

DDCC MEETING MINUTES, 5 JUNE 2023, STEADING INN (IN PERSON)

Minutes (draft)

1. Welcome and apologies

Present: Jo Gillies, Constance Newbould, Helen McKay, Ailsa Carlisle, John McLean, Keith Burwell, Gillian Holmes, Diane Graham, Helen Sheridan, Duncan McAuslan, Kenneth McLeod, Gillian McLeod, Corinne Mace, Jim Telfer, Sue Gray, Mark Hartree, David Newbould

In attendance: Roddie McLeod, Adam Archibald for agenda item 2.

Apologies: Councillor Winchester, Catriona Umpleby, Julian Holbrook, Anna Henly

2. Plans for Calderstones development.

Guest speakers: Roddie McLeod (Planning Consultant) and Adam Archibald (Architect) on behalf of Landscape Hotels Scotland Ltd.

Scot Lawrie is Managing Director. Other individuals and investment fund(s) have backed this proposal although funding is dependent on planning permission being granted. Developers have an option to buy the site if planning permission is approved. The developers aim to meet the highest BREEM standard - no existing UK hotels meet this. The intention is to maximise use of the unique landscape and keep as many trees as possible.

Planning permission in principle was granted in 2015 for an hotel with 150 bed max. In the interim the nature of area is changing, e.g., the Snow Sports Centre and Mountain Bike Centre will increase activity in the area even further. The full planning application will be submitted later this week and DDCC will be consulted.

Client is paying part of junction upgrade. There will be a set of traffic lights at Snowsports Centre junction (**plus another set of traffic lights is also planned at the triple junction, separate to this development**). There will be a new access road from the upgraded road leading to the Snow Sports Centre and no direct vehicular access from the A702. The pavement will be widened to 2 m, and an acoustic fence will be added. Within the site there will be a one-way system for cars, with small parking at the front of the main building plus permeable car park to south boundary.

The main block (referred to as the hub) has 102 bedrooms, spa, indoor-outdoor pool, and restaurant/bar. It will be on the site of the original house. It is 3 storeys using existing ground floor level at the front while the 3rd floor will access to existing ground level at the rear. Rooms in hotel are acoustically sealed. To meet the highest level of environmental BREEM standard, the hub will have timber construction, green roof, and solar PV on south facing roof. Surface water has to be attenuated on site. Lighting has to be subtle and directed downwards. There will be 215 car parking spaces which we were assured falls substantially below the normal design guidelines for the scale of development. A shuttle electric bus will be available to transport guests.

There will be 38 eco-suites dispersed within the woodlands in the lower part of the site. They will be accessed by foot and have green roofs and air source heat pumps in the undercroft of pods. Each will have a deck. There will not be kitchens but there will be services in the pods and all will be connected to the main sewerage system. The pods will be built off-site using Scottish timber and craned on to the site.

A full inventory of the site has been made. There are 780 trees on site, 100 to be felled. Biodiversity enhancement is now a prerequisite of developments. Any non-natives that are removed will be replaced with native species. There are no proposals for developments in the upper woodlands which will have a forestry management plan. Badgers and bats will be shifted. Existing trees at roadside will not have to be removed to widen the pavement.

The intention is to make access tracks for the general public through to the Pentlands and Snowsports Centre using natural paths, e.g., pedestrian and cyclist access at the existing metal gate. We requested that gates will be horse friendly.

Timetable: Planning permission will be submitted this week (it was waiting for road work upgrade to begin). A decision is expected by September, with building to start immediately thereafter, with a 1-1.5 year's build programme.

Although we were reassured about most of our concerns, the separation of the main carpark from the houses to the south (Hillend House) remains an issue; we requested a broader screen at the boundary.

3. Ratification of minutes, DDCC Meeting 3 April 2022, and update on actions not on the agenda
Minutes were proposed by Jo Gillies and seconded by Constance Newbould. DDCC has agreed to partly fund repairs to Boghall Bridge. Equestrian requirements for the new proposed signalised crossings at the triple junction have been submitted.
4. Police Report (for full report see Annex 1)
There were 19 calls in May most of which were youths throwing stones at cars. Fortunately, there were no serious accident with only one crash, which was at the triple junction
5. National Framework 4 Consultation
CN and HM had attended two different drop-in sessions where the new approach to developing the next National Planning Framework was explained, i.e. the initial step is for communities and individuals to say what we want for as many aspects as possible and submit this by the end of October at the latest. Measures such as traffic calming (e.g. on Old Pentland Road), cycle routes, more buses, a doctor's surgery were made. Given the importance of this process we must capture as many suggestions as possible and prioritise them. A local plan would carry some weight.
ACTION: JG to email residents seeking suggestions which will be finalised and prioritised at a special meeting.

6. Climate Change Action Plan (Julian Holbrook had provided a report since he couldn't attend)
Bird and bat boxes: many have been built and erected but there are materials to make more. **ACTION:** Julian Holbrook to propose dates to complete the construction and dates to be circulated.
Julian is exploring the potential for set up Damhead Climate Action as a Community Interest Company. This would support implementation of the community climate action plan. Julian is also liaising with Midlothian Council on hedges and timing of their cutting to support local biodiversity, and exploring opportunities to support and adopt verges and hedges.
7. DDCC Administration
 - DDCC Grant 2023/24 is £95 for running costs. In addition however we have been allocated £739.50 towards actions identified in our Climate Action Plan (improvements to energy efficiency and production of local food). The DDCC bank account has £3409.09 at the end of May.
 - Actions have been taken to revitalise the DDCC website including paying for a domain name which will be damhead.org and hosting for 3 years. **ACTION:** CN to explore whether files from former website can be uploaded to new site.
8. AOB
 - All residencies should be getting fibre broadband by September 2023. . **ACTION:** JG to follow up on exceptions, including new houses and Tigh na Geat Cottage, which need to be added to the list.
 - A701, relief road. On further investigation it has become apparent that the landfill site is not inert so the preferred route would be too expensive. More drillings and environmental assessment are planned around Pentland House; CN has meeting tomorrow with Jeremy Balfour MSP. It was suggested that a potential improvement option would be to switch to creating a roundabout at the junction of the A702 and Bush Loan, alongside improvements to the triple junction.
 - We've been told recently about a path under bypass – we should try to link our paths to this.
 - Mixed use development at West Straiton. The planning application is being developed. It seems that less commercial development and more housing is planned. **[Post meeting note – this application was submitted on 2 June 2023, Ref No: 23/00354/PAC].**

In general, meetings will take place at 7.30 on the 1st Monday in every second month for 2023. For the coming period these will alternate between zoom and in person meetings:

7 August (zoom)

2 October (in person)

4 December (zoom)

Damhead and District Community Council - Police Report

May 2023

During the month of May 2023, Police Scotland received a total of 19 calls to the Damhead & District / A702 area.

Incidents of Note

- About 11.50pm on 1/05/2023 police were called to A702, Biggar Rd after youths were seen to be throwing stones at passing vehicles.
- About 7.30pm on 02/05/2023 police were called to A702, Biggar Rd after youths were again throwing stones at passing vehicles. Police attended with no trace of the youths.
- About 6.15pm on 10/05/2023 police were called to A702, near Easter Howgate, following a vehicle breakdown. Police attended and the vehicle was later recovered. Midlothian Council also attended to remove discarded fuel left on the roadway.
- About 2pm on 14/05/2023 Police were called to A702, junction with Old Pentland Road, following a report of a mini bus having struck a car. On police arrival it was ascertained a storage flap on the minibus had opened up and part of it connected with the car.

If anyone has any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with PC Graham Black, Penicuik Community Policing Team. Thank you.