

DFHC (SC042692)

Public Meeting, Lesser Hall, 14/8/25

Present: L Ferguson (Chair), D Rollo (Vice chair), W Roberts (Treasurer), J Wilson, L Telford, D Crew, J Currie, I Cranston

Public: 9

Community Council Chair.

Chair welcomed those present.

1. **Apologies** - none

Conflict of Interest - none declared by those present.

2. **Minutes of last meeting**- the last Business meeting was to discuss EV chargers and the offer from Scottish Power to install 2 in Fisherman's carpark, 2 at the Village Hall and 2 on the corner of The Green. Notes of this meeting can be found on www.denholmvillage.co.uk.

Chair noted that following this meeting and the resignation of L Baines (Secretary) that she will also stand down following the forthcoming AGM.

3. **Matters Arising - Land transfer** - this has been halted until a 3rd Trustee is appointed following the resignation of the Secretary.

OSCR (regulatory body) have opened an enquiry following a complaint they received regarding DFHC proposal to "sell" plots of land and have asked for further information around this issue.

In reply to this, the Council will point out that land is NOT being sold, and will include the Sheriff Summary document, correspondence from MFMAC (Edinburgh Solicitors) advising SGM be held, agenda and minutes of the SGM, along with the voting slips and details.

Public suggested that a statement from Councillor Clare Rammage should also be included as she monitored the meeting and presided over the subsequent vote count, and felt that the premise needs to be restated - the land is NOT being sold, the SGM was an open meeting where democracy prevailed and the village made its position clear, which was agreed as appropriate to include.

Public asked about which areas were being discussed and if there were any other court cases.

Chair advised no, only the case concerning Two Hoots. The only land that was registered affected Two Hoots, Larach Dene and Rubersvale She also noted that there were documents in the papers received from AHC (previous solicitors) that clearly stated that all of the land at Rubersvale was gifted to the property in 1910s and reminded those present of the legal correspondence (1993 - see SGM minutes Feb 25) stating that monies should NOT be sought for land.

Public reminded the Council that Community Land Scotland may be able to offer help with funding to support the legal work connected to the land transfer.

4. **Treasurers Report** - current balance is £9,845 and there is £137.03 in petty cash meaning there is £9982.70 available, which includes £2749 for the Dean (restricted fund). A savings account has been opened with £5000 deposited on behalf of the Dean sub committee, meaning the Dean total sits currently at £7754.8. DFHC unrestricted fund available £7233.65.

A Council member had earlier noted there were changes to DFHC accounts as shown on OSCRs website, the changes showed reduced amounts of income and expenditure for

years 21/22 and 22/23, which the Council were unaware of. The Treasurer contacted OSCR who advised that the amendments were made on 13/5/25 by the then "vice chair". The Treasurer asked for the original amounts to be re-instated; OSCR agreed and these are showing as of tonight (14/8/25).

Public asked for the name of the "vice chair", and was told OSCR did not reveal this.

Public reminded Council of the importance of the dates - the new committee were appointed on 6/5/25, the villager who was appointed as vice chair at that meeting did **not** make the phone call to OSCR requesting the changes, which raises further concerns.

Public asked were the changes requested by OSCR and when was this request made?

Public stated all the figures should have been as accepted at the previous AGM. Another pointed out that Gift Aid had been claimed and questioned the legitimacy of this under the circumstances while another member of the public cited instances when monies were paid in and went out immediately and noted that the changes removed the legal costs associated with Plot 1 and minimised the costs associated with the recent case, both reflecting inaccurately on the recent behaviours of the previous council.

Vice Chair agreed these were all important points and that the situation warrants further investigation which the **Treasurer** agreed to pursue.

5. **Dean 10 Year Management Plan** which the sub-committee produced in line with the bequest by M Braithwaite had been sent to the Council for comments. The Council noted that the inclusion of the maps referred to in the Plan would have been useful. The Plan and maps will be made available for public consideration, please direct any comments to DFHC Chair.

Public enquired if DFHC Trustees are now welcome at sub-committee meetings.

Vice Chair replied that Trustees are invited.

Public asked if they (sub-committee) were a working party or a sub-committee and do they come to DFHC Council for ratification

Chair advised they were a sub-committee, for Health & Safety issues the sub-committee consult SBC Pathways and are following the plan laid down by M Braithwaite, the monies for the Dean are managed by DFHC Council, with Chair and Treasurer as signatories.

Public clarified their concern was not about the work they were undertaking but was about them not deferring to the main Council.

Chair restated that she and the Treasurer are the signatories.

6. **Events** the last car boot sale generated £224, the next on 6/9/25 is the same day as the Flower Show and it was generally agreed that one would not adversely affect the other. The Village Hall have asked for a donation from the Council for our use of electricity & facilities during the car boot sales, which was agreed as wholly appropriate. Generally feedback from the car boot sales participants was that Saturday is a good choice, and they have valued the tea/coffee/hotdogs being available.

Sausage Sizzle will be held on 5/11/25, similar to last year with the addition of a fire pit/barrel. A request to hold the event closer to the gate area of the Green was agreed.

Xmas Tree, lights and switch on - G Ferguson will donate the tree. SBC will email their list of requirements prior to the event which will include PAT testing the cable.

Council noted that it was 250th Anniversary of John Leyden's birth on 8/9/25 and wondered if an event could be planned to celebrate this.

Public stated Hawick Archaeological Society created something to celebrate Murray's anniversary so could be contacted.

Chair will take this to the Community Council meeting (20/8/25).

AGM will be on 8/10/25 at 7pm, venue to be confirmed.

Public asked Chair to reconsider her forthcoming resignation citing her value and commending the work she has done.

Council agreed and also stated the importance of continuity.

Public noted that once the Council become SCIO, individuals may be more likely to engage and join the council.

Chair agreed and stated it should be a priority going forward and she has been in recent contact with Borders Community Action about this.

7. **AOB - EV Chargers** - the Council have decided to withdraw the Fisherman's car park as a site for EV chargers, deeming it unsuitable and unsafe for this purpose. Scottish Power (SP) have said they are not concerned and always had doubts as to its appropriateness. The Council have offered that the Green (car park opposite the Fox & Hounds) be used for an additional charging point, but SP have not responded as yet. Chair advised that the Village Hall have asked Bannerman Burke Law (BBL) to check the offer from SP, and said that any remuneration from the chargers for the village remains unknown.

Public noted there are a variety of other options for EV chargers including some that could provide an electric car which could be available for village use.

Chair restated the need to become SCIO as a priority for 25/26. She also advised that there needs to be proper management of the Fisherman's car park/ plot 1/quoting haugh areas following complaints from residents about the ingress of weeds into their gardens.

Public - Community Council Chair advised they had a maintenance grant for pathways although these had not been tidied yet and some monies may be available.

Public asked why were plots 2, 3a/b asked for rent when SGM made clear this was to stop and small areas returned to householders so that the main focus is on the communal areas like the Green, Wee Green.

Chair replied this had happened prior to the SGM.

Council stated he felt the current Chair is doing a good job and this should be acknowledged.

Public advised the Placeplan document is near completion and they will be looking for comments/feedback during the consultation period, he reminded those present that this is about our aspirations for the next 5 years and encouraged people to respond.

He noted that Foundation Scotland will fund a survey to improve the electricity supply to the Green and reminded the Council that the railings round the monument still need to be repaired and repainted, he advised that the Council don't lose sight of maintenance requirements.

Public - Community Council Chair - stated she felt a Council member should have declared a Conflict of Interest because of the land transfer.

Council disagreed stating a decision had been made by the village so any conflict is in the past.

Public - Community Council Chair - asked the Council to improve the information sign at the side of the Green, suggesting it should be upgraded.

She advised Centre Parcs have tried to include small communities to address their concerns via their information sessions and proposed plan, she has hard copies available if anyone would like to make comment and CC will relay their concerns.

Treasurer reminded those present of the forthcoming public meeting in support of saving our Fire Service on Tues 19th Aug at 2pm & 6pm in the Town Hall in Hawick. It's advised the individuals register their interest prior to going. CC Chair has a petition if people wish to show their support.

Public stated he agreed with the Council there was NO conflict of interest re the land transfer, the village had spoken with a democratic vote and a very clear mandate for the transfer. He spoke of the phenomenal public interest shown by those at the recent meetings which produced a new council and at the SGM and commented that despite that, this and other committees seem to be struggling for members?

Public agreed with the comments and suggested people were confused with who was on what committee in the village and perhaps it was time to dissolve and move on as one group (this was backed by others present).

Public thanked the Chair for all her hard work since taking office, and for her effort to get things “over the line”, she hoped the Chair would reconsider.

Council agreed with her comments adding it would be good if she could see things through.

Chair thanked everyone for attending.