



Dirleton Community Association Annual Report for 2024-2025



The Organisation's Purposes are:

- *To act as a voice for the residents of Dirleton and the surrounding areas*
- *by collecting and representing views which have an impact on life in the Community and to liaise with all public bodies on matters pertinent to residents of Dirleton and the surrounding areas*
- *To promote community participation amongst, and to encourage good working*
- *relationships between, all of Dirleton's community bodies, associations and residents*
- *To encourage the preservation and the improvement of the character and*
- *amenity of Dirleton and its unique natural, historic and ecological features and to promote public interest therein*
- *To support the retention and development of communal areas and facilities and*
- *to promote any other community-based activity which residents may consider*
- *could improve the life and well-being of the community*
- *To liaise with the local council and community council in relation to planning*
- *matters, at all times encouraging high standards of architecture and planning and to protect the conservation and heritage of the village*
- *By the way of meetings, lectures and publications, community participation will*
- *be encouraged in schemes of a charitable nature: all activities amongst the*
- *community will uphold equal opportunities and prohibit all conduct that*
- *discriminates or harasses on the grounds of race, religion, disability, age, political beliefs, gender or sexual orientation.*

Recruitment and Election of Committee Members:

The Association's Trustees are elected or re-elected at the Annual General Meeting held in the autumn of each year. The Trustees then elect the Office Bearers and committee for each year. Last year, following a previous resolution, the DVA ceased to exist on 11th October 2024 and was replaced by the Dirleton Community Association (DCA) which is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). While still a charity under OSCR, this now gives it the ability to purchase land and buildings, as and when required.



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Committee Members November 2024 - November 2025

Office Bearers

- Chairperson: In rotation.
- Honorary Treasurer: Simon Paterson-Brown.
- Minutes Secretary: Carl Hamer.
- Membership Secretary: Janice Macleod.

Other Members: Fred McClintock, Tracy Lonie, Derek Carter, Mike Howarth, Dan Arnold, Rachel Sydeserff

Ex Officio: Zena Tindall (Community Councillor).

Changes to the Constitution

Discussions continued to take place about the possibilities with the Old Village Hall and it was made clear to the DCA by the Community Land Team that the constitution under which the DCA was formed needed some change to make it compliant with recent legislation especially in light of the wish to purchase the site. There were a number of other changes required (e.g. tighter definition of the Community area). Work began in August 2025 and culminated in a new constitution being proposed for adoption at the 2025 AGM. Once adopted this will be lodged with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

Communications and Public Involvement

The Association held meetings every two months throughout the year to which all DCA members (and now residents) were invited. Committee meetings were held on other months and on an ad hoc basis as issues arose.

The village website (<https://dirletonvillage.org>) has been completely rebuilt and has been working efficiently along with the new email system. This has taken a huge amount of work from Mike Howarth who continues to monitor and develop it.

The DCA committee has also used a new Facebook page which is run by Tracy Lonie and links to the Community Council through Zena Trendell.

The village noticeboards continue to be used to make information available to off-line residents, non-members and visitors.

A new 'welcome pack' which was written two years ago is continually updated as required and is available on the website.



Planning and Associated Matters

The DCA committee continues to fight on behalf of the community for high quality planning and architecture within the conservation area, in accordance with the DCA constitution.

Work on the former workshops site for conversion into houses has commenced. The committee is actively engaging in proposals for the open space landscaping around the building, and for the covering over of the unsightly, disused septic tank.

The DCA welcomed the proposals to restore Auburn, but objected to the architectural design and conservation area impact of the proposals to replace the former laundry building with a pastiche of it, combining garages/carports and holiday letting apartments. This objection was not successful, and the building is nearing completion.

Newmains Farm. Building on this development site has stopped and its future is unknown.

Newmains Farm Public Right of Way: following the closure of the public path between Ware Road and the John Muir Way through the Newmains steading area in February 2019 and the DCA's submission to ELC of substantial evidence of its use by the public over a long period of years, ELC has recognised the route as a public right of way, and the Scottish Rights of Way Society has registered it as such. ELC is in negotiations with the landowner as to the route of a diversion round the immediate steading area and the replacement of signage and is consulting with the DCA over this. The owner has built a sub-standard path around the steading. It does however remain as a work in progress. East Lothian Council (ELC) have still to conclude the formal legal process of recognising and creating a suitable right of way route. The committee continues to pressurise ELC to do so.

A new application to build a house at Speedwell Gardens was submitted. No decision has been made.

A revised application to build a house immediately west of the Castle Inn was approved. The DCA had submitted comments which do not object to the development of the site in principle, but which objected to the design on architectural and conservation area grounds. The DCA has asked for the number of listed stone wall sections demolished to form exits to be reduced from 2 to 1, and commented on the lack of any conservation area statement in support of the design generally. It also objected to the inappropriate chimney and fenestration design in particular. Improvements were made.

Work on Castlemains Gardens has now been completed and we welcome all new residents to the village and the new DCA.



Other Activities and Achievements

Representatives from the DCA committee have been attending the North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership (AP) meetings regularly on behalf of the community and we are delighted to report that Zena Trendell has now taken over as Chairperson. We wish her well and thank Hilary Smith very much for all her previous work in this position.

This year the DCA organised a 'Village Welcome' party in the Castle Inn for all the Community within the new DCA area. This was a tremendous success attracting over 150 adults and 40 children. The highlight was undoubtedly the water bombing of the children by Andrew, the black knight, from Dirleton Castle!

DCA committee members have met with various officials of ELC during the year to further the community's priorities which resulted from last year's Dirleton Discussion Day and has led to the following actions:

1. The Dirleton Local Place Plan has now been completed and is on the village website (<https://dirletonvillage.org>) We are all very grateful to both Derek Carter and Zena Trendell for the enormous amount of work they put in to get this project across the line.
2. The raising of £10,000 from the community to support the erection of heritage lights in the village represents a great effort from everyone so many thanks to all who contributed. This project is ongoing and the west side of the green remains in darkness, although we hope 'to see the light' in the near future! Thanks to Derek Carter for all his work here.
3. The old village hall/equipment store project is at the planning application stage. This is delayed pending a bat winter hibernation survey. Edward Danks of Paris Steele has kindly volunteered to act as the Association's Solicitor for the hall purchase. The team is currently working on competitive tenders for the demolition works. Neither the funding applications nor the purchase of the building can be processed until planning permission is received, hopefully in the spring.
4. The Dirleton to Archerfield Walled Garden Solar Walk, developed and installed under the direction and planning of Dan Arnold, the children from the Primary school, Heriot-Watt University, Archerfield Walled Garden and a grant from the Gullane Area Community Council was officially open in the Spring and has been a great success. If you walk along it, you will be walking faster than the 'speed of light'!
5. ELC has now obtained a grant from the Scottish Government to make changes along the village main street to address some of the safety issues. Discussions with ELC continue.



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Accounts

The draft accounts for the new DCA Oct 2024-Sept 25 show the account stands at £11,795.16. Income was £10,789.98 and Expenditure was £12,870.05. The detailed accounts will be shown at the AGM. The DCA are very grateful to the Solar Walk for their donation of £617.98.

Simon Paterson-Brown

Acting Chairman

Date: 4th Dec 2025