

## Dirleton Village Association

### Minute of Meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> July 2022

The meeting was held at the Kirk Hall.

**Present: D. Tait (Chairman), C. Hamer; J. Macleod; F. McClintock; B. Ford; B. Thomson A Orr; C. & T. Drysdale; F. Dingwall; K Cornwell; D. Carter; J. Thomson; S. Oliver; V. & B. Nimmo, M. Chynoweth; A. Brown (VCEL)**

**Apologies: S. Paterson Brown**

#### **1. Discussion led by Alison Brown of Volunteer Centre East Lothian (VCEL)**

**DT** outlined the DVA's current charitable status. **AB** confirmed that the Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) is a legal form unique to Scottish charities and is able to enter into contracts, employ staff, incur debts, own property, sue and be sued. It also provides a high degree of protection against liability. It allows a group to be more ambitious about the projects it wants to be involved in. Gullane Village Association is a SCIO. The SCIO becomes a legal personality in its own right rather than the individual responsibility of trustees. Forming a SCIO can be a lengthy process (9-12 months) although the DVA is already a registered charity and so might not be quite as long. It would require a new Constitution, Asset register and agreement from the membership. It would give an opportunity to review the objectives of the DVA.

**BT** explained the financial situation.

**TD** commented that it is unnecessary for the DVA to become a SCIO in the event that the Kirk Hall became available as the registration of a right to buy is from a Ltd company with guarantee.

**JM** asked whether a Constituted Group (CG) has disadvantages. **AB** confirmed that the charity would need to be wound up and that as a CG it would not have access to as many funding streams.

**BT** outlined his thoughts on the decision to be made for the DVA going forward.

**TD** outlined the history behind the DVA's original objectives and suggested reverting back to its conservation role. **FMc** expressed support for this idea.

**JM** reminded the members that the Communities Day is an opportunity for the residents to establish what role they want the DVA to have.

**BN** thanked **AB** for her insight and suggested that further discussion is required before we need VCEL's assistance. **AB** confirmed to **KC** that VCEL would provide further advice when required. The committee thanked **AB**, who then left.

#### **2. Minutes**

**CH** confirmed that he had not been able to prepare the minutes of recent meetings due to family commitments but would address this over the coming weekend.

#### **3. Recruitment**

**DT** confirmed that despite discussions with residents, pleas through Mailchimp and Facebook no-one had come forward to join the committee. **BF** confirmed he has also spoken to young

professional families who expressed interest in becoming members but not in joining the committee.

**FMc** suggested that all committee members should resign at the Community's Day and force residents that want to maintain the objectives to form a new committee. This form of action was successful for GVA but that was because the community then missed out on the use of the Village Hall. It was viewed as a risky action for the DVA committee to make and may not even be possible as they are trustees of the funds held in the DVA account.

**BT** confirmed that without a treasurer the DVA could no longer achieve objectives as it would no longer be able to pay for services. **DC** listed some ongoing projects that would be affected – Queen's Green Canopy tree planting, and the Road Safety enhancement around the Castle Green.

#### **4. Community's / Village Discussion Day**

1 - 4pm 27<sup>th</sup> August. AO confirmed that DGN had not been formally invited to the day and saw the DVA as an organisation trying to control other groups. **JM** confirmed that all interested parties would be invited and the DVA would be there as one of those organisations and in no way controlling other than organising the event.

#### **5. Website**

The website requires ongoing maintenance to keep it up to date. CH confirmed that he will liaise with MH to ensure the minutes promised would be uploaded and see what else can be done.

#### **6. Accounts**

**BT** confirmed that there has been no feedback from OSCR on the accounts submitted. The balance currently stands at c.£15,000.

#### **7. Queen's Green Canopy**

**DC** outlined the current funding status. The Tree Council has promised funds for 39 of the 89 trees proposed. AO suggested that as the DVA accounts are so healthy they should match fund the trees. **DC** confirmed that c.£2,500 was required to complete funding and there was a majority vote to support this.

#### **8. Kirk Hall**

TD expressed concern at talk within the village that the church might be closed and that this could lead to the disposal of the church hall. He outlined the process by which the DVA could apply to the government to register an interest for a community right to buy it if it were to come on the market. He stressed that this would only give the community such a right in the event that the Church were to decide to sell the hall at some time in the future. If granted, the right would last for a period of five years and could be renewed thereafter at five-yearly intervals. He explained that Whitekirk Community had gone through a similar process to purchase their church hall, with two thirds of the price having been met by a grant from the Scottish Land Fund and the remainder raised through the community. He thought that the costs of progressing the application for registration would be limited, including obtaining copies of the Kirk Session's title to the hall (already obtained), registering a new charitable company, as the company previously set up for a separate right to buy application which

hadn't proceeded had been dissolved, and obtaining copies of large scale ordnance survey maps.

KC disputed TD's suggestion that the C of S head office might be able to overrule any local decision that might be made by the session to close/dispose of the church and hall and stated that in contrast to the trend in a significant reduction in attendance, the attendance at Dirleton Kirk was healthy. KC and DC both suggested liaison with the session to avoid alienation, about which TD was doubtful, as they would be advised formally through the application process and would be invited to submit comments to the government as part of it. TD explained that there was no suggestion that the community would be required to buy the building; it is simply a safeguard that in the event that it was to come on the market, we would be offered first refusal before any potential developer.

DT requested that TD continued to progress with obtaining the information necessary and forming a subgroup and CH volunteered to assist and continue acting as DVA liaison with such a group.

#### **9. Road Safety at the Castle Green**

DC confirmed that he had received some notifications from people regarding drivers ignoring the no exit signs but that more were needed to strengthen the case for change with the Council. SO suggested that the fact that the junction is being monitored might dissuade residents. SPB is setting up a meeting with NBCAP and ELC Roads Dept. to discuss a drawing provided to the committee which shows the safety concerns.

#### **10. GACC**

DT indicated that GACC matters are focussed on Gullane and West Fenton.

#### **11. NBCAP**

JM had nothing to report from NBCAP meetings. Hilary Smith is organising a walking festival 18<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> August. TD indicated that a brochure of local walks had been put together by GACC and DT said he would look into this being added to the website.

#### **AOCB**

- SO requested that members are informed of the Dial a Ride service. She provided a leaflet that CH agreed to scan and upload to the website and then post in the noticeboard.
- DC requested that the issue of funding issue relating to the kirk wall railings is resolved and added to the agenda of the next meeting. DT agreed but reiterated there will be nothing else on that agenda apart from finalising accounts in advance of BT handover to new treasurer!!.
- TD requested that all meetings are better advertised this might improve attendance.

#### **12. Date and time of next meeting-**

Committee meeting 7.30pm 18<sup>th</sup> August at the Kirk Hall, open invite as always although very limited agenda.

Open meeting 7.30pm 22<sup>nd</sup> September at the Kirk Hall.

## **ACTIONS**

- a) **DC** to liaise with Doug Haig regarding renewal of finger posts.
- b) **DC** to liaise with ELC planning enforcement regarding the blue tourism board.
- c) **SPB** to update committee on liaison with HES and need for support letter from DVA.
- d) **TD** to liaise with **DS** and update DVA committee on planning enforcement for the equestrian stable block.
- e) **DT** to check when Zoom subscription is due for renewal.
- e) **CH** to liaise with **MH** to get website administration access.
- f) **DT** to confirm committee e-mail addresses.
- g) **CH** to review DC's overview of the actions completed, ongoing or not prioritised from the previous Community's Day.
- h) **DC** to check for potential ash die back on tree opposite Amalfi
- i) **DT** has an application form, letter from the chair and a map to be circulated.
- j) **DT** to obtain local walks brochure from GACC to add to the website.
- k) **CH** agreed to scan and upload Dial a Ride leaflet to the website and then post in the noticeboard.
- l) **CH** agreed to complete and post draft minutes on the website ASAP.
- m) **SPB** is setting up a meeting with NBCAP and ELC Roads Dept.
- n) **DC** to complete financial forms relating to the purchase of trees and submit to **BT**
- o) **TD** to progress collation of information/records for registering a right to buy.
- p) **JM** to invite interested parties to the Community's / Village Open Day.