Annual Q&A Session with Galbraith's Representative

Date: Friday 13 November
Venue: Tyninghame Village Hall
Facilitated by: Tyninghame Village Hall and Community Committee (TVHCC)

Attendance

Galbraith's: Georgina Weston (GW)

TVHCC: Carol Crowther, Chair (CC); Ian Staples, Trustee (IS); Daniel Wight, Trustee and Dunpender Community Council rep (DW)

Welcome and ground rules

CC welcomed everyone and invited attendees to add topics to the questions already submitted, which were available in hard copy on the tables. The evening followed those questions.

- **Parking was not discussed**, as the village has now set up an Interest Group to look for solutions. CC apologised that the minutes of the Parking meeting were not yet available, owing to Microsoft's recent IT issues.
- CC asked everyone to keep discussion polite and courteous, and not to make concerns personal.
- GW, on behalf of the Estate, gave generously of her time and answered as best she could. She invited tenants and owners with individual queries to approach her directly.

1. Long Row, Fallow Field and Ricky's Shed

Questions submitted:

- What is the latest on the Estate's planning application for new housing on the Fallow Field, given its designation as a community growing area in the Dunpender Community Council Local Place Plan? The Estate's proposal is understood to be a change of use from agricultural to housing: "a small number of small affordable housing units arranged around a courtyard", with potentially less "space available for community growing".
- How many houses are planned, and what will be the size and nature of the community growing area? Who will be allowed to use it?

- What are the Estate's plans for Ricky's Shed on the A198, now that it is no longer used as a tractor shed and workshop? Could it be used for occasional, restricted car parking for Hall events in the meantime?
- What guidance, if any, is given to village tenants on the dos and don'ts of conservation maintenance?

Long Row

GW acknowledged that Long Row has been empty for some time. She confirmed that:

- The upgrade will take considerable time and money and is likely to take at least 18 months. Legislative requirements, such as energy efficiency, must be addressed, which is adding to the delay.
- Number 4 will become a holiday let. The other vacant houses will be made ready for rent or sale.
- A certificate of lawfulness was sought for the holiday let and has been provided. ELC confirmed that planning permission was not required.
- The exteriors of all the houses will be painted the same colour as No. 3.

Concerns raised by attendees

- Whether a holiday or short-term let is it appropriate or morally right in a village of this size, given the ongoing need for affordable housing.
- A worry that one holiday let could lead to others, with the village gradually losing its residential character.
- A sense that the Estate has already made a significant amount of money from property sales and rentals in the village. Attendees questioned why funds are still insufficient to refurbish Long Row without creating a holiday let or selling.
- A holiday let, plus other residents' vehicles, would add further pressure to parking.

One attendee said they would object to a holiday let on Long Row if they were able to. It was noted that the plans have already been approved through East Lothian Council (ELC).

GW's response

- Decisions on the properties are complex and must be balanced against works needed elsewhere on the Estate.
- Matters have become more complicated because the Estate Trust has new Trustees, who need time to become familiar with ongoing issues.
- Improved parking forms part of the plans for both Long Row and the longer-term plans for the agricultural field on the northern edge of the village (the Fallow Field).

Estate Trust: who the Trustees are

Asked to clarify, GW confirmed:

- Four Trustees oversee and manage the estate ownerships which include several trusts: an accountant, a solicitor, a surveyor, and one other Trustee, who is Lord Haddington's father-in-law.
- Lord Haddington is not a Trustee but does own some individual assets.
- Trustees receive no financial reward, beyond their time spent on Estate matters. Trustees are not beneficiaries of the trusts.
- Across all the estates there are several Trusts, with some properties individually owned and others held within one of the Trusts.
- The beneficiaries of the Trusts are all family members: the Earl of Haddington and his relatives.

Fallow Field: current position

GW gave an update:

- Ricky's workshop forms part of the discussions and is included in the plan.
- Meetings have been held with ELC, who have said that any houses must be affordable, small, adaptive, and sensitive to and in keeping with the village. The development must also consider the Local Place Plan and, wherever possible, include community growing space.
- ELC have asked for more detail on the proposed design and the feasibility of road entry and exit onto the A198.
- Nothing meaningful is likely to happen on the ground for 2–3 years.
- There has been no large financial outlay from the Estate so far. The process has two stages, and once the council has drafted its 10-year plan it should be made public for further consultation.

Feedback from attendees

- One attendee noted that the original intention was for small properties, not large-scale development. Another asked what "community growing space" means, with some concern it could be tokenistic, such as a few raised beds.
- Overall, the plans felt vague. Attendees doubted that the housing would really be affordable, raised significant concerns about safe access to any new site, and felt there should be more open discussion of the proposals.

2. Flooding and mud

Questions submitted:

- What is the Estate doing to prevent further flooding from the top fields towards the village?
- What is being done to stop mud from the field at the north-west edge of the village flooding village streets and south-side properties?
- Who is responsible for clean-up? Normally the farmer must clear debris from the public highway where their action or inaction has caused it, but village streets have never been cleaned effectively after such events.

GW acknowledged that the muddy flooding had been horrendous. She explained that:

- The field had been sown with vegetables, where previously it had grown cereal. Cereal crops protect the soil much better in heavy rain.
- There are no plans to plant vegetables in this area in the future.

Ploughing and sowing of the cereal crop will be redirected to manage soil and water better within the field.

- The area will not be irrigated but surrounding irrigation will be monitored

3. Access roads and driveways

Questions submitted:

- When will the access road from Main Street to The Green be upgraded? This is Estate land, and the upgrade was previously agreed by the Estate and is its responsibility.
- What maintenance is planned for the access road to Tyninghame House, specifically at Tyninghame Mains?

- Are there plans to improve the damaged areas to the front of properties on Main Street specifically tenant property

GW said that AG Thomson have been instructed to carry out the work at The Green, Main Street and Tyninghame Mains early in the New Year.

Concerns from residents of the affected areas

- They do not want a “patch-up” job.
- They have not been involved in any project discussions so far.
- If they are to share the costs, they want sight of any tender to be sure the work is right, fit for purpose and will last many years.
- This raised questions about residents’ liability if the work does not meet requirements.

Discussion

- Much of the discussion concerned the liability of individual owners who share a driveway, and the Estate’s responsibility to put forward fair proposals for sharing costs. The right of those contributing to have a say in the specification was also discussed.
- Title deeds and the Estate’s legal obligations were discussed at length. One resident was concerned that the large potholes are potentially dangerous to road users, especially children on bikes. She asked whether mesh grids could be laid to prevent erosion of the drive.
- There was agreement that further discussion is needed so that each party’s share of the cost is proportionate, recognising that the deeds are not consistent in how costs are allocated.

4. Village Hall

Questions submitted:

- When will the Hall driveway be re-chipped?
- What is being done to understand the apparent ongoing drainage problem at the rear corner of the Hall?

GW said that the persistent wet at the rear corner of the back wall must be investigated before new chippings are laid. A cracked run pipe is suspected and would need to be fixed. The walls of the easy-access toilet and the storeroom were noted to be extremely damp.

5. General maintenance

Questions submitted:

- When was the small strip of land opposite Widows Row deemed fallow and excluded from regular grass cutting by the Estate?
- Can Galbraith's reinstate hedge cutting, reduction of overgrowth and general estate management, some of which seems to have lapsed since Ricky is no longer with us? Examples include the back of the drying green, the cricket pitch and the hedge at the Village Hall.

GW described the contract with North Berwick Gardening Services and noted the many positive comments she had received about Steven's work. However, areas were missed when the new work plan was agreed, and this will be rectified**.** The areas are:

- Widows Row
- The hedge at the front of the Hall
- The entrance to the cricket and football pitches

GW asked people to tell her about any areas they think are still being missed.

It was also noted that cutting the hedge on the edge of the pitches is the farmer's responsibility and has not been happening. GW said she would remind those responsible.

6. Conservation status

Tyninghame is a Conservation Area because of its special architectural and historic interest as a planned estate village. This includes the bridge at the village entrance, the Mill and the Cricket Pitch. The adjacent landscape and Tyninghame House policies are classed as "Outstanding" in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland, and so are subject to ELC's strictest planning rules.

It would be helpful if owners and renters were given guidance on maintaining their properties in keeping with the collective landscape, avoiding unsympathetic changes that affect the village's character.

The discussion showed strong, shared feeling about preserving the look of the conservation village. Residents cited areas where building works, new vegetation or hedging, or lack of maintenance detract from its special feel. Examples included:

- Lack of uniformity in pathways, paint colours and so on
- Café tables and chairs spilling beyond the café boundary
- Overgrown trees and hedges
- General loss of what was there before, such as historic walkways

GW noted that the Estate must ensure its own properties meet requirements but cannot police what homeowners do. All owners must consult ELC before making new or adaptive changes to their property.

GW and CC agreed it may be possible to produce wider guidance on maintaining standards, to be hosted on the TVH website. It was noted that ELC's planning department is the ultimate authority on these matters.

Summary of actions

Action	Who
Road and driveway repairs at The Green, Main Street and Tyninghame Mains, early in the New Year	AG Thomson (instructed by the Estate)
Investigate the damp and suspected cracked pipe at the rear of the Hall before re-chipping the driveway	Estate / Galbraith's N.B since meeting please note that chippings will be laid as a very temporary solution to level ground and minimise falls risk. Further investigation will still progress
Add Widows Row, the front Hall hedge and the pitch entrance to the grass and hedge cutting contract	Galbraith's / North Berwick Gardening Services N.B since meeting some of this work has been carried out
Remind farmers responsible for cutting the hedge at the edge of the pitches	GW N.B since meeting this has been undertaken

Report any further areas being missed	Residents, to inform GW
Draft conservation guidance for owners and renters, for the TVH website	GW and CC
Share road and driveway tenders and a fair cost-sharing proposal with affected residents	Estate (requested by residents)
Make the council’s 10-year plan available for consultation once drafted	ELC