



Present: – Cath McGill (CM) – Chair, Neil Whyte (NW) – Minutes, Hazel Thomson (HT), Mary Davidson (MD), Janice Brown (JBr), Faye Skelton (FS), Jason Rutter (JR), Kelly Drummond (KD), Cllr Jim Muirhead (JM), Cllr Catherine Johnstone (CJ)

In Attendance: Dawn Barclay, Ellen Scott, Ross McEwan, Enid Trevett

Apologies: Billy Duncan (WD), Gillian Cousin

1 Chair's Welcome & Apologies

CM opened the meeting and welcomed all those in attendance. Apologies noted as above.

2 Actions & Matters Arising from previous meeting and Adoption of Minutes

CM reminded Community Councillors wishing to stand again at the forthcoming AGM to ensure that their nomination forms are returned as soon as possible.

Previous minutes could not be approved, as they have yet to be completed. Carried to next meeting.

3 Guest Speaker: Coalfields Regeneration & Community Action Plan

Ellen gave a brief history of the Community Action Plan. Originally started with a big load of people, but it whittled down to just Ellen, Enid & Jim! However, lots of community engagement to surveys and turn-out at open days was excellent. The output went to Midlothian Council and became the Gorebridge Neighbourhood Plan, which is good for grant applications as it is something that can be referenced. It's always good to include everyone, for example Arniston Rangers and the Scouts may be interested in adding things to the plan.

Enid from the Coalfields Regeneration Trust (CRT) explained plan ended in 2020, and it's a good time to revise it. During Covid, CRT took the time to look at using the new Place Standard as an engagement tool. It's use is becoming common amongst many organisations, for example the NHS. So, they propose to work with the Place Standard to engage the community. CRT have created an online interactive live tool – similar to the panels that would be present in a physical location with 'prompting' questions.

The Place Standard tool provides a simple framework to structure conversations about place. It allows you to think about the physical elements of a place (for example its buildings, spaces, and transport links) as well as the social aspects (for example whether people feel they have a say in decision making).

The tool provides prompts for discussions, allowing you to consider all the elements of a place in a methodical way. The tool pinpoints the assets of a place as well as areas where a place could improve.

I want to complete a Place Standard assessment. [Start Assessment](#)

I want to set up or manage a Place Standard group. (A group can allow you to collate and compare results.) [Login / Register](#)

I want to learn more about using the Place Standard. [Online Guide](#)

We have published a new Strategic Plan for the Place Standard Tool. [Click here to access the document](#)

The circular diagram features 14 segments: feeling safe, care and maintenance, influence and sense of control, moving around, public transport, traffic and parking, reduce noise and improve space, reduce air pollution, use and maintenance, facilities and amenities, work and local economy, housing and community, social contact, and health and wellbeing.

The idea is that there are 14 different aspects of a community, and people within that community asked to score against these aspects from 1-7 and provide comment. It has proven a good, in-depth way of getting peoples feelings. Better than general survey before, this should bring in focussed data. Provides questions, thought bubbles to seed thought process in people, thinking about (e.g.) climate within a structure that makes feedback easier to group and spot trends.

There is an online virtual engagement room called "CRT Connect", where you can see videos explaining how to engage with the panels etc. It is part of a suite of different ways to engage people. Can also use facilities in the Beacon, for example, to host a family event to show physical panels and booklets. Social media links etc. through schools. Lots of options.

The proposal would be to take the best of old plan and update parts as necessary as a starting point. CRT offering support as facilitators. There is no financial support available, but instead can facilitate the effort.

Enid then showed a live demo of CRT Connect from Clackmannan, with the virtual room showing all the benefits discussed above.

Enid is looking for volunteers for working party. Kelly, Dawn, Ellen volunteered.

February was suggested for live event at Beacon? Can do online stuff well before then.

Can we involve members of the public, perhaps group leaders as stakeholders? Previously lots of feedback at the open days. Can certainly invite people along.

HT asked how are older people supported, with no internet etc? Enid said at the Beacon is an example, similar to an open day. Leave panels up there for a week or so? Do a coffee morning? Open to ideas. Maybe can loop in GCDT plans for a community day. Make it a launch day for this?

In the past, had 20k to spend by end of financial year. This money isn't here any more, so pressure on engagement isn't as critical as it was before.

Room can be re-rendered for Gorebridge really quickly. Just need a social media star to record a video to introduce the project for Gorebridge. TBD. Enid to come down for a meeting with the working group to come up with a plan for this.

CM thanked Enid for the presentation.

4 Update on Ongoing Issues

No update this month.

5 New Issues Raised by Community

5.1 Land at Barleyknowe Road / McLean Place

NW refreshed an action from earlier in the year, and has made contact with Melville Housing who are keen to discuss how the land near Barleyknowe Road/McLean Place may be revisited as allotments or a community garden. NW to invite Melville Housing to January meeting. MD mentioned she would be keen to be involved as liaison.

6 Major Planning Applications

No update this month.

7 High School Meeting Recap

Meeting went ahead, and it turns out Fiona Robertson was able to attend after all. Minutes/notes written up and shared with Council representatives and posted on our website: <https://communitycouncilgorebridge.weebly.com/gorebridge-high-school.html>

One update received since from Midlothian Council was that Newbattle is indeed currently running at 90% capacity, not "nowhere near full" as mentioned on the call.

There was a discussion on why we need to re-justify the high school, in relation to the effort underway to re-examine school roll projections before putting a timescale on the construction. JM stated that in reality it's more a when, not if. It's a refresh of assumptions, e.g. students per house, to ensure the strategy is OK. It's forward-looking: not about how long since Greenhall shut, about providing future facilities when they are needed.

MD suggested that money is being wasted moving kids around.

SB noted that one of the things that stood out was a commitment to 2024/25, which is now not happening (and is not being confirmed as ever being a commitment now). Ellen also mentioned that she sent an email to Education, which has not been answered, that contained past statements of the commitment to the school.

CJ said plans are not written in stone, and are always subject to variation. For example, Borders Rail proposing to reduce service could be having impact on house building schedules and so may have a knock-on impact on timescales for schools. JM mentioned that the large development proposed at Gowkhill will take Gorebridge capacity.

A long discussion followed on the frustration of lack of holistic planning, a feeling that there's a self-fulfilling prophecy of not being able to reach critical mass for key services (schools, shopping etc) without further housebuilding, yet attractiveness of area to new residents being impacted by lack of key services.

SB asked if Newbyres Crescent, where housing had to be pulled down for gas emission reasons and remains vacant, could be repurposed for commercial useage? Seems like that would be an ideal opportunity to revitalise the commercial centre of Gorebridge, with parking etc.

JM mentioned that the Council is running out of land, so having to buy land. Ellen said we know we will need a high school eventually. Can we not allocate and reserve land for this?

NW asked if we will see the workings and assumptions behind the review when it is published in December? JM said he thought this was likely and there should be nothing to hide, though there may be some commercial sensitivities on land prices etc that would need to be considered.

8 AGM Preparation

8.1 Proposed alteration to Constitution

An update to the Constitution was sent round in advance by NW. The changes are:

1. To formally allow meetings of the Community Council to happen virtually as well as in person
2. To better align the operation of the bank account and payments from it to modern banking practices, by specifically allowing the use of BACS as a payment method for the Treasurer

With no concerns raised at this meeting, NW to circulate the changes to Gillian Cousin as Council Liaison for formal sign-off and, if acceptable, will ensure wording is formally adopted at the coming AGM.

9 Police Report

The police report was circulated prior to the meeting.

Aaron Clinkscales, whom CM met at the official Gorebridge Hive opening, keen to get involved with policing and learn more on our meetings. Good to get feedback on Community Policing.

JM mentioned a crime on his property mentioned in report. Looks like the criminals were after electric bikes, and they were very keen to get gates open to enable their escape. Thankfully, they were unsuccessful. Worth raising awareness wider?

10 Community Council Reports

10.1 Chair & Secretary

Nothing additional to report.

10.2 Treasurer

FS noted that the only change had been £60 in from planter payment

Update on the current pots:

- GDCC General £3164.95
- Miners Memorial £1,750.83
- War Memorial Refurb £253.00
- Awards £1695.99
- **TOTAL: £6864.77**

10.3 Federation

No update.

11 Project Updates

11.1 Station adopters

Winter planting being worked on now.

11.2 Remembrance Parade

Forms and risk assessments submitted to Civic Licensing, Democratic Services and Roads per guidance. Usual 10:30 start at Newbyres Village, with parade along to the Beacon and the memorials there.

12 Councillor Reports

12.1 Cllr Johnstone

CJ report was circulated in advance. No questions.

12.2 Cllr Muirhead

JM provided a brief verbal report.

Main difference was Ellen asked about a Men's Shed project. JM said Council own some garages at Bonnybank court, backing on to end of Swan Terrace. Only one of these is in use. Could these be useful for the project? They may need some work to bring up to spec. Their location, being relatively out-of-the-way, wouldn't really lend itself to long-term storage as such for security reasons, but if it was used regularly might be OK.

12.3 Cllr Munro

Not present.

13 Any Other Business

JB said at Newbyres there is an ongoing problem with kids playing with balls and hitting cars. It is becoming a real issue, and members of the public are getting abuse when challenging them. Suggested to get in touch with PC MacFarlane. Ellen suggested a set of goals in Auld Gala Park might help give the youngsters somewhere to go to play.

MD highlighted a streetlamp down back of Robertson Bank (south of Gore Water) being intermittent. JM will pass it on for action. Additionally, another near the bottom of the Lady Brae at St Margaret's.

CM closed meeting at 9.04am.

List of Abbreviations

BRCP	Borders Railway Community Partnership
CAT	Community Asset Transfer
CLL	Community and Lifelong Learning (Midlothian Council)
CRVS	Community Resilience Volunteer Service
DPP	Detailed Planning Permission
GADEG	Gorebridge and District Environmental Group
GCC	Gorebridge Community Cares
GCDD	Gorebridge Community Development Trust
GDCC	Gorebridge & District Community Council
HGTT	Hunterfield Gothenburg Tavern Trust
MLDP	Midlothian Local Development Plan
MTRaP	Midlothian Traffic Roads and Paths
PAC	Pre-Application Consultation
PPP	Planning Permission in Principle