

DDCC MEETING MINUTES (draft), 5 FEBRUARY 2024, BY ZOOM

1. Welcome and apologies.

Present: PC Susan Pearson, Neil McKay, Julian Holbrook, Kate Holsworth, Gaeton Richards, Gareth Derbyshire, Lynne Derbyshire, Constance Newbould, Helen McKay, Graeme Buchanan, Ailsa Carlisle.

In attendance: Councillor Pauline Winchester, Colin Anderson (Fairmilehead Community Council)

Apologies: Anna Henley, Robin McBride, Duncan McAuslan

2. Ratification of minutes, DDCC Meeting 4 December 2023, and update on actions not on the agenda

Correction to minutes of last meeting para 6b. JH explained further that DDCC should be classified as a dispersed settlement statement in the next MLDP2.

Proposed: Ailsa Carlisle

Seconded: Constance Newbould

ACTION: CN to provide HM information of possible bank account that allows internet banking for charities.

3. Police Report. See Annex 1 for the full report.

We welcomed PC Susan Pearson. Her role (as Community Officer began in September. She prefaced the police report by explaining that it is difficult to extract information related to DDCC from their broader statistics. CN explained that we have our own system for reporting any additional incidents. **ACTION:** JG will remind residents to notify her of additional incidents to provide a full picture.

Police report for Dec/Jan. Key points were: drink driving on A702; lorries parked on pavement were moved; there was a report of debris on road but Bear couldn't locate any problem; erratic driving by van but no trace on vehicle and no further action was taken; a car skidded on ice on Old Pentland Road after which the debris was cleared up, and the road checked to ensure no traces of oil were present; a house name plaque was stolen; items from a stolen vehicle were found at Hillend; there was a crash at the Steading; a vehicle, which had veered off the road, was recovered the following day.

PC Pearson explained that A/Police Sergeant Chris Howarth, who'd emailed DDCC asking what our top issues are, is trying to build up a picture of priorities in different CCs. CN identified the main issues as: speeding adding that the A703 is supposed to have a temporary 40 mph speed limit because of construction junction but it is being completely ignored; cyclists, including schoolchildren and students, have increased over the years and must be taken into consideration during future plans; prowlers; and break-ins. We confirmed that these were all reported at the time. A further concern is the difficulty of leaving drives and fields on to Old Pentland Road. **ACTION:** JG to formally report back on these concerns for Police Scotland.

Temporary traffic lights at IKEA/Aldi have been out of order from time to time – we now have an out of hours contact number. Heavy lorries will be directed through the road works and will not exit at the 3-way junction.

ACTION: If the traffic lights are out of order phone the out of hours contact number and/or 101 who have an emergency number to call.

ACTION: SP to check details of the vacancy at Call Centre at Bilston Glen and if appropriate CN will put them on the website.

4. Old Pentland Cemetery (Neil McKay)

NM explained that he had a long-standing interest in the history and heritage of the Pentlands. He visited Old Pentland Cemetery in 2022 and found it overgrown and a bit neglected. Since then he has been doing basic maintenance but needs to understand the landowners vision for the site and what can be done. Allanvale, the new owners, were contacted on 17th January and NM arranged a meeting with Patrick Dunne, Jim Kirkwood from Allanvale, Andrew Marsden from Friends of the Pentlands (FotP) and Justin Venton, Land and Countryside Manager, Midlothian Council. Kate Marshall from Damhead was invited but couldn't make the meeting. The cemetery is Category B listed so the landowner has a duty of care. Allanvale is working on a conservation and environment plan for the whole area including the cemetery. Justin Venton mentioned that there was a long-standing goodwill arrangement with residents, whereby Midlothian Council cut the cemetery grass at regular intervals. Unfortunately it no longer has the resources to do this. FotP offered to do light gardening tasks on site but this could not extend to larger scale work e.g. pruning or limbing of the large yews. Allanvale stated that they could provide tree surgeons. The agreed actions from the January meeting were to wait for the broader environmental plan and schedule a meeting on site (27th Feb). Hamish Clerk, who organises work parties for FotP, will attend.

DDCC thanked NM for his efforts. CN gave some background. A number of local residents maintained the cemetery for many years in the late 80s, then reduced this to just the centre flat area with the slopes being left unmanaged so elder scrub is encroaching the boundary. Lorna Goudie and Stuart Clark also organised and supported Midlothian Open Days at the cemetery. CN mentioned that some important headstones were removed and held at Huntly House (Museum of Edinburgh). JH expressed the view that the yews could be over-pruned and the cemetery's sense of solitude is important so any plan should aim for minimal intervention.

ACTION: JG to provide NM with JH contact details for joining the on site meeting.

5. Strategic planning and developments:

- Developing our Local Place Plan – next steps?

HM explained the LPP process and timelines. The LPP has three parts: local context; specific proposals; and amendments to MLDP2. We have just one amendment so far (removal of the A701 relief road) but we need to add that the land zoned for the film south of Old Pentland Road reverts to green belt and land to the north of OPR is zoned as MX1 biodiversity and land management. JH noted that our LPP has nothing about energy. There was a discussion about the value and need to rank our suggestions. It was left that HM would remove numbers but devise a colour coding that indicated the urgency of our concerns.

JH explained that DD is a very special place and rather unique providing a good model of how many of the Scottish Government's objectives can be delivered. The four additional proposals are:

- a. Dispersed Settlement
- b. Cultural Landscape of Special Significance
- c. Damhead Nature Network.
- d. Straiton Bing should be a designated landscape feature.

JH also proposed that we form a Community Charter outlining all Damhead's key features. Such a charter would have to be taken into account in any EIA. There was a short discussion about the benefits of a charter. To discuss these latest proposals further a meeting had been arranged at Auchendinny Community Centre on 12th Feb. 7-8:30.

ACTION: JG to circulate details of meeting on 12 February

ACTION: HM and JG to circulate the consultation draft by 15th February to residents, neighbouring Community Councils, all Midlothian Councillors and any relevant groups.

We discussed how to respond to LPPs from adjoining Community Councils, e.g. Roslin and Bilston. We are mainly looking for spatial linkages and joint interests. Because of shortage of time, we need to focus on getting feedback on our own LPP.

ACTION: JG to coordinate any responses on neighbouring LPPs

ACTION: JG and CN to collate any responses on the DDCC LPP

- ALDI entrance speed limit

There are roadworks while the entrance section is being developed and a 40mph speed limit has been proposed for thereafter. The road will be closed to through traffic from the triple junction so OPR is for access only. JG informed us that she had asked for the speed limit to be reduced not just outside Aldi but all of the Old Pentland Road however she'd had no response yet.

ACTION: CN to contact MLC re diversion signage during road closure, and to contact SHG re potential to erect a sign for access to Secret Herb Garden.

- A701 Relief Road. No further information.

- Calderstone's planning application 23/00460/MSC23.

About 30 documents have appeared on the planning portal, e.g. drawings, trees, drainage, biodiversity and response to comments from consultees' and the planning officer, claiming that everything has been addressed. JG suggested this is the next step in the process. If DDCC is not contacted soon, she will check on the position. Demolition of existing house is supposed to start 19th Feb.

ACTION: JG (if necessary).

- MTRAP update. The priority list of road repairs is being worked through. Burnside is on their list for repairs but not in immediate group. Nothing else to report.

6. MLC Budget update. Discussed at MFCC, no proposals put forward for cuts at that time (one month ago) raising concerns across all communities. PW explained that underspend and reserves will be used to plug this year's deficit but very big cuts will be needed next year and the year thereafter.

7. Community activity:

- Superfast fibre broadband. Installation is behind schedule for some houses but other areas have had the new system installed. After final testing of the cabling, houses owners must apply for hook up. Relevant links have been circulated previously.
- Old Pentland Cemetery (see above)
- Resilience equipment is being held at households on the lanes joining A703, Burnside and Old Pentland Road.
ACTION: JG to check with holders that they are willing to have their locations and contact details available on DDCC website.
- Guest speakers for AGM? **ACTION:** suggestions to JG

8. AOB

- a. **ACTION** PW to check release of council papers re A701 relief road
- b. Hedgerows to be cut before the end of February.
- c. Beeslack statutory engagement beginning 19th Feb, planning to open before end 2026, hopefully August 2026.
- d. Short term lets (e.g. AirB&B) need a short term let licence. Details available on Midlothian Council website – all properties need a licence by 1 July 2024.
- e. Litter pick end February/March. For this to be done safely some sections need a car with trailer or traffic lights **ACTION:** CN will raise at MTRAP.

9. In general, meetings will take place at 7.30 on the 1st Monday in every second month for 2024:

22 April AGM + meeting* (Steading Inn)

3 June (by zoom)

5 August (Steading Inn)

7 October (by zoom)

2 December (Steading Inn)

* delayed from first Monday of the month to avoid Easter Monday and school holidays

damheadanddistrictcc@googlegroups.com

<http://damheadcc.org>

<https://www.midlothiancommunitycouncils.org.uk>



Annex 1. Police report.

Criminal Activity Dec 2023 & Jan 2024
Meeting Date – 5th Feb 2024 – ZOOM
Damhead Community Council
Beat Area MW02



Incidents of Note

- On 03/12/23, a driver was reported for drink driving on the A702, Penicuik Road, Edinburgh.
- On 21/12/23, a complaint was received of lorries parked on pavement at Old Pentland Sawmill. Contact made and vehicles moved onto the tarmac.
- On 23/12/23, a report was received that there was debris on the A702. BEAR attended and could not locate any debris. No further calls received.
- On 24/12/23, a report was received of a transit van being driven erratically on the bypass and had thereafter exited and pulled in near to Hillend. VRM and description circulated to officers. No trace of the vehicle and no further calls.
- About 2240 hrs, 29/12/23, a vehicle skidded on ice and collided with a road traffic sign on Damhead, Pentland Road. Council attended in relation to the ice and the report of oil on the road following the incident.
- About 2350 hrs, 03/12/23, a report was received a vehicle speeding at Old Pentland, Pentland Road. Area searched, no trace of vehicle.
- On 03/01/24, a report was received of a stolen house name sign, by removal of the screws. Unknown exactly when this occurred. Crime Report submitted and local CCTV to be checked. Nothing else stolen.
- At 1550 hrs, 05/01/24, a report was received that misc items had been located within the car park at Hillend which were from a previous stolen vehicle. Items collected for safe keeping and owner made aware to collect from Bonnyrigg Police Station.
- At 1503 hrs, 17/01/24, outside the Steading, Biggar Road, Penicuik, a vehicle failed to stop in the appropriate time and collided with the rear the vehicle in front. Both driver's breath tested with a negative result. Details exchanged.
- At 1340 hrs, 27/01/24, numerous complaints received about the temporary traffic lights not working on the Pentland Road/Straiton/outside IKEA. Officers attended and carried out traffic management until lights were re-set. **** More calls received over the weekend – we now have emergency contact details going forward.****
- At 2200 hrs, 28/01/24, a vehicle veered off the road into a field on the A702, Biggar Road near to the Hillend. No injury or damage to other property. Recovery vehicle to attend on 29/01/24, in daylight when safer to do so.

If any person has any information about the incident(s) listed above, or indeed any other crime, please contact your Community Police Officer PC Susan Pearson via 101 or email: -

LothianScotBordersPenicuikCPT@scotland.pnn.police.uk

Additional Information

Hate crime and domestic abuse can now be reported online via the official Police Scotland website at www.scotland.police.uk or by visiting a Third Party Reporting Centre – details of which are also on our website.

Information regarding crime can be passed to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or through an Online Form - both of these routes are completely anonymous and available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Police Scotland use social media to circulate the latest news, events and information to the public via Twitter (@LothBordPolice and @MidLothPolice) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/LothiansScottishBordersPoliceDivision and www.facebook.com/MidlothianPolice).

TELEPHONING POLICE SCOTLAND

If you need to contact Police Scotland then the number you use will depend on whether what you are reporting is an emergency or not.

You should always use 999 when:

- * there is a risk of injury or loss of life
- * a crime is in progress
- * someone suspected of a crime is nearby.

For non-emergency calls please use 101 to contact Police Scotland.

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As you may be aware Police Scotland are actively recruiting Service Advisors to help those in need and have a positive impact on the community.

We are seeking applications from your community where our Service Centres (Motherwell, Bilston Glen and Govan) are based. We are also keen to encourage members of the community that are underrepresented to join our team.

I'm seeking your support to encourage your constituents to consider applying to become part of a dynamic and exciting team.

More information can be found on our website along with details of recruitment events near you.

<https://policescotland-spacareers.tal.net/vx/lang-en-GB/mobile-0/appcentre-13/brand-3/candidate/so/pm/6/pl/24/opp/1780-Service-Advisor/en-GB>