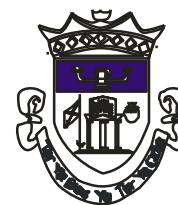

Hawick Community Council



MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

held on Monday 13^h September 2021 at 6.30pm at Hawick Lesser Town Hall

Present:	Cameron Knox (Chair) Jim Adams (Treasurer) John Campbell Keith Irving Euan Welsh	Marion Short (Vice-Chair) Margaret Hogg (Secretary) Wilson George Duncan Taylor French Wight
Attending:	Councillor McAteer Councillor Turnbull Charlie Stewart (HHS) Billy Fletcher, Burnfoot CC	Councillor Ramage Jake Szoneberg (HHS) Graham Ford (Hawick Paper)

There was one member of the public also in attendance.

- 1. Chair's Opening Remarks** – The Chair welcomed everyone to the monthly September meeting of Hawick Community Council and stated he was glad that this meeting was able to return to its original home within Hawick Lesser Town Hall.

It had been great to see so many townsfolk as well as visitors alike out on Saturday past, lining North Bridge Street and the High Street, supporting the start of the next stage of the Tour of Britain through our town. There had been a great family atmosphere and the event showcased Hawick at its very best. A well done was expressed to the Hawick Cycling Club for their organising the Stage 7 start and the Hawick Cycling Festival, and to the many volunteers and organisations involved in making this a great occasion.

HCC and the Hawick Paper would be recording the meeting for minutes and reporting purposes.

- 2. Declarations of Interest** – The Chair advised that if any members had a conflict of interest in any agenda items, they should make it known at the start of the discussion.
- 3. Apologies for Absence** – Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of HCC members Braden George, Alan Wear and John Wilkinson as well as Councillor Marshall, and Brian Bouglas, Future Hawick.
- 4. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of 9th August 2021** – The Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting – Proposed by Wilson George and Seconded by French Wight.
- 5. Matters arising** –
Hawick Honorary Provost Achievement Awards Board – completion of the list of recipients remained ongoing. The date for award to Stuart Hogg to be advised by the Secretary.

Dog Poo Bin – Parkdail/Joogle Bridge/Wilton Lodge Park Circular Route – Councillor McAteer reported that this bin was now in place.

Defibrillator for Wilton Lodge Park – The Chair reported that this matter was in hand and being progressed by a member of the public, David Slight, along with Avril's Trust. A Just Giving page had been set up and it was understood that the target sum for this defibrillator had been almost reached.

Sluice at Common Haugh – The Chair stated that this was a total fiasco and that Hawick had become a laughingstock as a result.

Councillor Turnbull advised that Scottish Water now required chemical waste to be held within a storage tank and discharged to waste treatment works in a controlled way. The corrosive nature of this material could lead to sewer failures which had already been experienced elsewhere. He considered works required could turn out to be overly costly and we would require waiting to see how matters developed. Any movement would now likely be into next year.

John Campbell queried where the Showmen's Guild disposed of their waste, as this had been ongoing in the town for years. Reference was made to a similar sluice operating up North where SEPA, the Campervan Society and Highlands & Islands Council had worked together on a plan for a sluice there, however SEPA representatives responsible for the Hawick sluice were appearing to be somewhat obstructive. He had notified Norrie Curtis, SBC of this good example of joint working, but a reply was awaited. Councillor Turnbull agreed to follow these points up with Norrie Curtis, SBC.

Tourist Information Board at Common Haugh – Councillor Ramage reported that SBC was fully supportive to fund, but a stop had been put on this meantime following her discussion with Future Hawick, and an approach from Gordon Muir and Paul Hogarth, involved in the Hornshole Greenway, who were looking to have branded signage throughout the town, which she considered was a brilliant idea. Hornshole Greenway had been working in partnership with other organisations who were agreeable to aligning signage e.g., Hawick Rugby Club, Future Hawick, Town of 1000 Trails etc. A copy of the proposed signage branding was circulated, and members agreed this was a good idea, stating that this branding would create consistency throughout the town.

High Street Bollards – The Chair advised that a letter of support for bollards to be painted blue and gold had been sent to SBC following the August meeting, however there had been no reply to date.

Councillor McAteer advised this matter was not concluded. He had been in touch with John Curry, (SBC's Director of Assets & Infrastructure) who had advised the Scottish Government had been supporting this type of works in other towns. Mr Curry agreed to revert to this individual within Scottish Government to find out what the options might be to progress this project and other similar works. He would then revert to Councillor McAteer. Future Hawick were looking to create a funding pot to allow for this type of works within the town. Hopefully some common sense would prevail on this matter and Councillor McAteer undertook to update on progress at a future meeting.

Steps at the Dunk – Councillor Ramage advised she had visited this area on a hot day where she noted a lot of people in the river. So, in effect, people who wanted to get to the river

were able to do so. She considered that to install steps to this area would however serve to encourage greater access to an area where the river can particularly in winter be very high and dangerous. She did not advocate installing steps there to be a good idea. Marion Short agreed that it was a good point as the river can flow very fast at this location and cause danger. Members agreed that this matter should not be pursued further.

- 6. Police Scotland Report** – It was noted that no police could attend the meeting due to lack of manpower.

French Wight queried the continuing reduction in solvency rates and whilst it had been explained at the last meeting that this was due to a change in reporting methods causing figures to be distorted, this nevertheless remained of real concern.

Councillor McAteer concurred that the trend of reduced percentages of solvency rates were worrying and indicated a shortage of manpower/officers, but also more importantly a lack of investigation resulting due to this shortage. Performance on solvency of theft by housebreaking was a true indicator he best used to gauge performance, as this involved crime which most impacted on households. Reduced solvency figures particularly in this category of crime appeared to enforce there was indeed a lack of manpower to investigate and resolve crime within the communities.

Marion Short advised on comments made to her at the Tour of Britain, on the number of Police in attendance within the town for this event. It appeared that for major events, Police attendance was not an issue. It was noted however that costs to the Tour of Britain for this level of policing would have been exorbitant.

It was concurred that Police Scotland were very good at managing major crime and providing specialist policing resources, but this appeared to be at the cost of providing manpower required in the communities to investigate and resolve crimes there. It was to be hoped this situation could be reversed soon.

Councillor Turnbull commented that this was why the CAT teams were essential. We would be in a worse situation without those Teams. Policing resources were likely to worsen come the end of October/early November when the Cop26 event would be held in Glasgow and would draw away community resources to cover there.

The Chairman added that policing the complicated new “rule of six” (in relation to Covid restrictions) would also not help this situation with having finite resources.

- 7. High School Senior Team Report** – The Chair welcomed Charlie Stewart, Head Pupil and Jake Szoneberg, Deputy Head Pupil to their first meeting of HCC.

The pupils thanked HCC for their invite and reported that House Captains had been selected for each of the school Houses; Bikes had been painted and decorated for the Tour of Britain which pupils had enjoyed doing.

There were plans to set up some Committees e.g., for Christmas Dance, Charity Committee to fundraise and give back to the Community.

On a fortnightly basis, assemblies would be held to recognise pupil Achievements and to turn around the negatives still circulating about the school towards positive achievements.

Plans were in place to hold a Careers Night to raise pupils' awareness and knowledge of opportunities out there within local factories and other local businesses, universities, colleges etc.

The Chair asked what the atmosphere was like in the school, and it was noted the view from pupils was that it was good to be back to school learning following a long spell of online learning the previous year which had been quite stressful. Teachers had been very helpful in preparing pupils for grades last year, but pupils were looking now for a bit more normality and being back to learning within the school and working towards exams again.

French Wight enquired about pupils' thoughts on the Vaccination Programme for Schools, and pupils considered this was a good idea and advised they had already been vaccinated. The consensus of pupils seemed to be in favour of being vaccinated. John Campbell wished the pupils success with their plans.

Councillor Ramage enquired when the last Careers Night had been held and it was noted from Duncan Taylor that this had been 2 years ago in late 2019. It was agreed that it was good to have this planned again.

- 8. Treasurer's Report** – The Treasurer reported an Opening Balance of £24,178.26. There had been little movement in the month – a further £100 had been received for stallholder fees for the Summer Market and the Traders Market Licence of £88 had been paid. A small sum (£24.05) had also been paid in respect of Covid Support expenses, all contributing to a Closing Balance of £24,166.21.

Expenditure of receipts from the Summer Market Raffle and Stallholders' fees would be discussed later in the agenda and reported in next month's Treasurer's Report.

9. Public Forum & Town Issues

- (a) Traffic Chaos in Hawick - French Wight raised the resurfaced problem of traffic throughout the town and the previous agreement reached that the bin lorries would attend to waste collection first thing in the morning from the High Street, as they were mainly responsible for traffic being held up around the inroads to the town. He expressed concern that lives could be lost if emergency vehicles were unable to reach anyone requiring their attention.

Councillor McAteer agreed and advised that he had also raised his concerns regarding traffic problems within the town. He had learned that there were only 2 waste vehicles to cover the whole of the Borders – one of which was deployed for the Hawick route and the other the Galashiels route, which was the main fundamental issue. A time slot was allocated to the Hawick vehicle, which could not be changed, as on finishing in Hawick it was then deployed to cover the Jedburgh area and other parts on route. He had been advised and had witnessed the waste lorry cutting off up by the Town Hall and looping round and down O'Connell Street which was a process used to apparently ease traffic flow. This clearly did not work and the problem of only having two waste vehicles needed to be addressed by SBC.

This vehicle issue and traffic flow was compounded with the Flood Protection works ongoing within the town and diversionary traffic management in place. The level of traffic and the chaos resulting, particularly on Fridays, were intolerable.

It was discussed at HCC August meeting of exploring the prospect of having temporary lights situated at the Morrisons Roundabout which could help traffic flow. Marion Short reported on it taking 25 minutes to drive from Heronhill to the Morrisons Roundabout, and that it was quicker to walk that route than to drive. Drivers also needed more education on driving with courtesy, particularly at roundabouts.

It was noted that drivers were also performing dangerous U-turns in favour of using outlying country roads. There also remained concerns at the level of traffic going through the Terraces to avoid long waiting times and resultant damage recently caused in Dalkeith Place and the Killinghouse Brae.

It was agreed that all parties, including HCC, write to the Roads Authority advising the traffic issues were unacceptable within the town, not helped by the lack of numbers of waste disposal vehicles and times of waste pick-up on the High Street. In addition, the diversionary traffic management in place for ongoing Flood Protection works should be cited as a contributory factor as well as raising the proposal for installation of some temporary traffic lights at Morrisons roundabout.

It was noted that Councillor McAteer had copied the latest email he had received from SBC to the secretary on this matter.

- (b) Information Boards installed by McLaughlin & Harvey - French Wight raised the Flood Protection Information Board, with no information on it, which had been erected on the Station Bridge on an unsightly concrete slab. It was considered that this Notice Board had not been finished off properly and Councillor Ramage agreed to progress this matter with McLaughlin & Harvey.

Duncan Taylor advised that there were more than one of these temporary Notice Boards and he had already contacted Yvonne Gilfillan two months previously regarding information. He did not think there would be further aesthetic works carried out.

- (c) Meeting re tidying of TLC/Dovemount Roundabout - Marion Short reported on a further very successful and productive meeting, along with Councillors Ramage and Marshall, with Bear Scotland regarding the TLC/Dovemount Roundabout. Inroads were being made for a Christmas Tree to be cited there. There had also been agreement that the bushes between the two bridges would be removed. The next meeting with Bear Scotland would be held in October, exact date to be notified.
- (d) Loose Drain Cover at Sandbed - Keith Irving reported a loose drain cover at the Sandbed area at its junction with Buccleuch Street. Each time a vehicle went over this drain cover, it was very noisy and must be of nuisance to residents in the area.

10. Reports from sub-committees

- a) A7 Action Group – Marion Short had been requested to raise again the request from a Parkdaill resident to have the traffic from the Dunk corner to Parkdaill slowed. It was now too long since this was raised.

Councillor McAteer reiterated his comments made at previous meetings, and that the 40mph consultation had been completed, processes were now concluded, and everything was in hand, possibly within the next two weeks, for signage to slow traffic to be erected. These signs may initially be covered. All residents had been kept fully up to date. He concurred that it had been and remained frustrating that there had been no timetable of dates in place however this having been an issue for years, he was

confident now that Bear Scotland would progress on their promises imminently. The road layout remained dangerous and would not be resolved but signage would assist until an engineering solution could be reached on road layout.

French Wight advised that a zoom meeting of the A7 Action Group had been held 2 weeks previously. Both the Secretary and Treasurer had entered their resignations. He raised the group's concerns that a multitude of persons/councillors/groups appeared to be trying to progress on issues previously addressed through this A7 Action Group. This was causing confusion and things appeared to be fragmented, and he considered was not working to good effect. More cohesion was required to either allow the A7 Action Group to address all issues or otherwise a decision should be made on whether the Group should now become obsolete.

Until works were carried out to road layout, like what had happened after a number of years of waiting at Dirtpot Corner in Peebles, incurring expenditure into the millions, this dangerous corner at the Dunk would remain an issue.

- b) Summer Market – Marion Short referred to her report in the previous week's Hawick Paper. Members were delighted with how the Summer Market had gone. The weather had been kind and volunteers attending had to be thanked for their amazing efforts. All in all, a very successful day.

Use of Income from Stallholders' fees & Awards to 4 charities from Raffle – The HCC members agreed to increase funds generated at the Summer Market from the raffle of £928.50 to £1,000, to allow each of the 4 named charities to be awarded £250 each. Similarly, a small amount would also be added to the fees generated from stallholder fees, after payment of gifts for use of vans, and fee for Market Traders Licence, to allow an award of £200 and £50 respectively to Hawick Youth Rugby and the Ancient Order of Mosstroopers Club for their assistance with erection and dismantling of gazebos at the Market.

- c) Christmas Event – It was noted that 37 stallholders had expressed interest in attending the Christmas Market to be held from 10am to 4pm on Saturday, 4th December. 26 stalls would be placed in Oliver Place and 11 within Oliver Crescent. There were some difficulties in acquiring gazebos to accommodate 37 stalls, especially as some other town's events were taking place the same day, and it may be that an application would again be made to the Common Good Fund for purchase of additional gazebos. These would of course be made available and shared with other community groups requiring these.

Volunteers would be required on the day from 6.30am for erecting gazebos, given the high number of stalls, and an approach would again be made to Hawick Youth Rugby etc. Any Councillors or other members of the public were encouraged to volunteer. The Chair reported that a minimum of 4 teams of 8 volunteers would be required.

Councillor McAteer reported that Upper Teviot & Borthwick Water had agreed to donate their Foundation Scotland monies (approx. £2.5k) for use by HCC and this could perhaps accommodate part purchase of additional gazebos required. It was considered around 6 gazebos would be required.

The Chair advised it was also hoped to have entertainment on the day like that held 2 years previously, and once responses from all performers had been received, a final

decision would be made on whether this would proceed. It was agreed that having entertainment did attract additional numbers attending on the day.

There was a need for 5 applications to SBC for various licences, road closures etc to be made by the Vice-Chair.

It was agreed that HCC members would repaint/repair Christmas trees and snowmen on Monday, 20th September 2021.

- d) Hawick Common Good – nothing to report as no further meeting held.
- e) Hawick in Bloom – The Secretary reported that a meeting of volunteers had been held the previous Tuesday, the first since 20th August 2020. The principal item was to agree winter planting requirements and following agreement, the order had now been placed and delivery of plants would be on 12th October 2021.

Two planters would require to be replaced and costs had been sought from the Men's Shed.

Allars Crescent would be a project for completion this winter/early 2022. Some works to the right-hand side of this area had been carried out with some perennials planted along with bedding plants. A plan was being prepared by one of the volunteers to include the whole of this area with perennial planting as this required less maintenance and ongoing costs.

- f) Wind Farms – Consultation on Teviot Wind Farm had been carried out in Hawick the previous week.

The Chair reported that he had attended and found this consultation to be very informative. In relation to wind turbines transportation, the preferred option appeared to be Option 1 which would mean no turbines travelling through Hawick, whereas the other options 2 and 3 would mean these being transported through Hawick. Jamie Leslie and Carol Douglas had intimated they would be happy to attend the next HCC meeting to report on outcomes of the consultation.

Keith Irving circulated a photograph of wind turbines being buried, indicating a not so green ethos being displayed by those Wind Farm owners.

- g) Tour of Britain – Keith Irving reported that this event had gone very well. The flags and jerseys would be taken down on Sunday, 19th September, which date had been organised to allow these to remain in situ for the Vertish Hill Sports.

There had been a good turnout of support from the townsfolk and visitors alike. TV coverage within the town could have been better, with signal difficulties from Arthur's Seat being the cause for disrupted coverage.

There were 58 jerseys produced and there was a decision to be made on where these would end up. They may be kept for future events and decoration purposes. Team shirts could be given to the schools sponsoring.

There were two shawls produced by the Hawick School of Textiles spearheaded by Alistair Young. One had been presented to the 2nd in command of the Tour by the Provost, along with Keith Irving. The other, produced in cashmere, was used by

Margaret Brown who was in the Hawick Cycling without Age trishaw along with her granddaughter and part of the parade. These shawls may be auctioned at some stage.

Councillor McAteer complemented HCC and the other volunteers and Keith in particular, for picking up the challenge of decorating the High Street and all the work which had been carried out associated to this.

Finally, Keith advised that there was a greeting meeting of Hawick Cycling Club the following evening to assess how the event had gone and it may be that some sort of Cycling Club event could follow on from this Tour in future years.

11. Updates from Community Partners

- (a) Foundation Scotland - Nothing to report.
- (b) Future Hawick (FH) – in his absence, the Chair read out a report from Brian Bouglas, Future Hawick. Future Hawick had a meeting that night on gaining Development Trust Status, which would assist with securing grant funding more readily; Re-wilding of Killinghouse Brae was ongoing, and FH were in discussion with SBC regarding further rewilding on the A7 banking at Wilton Hill/Burnfoot and on Weensland Road; FH were awaiting a Feasibility Study Report on the Liberal Club; Pavement Hall of Fame, FH were in discussion with SBC and seeking quotes to create a trail of engraved slabs along the High Street depicting people who have made a difference to Hawick; new hardware and software had been purchased for the FH office and they would soon have wi-fi available for users of their office space; FH were in the early stages of working with the Town of 1000 Trails Group in creating a Town App bringing together all town information to benefit visitors; Cohesive working of all community groups – FH advocated a meeting of all community groups should take place twice yearly to outline each group’s proposals, assist each other when required, and this could also prove beneficial to gaining grant funding; Welcome Hosts – requests from campervan owners were ongoing regarding the sluice, and Marjorie McCreadie was looking for clarification on designated parking for camper vans post flood protection works; St Leonard’s Park Project – the Business Plan was progressing slowly and the steering group had met and had under discussion the infrastructure and positioning of proposed buildings at the Moor; Continuation of cycle path from Greenhill to Hawick – FH had received support from Ashkirk and Selkirk CCs however Sustrans would not be considering any projects until early 2022.

Members noted the report from FH.

- (c) T & L Area Partnership - Community Fund 2021/22 – The Fund A was proposed to open wef 1st October 2021 with a closing date of 12th November 2021 – to be confirmed. Upper Teviot & Borthwick Water had recommended that their share of the pot be awarded for use by HCC.
- (d) Williestruther Boardwalk Improvements – Marion Short expressed thanks to Matthew Thomson, farmer, for allowing easier access through his fields with materials and onto the boardwalk.

Marion reported that there had been 2 campervans located at the car park at Williestruther and wondered if the Common Good could arrange for new signage to prevent any overnight parking at this location. Councillor Turnbull agreed to progress.

French Wight reported that Criminal Justice personnel were now back on site and some lengths of boardwalk had been laid. Hard core was being sourced for gravel pathways.

French advised that he had contacted Frank Scott, SBC regarding canoeists using the loch, despite previous drownings having occurred there. This loch was dangerous and should not be used for such purposes. French had requested signage from no swimming and no boating to include no canoeists and members suggested also that no paddle-boarders should also be included. French had also asked for life-saving equipment at this location to be updated.

Councillor McAteer suggested, given the imminent dangers, that Frank Scott be requested for an urgent report on progress with this matter.

12. Planning Issues – There were no planning issues for consideration.

13. Correspondence –

- (a) Email from Carol Douglas, Muirhall Energy – the Chair reported that an email had been received from Carol Douglas offering support to HCC for funding of additional Christmas Lights. Following discussion, members had agreed not to accept this funding at the present time, given its role as an elected body and official consultee responsible for ensuring the views within our community were presented and heard on Teviot Wind Farm. This role could not be compromised in any way.

14. A.O.C.B –

- (a) The Chair reported that Hawick's Core Paths had received their 2nd cut.
- (b) The Chair reported that the defibrillator outside the Town Hall had now been returned after use by Police Scotland. Once new pads had been fitted, and the defibrillator cleaned, it would be returned to its cabinet.
- (c) The Chair referred to an email issued that day to HCC members regarding the SBC Network AGM to be held on 29th September 2021 at 7pm within the Men's Shed, Kelso. Wilson George and Jim Adams agreed to attend along with the Chair.
- (d) It was noted from French Wight that Acreknowe Reservoir was shrinking, and this was because water was being pumped into Alemoor. Dog owners should be aware of sinking mud around this area.
- (e) Euan Welsh showed a photograph of overgrown hedging at the bottom of Churchill Road. Councillor Ramage advised she was aware of this issue and was given the photo to progress with SBHA, the authority considered responsible for resolving this.
- (f) Water at Lovell Court – Councillor Turnbull advised that the issue was in hand to be resolved by Eildon Housing Association imminently.
- (g) Councillor McAteer raised the matter of the memorial to Fred Douglass. The Common Good Fund had granted £5000 in May to Borders Against Racism Group for this project however were less inclined to support under the Borders Against Racism banner and had sought assurances that the name would be reviewed to reflect a more Hawick focus. Despite attempts to engage further with Borders Against Racism, they had gone silent. Councillor McAteer stated we would not want this project to fail as his work is of great significance to Hawick. SBHA had agreed to fund a plaque at the location of his public address. He wondered if HCC would be able to pick up on this to see if it could be progressed. Marion Short requested that Councillor McAteer forward information to the Secretary.
- (h) The Chair congratulated HCC member Euan Welsh on his entry to Queen Margaret's University in Edinburgh and wished him well with his studies.

- (i) Keith Irving reported that he had approached Sustrans for additional monies for paths at the top end of Wilton Lodge Park to be made legal for cycling purposes. He had had a meeting with the engineers from SBC on this and their response was awaited.
- (j) Councillor McAteer advised in conjunction with Sustrans, he wished it to be made known that he and his fellow Councillors fully supported the proposal for a new bridge linking Weensland to Mansfield and was aware of a petition having been launched in this connection. It was noted that this request had been ongoing for some considerable number of years and Councillors were fully representing the views within the town.

15. Date of Next Meeting – It was agreed that the next meeting of HCC would be held on **Monday, 11th October 2021 at 6.30pm within the Lesser Town Hall.**