

Crailing, Eckford and Nisbet Community Council : Chair's Report, (May 2019 to 30th April 2021)

During 2019, which seems so long ago now, there were two significant developments, which were important for Community Councils in the Scottish Borders and the communities they serve. Both relate to funds devolved to local authorities from the Scottish Government, and linked to the implementation of the Community Empowerment Act (2015), and associated with supporting community based projects. The first was the 'Localities Bid Fund', in which any community group, in a given Locality area, (e.g. Cheviot, which CEN CC is within), could put together a bid for monies to support a given project or initiative. The bid was required to satisfy at least one of the themes of the SBC Community Plan. Such a group within the village of Nisbet decided, (with CEN CC support), to apply for a grant to renovate the Nisbet Churchyard. They were successful in being awarded a grant of £4000 and this work is now on-going, (having been interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic).

The Second development which occurred in June 2019, was concerned with a much more enhanced role for the Cheviot Local Area Forum, to which, SBC devolved a 'Community Fund' in excess of £160,000 to. Again, this funding was to facilitate community development initiatives across the Cheviot area. The annual fund devolved will be recurrent, though the actual amount may change from year to year. The Area Forum meetings are bi-monthly and CEN CC sends a member to attend and participate in the decision making. Although activities were interrupted last year by the pandemic lock-down, the Area Forum will continue to be an important platform for our community to apply for project funds and be involved in SBC decision-making, as we now emerge from the pandemic.

During 2019, Marie Hogg resigned from the Community Council as she was moving home to another area. During her term of office she had been an invaluable member, representing the Ulston locality and CEN CC is very grateful for her

dedication and the very helpful input she was able to contribute with planning issues on her patch.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, CEN CC has continued to function, although clearly, we were unable to hold meetings, including our usual AGM in May 2020. I would like to thank all the members of the CC for their continued hard work and support during what has been for all, a difficult period. The community council has continued to respond to consultations from the Scottish Government and SBC, including the new Local Development Plan. Planning applications have continued to come in and some, have required a great deal of time and research from members, in responding to them, on behalf of residents. During the first lock-down, CEN CC was successful in securing a grant from the Scottish Government, to facilitate the provision of a temporary community shop, based in the Crailing Lothian Hall and run by members of the Hall Committee. When it closed last autumn, the remaining stock was donated to the Jedburgh Food Bank.

Also, I commend and wish to sincerely thank all those residents in our community who during this past fifteen months, have given willingly of their time and experience in ensuring that the many facets of our community activity, were able to continue to function, to the benefit of all residents: the Resilience Co-ordinators in each of our villages and hamlets, (especially those who stepped in to replace someone, or into a new position), the defibrillator checkers for each of our areas who play an important and key role, Jane Vickers for maintaining the CEN Oil

Group Purchase Scheme and Sheila Campbell for her continued amazing work with the CEN website, for keeping us all informed and especially for assisting me with the management of the CEN CC email system. Also, what has been of a great help and I am very grateful for, has been the continued support from SBC Officers, our three SBC Councillors and the staff at The Bridge in Jedburgh.

During 2020, two of our long serving members, based in Crailing, retired from the community council: Caroline Cook and Linda Coles. As very dedicated and conscientious councillors, over their periods of office, they have both made an incredible contribution to the work of the CC in many ways, particularly, Caroline, as the attendee on behalf of the CC at the Cheviot Local Area Forum and Linda as Minutes Secretary. They will be a great miss and I express my sincere thanks to both for their service to our community.

I wish my successor Cllr. Dinah Faulds all the very best for the future and have no doubt that she will steer CEN CC during the coming post-pandemic months and years, both carefully and efficiently.

Malcolm McGregor

Retired Chair.

June 2021