

Listening, Informing and Representing:

During Autumn 2022 we held a consultative meeting in each of our villages which were attended by over 60 residents. From these meetings and informal discussions we identified initial priorities:

- Road Safety: Speeding in our villages and instances of nuisance parking.
- A need to build our community in Leitholm, post Covid, through increasing the use of our hall.
- A need to find somewhere for our community to meet and socialise in Eccles.
- A need to improve the appearance of our villages through the introduction of planters and a general tidy up.
- A need to improve how we communicate with our communities.

Planning for Place:

This is the framework within which the Scottish Borders Council wish us to report on community led planning. By developing a plan we have the ability to inform the council and other public bodies of our priorities. By lodging the plan with the Council there is a greater possibility that the our priorities may be actioned. The plan allows us to measure success and refine priorities.

To keep our community informed, we have created a Facebook page and post regular newsletters on noticeboards. We provide regular feedback to the Council in relation to local concerns and planning matters. In recent months we have met with the Road Safety Department of the Council and Sergeant Granger to discuss road safety concerns and local policing of our area.

What we have achieved:

The Road Safety Department have undertaken to improve signage and road markings at the entrances to our villages to re-enforce the 20 miles per hour message. We have a better understanding of the pressures on local police resources and look to work with them to monitor and enforcement of speed limits. Parking issues are being monitored.

In both Eccles and Leitholm small committees have been formed to take priorities forward.

Leitholm Village Hall is now in regular use with a wide range of activities including: Line Dancing, Pilates, Pottery Classes, Thai Cookery, FIB Training, Indoor Bowls, Sewing, Andante Choir and seated exercise. A further programme of activity is being planned – watch this space!

Community projects have not been limited to the Hall, with a charity dog walk, Tree planting, Easter egg hunt and Open Site Community Pollinators project.

In Eccles, following an assessment of local buildings, the disused primary school has been identified as a potential community hub. Conversations with the Council are going well with a strong indication that they will provide an 18 month free let of the premises to see whether it can be put to good use by the community. Lots of ideas are being considered to ensure the success of this project. We need the community to get involved, both with ideas and to support the work of Gregg and his team.

Planters have been built by local tradesmen in both Eccles and Leitholm and these should be in place soon, filled with flowers for the summer months.

Much of the work being delivered through our Community Council led teams in Eccles and Leitholm has been being delivered in Birgham for a number of years through the Birgham Community Development Trust. Our role in Birgham has mainly involved supporting their work through signposting potential funding.

Assisted by Council funding we have just delivered a questionnaire to every home in our area and look forward to a good response to guide our direction into the coming year.

What now?

Much of what we will concentrate on in the coming year will be influenced by the response to our questionnaire, however, we still have a fair bit to go to address issues raised at our initial meetings with our communities:

We will continue to engage with both the Council and Police regarding road safety in our area. With limited resources, priority is given to serious accident hotspots. Fortunately, there have been no serious accidents in any of our villages for over ten years. Let's keep it that way!

Building on the successes of Birgham Community Development Trust, it would be good to create similar charities for both Eccles and Leitholm. We will explore this possibility with the communities involved.

Taking forward the Eccles Primary School proposal is a major piece of work for the small committee there and we will give them as much support as we can.

The issue of poor/non-existent public transport has been raised. We will explore what can be done to improve this. Similarly, attention need to be given to our existing paths and footpaths alongside looking at the potential for extending these.

We need to explore how we can capitalise on current opportunities: Borders Cycle network, the Destination Tweed Project for example.

On the communications front we have been awarded the development of a free website for our Community Council. We will need to decide on how to make best use of this to promote our work and support our communities.

If you are interested in helping with our work or finding out more, please get in touch:
Facebook: Leitholm Eccles and Birgham Community Council
Email: leitholmecclesbirghamcc@gmail.com Learn more about the community council!