in to their garden. Veronica agreed to explain the situation to the neighbour, and if necessary to contact SBC (via TW) if we felt that this was not a suitable area to be maintained for bio-diversity.
- 9.3 David noted that he is still awaiting payment for the wrk done on Nenthorn paths – AMC to contact PG.

10. Next Meeting

October 15th, 19:00 Smailholm Village Hall