**Dirleton Village Association**

 **Minute of Meeting of 19th September 2019**

**Present: S. Bruce, M. Peebles, B. Thomson, D. Tait, T. Drysdale, C. Drysdale, M. Coutts, M. Barker, F. Dingwall, P. McDonald, P. Burnet, L. Burnet, K. Cornwell, S. Cornwell, V. Nimmo, E. Sutherland, S. Oliver, A. Orr, B. Nimmo, J. Finlay, N. Steel, D. Carter.**

1. **Apologies:** M.McNie M.Chynoweth G.Presslie P. Du Vivier S. Low F. McClintock D. MacDonald S. Steel

DC announced that Richard Gardner has asked to stand down as Chairman for the current year and will not stand for the following year due to health issues. He has offered however to stand for re-election to the committee for next year. DC therefore invited volunteers interested in taking over the chair to contact a member of the committee as soon as possible but at the latest in time for the November AGM.

1. **Approval of the Minutes of the June Meeting:** BT asked for his initials to be corrected. Minutes approved. All matters carried forward listed to be discussed at current meeting.
2. **Public Realm/Area Partnership:**

War Memorial Green Enhancement Project: DC & TD had attended meeting of the area partnership’s On the Move group which went well. DC and JF also met with Council officials from the relevant departments, and this meeting also went well. DC had also met with the Kirk Session, who have requested retention of some hard standing parking area close to the gate for those with reduced mobility. The proposal drawings have been changed to suit. DC confirmed that there are funds for the Area Partnership’s (AP) parts of the project within the area partnership’s roads and other budgets for this year, and that he hoped that this will be signed off at the next AP meeting and the DVA can then go ahead with an application to the War Memorial Trust. SO queried the background to village approval of the project but was reassured that the village had been fully canvassed. The role of the AP was also explained.

1. **Planning:**

Castlemains Farm Planning Appeal:

Play Area: DC clarified that he had been told by the case officer that developers are due to make funds available for the enhancement of the current play area and that if used for any new area it would need planning permission, but that decisions on allocation are made by the council. BT argued that the village should push for investment of the full sum allocated for this purpose involvement. DC to ask Planning Officer to consult.

Lighting: The choice of lighting type for the development still has to be made. DC has asked the planning officer to consider the DVA’s ‘Dirleton Heritage lamppost’ proposal for the new development, as it is being considered for the War Memorial Green project and for replacement lampposts.

Station Road Footpath: Comments that this proposal is ‘a path to nowhere’ . It would cause the removal of the ‘protected’ existing hedge which is, in addition, almost certain to be mainly removed to provide access to the site for building work and the road access. CH and JF have contacted the planners about this. CH to contact a local councillor to follow up.

Changes to materials and landscaping proposed by Reporter: While the DVA has no right of influence on these, it was agreed that DVA should continue to make comments.

JF pointed out that all these issues could not go forward before the required archaeological investigation has taken place.

Archerfield/East Lodge planning application:

TD has asked for a progress report from the planning officer but was awaiting this. MP pointed out that the felling of trees had been used to stop a planning application at Tenterfield, Haddington which might set a precedent . Agreed that a letter to the Courier worthwhile.

Duncan’s Plantation Plot 5: After issue with the killing of mature trees on plot 3 by the contractor, the DVA has responded to the planning application for plot 5 by asking for tighter controls by the council.

Archerfield Walled Garden (Car Park): DVA and the community council have objected to the extension of the exposed car park east of the existing tree belt as it is in full view from the east and is close to the recreated historic tree avenues. Landscaping with boundary and internal trees has been requested.

1. **New Mains Right of Way:**  TD reported that some 63 signatures to use the questionnaire had been received and the questionnaires had been sent to ELC in mid-July – 25 of the signatures certified use in excess of 20 years, which is the threshold for proving right of way status. The ELC outdoor access officer Nick Morgan is progressing the claim in liaison with the ELC legal, who are being slow in progressing it. Some discussion of whether the right of way needs to be maintained by regular walking (it is currently closed off with heavy duty fencing) to avoid a loss of right after one year. Agreed that this should be checked with Mr Morgan. Agreed that the DVA should not organise any protests at this stage, but that individuals are of course free to act as they wish. It was suggested that, in order to maximise public support, the best time for such action might be once a planning application is lodged.
2. **Bowling Club Refurbishment Project:**  NBCAP has approved a grant for the cost of planning application for work. JF to now go ahead with drawing up plans – thanked for doing this.
3. **Winter Resilience Plan:** DT reported on consultations with S Baptie at ELC and with the community council. Plans to keep it simple with emphasis on clearly explaining what to do in an emergency. Only two confirmed volunteers for tasks so far, but some other names added at Community Day. Finished document to be put on website but with all names except main contact (DT) redacted.
4. **Sustainability Policy:** DT commended on excellent report. Dirleton Primary to adopt. Some discussion of whether school could regain its Green Flag status – it had been dropped due to administrative burden of implementing. KC proposed that the DVA adopt the proposed Sustainability Policy, seconded by VN. The meeting agreed.
5. **Council Grass Cutting:** Agreed the Green a mess, with cut grass not being collected and inhibiting use as a recreation area, particularly for ball games. Protests to ELC have been made, but a broken gang mower is said to be the issue. DC to continue to pursue this with them.
6. **Wild Flower Planting in Long Grass Area:** Volunteers are needed to help. B Moody has agreed to involve children with primrose planting. Grass area to also be prepared for wild flower seed sowing.
7. **Decluttering of scenic views:** DC’s proposal to trial the removal of the litter bin opposite the Open Arms for a year as the first de-cluttering action of this campaign was discussed. DC pointed out that historic photos show that in the past the village green was often busy with day-trippers from Edinburgh but that now the majority of the visitors to the village are tourists visiting the castle, and that this social group tends to be environmentally aware. P McD felt that the bin should not be removed as it was needed for dog poo bags etc. left around the Open Arms. JF said that research does indicate that people do take home their litter if bins are removed, that he had experience of projects where this had happened, and that therefore he supported the trial. DC pointed out that Historic Environment Scotland and the National Trust for Scotland successfully removed all litter bins on their heritage areas, including Dirleton Castle, many years ago. DC said that he would be disappointed if a fear of increased littering and anti-social behaviour prevented the DVA from testing a proposal to improve a key view in the village. In his experience, Dirleton residents care about the appearance of their village. Some dog owners already take their poo bags home and put them in their own bins. TD felt that children may drop litter if there is no bin. DC felt that our village children were very aware of environmental issues these days and are well taught at school. The option of relocating to a less visible spot such as immediately to the west of the Open Arms car park entrance was discussed. DC considered that the matter may need to go to a vote if agreement could not be reached. To be carried forward. (As the discussion had to be curtailed due to time).
8. **Yellow Road Markings opposite Amalfi:** M McNie to explain at next meeting her reference to an agreement to use only white paint in the village.
9. **Delivery Vehicles at Open Arms and Access:** KC to continue discussion with Open Arms as these vehicles can cause an obstruction to access to Oatfield, which could be dangerous if an emergency vehicle were to require access. Oatfield residents present expressed particular concerns about this.
10. **Hanging Baskets:** FD asked for opinions and decision on whether these should be reinstated for 2020. Two clear opposing viewpoints – reinstate them as attractive and popular with some and compatible with the village’s participation in the Open Gardens programme to open on 13/14 June 2020 (post-meeting note- would not be available until after the Gardens Open Day) - or don’t reinstate them as they make the green look more like a gentrified, twee municipal park and less like a country village green. It was said that wild flower planting is a lower cost, less labour intensive alternative which is also better for wildlife. There are also a number of other more important competing priorities for finance in the next 12 months: - For the Fete and Games Plant Stall takings: a storage shed/barn to keep the Fete and Games equipment dry; For DVA funds: the church green/War Memorial project and support for the Bowling Club improvements. No decision.
11. **Volunteers for Xmas Lights on existing Trees:** M Mabon has retired from organising this. She was formally thanked for many years of past service to the community. She has asked the Fete and Games committee to organise the erection of the Xmas tree in front of the Castle Inn. The Fete and Games committee have agreed to continue to do this. A new volunteer is required to manage the lights on the trees on the green, if they are to go on this year. Volunteers to contact DC, who has the information about what to do from MM.
12. **Phone Box Future Use:** SB willing to help maintain and described some enthusiastic responses from school children when canvassed. DC read out the children’s suggestions. There is also a list of suggestions from the Community Day held recently. A Community Library/Book Exchange seems the most popular of the suggestions, with people willing to run it. Other uses require more funding or complicated technology. JF warned against uses which require technology, describing the problems of any media installation. Agreed that multi-use may be the best way forward, beginning with the simpler, cheaper book exchange option and with other options dependent on volunteers to take them on.
13. KC pointed out that we need first to establish that we can keep the box and on what terms – enquiries so far have been passed between ELC and BT. KC emphasised that a decision is needed by a deadline of 28.10. He and TD to liaise over pressing ELC on this.
14. **GACC Report:** TD was not asked to report but later confirmed no material points raised about Dirleton except as otherwise covered in the meeting.
15. **AOCB none.**
16. Date of next meetings: Committee: 17th October 7.30pm Kirk Hall. Next Full Meeting: AGM 21st November