

Dirleton Community Association

Minute of Committee Meeting on 20th February 2025

The meeting was held at 7pm in The Castle Inn.

Present: S. Paterson-Brown; Z. Trendell; T. Lonie; C. Hamer; J. Macleod; F. McClintock; D. Carter (present until 8pm); R. Sydeserff

Apologies: - D. Arnold; B. Moody

Attendees: M. Howarth, N. Howarth, C. Drysdale, T. Drysdale, V. Nimmo, P. Du Vivier, A. Soave, M. Chynoweth, S. Oliver, A. Stokes, F. Dingwall, A. Orr

1. Agenda Minutes

No minutes to be agreed – this is the first public meeting of the Dirleton Community Association (DCA).

2. Local Place Plan (LPP)

Derek Carter provided an update on progress of the Local Place Plan (LPP). It has been rewritten to align with the requirements of the East Lothian Council (ELC) planning department therefore contains material changes and to ensure it is compliant with the public consultation element one further special public meeting will need to be held. It was agreed this will be 20th March 2025 in the Kirk Hall and a presentation has been prepared in advance of this.

Key changes include:

- An area of woodland running down near the school and close to the entrance of the Archerfield estate is to be developed into an outdoor education area for the school (this is proposed within the LPP). If successful, it could also be offered for use to other schools in the area, however, this needs to be re-zoned from its current tourism purpose. The draft LPP therefore proposes this.
- Mobile telephone mast position (as discussed previously).
- The area between Eel Burn and Yellowcraig has been included in this draft of the LPP following recent discussions. Feedback from the local population on its importance in terms of walking and as a general recreation area together with a desire for it to remain so should be stressed within the plan. The area is now called, 'Old Dirleton Common', its historical name. It is now referred to as, 'New Mains Farm' and includes the Yellowcraig nature reserve car park and residual Dirleton common fields, Lysander House and Broadsands.

3. Heritage Lighting

Scottish Power are re-cabling the street lights on the church green and other main areas of the village. This has provided ELC with the opportunity to repair and replace the street lights. The DCA requested heritage lighting to ensure consistency across the village. To facilitate this an offer was made to ELC to contribute £10k towards the increased cost

(achieved through pledges from the public). These pledges now need to be collected and Simon Paterson Brown will confirm the best method of submitting this to ELC (via Doug Haig).

It was noted that replacements currently exclude 4 lights along the West side of the green. Derek Carter will follow up with ELC regarding this error with a view to having them included in next year's financial budget. He will also why they stop short at the East end of Main Road.

4. Village Hall

A contractor has carried out a free initial view of the building, however, requires further expertise from his engineer. Derek Carter will follow-up in terms of a potential timeline.

5. DCA Membership

To date 66 members/individuals have signed up (this includes 2 associate members and 5 groups).

Mike Howarth has partially updated the website with bespoke software as off-the-shelf packages were unable to provide adequate online protection. Membership (and membership renewal) is a self-service sign up process via the online portal.

Should membership fees be required in the future they can be made by BACS transfer on the website. Card transfer will also be possible.

This feeds the mailing list (there's a general mailing list and members only list). The overall aim is to make the process as easy as possible.

A fuller website update will be carried out later in the calendar year.

A link to the Facebook page (set-up and administered by Tracey Lonie) will be explored and paper copies will be displayed on the village noticeboards (the need for off-line solutions were discussed).

A welcome pack will be circulated to members on behalf of the DCA.

6. Curling Pond

The curling pond area discussed is in the woodland area just off John Muir Way. There are 2 ponds, however, only 1 is being considered for re-wilding. The current plan is for a drain to be taken across the pond into Eel Burn to allow permanent water. It is presently a reed bed. Sediment will be removed, the clay brick base cleared and gravel path replaced before a hide and pier are built (these will need planning permission).

A quote for the work to be completed is approximately £5k (it is hoped that grants will cover this). Initially, an ecological assessment is required (due to concerns regarding deer using the area) costing between £700-£900 (it was agreed that the DCA pay this). However, Carl Hamer is confident there will be minimal disruption from the plan. This assessment will be carried out during the spring.

There is potential for indirect funding from Nature Scotland (via Froglife).

This project will provide an overall habitat benefit and a management plan will be created (including future maintenance needs). It was recognised that the land is part of the Archerfield estate with the owner and ranger part of the process.

Sue Oliver stated a preference for re-wilding of the area, rather than for the use of people via the gravel path and building of a hide. Derek Carter said that organised use of the area

could be controlled. Further discussion on these developments will take place at a later date.

7. Treasury Report

Simon Paterson Brown provided an update on the financial position. The bank account name has now been changed to the DCA. There is a total of £13,699 in the account (with £10k relating money bequeathed for the good of the village by Molly Ritchie).

It was noted that historically agreement on the term 'for the benefit of the village' has not been achieved therefore the money remains unspent for now.

A brief discussion took place on the potential for transferring part or all of the £10k into premium bonds (as an alternative to interest from a savings account).

The DCA has annual running costs of between £700-£800 that need to be considered in terms of financial position.

8. Dirleton Common

This is currently used as the overflow car park at Yellowcraig. The Dirleton Village Association (DVA) was not in a position to address the community interest with this site; however, it is recognised that with the development of the DCA (via the SCIO) potential can be explored.

Tom Drysdale investigated the legal position regarding this specific piece of land in the past and volunteered to report on this at the next meeting (together with the precise location). At that point, the DCA will be able to consider options to the benefit of the community.

9. Gullane Area Community Council (GACC) Update

Zena Trendell provided an update from the latest meeting in January:

- In the build-up to the National Adult Support & Protection Day (20th February) local community police officers have offered to carry out a session on the importance of fraud prevention and awareness. It was agreed to invite them to a future meeting.
- There is an East Lothian Community Resilience Workshop taking place on Saturday 1st March at which Janice MacLeod is the DCA representative.
- There is potential for interested individuals to train as First Responders. Information will be circulated by email.
- GACC is supporting North Berwick Community Council with its opposition to ELC parking proposals.
- Work is ongoing to develop a core path between Gullane and Drem.
- Dirleton is a recent beneficiary of a Local Priorities Fund application (Anne Orr – Willow Class).
- Planning issues relate to an application for saunas proposed at Longniddry Bents.
- The GACC is seeking a replacement secretary – this is the only paid role. More details will be circulated.

10. Community Events

- a. The date of the next Dirleton Fete and Games is Saturday 21st June.
- b. HOPS in the Garden (Music Festival) at Archerfield Walled Garden is on Saturday 23rd August.
- c. It was noted that a future afternoon tea will be arranged by Dirleton Good Neighbours.
- d. A village get-together or gathering is to be arranged for a future date.

11. Planning

There were no planning updates. However, Carl Hamer provided a note following the meeting to state that he had received a response from ELC acknowledging enforcement are investigating the long linear bund along the A198. It is currently not consented and the DCA have requested a more natural fit with its surroundings.

12. DCA Registration of community interest in the Kirk Hall

Janice MacLeod read an email dated 13th February from David Graham, the church minister seeking to reassure residents' concerns regarding the possibility of his retirement and any associated sale of the church/kirk hall. The email stated there are no such plans. Following discussion, it was agreed that a report to explore the potential of registering the community interest in the Kirk Hall would be created. Tom Drysdale will complete and discuss this piece of work for consideration at the next meeting. Janice MacLeod will inform David Graham of this piece of work.

13. AOCB

Concern at the future viability of the primary school was raised. This includes public attendance at school events. It was emphasised that the community as a whole need to engage to ensure the school has a strong future.

It was agreed to invite representatives from the parent council and headteacher to the next meeting.

Derek Carter said that he supported the concept of a welcome party in the Castle Inn for new residents within the community. To be discussed at a future date.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be a public meeting on 24th April 2025, Castle Inn at 7pm (prior to this a public meeting will be held on 20th March 2025 for an update on the Local Place Plan).

Actions:

- a) **DC/ZT & John Finlay** to finalise the LPP for presentation on 20th March 2025.
- b) **DC** to follow-up with ELC regarding the missed street lights.
- c) **DC** to establish a timeline with the contractor regarding the Village Hall.
- d) **TL & Mike Howarth** to collaborate on the linkage between the DCA website & Facebook page.
- e) **JM** to update and circulate the village welcome pack to members.
- f) **CH** to develop a management plan for the future rewilding of the old curling pond.
- g) **SPB** to look into potential premium bonds.

- h) **Tom Drysdale** to investigate & provide a report to the DCA (on 24th April) regarding the exact location and legal position of what is commonly known as 'Dirleton common' or the overflow car park at Yellowcraig.
- i) **ZT** to arrange for the local community police officer to carry out a session on fraud prevention. As well as information on First Responders & GACC secretary post.
- j) **JM** to attend a workshop on 1st March regarding community resilience.
- k) **Tom Drysdale** to report on the potential DCA registration of community interest in the Kirk Hall on 24th April 2025.