**DDCC MEETING AGENDA, 7.30pm, 4 August 2025, by Zoom**

1. **Welcome and apologies**
   Present: Jo Gillies, Helen McKay, Anna Henly, Catriona Umpleby, Duncan McAuslan, Kate Holbrook, Ana Marques-Anderson, Julian Holbrook, Colin Anderson (Fairmilehead Community Council)
   Apologies: Constance Newbould, Ailsa Carlisle, Paul Johnson, Jimmy McLean, Mark Hartree.

2. **Ratification of minutes, 2 June 2025.**
   Minutes from the last meeting were nominated by CM and seconded by DM. All of the actions are on today's agenda.

3. **Police Scotland Report** (see Appendix 1) for the last 4 months.
   Almost all incidents were fuel thefts from the petrol station. There were no accidents recorded at the triple junction.

4. **Traffic and road safety:**
   - Triple junction. Jimmy McLean (BEAR) could not attend but had provided an update via JG.
     - Flows had improved; fewer frustrations; there were some defects with the lights at the Snowsports Centre junction which have now been improved; there was an overall improvement when the two set of lights were synchronised.
     - Post implementation surveys on the traffic flows indicated that access from Old Pentland Road (OPR) and the A703 to the A702 is good; there had been fewer complaints; on average the southbound journey times have increased 1.3 minutes over the week and 2 mins through the working week – from BEAR's perspective this is acceptable and safety is much better; northbound journey times have reduced by 2.5 mins over a 7-day period and 3.4 mins on average during weekdays; road survey audit indicated that speeding around the bends as vehicles approach the lights going north might be a problem at particular times of day – skid marks on the road support resident's experiences that outwith peak periods vehicles are speeding on approach; HM suggested that extending the 40 mph limit to the top of the hill would be a solution.
     - BEAR are working through the process to repair the pavement at the top of OPR to the original standard; maintenance of hedges by BEAR on the A702 will be stepped up again.
     - Additional points raised by residents: a 1.5 min increase is said to be acceptable whereas the justification for the relief road is a saving of 3 mins; some drivers are using the roundabouts at the Lothianburn junction to the bypass to short circuit queues in the proper lane - earlier clearer road signage of the correct lanes might help for cars exiting the bypass. Local community could ask for a 'no right turn' northbound from A702 and BEAR would act quickly – there were mixed views and we noted that a ban on turning right going northbound at the triple junction from the A702 may not be necessary if there are generally time savings going north, and a further option is to use the Snowsports

Centre junction to turn back south and then access OPR or the A703; the current solution might have to change if development in the area continues. Journey times should be reassessed once the holidays are over and traffic is back to full volume; the audit did not witness lorries cutting across the boxes set aside for cyclists but BEAR could make the cyclists' box narrower and hugging the left hand side of the road which there was general support for; there is a pinch point at AH's so lorries go on to the pavement – why do lorries need to go east on OPR at all?
ACTION: CN to contact businesses operating on OPR to instruct lorries associated with their business to access from the east only; JG to see if BEAR will restrict lorries turning into OPR from west end;

- Burnside: erosion, drainage and proposed 40mph speed limit
  - Midlothian Council (MC) workers came to clear the pipes on Burnside but did not realise that it was a single-track road so need to return. ACTION: CN/MH to seek better communication and a potential meeting with MC since local people can provide more background information on the issues and potential solutions.
  - There is no further information on speed limits.
  - Drains have been cleaned in many areas - MH expressed thanks for their quick response. There is an open drain with broken covering at junction of Burnside and OPR.

**4. Strategic planning and developments:**

- MLDP2
  - Sites that had been flagged for development for MLDP2 that were discussed at the last DDCC meeting included 400 Cala houses proposed for Jim's farm, and a significant number of houses along the the bypass from Lothianburn and up towards the Esso Garage. MC confirmed the target of ca. 8000 houses, but sites for 7000 have already been identified so new sites are needed for only 1200 units. Following a meeting that CN and CU attended with MC officials, the latest plan published to go to the Councillors planning meeting had removed the 400 houses around Jim's farm and the area by the city bypass. MC said that they had considered DDCC's LPP. It was expected that the proposal that would go to the elected members would be for additional sites for 1200 houses to be included in MLPD2.
  - Planning Meeting with Councillors was postponed to the end of June and was not live streamed, however CN attended. An additional paper from the Councillors was tabled and did include the 400 Cala homes. Russell Imrie had previously seemed supportive of the case to limit the additional housing to 1200 but later seemed to be pushing for more houses including Cala. DDCC's sub-group developed a very good response which was acknowledged by MC.
    ACTION: CN to post the response on the website for awareness (alongside Green Belt paper referenced below)
  - A second paper looked at the Green Belt and indicated major changes to the area around Jim's farm. The sub-group has developed a response emphasising that there should be no loss of Green Belt and that a full impact assessment is needed because the proposed change

is significant in terms of DDCC's total area. There was a short discussion about how to liaise effectively with other CCs (meeting with all?) and capture our collected knowledge of the backstory.
    - The Scottish Government Reporter was generally supportive of the MC's Gateway process for the MLDP2 and is content with original estimate for number of new housing sites, so there is no need for the further additional houses.
    - Frustrations with lack of engagement, including lack of Councillor engagement with the DDCC meetings, and use of misleading and inaccurate information by MC to inform planning decisions. JH suggested that we have a log of all the incidents and need to be more vigilant about information coming out from MC.
    - JG asked for people to contact councillors in advance of the next planning meeting in August to raise awareness of community's views. HM volunteered.
    - MLDP draft expected October and the full document in November with only 12 weeks to comment.
- 24/00752/PAC Cala Housing Development.
  Initial engagement has occurred but the second community engagement has not taken place
- A701 Relief Road and link to A702.
    - Petition – 500 signatures already.
    - Sub-group has been very active and we are extremely grateful to CU, PT, JM, CN, AM-A, JH, KH, NM, LM.
    - Bilston School event on 14th Aug. is not an official consultation. Concerns raised that the latest plan is NOT a minor tweak and does require a formal consultation. DM noted that the most recent photos of proposed route seem to have changed again.
    - AM-A has emailed asking for all the documents relating to the justification for the road, the route etc. Furthermore that MC need to take account of changes since the original surveys. She has submitted an FOI but after 20 days there has been no reply.
    - JH noted that many planning documents do not recognise Damhead – it is often just tagged on to Loanhead – suggests we invite the councillors to see actually what DD is, e.g. that we support 120 jobs.
    - We need to remember MLDP has three parts including the national planning framework even though the MLDP2 is at regional level. ACTION: HM to follow up on Planning Aid Scotland and Independent Commissioner in Scotland.
    - There was a widespread feeling of frustration and concern that the councillors don't represent our views. We considered ways of contacting a higher level (e.g. the communities minister) to seek better representation. Many other community councils are similarly frustrated.

**6. Community activities and concerns:**

- Summer Gathering, 12 noon – 4 pm, Sunday 31 August at Pentland House. Everyone welcome – please bring a contribution for the picnic lunch.
- Giant Hogweed: JG contacted River Esk and River Tyne Eradication Project which consists of group of volunteers who lacked capacity to be able to help tackle giant hogweed sites identified; we (DDCC) are not willing to go on to

private land. MC will do their own land and will contact private landowners with advice on what to do. We should prepare for next year and advise landowners asap. Some training is available through Forth Rivers Trust. Hogweed close to the triple junction has been chopped and then sprayed and is not growing so well this year.
ACTION: JG to send existing list of sites to JH. Anyone interested in attending training on dealing with Giant Hogweed to let JG know.

**7. DDCC Administration**

- DDCC budget and bid for grant. HM reported that our reserves are £3001.11 and there had been no transactions in the last two months. We received £8.93 in interest. HM returned the acceptance form for our small grant so £640 will be transferred to our account in the next few weeks.
- Community Council Boundaries Review (Damhead, Penicuik, Roslin and Bilston). A revision of these boundaries has been talked about for a long time. In a recent discussion it looks as though the wishes of the three community councils are complementary. We are looking for more rural areas whereas Roslin and Bilston are looking for built up areas and Penicuik is looking to reducing area. Initial suggestions are that DDCC would include Bush, Glencorse House, Gowkley Moss (but not the new school), up to Grahams Road and the more rural areas to the south.
  ACTION: JG to circulate most recent version of the proposed boundaries.
  ACTION: HM to contact planners re changes to LPP re updates

**8. AOB**

- KH and Subgroup keen to collect data e.g. via a questionnaire. Information on businesses might be available through google maps.
- JH could do with help putting up bat and bird boxes: DM prepared to help.
  ACTION: JH to circulate map of preferred locations for bats. If anyone interested in a box please contact JH at damheadclimateaction@gmail.com
- HM: more hard copies of the DDCC map had been requested
  ACTION: JG to email the emailable version and take hard copies to the summer gathering
- HM: Neighbourhood Watch. Arrangements were in hand to have a presentation and discussion at the next meeting.
- JG: Need to get good representation of Community Councillors at our DDCC meetings to ensure quorate. General agreement to continue with current arrangements with additional meetings as required. Mon 6th Oct (in person) and Mon 1st Dec by zoom.

**9. Date of next meeting** Mon 6th Oct (in person) Venue to be confirmed

DDCC Email: damheadanddistrictcc@googlegroups.com
DDCC Website http://damheadcc.org/
Midlothian Federation of Community Councils Website
https://www.midlothiancommunitycouncils.org.uk
"Damhead Community" Facebook page:
https://www.facebook.com/groups/134821255247393

**Appendix 1**

Community Council Report
**April to July 2025**
Beat Areas MW02
Damhead Community

## Incidents of Note

Inc 0054 (06/04/2025) Esso Service Station, Biggar Road. Sec 165 RTA 1988 vehicle seizure by Roads Policing Officers due to no Licence/Insurance

Inc 1636 (06/04/2025) Pentland Hills between Boghall Farm and Hillend. Report of Off Road Bikes. Area Search No Trace on Police arrival.

Inc 3463 (16/04/2025) Esso Service Station, Biggar Road. Theft Shoplifting. Quantity of Alcohol stolen by female teenage youths. Crime Report Submitted.

Inc 3479 (29/04/2025) Esso Service Station, Biggar Road. Theft of Fuel. £60.30 worth of fuel stolen. Crime Report Submitted.

Inc 3463 (02/05/2025) Biggar Road near to Hillend. Male assaulted after a road rage incident that had occurred on M8 motorway. Crime Report Submitted.

Inc 2179 (30/05/2025) Esso Service Station, Biggar Road. Theft of Fuel. £50.05 worth of fuel stolen. Crime Report Submitted.

Inc 3997 (02/06/2025) Esso Service Station, Biggar Road. Theft of Fuel. £64.76 worth of fuel stolen. Crime Report Submitted.

Inc 0447 (06/06/2025) Seafield Moor Road. Wilful Fire raising. Abandoned Caravan set on fire. Crime Report Submitted.

Inc 1190 (19/06/2025) Esso Service Station, Biggar Road. Theft of Fuel. £70.20 worth of fuel stolen. Crime Report Submitted.

Inc 3437 (26/06/2025) Esso Service Station, Biggar Road. Theft of Fuel. £92.38 worth of fuel stolen. Crime Report Submitted.

Inc 0698 (201/07/2025) Esso Service Station, Biggar Road. Theft of Fuel. £43.69 worth of fuel stolen. Crime Report Submitted.

Inc 1914 (13/07/2025) Esso Service Station, Biggar Road. Theft of Fuel. £15.04 worth of fuel stolen. Crime Report Submitted.

Inc 0652 (21/07/25) A702 Near to Hillend One car Vehicle accident. Secondary two car vehicle accident, appeared to be caused by driver being distracted by initial vehicle accident.

Inc 2666 (21/07/2025) Esso Service Station, Biggar Road. Theft of Fuel. £30.01 worth of fuel stolen. Crime Report Submitted.

Inc 0277 (22/07/2025) A702 between Hillend and Boghall Farm. One car vehicle accident caused by colliding with an escaped cow from a nearby field. Driver arrested for failing Roadside Drug swipe for cannabis however no further action taken against him due to a procedure issue.

Inc 2049 (25/07/2025) Esso Service Station, Biggar Road. Theft of Fuel. £15.13 worth of fuel stolen. Crime Report Submitted.

Inc 1584 (30/07/2025) Esso Service Station, Biggar Road. Theft of Fuel. £36.80 worth of fuel stolen. Crime Report Submitted.

Inc 2089 (01/08/2025) Esso Service Station, Biggar Road. Theft of Fuel. £66.86 worth of fuel stolen. Crime Report Submitted.

Inc 2069 (02/08/2025) Esso Service Station, Biggar Road. Theft of Fuel. £44.51 worth of fuel stolen. Crime Report Submitted.

If any person has any information about the incidents listed above, or indeed any other crime, please contact your Community Policing Officer **PC Ross Young** via **101** or **email: MidlothianWestCPT@scotland.police.uk**

**Additional Information**

**This reporting period has seen no major incidents of note except the usual Theft Drive Off's that occur at Lothianburn Service Station and the occasional vehicle accidents that occur on the A702.**

**If any resident has any other concerns or is looking for information such as Crime Prevention advice, then PC Ross Young can be contacted via his Police Scotland Email address Ross.Young@scotland.police.co.uk**

**Crimestoppers**
Do you have information on criminal activity in your area? Please call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or through their online form - both of these routes are completely anonymous and available 365 days a year.

**Social Media**
Police Scotland use social media to circulate the latest news, events and information to the public via X (**@PSOSMidlothian** & **@PoliceScotland**) and Facebook (**Police Scotland Midlothian** & **Police Scotland**).