

DIRLETON VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

Minute of the Annual General Meeting: 17th November 2022

Present: D. Tait (chairman); C. Hamer; F. McClintock; J. MacLeod; S. Paterson-Brown; B. Ford; S. Low; T. Lonie; B. Thomson; D. Carter; T & C. Drysdale; K. Cornwell; D. Holloway; F. Dingwall; V & B. Nimmo; F. Dingwall; A. Orr; M. Chynoweth; E. Sutherland; M. Quilietti; C & J. Lindsay.

Introduction: DT welcomed everyone.

- 1. Apologies:** M. McNie; S. Oliver and P. Duvivier
- 2. Matters Arising:** None
- 3. Approval of the Minute of the 2021/22 AGM:** approved on a proposal by **FM**, seconded by **JM**.
- 4. Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22:** the chairman summarised the Annual Report and draft accounts that were submitted to the membership by Mailchimp on 5th November 2022, which for ease of future reference is detailed below.

Committee Members November 2021 - November 2022

Office Bearers

Chairperson: David Tait.

Honorary Secretary: vacant.

Honorary Treasurer: Barry Thomson (interim). Barry retired in August, and the committee thanked him for his work on the 2021 and 2022 accounts. From August: Simon Paterson-Brown.

Minutes Secretary: Carl Hamer.

Membership Secretary: Felicity Dingwall. Felicity retired during the year and the committee thanked her for the invaluable good work she has carried out for the DVA over many years. From August: Janice Macleod.

Other Members: Fred McClintock. Brian Ford (part year)

Ex Officio: Simon Paterson-Brown (Community Councillor). David Tait (Community Councillor)

The State of the Association

The DVA membership stands at 164, up from the previous year. This is 20% of the Dirleton Ward area population (total 818 in 2013). The DVA needs more people to join the committee and to hold office. David Tait is standing down after serving 2 years as chairperson service, in compliance with the constitution. The committee thanked him for his service to the community. The office of Honorary Secretary is still vacant. Simon Paterson-Brown has taken over as Treasurer from the interim Treasurer Barry Thomson.

The following committee members are standing for re-election: Fred McClintock; Janice MacLeod; Carl Hamer and Brian Ford. Simon Paterson-Brown. Simon Paterson Brown is ex officio a member of the committee as he is a Dirleton representative on the Community Council.

Committee members can give as little or as much time as they wish. Non-committee members have also volunteered to carry out specific tasks in the past where they have a specific interest in

something, and this is always very helpful. If you would like to discuss joining the committee or helping with a particular project, please contact a committee member.

Communications and Public Involvement

The Association held meetings every two months throughout the year to which all DVA members were invited. Committee meetings were held on other months and on an ad hoc basis as issues arose.

The Mailchimp membership emailing system is working well, and much improves the speedy dissemination of information and feedback. The issue of how to contact non-members of the DVA when necessary, remains.

The village website has been completely rebuilt and has been working efficiently since its re-launch. Each village organisation is asked to keep its section updated. Carl Hamer has taken on the task of updating the DVA section.

The DVA committee has used the Dirleton News and Views Facebook page occasionally and this has been useful, particularly for dealing with immediate issues. The village noticeboards continue to be used to make information available to off-line residents, non-members, and visitors.

Planning and Associated Matters

The DVA committee continues to fight on behalf of the community for high quality planning and architecture within the conservation area, in accordance with the DVA constitution.

Work on the Castlemains Place development of 26 private and 10 affordable housing units has commenced. The committee continues to monitor issues affecting the village. Planning consent was given to East Lothian Housing Association for the demolition of the two workshops at 17 and 18 Castlemains Place and construction of two blocks of flats (4 affordable housing units in all). The properties have since been sold to R3 Repairs, who have submitted a new planning application to convert the existing building to two 1½ storey semi-detached houses. **CH** confirmed that the DVA has submitted a response of support for the application as it is a far better prospective than the consented development. **CH** added that the applicant has made approaches to purchase the public amenity space around the properties. However, the DVA has confirmed objection to future sale of public amenity land for private gardens with the exception of a limited area to the north to respect privacy and off-set by new amenity space generated by remediation of the septic tank and closure of the existing road junction. A decision is awaited. **AO** enquired as to whether we could recommend sale to essential workers and **CH** confirmed that it is now a private development proposal rather than the development consented to ELHA.

In 2019 the DVA objected to an application for planning permission for a number of developments at Archerfield Links by Caledonian Heritable Ltd, the owners of the Archerfield Links estate, including the proposed felling of trees and building of 2 large houses behind the Archerfield East Lodge. A decision on this application is still awaited.

Building on the Newmains Steading development site, for which planning permission and listed building consent were granted in September 2020, has stopped and its future is unknown. The Public Right of Way (PRoW) between Ware Road and the John Muir Way, which passes through the steading, was stopped up and diverted around it in February 2019 with a sub-standard path.

The DVA has submitted substantial evidence of its use by the public as a walking and cycling route over many years to East Lothian Council (ELC). ELC have still to conclude the formal legal process of recognising and creating a suitable route for the PRow and the Scottish Rights of Way Society registered it as such. ELC is in negotiations with the landowner as to the route of the diversion around the steading and the replacement of signage and is consulting with the DVA over this.

In 2020 applications for planning permission and listed building consent relating to Auburn and the former gallery/laundry building on Manse Road were submitted to ELC: The DVA welcomed the proposals to restore Auburn, but objected to the architectural design and conservation area impact of the proposals to replace the former laundry building with a combination of garages/carports and holiday letting apartments. Several changes were made to the proposals and the application. The applications were approved by the Council in February 2022. The site is now under construction.

Although the Council granted planning permission in July 2020 for riding stables complex and a manège, off Manse Road they took on board a number of the DVA reasons for objection and applied conditions to disallow the proposed floodlighting surrounding the manège and to restrict the completed development to private use associated with the residential use of Auburn and not for any business or commercial purpose. The project is now nearing completion.

An application to build a house at Speedwell Gardens was submitted in 2021. The DVA objected on Local Development Plan and Conservation Area grounds, and because the cypress trees proposed for retention in the application were unstable and a danger to both the proposed and the existing neighbour's houses. The application was rejected.

There is a current application to build a house immediately west of the Castle Inn. The DVA has submitted comments which do not object to the development of the site in principle, but which object to the design on architectural and conservation area grounds. The DVA has asked for the number of listed stone wall sections that are proposed to be demolished to form an entrance and exit, to be reduced from 2 to 1, and commented on the lack of any conservation area statement in support of the design generally. It also objected to the inappropriate chimney and fenestration design in particular.

Despite a reasonably high level of protection being afforded by the Local Development Plan the village continues to suffer from the threat of inappropriate house building and other development within and close to the conservation area. There appears to be no prospect of such development pressure receding in the foreseeable future.

Other Activities and Achievements

Representatives from the DVA committee have been attending the North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership (NBCAP) meetings regularly on behalf of the community.

DVA committee members have met with various officials of ELC during the year to further the community's priorities which resulted from the Dirleton Discussion Day and subsequent survey in 2017.

The War Memorial appeal raised more than was needed for the war memorial repairs. The balance is being held on the DVA account until it is determined whether there is agreement for the surplus

to be used to restore the churchyard railings cut down in World War 2. The DVA committee has organised a vote amongst the community and the churchgoers to ascertain the majority view on this. Once the results are known and the majority view is determined, then a decision concerning the railings will be made and the directions of the war memorial appeal donors concerning how they wish their surplus funds to be used will be obtained.

The DVA is taking part in the Queen's Green Canopy Tree Planting initiative this year. Community consultations are complete. A ceremonial tree was planted by Lord and Lady Stewart of Dirleton in June to commemorate the late Queen's Jubilee. A total of 70 trees, one for each year of her reign, will be planted.

Two public meetings have been held to discuss safety issues concerning the main village road alongside the Green.

The committee used the Community Day in August 2022 to begin the process of updating its 2017 survey of community priorities. A new survey is now being organised which will form the basis of the committee's next 5 year plan for 2022-2027.

Following feedback from the Community Day, the DVA committee has submitted an 'Expression of Interest' to the Council concerning the derelict village hall. This does not commit the community to doing anything at this stage, but simply requires the Council to review the situation and respond.

A Dirleton Village Interest Group has been formed, to which any village organisation may belong. It is hoped that this will act as a village forum for the discussion of matters of common interest such as the scheduling of events.

Accounts

Simon Paterson-Brown (Treasurer) presented a summary of the accounts that have been approved by the Independent Examiner (IE).

The accounts on 31st August 2022 showed a balance of £15,434.48 an increase of £893.55 during this accounting period. The final balance includes £1,972 remaining from the War Memorial renovation fund.

TD queried whether the IE had seen the accounts summary extracted from the reviewed accounts. **SPH** confirmed he hadn't, and **TD** suggested some revisions to the format and detail provided and requested that the revised summary is reviewed and resubmitted to the membership at the next meeting for approval.

5. Election of Office Bearers and Committee

JM thanked **DT** for his work as chairman. No nominations were received for the role of chairperson. The committee proposed to have a rolling chairperson for each meeting, as previously adopted in the same situation. The schedule of chairperson would be agreed prior to the next meeting. **KC** commented that the role of chairperson isn't just to oversee the meetings and suggested that to improve continuity, the chairperson undertakes the role for designated period rather than alternating each meeting. The committee agreed to consider this.

Although the honorary secretary post remains vacant the secretarial duties will continue to be allocated to **JM** (Membership) and **CH** (Minutes). **SPB** was elected as a committee member and Treasurer.

The remaining committee members (**FM**, **DT** and **BF**) were all elected as continuing committee members. **Tracy Lonie** was proposed as a new committee member by **JM** and seconded by **CH**. **Sheila Low** (a former DVA treasurer) was proposed as a new committee member by **JM** and seconded by **FM**.

Each committee member provided some information on their background and what they intend to bring to the DVA. Of note were **TL** providing a better link to Archerfield Village, **CH** to update the website, **JM** to update the welcome package to new residents and **DT** to continue as the Dirleton Area Resilience Team (DART) representative.

AOCB:

- **JM** suggested that the minutes of the NBCAP could be added to the website.
- **JM** confirmed that the projector screen funded by Village Voices Village Choices was now installed in the Kirk Hall. **DC** has donated a projector, and this now provides an opportunity for residents to make presentations using a laptop. Consideration might be given to showing films although there are licencing laws to be complied with. **BT** has some old film footage of Dirleton some of which has been digitised and this might be shown. **BT** to edit and let **FM** take a look.
- David Graham agreed that the DVA could look into the possibility of having wifi in the Kirk Hall. Mike Howarth is looking into this but no decisions has been made yet.
- **AO** requested clarification on membership access to committee meetings. **CH** suggested an initial short open meeting followed by a closed meeting to committee members to undertake business. Committee to discuss and inform the membership.
- **VN** commented that the current attendance at meetings falls well short of historical attendances, and they need to be more welcoming.
- **TD** commented that although not a fan of online voting, if it is to be adopted then the basis of voting needs to be clear.

Date of Next Meeting: 19th January 2023.