

# Carlops Community Council Annual General Meeting

23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024

## Report from the Chair

Firstly thank you everyone for joining the AGM this evening – and for all of the support of the Carlops community across the last year. I'd especially like to thank my co-committee members, Guy Walters in his role as Treasurer and general 'do-er' – the man that gets things done! Also to Kate Morss and Colin Hall who sensibly took on a shared role of Secretary having seen the scale of the task that one person – Hannah Walters – took on for so long! But also thanks to Georgie Jones and Christina Gaiger who volunteered to join the committee last year meaning that we've been able to share tasks and roles a bit more than was possible when there were fewer of us! I should also like to formally thank Marty Lee who manfully chaired the Community Council for more years than he'd probably been keen to admit – or certainly more than he signed up for! They have been very big shoes to fill!

So how have the last 12 months been? Well in many ways, it's been a fairly quiet year with no major dramas or issues to be addressed – with the Rutherford planning application a possible exception – I'll come onto that!

The village as a whole did have the excitement of a fully fledged film production company on site for the best part of three months during the winter – I certainly am looking forward to the film's release and the appearances of a few Carloprians on screen – I'm hoping that Oscars are awaiting the likes of Mary Claire and Les in particular! This did of course mean that the Villager Hall wasn't available for a period – but many thanks to the Church for providing a venue which we used on a couple of occasions for Community Council meetings. The film crew also hired out the Allan Ramsay for the period, and it was great to see some life around the old pub again. This continued with Beth's 18<sup>th</sup> and the recent community night where over 60 turned up. Moves are apparently afoot to re-open the pub – what a difference that would make to village life!

In terms of projects, we have had a few successes. Firstly, the telephone box. This has been a labour of love for several people in the village – especially Guy – and the result is a beautifully redesigned information hub that I've seen mentioned in various places as a gleaming beacon of our community. Thank you to Guy in particular for his sterling efforts, but also to others in the community who helped in its splendid restoration.

Another of the projects, again championed by Guy, has been the efforts to restore, renovate and consolidate the Memorial Well. This is ongoing – and Guy can bring us up to speed, but I know we have some funds potentially in place via the Orcome Trust providing some seed-funds to

make the well safe, then we can try to raise sufficient money through crowd-funding to improve level of restoration.

And for many years, one of my ambitions has been planting a tree on the Green which will remove the need to source a Christmas tree each year – both expensive when it comes to Community Council funds, and not at all sustainable. It was therefore hugely appreciated when Pamela Logan in Ramsay Cottages donated a fir tree which was planted, with the help of Sustainable West Linton – by Becky Gibby earlier this year. It has a long way to grow of course – but it's well rooted and will provide pleasure for all of us in the years to come – and save the Community Council a few hundred pounds each year into the bargain! Thank you again to Pamela – and to Becky for planting it.

Friends of the Pentlands have also been extremely active this year and were happy to make repairs to the popular path up to Patieshill from the A702 – a popular route for dog walkers and walkers generally. As it is technically in Midlothian, we've always been at a bit of a dead end when it came to repairing it – but the team of volunteers from the Friends of the Pentlands did a great job. I know they have ongoing plans for further work in the area too – hugely appreciated by all of us.

The issue of speeding and traffic through the village will probably always be an agenda item and a source of annoyance to all of us. That said, again there has been some positive progress this year. It looks as though the 20mph speed limit will be maintained – and thank you to Kate for arranging for the delivery and then the subsequent distribution of the 20mph stickers for wheelie bins along the main road. Every little helps – I know we are also looking at planters on the south side of the village – and of course despite these efforts, there have still been many incidents of speeding through the village on a daily basis. Several residents' cars have been scraped and bumped along the A702, and of course we had the recent accident which destroyed the garden wall of Pentland House. Remarkably, nobody was injured in that accident which resulted in both vehicles being written off – but it does illustrate the need for the Community Council to continue to campaign on the issue of speeding. Encouragingly, we have joined up with all of the other Community Councils in the area and a Speed Concern group has been set up which will hopefully give us a stronger collective voice.

This past year has also seen the establishment of a Community Development Trust. The boundary covers West Linton and Carlops and this now provides a further opportunity for all of us in terms of access to additional funding streams. Watch this space – or indeed get directly involved if you are interested in shaping the next steps.

And finally, it would be remiss of me if I didn't acknowledge the elephant that constantly seems to be in the room – the various planning proposals

and applications for development of the former Rutherford Castle golf course and surrounding area. This past year saw some initial proposals for a massive development that were vehemently opposed by both West Linton and Carlops Community Councils. A new operator got involved and the plans were smaller and appeared much more realistic. Unfortunately, he has pulled out so it remains with the owner of the land to decide on the next steps. We'll continue to keep the community up to speed as things, no doubt, continue to develop.

So, in closing, thank you everyone for your support of the Community Council - and we'll always welcome ideas and fresh blood if anyone wants to get involved more directly! One of the upcoming events where hopefully a few in the community will help with - is the Carlops Sports and Games Day which this year will be in mid September. Thoughts, ideas and any help will be much appreciated!

Jim Eccleston  
23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024