
Hawick Community Council



MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

held on Monday 10th January 2022 at 6.30pm via Zoom

Present:	Cameron Knox (Chair) Jim Adams (Treasurer) John Campbell Duncan Taylor John Wilkinson	Marion Short (Vice-Chair) Margaret Hogg (Secretary) Wilson George Euan Welsh
Attending:	Councillor McAteer Councillor Ramage Councillor Turnbull	Councillor Marshall Councillor Richards

There was one member of the public in attendance, along with Graham Ford, reporting for the Hawick Paper.

- 1. Chair's Opening Remarks** – The Chair welcomed everyone to the January HCC Meeting and hoped that they had had a great festive season despite restrictions. We were back again to having this meeting via zoom just when we were getting used to meeting face-to-face again, however it was business as usual albeit virtually.

It was noted that the Hawick Paper and HCC would be recording the meeting for reporting and minuting purposes.

- 2. Declarations of Interest** – The Chair advised that if any members had a conflict of interest in any agenda items, they should please make it known at the start of the discussion.
- 3. Apologies for Absence** – Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of HCC members Alan Wear, French Wight, Keith Irving, and Braden George.
- 4. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of 13th December 2021** – The previously circulated Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting – Proposed by Duncan Taylor and Seconded by Jim Adams.
- 5. Matters arising – Queen's Platinum Jubilee – Sunday, 5th June 2022** – The Chair proposed an event be held around the Bandstand area on this date. With Christmas and New Year now over, he suggested that HCC members meet via zoom on Monday, 17th January at 6.30pm. This was agreed by members attending.

He advised that SBC grant funding was now open for applications from £1,000 up to £2,500 available. The Chair had also contacted Burnfoot Community Council to determine whether they were planning an event themselves or whether they wished to join in HCC plans for Wilton Lodge Park. A response would be forthcoming once the Chair of BCC had discussed

this with his Community Council members. He had also contacted Michael Bruce of Hawick Scout Pipe Band who had confirmed the band would be available and that they were learning a new pipe tune specifically for the Queen's Jubilee which was considered would be ready for that date.

Place-related training through SBCCN – The Chair confirmed that he had written to SBCCN regarding this training which he understood to be up and running for Selkirk and Eyemouth CCs, and a response was awaited as to when this training would be held for HCC members.

Trees Issues – The Secretary had written to SBC and a response had been received from John Curry agreeing to attend HCC's February meeting with an update on their new tree management policy.

Councillor Marshall reported that trees at Wellfield had also been reported by him to John Curry and Fiona Cameron, Neighbourhood Services Manager, with the latter responding stating that SBC's priority was to make dangerous trees safe. They would then undertake checks of other trees and wooded areas on a priority basis, starting with those in high footfall areas. A visual check would be made of all trees, looking at the root plates for any sign of disturbance and the canopy for damage. These inspections would be scheduled along with other priority work being undertaken. She had instructed Grant Turnbull to carry out an inspection of the trees at Wellfield and it was hoped the issues there would be resolved in early course.

The Vice-chair advised she had emailed Councillors McAteer and Turnbull regarding a fallen tree within the play park at Weensland adjoining the football pitch. This had been lying for some time now. It was agreed that she would contact Fiona Cameron, albeit this had already been flagged by Councillor McAteer.

Councillor Ramage advised of a Members' Briefing to be held by SBC the following day on the new tree policy which would be of interest and an opportunity for Councillors to make comment on. Councillors received a lot of complaints regarding tree management, so this Policy was of particular interest.

Councillor McAteer confirmed that Councillors welcomed this new Policy and the opportunity for everyone to make comment on this, to ensure that this worked and was understandable as responses on issues with trees currently lacked consistency.

Councillor Turnbull advised that the height of trees on Weensland Road blocking light from street lighting was also an issue he had raised. Trees were so thick that in winter especially, lighting was unable to be seen.

John Campbell stated he was glad that all these tree issues had been highlighted and were being progressed.

Wall Plaques – The Secretary had also written to various Clubs regarding maintenance of plaques within their responsibility. Clubs were bringing this to attention of their respective Committees.

T&L Partnership Fund - Reivers Festival - Councillor McAteer confirmed that this was raised with the Executive Member for Finance as part of ongoing budget discussions, and he had been advised of reason to be optimistic that the Reivers may be included in the events plan

in future but not whilst budgetary discussions were ongoing. Councillor McAteer would hopefully get an update in due course.

- 6. Police Scotland Report** – It was noted that these reports had been received the previous day and circulated to HCC members. There were however no crime statistics provided.

The Vice-Chair stated that she was glad to note that on 10th December a fine and penalty points had been imposed for parking on a section of crossing on Hawick High Street. It was gratifying to note that this was now being monitored. She had also noted in the Hawick & Denholm report regarding 2 missing persons incidents, and she wished it noted that training on missing persons had been given to the Resilience Group. This Group was a valuable asset for use, and the Police should be made aware they would be willing to offer their assistance to them in any future such incidents.

Councillor Turnbull reiterated Sergeant Paul Begley's move from Community Policing as mentioned at the last meeting of HCC and advised that from the following day Sergeant David O'Rourke would be moving on from one of the CAT teams and being replaced by Sergeant Jane Harrison. He advised of problems currently being experienced because of absence numbers due to Covid isolations including an effect on police numbers and responses from CAT teams with the latter's staff being seconded elsewhere. A CAT meeting would be held the following day to determine the problems being experienced due to these absences.

The Chair was pleased to see a good result reported on a recent drugs raid on the outskirts of Hawick with drugs seized valued at between £5-15k. It was also good to note no housebreakings within the Hawick & Denholm area in the month.

Councillor Marshall advised of major concerns raised at a recent Hobkirk Community Council meeting on rural crime particularly within the Bonchester and Hobkirk areas. Concerns had been passed to Police Scotland and he was hopeful for a meeting to take place soon with everyone working together towards progressing resolution.

- 7. Treasurer's Report** – the Treasurer reported a closing balance of £21,772.56.

When monies allocated for Williestruther improvements and Bandstand entertainment at Wilton Lodge Park were deducted, this would leave a balance of £10,041.49.

He advised that the HCC1 account would reduce to less than one year's grant taking account of running costs, such as insurance, website, secretarial expenses, and a cost anticipated for the Town Hall defibrillator.

Christmas lights/events account showed just over £2k remaining. This would reduce to c.£1,400 once outstanding expenses were paid as well as the electricity bill, which was usually received around July. With proposals to renew and/or repair existing Christmas lighting and experience of previous costs for this, as well as replacing Christmas trees and snowmen with a more permanent solution, that remaining sum would not likely be sufficient.

Hawick in Bloom Account looked on the face of it to be healthy however expenditure since April amounted to £4k. The Grant from the Common Good Fund would be received in

February for £1,850 but any additional works would see that account under strain, and it would be necessary to seek donations again to supplement this.

Foundation Scotland Funds would be allocated to HCC soon and he considered these funds be used in 2022 for Christmas lights requirements and the Achievements Board at the Tower Knowe.

The Treasurer hoped that his explanations gave a clearer picture of HCC's current financial position.

Duncan Taylor enquired as to how the bill for electricity usage for the Christmas lights was calculated. The Chair explained that he supplied times and wattage to the Electricity Board to allow such calculation. Last year's bill had been £137.

Councillor Turnbull suggested that in addition to Foundation Scotland grant, project costs could be topped up from Wind Farm monies, other fundraising events, or seeking other sponsorship and donations.

Members approved the Treasurer's Report.

8. Public Forum & Town Issues

(a) Fly tipping – the Vice-Chair advised she had put in two Freedom of Information requests to Scottish Borders Council. The first related to fly tipping having read an article in the national media regarding SBC being one of the ten worst performing authorities in Scotland. SBC had 1980 reported cases of fly tipping yet no reports leading to any action having been taken in the last three years. Questions had been raised, including to provide a breakdown of the 1980 cases for each of the 5 areas of SBC, as well as timeframes. Given this being poor publicity for SBC, what steps were being taken to rectify and was there a recovery/enforcement section in place within SBC specifically to undertake this work.

The potential of the Council reducing costs for uplifts of larger household items was also suggested, as a means of reducing fly tipping if uplift costs were more affordable.

An acknowledgement of this request had been received advising that a response would be received within 20 days.

The Vice-Chair went on to advise of fly tipping of large pieces of furniture and black bags at Lovers Lane and asked elected members whether they would take this matter forward or should this be reported by her directly to SBC.

Councillor Marshall advised that fly tipping was illegal and a crime. This caused a blight on the countryside and impacted animals and humans alike. He supported the action of HCC on this issue, and he looked forward to seeing the FOI response from SBC. He advised that the current uplift charge was £41.50 for 5 items, and this was not affordable for many. The costs of Trade Waste Licences he considered should also be reviewed and hopefully would be so during SBC's current budgetary process.

The Vice-Chair expressed her dismay at the mentality of those responsible for fly tipping at Lovers Lane, where a vehicle must have been used for such large furniture to have

been dumped there, when they could as easily have taken this to the Recycling Centre in Mansfield Road, at no charge.

Councillor McAteer agreed with the FOI request and confirmed there was no dedicated post or team at SBC dealing with this waste, but rather this was left to the Police to enforce as a crime. Those choosing to fly tip also did this on private land which did not then allow SBC to uplift, and which then meant the landowners were left to remove and clear-up.

He had regularly had to request uplifts by SBC from Lovers Lane and suggested that more action in terms of signage and police patrols should be put in place. He agreed that this latest fly tipping be reported by the Vice-Chair, and he would be happy to be copied into that correspondence. People also required to be educated that they would not incur costs in using the Recycling Centre for disposals. The timing was good to contact SBC with such requests in terms of the budgeting process.

The Vice-Chair agreed to contact SBC re Lovers Lane and to highlight the discussion, particularly around educating usage of the Recycling Centre at no cost. She would copy Councillors in.

Councillor Ramage suggested it may be appropriate to meet with appropriate officers at SBC and to include representation from HCC as she considered everyone should be working together more proactively towards rectifying this issue rather than Councillors dealing individually with complaints.

Councillor Marshall agreed that landowners were being blighted as well as local RSLs, as areas they owned were also subjected to fly tipping and they should also be brought into wider discussions too. Furthermore, there needed to be serious discussions on recycling, as there was a major issue with glass recycling. With no business collections now in place, businesses were at times attracted to using bottle banks. Car tyres was another issue particularly for farmers whose land these were dumped in.

The Vice-Chair thanked elected members for their input and expressed interest in being part of any group being set up. The Chair suggested that this issue be highlighted in the Hawick Paper.

- (b) Recycling Statistics – The Vice-Chair advised that again following reading in the national media her second FOI request to SBC related to recycling within Scottish Local Authorities. She had noted that in 26 of the 32 Local Authorities, recycling figures had plummeted, and that 42% of households in Scotland recycled, being the lowest percentage of the four home nations. Wales were noted to have performed best.

Five questions had been raised, however four had subsequently been superfluous. The first question had asked whether SBC was included within the 26 authorities (where recycling figures had reduced) or was it included in the minority 6 authorities.

The response received was that SBC was not included in the majority. Their recycling rates had increased, largely due to closure of the Easter Langlee Landfill Site in 2019 which had resulted in waste being pre-treated before going to an Energy from Waste facility.

The Vice-Chair had been pleased to note that SBC was one of the authorities in the minority, and meeting recycling targets, as she had concerns this could have impacted on subsidies. She would copy Councillors into the response.

Councillor McAteer advised he looked forward to the specific detail within the response. He stated that one of his issues was around zero waste, and whilst there was good indication that recycling was happening, SBC sent all its waste to Huddersfield. There was therefore a balanced position to be reached around how this was then managed.

The Chair thanked the Vice-Chair for her good work on these requests.

9. Reports from sub-committees

- (a) A7 Action Group – It was noted there had been no further meetings on which to report. Following last month's meeting, the Chair reminded HCC members that a discussion would be necessary to collate members' views on whether HCC considered that the A7 Action Group was still required after 31 years in its present form or did it require to be reinvented in some other form for the benefit of the A7 users. Responses were required to Marjorie McCreadie by 20th February. An email would be issued to members for their response.

Jim Adams advised that the pathway leading to the Dunk was in poor condition. Councillor McAteer confirmed this was a recurring issue and had been reported to Bear Scotland prior to Christmas and that this was on a plan to be carried out soon. An engineer would attend the following week.

Duncan Taylor confirmed that the A7 Action Group were having success at the present time, and it would be his view to support its continuance going forward, so long as the members on it were similarly supportive.

- (b) Christmas Market – The Vice-Chair confirmed that all gazebos were now dried out and packed away in advance of the Christmas lights etc being taken down the following Sunday. Trees at Trinity Gardens and the Tower had been taken away by SBC that day, with the remaining tree at the TLC roundabout removed to the banking, ready for uplift by SBC the following day, as SBC staff were not permitted to enter the roundabout due to the absence of any traffic management. This tree was removed by two volunteers.

Regarding the condition of the trees and snowmen on the High Street, she considered that a post-Christmas event briefing be held via zoom of HCC members, where discussion on Foundation Scotland funding and use of this could also be aired. The Chair considered that something along the lines of the recent Cycling Jerseys displayed along the High Street and made of a plastic material could be suitably used for replacement trees and snowmen. The Chair agreed to arrange a meeting and to email HCC members.

The Chair reported on competition winners – Hunt the Duck Winner was Tamera Forsyth, Wilton Primary School who had received £25; Snosey the Snowman competition winner was Erin Scott (£10) and runners up Calum Arnott and Flynn Robson (£5 each). They had all stated they had enjoyed partaking in the competitions and looked forward to doing so again next year.

The Christmas Window competition winner was Adams Kitchen who would receive an engraved silver salver and certificate. The runner-up was the Howegate Café with Highly Recommended awarded to Charlie's the Florist, Dorwards and Hendersons Travel.

The Chair advised that the Christmas Lights would be taken down on Sunday, 16th January starting at 9am at the Horse. He appealed for volunteers, especially with ladders, to attend.

He hoped that in 2022, subject to funding, the Christmas lights could be extended to allow completion at the Tower Knowe i.e. from Heart of Hawick to Drumlanrig Bridge as well as the trees at the Sandbed. Further details would be forthcoming once an assessment of the lights had been undertaken and discussions held by HCC members regarding funding.

- (c) Hawick Common Good - John Campbell stated that as reported in the Hawick Paper the previous Friday, new assets had been found. These were Buccleuch and Hawick Bowling Clubs, Common Haugh toilets, the car park at Cross Wynd and the Backbraes Woodland.

Councillor McAteer reported that their recent meeting was about Councillors agreeing the 12-week consultation process around the assets recorded for Hawick Common Good. Hawick was in the best place having commissioned a review of common good assets some years ago and having a comprehensive list of assets, albeit they had been surprised to learn of these additional ones. He advised that there would unlikely be any radical change to how these new assets were managed e.g., on how Clubs would operate, and these would merely be added to the Assets Register as required by the Community Empowerment Act.

- (d) Hawick in Bloom – nothing further to report at present. The next meeting of the group would be held in February 2022.
- (e) Wind Farms – The Chair reported that there had been little movement on Teviot Wind Farm. Muirhall Energy had submitted two Section 36 applications in relation to Hopsrig and Loganhead, adjacent to Crossdykes Wind Farm near Langholm, Dumfries and Galloway. Progress with these applications would be monitored.

10. Updates from Community Partners

- (a) Foundation Scotland - The Vice-Chair confirmed she had submitted the Annual Report for 2021 which had been acknowledged and no queries had been raised. She could not specify what 2022 funding would be but anticipated from previous years that this would be c.£8,800. Decisions would require to be made at the requested post-Christmas event briefing to be held, as the Distribution Plan for 2022 was required to be submitted by mid-February.

Foundation Scotland had been forewarned by the Vice-Chair that 2022 funding may be used for HCC projects.

- (b) Future Hawick – The Chair read out a report from Brian Bouglas, Chair, Future Hawick.

It was reported that Future Hawick now had Development Trust Status and had acquired £15k grant funding from Community Enterprise (Scotland Loves Local) for this and for marketing. Along with match-funding from SoSE, this would help with development of their Town App, which they were now uploading information on, to help locals and visitors alike.

Future Hawick had also been in discussions with Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC), with the hope of bringing community groups in the town together, with cohesion being the goal achieving betterment for Hawick.

A zoom meeting had been organised for Tuesday, 18th January at 6.30pm with representatives from Burnfoot Community Council, Hornshole Greenway, Town of 1000 trails, along with Future Hawick members. Jan Pringle from SoSE would be informing everyone what SCDC could achieve for Hawick. HCC members were also invited to attend.

It was reported that the St Leonard's Park project was progressing slowly, with feasibility studies being undertaken for utilities input, infrastructure, and planning. Future Hawick had obtained funding to appoint a Project Manager to assist and were in the process of securing someone to that position.

Future Hawick had been in discussions with SBC about planting of wildflowers in areas of the town, namely Weensland Road and in Burnfoot. Subject to funding, this work should be completed by the summer.

- (c) Williestruther – In the absence of French Wight, the Vice-Chair reported that she had attended the site recently and had been in contact with French Wight who had been in touch with the Criminal Justice staff. Following previous agreement by McLaughlin & Harvey to supply 20 tons of core gravel, they had unfortunately supplied 20 tons of rubble which had been dumped in the car park. This was unsuitable for use. A letter to this effect had been sent by French Wight to Yvonne Gilfillan of McLaughlin & Harvey. This error had caused a delay in completion, as the rubble would now require to be removed, membrane laid and then the replacement core gravel delivered and put down. The Vice-Chair nevertheless reported she had received favourable comments from other walkers on the Boardwalk extension.

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

12. Correspondence –

- (a) The Chair reported receipt of an email from Frank Booth regarding exhaust pollution. It stated that he had witnessed when passing schools that several drivers sat with their engines running whilst parked and waiting to pick up their children. This happened not only on cold days but throughout the school year. He stated that lungs of children were known to be especially vulnerable to damage from fumes and he felt that action should be taken to reduce that risk, especially near school premises.

He stated that in Edinburgh there were street signs forbidding the running of engines when parked and advised that penalties were applicable under Scottish Law.

He requested that signs be erected in areas such as outside schools, the Common Haugh and other appropriate areas, and asked if HCC would push for this provision.

The Vice-Chair advised that there were ongoing problems with car parking around schools and this had not been able to be suitably resolved, and she questioned asking drivers to turn off car engines when parked, would be adhered to.

Councillor McAteer stated it was worth noting that the Council had a specific executive member whose role was the Environment, and the issue raised affected the whole of the Borders. He suggested that this be routed to the Council for it to consider in a wider context.

HCC Members agreed and the Chair agreed to respond to Frank Booth accordingly. The contact person at SBC was Jenny Wilkinson, Clerk of the Council. Councillor Ramage also suggested Lesley Munro who was dealing with the issue of antisocial parking near schools. The Chair advised that the email would be circulated to HCC Members.

- (b) Distribution of surplus selection boxes to Care Homes/Community Hospital & Burnfoot Community Council - The Vice-Chair reported that she had received a thankyou from the Community Hospital and from Billy Fletcher, BCC for their selection boxes, which they stated had been well received.

13. A.O.C.B –

- (a) Jim Adams raised once again the ongoing issue with dog poo not only within Wilton Lodge Park but now everywhere, and an issue with drivers parking on double yellow lines as well as parked cars half on the road and half on pavements. One car had been parked in Croft Road on double yellow lines for weeks, even before the Christmas Market.

Councillor Marshall agreed these issues and he had reported 4 or 5 vehicles in Burnfoot recently. He had emailed SBC's Environmental Health Department who could follow up on these, and he encouraged that such incidents be reported similarly.

Councillor McAteer referred to cause for concern at comments earlier from Councillor Turnbull who stated that a meeting would be held the following day with the CAT team to discuss how they were being affected by staff absences. The CAT team had been allocated over £250k and employed specifically to deal with these types of issues. If the CAT team were not going to be available, he considered that these issues were only going to get worse.

Legislation on offences around parking on footpaths and pavements was close to completion, however this would not be enforced through the police but through SBC. Long debate required to be had to determine how that would work. With reported lack of enforcement for fly tipping and reduction in CAT team staffing mentioned earlier, when the new legislation was in place to state for example that no-one should park on a pavement, how this would be managed needed to be clarified.

Councillor Ramage advised that when she received complaints regarding antisocial parking, she referred these to the Police. She completely agreed that dog poo was an ongoing problem and there was a lady at SBC who could provide Councillors with information, however it was the dog owners who were simply not listening to the information being given. Irresponsible dog owners were agreed to be the problem.

Councillor Marshall referred to an email he had received from Sergeant Paul Begley before he moved on, in relation to abandoned cars. That email had confirmed that these were the responsibility of SBC.

It was agreed that such type of issues should be reported to SBC Environmental Health directly or to the elected member(s) for the area concerned.

John Campbell referred to past competitions held in the town for the Best Kept Gardens and wondered if such competition could be reinstated. It was noted however that the reason for the competition being stopped related to the same people entering year after

year and other issues with entries being relative to rear gardens and access issues, and in flatted accommodation an inability to easily identify which garden was to be judged.

Councillor Marshall considered that this was worthwhile raising with the local RSLs to determine their interest in running this in partnership with HCC. The Chair agreed to take this forward with the local RSLs.

Councillor McAteer suggested that HCC might want to write to Jill Douglas to recognise and congratulate her on her recent award. The Chair agreed this would be done.

14. Date of Next Meeting – It was agreed that the next meeting of HCC would be held on Monday, 14th February 2022 at 6.30pm.