DDCC MEETING MINUTES 6 October 2025, by Zoom

1. **Welcome and apologies**.

Present: Constance Newbould, Kate Holbrook, Duncan McAuslan, Julian Holbrook, Pippa Thomson, Graeme Buchanan, Jo Gillies, Helen McKay, Ana Marques-Anderson, Luci McAuslan
In attendance: Councillor Pauline Winchester, Colin Anderson (Fairmilehead Community Council), Michelle Lindsay (Neighbourhood Watch Scotland) for item 6.
Apologies: Ailsa Carlisle, Stuart Clark, Mark Hartree, Anna Henly

2. **Ratification of minutes, 4 August 2025, and update on actions not on agenda.** There were no requests for change. The minutes were proposed by KH and seconded by DM.
   Actions arising:
   - ACTION 1: Papers from the subgroup to go on the website by CN
   - Planning Aid link seems useful and will be used by KH.
   - Sites on hogweed sent on but no volunteers yet to undertake training in its removal. ACTION 2: JG to resume in the Spring
   - HM has contacted planners re process for updating LPP but no response
   - ACTION 3: Map of suitable bat box locations to be circulated

3. **Police Scotland Report (for detail see Appendix 1**)
   - There had been numerous thefts of fuel from the service station. The police think that there is no pattern to these thefts and no serious ones, and while some had been repayed there are still some outstanding due to identification not (yet) being possible with the CCTV.
   - Only two accidents had been recorded at the traffic lights. Residents explained that from some angles drivers could mistake the light that referred to their lane of traffic. BEAR will address this.

4. **Traffic and road safety**
   - Triple junction. Only four cars turned right onto OPR in the 1.5 hours that DDCC volunteers had recorded traffic flows at the triple junction.
   - Lights at the Snow Sports junction were slow in triggering especially at night (it was questioned whether default was green up hill?) which occasionally led to long delays on the A702.
   - Burnside erosion and drainage. Contactors have investigated at the top of the pipe and found some root blockages. Repairs to the Burnside are not included in this financial year's capital budget.
     ACTION 4: CN will ask Alan Heatley about the next steps and request some consultation with residents about what is proposed before action is taken.
   - Burnside speed limit. JG had contacted the Council again to propose an immediate reduction in speed limit to 20mph, but still no response.
   - ACTION 5: PW to check the report that £300k has been made available for 23 bus stops. Possibly new bus service running east-west by Lothian buses.
     ACTION 6: HM to request stops are bottom of the Ski Centre in and out.
   - Straiton Park & Ride.
     - Lease (from private developer to Midlothian Council) will stop next year. Suggestion is smaller P&Rs.

- Alternative bus-stops are not suitable for people who need shelter while waiting for a bus or have mobility problems. ACTION 7: AC to seek action from Council
  ACTION 8: JG to mail round CC to see who uses P&R, ideas, possible sites and concerns (and CN to submit points).

5. Strategic planning and developments.

- MLDP2. The 8851-house target was still being used. One constrained site had been removed so even more additional land is needed. Our feeling is that the LPP is being ignored.
- A701 Relief Road and link to A702.
  - CN has been offered a meeting with Councillors Russell Imrie, Kelly Parry, Pauline Winchester. Additional residents will attend (KH, JH, potentially LM). The survey of recent vehicle movements showed that of the 1111 cars on A702 only 95 were going east on the bypass from Hillend.
  - We understand that there will be no further consultation with communities. There is a widespread view that there is no longer enough funding this project.
  - Edinburgh University has said that the relief road is no longer necessary for its plans because the roundabout at the junction of Bush Loan and the A702 will be sufficient.
  - One resident pointed out that there is an obligation to propose solution for additional housing in Penicuik regardless of whether the proposal (in this case the relief road) is a solution. We need to remember that the plan is to redesign the A701 as an area of active traffic with traffic calming measures in place.
- The new school is going ahead but will be delayed until Aug 2027 following some changes in design.
- 24/00752/PAC Cala Housing Development. No update to provide.
- 25/00405/DPP Bilston Primary School single storey extension proposal. Not discussed due to lack of time. *[Post meeting note: deadline for comments 2 September. Determination deadline end September, but no determination decision posted as at DDCC meeting date 6 October.]*

6. Community activities and concerns:

- Neighbourhood Watch Scotland. Michele Lindsay
  - Background: ML gave a short history of the Neighbourhood Watch (NW) movement which is designed to address crime together. There are 70 NW groups in Scotland and 35k alert users who have signed up (alert users choose who they want to receive info from). Not all about crime. For example some new housing estates set them up straight away to build community. Others come together to report issues to the correct agencies/organisations - these reports may help raise awareness with organisations, but organisations not obligated to take issues forward. NW is funded from several organisations, e.g. Scottish Government, Trading Standards, and SEPA. There is no cost to join. Not a way of reporting concerns (still use 999 for example).
  - Assistance for NW. There are seven people based at Newbridge police station, part-time from Tuesday to Thursday.

- Structure and organisation. Normally there is a volunteer Co-ordinator; ML recommended first to get a Co-ordinator, and possibly Deputy Co-ordinator. General advice is to start small. NW's strapline is "Your watch – your way". There is flexibility in how groups organise themselves, e.g. by WhatsApp or circulating letters. Might just be sharing information. Could have events, coffee mornings, crime prevention event – whatever might be helpful. Not necessary for everyone in DDCC to be a member. The first steps would be to sign up for alerts, define area to be covered (could be for example 2 to 500 houses). Co-ordinator needn't be a member of the DDCC.
- ML outlined some of the benefits. In some cases there is a discount on house contents insurance; NW have public liability insurance so events might be covered; 'NW Area' signs can be bought through their shop. Don't need to be part of NW but can sign up for alerts (without cost).
- Local group would have to pay the running expenses, e.g. the cost if we're printing things off and posting information.
- There was a feeling among some residents that NW doesn't offer much more that we had already put in place through our WhatsApp group, Facegroup, and website. People take responsibility for passing on information within the community.
- On the other hand, there seems to be some agreement that signs are a deterrent; signs (£25 each) are generally at exit/entrance to the area – and scam alerts could be useful. General advice, e.g. wildfire, problems with electric bike, could also be useful.
- CA gave update of Fairmilehead's experience. 9000 people in their community. The CC has signed up for weekly alerts; these are very general. In his opinion, would be worth trying it out. Can always revert if not of use.

- The Summer Gathering was a great success with lots of people joining in. It was really encouraging to see so many children and young people.

7. DDCC Administration

- DDCC budget and bid for grant. HM did not have details to hand at the meeting but subsequently noted that there is £3694.82 in our account at the end of September which included £8.71 in interest.
  ACTION 9: HM to chivvy our volunteers to deal with the noticeboards and bus stops.
  ACTION 10: JW to investigate wildflower seeds.
- Community Council Boundaries Review - Damhead, Penicuik, Roslin and Bilston. The initial proposal is for DDCC to take responsibility for the rural areas as far south as Flotterstone and west up the Pentland Hill and for Roslin and Bilston CC to take responsibility for the new houses in DDCC. Residents at Seafield Mill seem to stay in DDCC but neighbours on the north of Seafield Road seem to be in a different community council.
  ACTION 11: CN to check when the consultation will begin and alert DDCC.
  ACTION 12: PT to draft a note/contact people on the north side of Seafield Road (after checking with CN re final draft consultation version of map).

8. AOB

Calderstones has been on sale (approx. £30m) since spring with planning permission. DDCC residents are concerned that the amendments we'd negotiated could be lost if new owners apply for amendments.
ACTION 13: CN to continue checking the weekly planning notices.

9. Date of next meeting: 7.30pm, Monday 1 December, by Zoom

In addition, special meetings will be arranged as required for the subgroup, DDCC and the wider community to consider the A701 relief road application and/or the draft MLDP2. Both are expected around October/ November 2025.

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

ANNEX

POLICE SCOTLAND
Keeping people safe

Midlothian Community Council Report
August/September 2025
Beat Areas MW02
Damhead Community

POLICE SCOTLAND
Keeping people safe

Incidents of Note

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

Inc 2088 (08/08/2025) Esso Service Station, Biggar Road. Theft of Fuel. £15.25 worth of fuel stolen. Crime Report Submitted.

Inc 2444 (18/08/25) Pentland Hills near to Boghall Farm. Report of Off-Road Bikes. Area searched with no trace.

Inc 1129 (19/08/2025) Seafield Moor Road, Damhead. Suspect Persons. x3 Males wearing Balaclavas on Electric Motor bikes. Area searched with no trace.

Inc 3197 (20/08/2025) Carketton Lea, Damhead. Suspect Persons. x3 Males wearing Balaclavas on Electric Motor bikes. Area searched with no trace.

Inc 3237 (20/08/2025) Pentland House, Seafield Moor Road, Damhead. Suspect Persons. x3 Males wearing Balaclavas on Electric Motor bikes. Area searched with no trace.

Inc 2504 (21/08/2025) Junction of A702/A703 at Hillend. Vehicle Accident. Minor vehicle accident where vehicle have collided with wing mirrors due to narrow road at Junction. (Linked to Inc 2702 21/08/2025). No Police Action taken.

Inc 2702 (21/08/2025) Junction of A702/A703 at Hillend. Vehicle Accident. Minor vehicle accident where vehicle have collided with wing mirrors due to narrow road at Junction. (Linked to Inc 2504 21/08/2025). No Police Action taken.

Inc 2303 (23/08/2025) A702 Approximately 1 mile south of Hillend Junction. Vehicle Accident. Vehicle has crossed double white line and collided with oncoming vehicle. Appears to relate to a medical issue with driver. No Police Action taken.

Inc 0740 (29/08/2025) Esso Service Station, Biggar Road. Theft of Fuel. £71.07 worth of fuel stolen. Crime Report Submitted.

Inc 2496 (29/08/2025) A702/A703 Junction at Hillend. Vehicle Accident. Minor Rear end Shunt involving two vehicle approaching junction. No Police Action taken.

Inc 0846 (06/09/2025) Esso Service Station, Biggar Road. Theft of Fuel. £62.49 worth of fuel stolen. Stolen Vehicle from Edinburgh involved. Crime Report Submitted.

Inc 2543 (10/09/2025) Seafield Moor Road, Damhead. Dangerous Driving. Report of vehicle performing a dangerous overtake on a blind bend. No corroboration of evidence so no Police Action Taken. However, vehicle has been involved in another incident out with Midlothian and has been seized and due to be disposed of.

Inc 1953 (12/09/2025) Esso Service Station, Biggar Road. Theft of Fuel. £62.98 worth of fuel stolen. Crime Report Submitted.

Inc 0521 (18/09/2025) Esso Service Station, Biggar Road. Theft of Fuel. £53.91 worth of fuel stolen. Crime Report Submitted.

Inc 1059 (25/09/2025) Esso Service Station, Biggar Road. Theft of Fuel. £60.87 worth of fuel stolen. Crime Report Submitted

Inc 0834 (02/10/2025) A702 Biggar Road. Defective Vehicle. Vehicle stopped by Roads Policing Officers. Found to have various defects so driver issued with Vehicle Defect Rectification Scheme Ticket to bring vehicle up to standard.

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

Although not Specific to the Damhead area, there has been an ongoing Police Operation, Op Jigsaw running for the last month in the Midlothian area. This is targeting shoplifting incidents particularly at the nearby Straiton Retail Park. Additional Officers have been deployed most days which has resulted in an increase in shoplifting incidents being detected and solved.

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**).