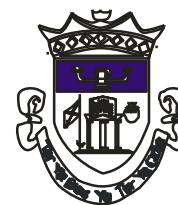

Hawick Community Council



MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

held on Monday 14th February 2022 at 6.30pm

within the Lesser Town Hall, Hawick

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

There were seven members 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 February HCC Meeting and stated after last month's meeting held via zoom, it was great to be back to a face-to-face meeting.

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 member Alan Wear, Councillors Marshall and Paterson and pupils of Hawick High School.
- 4. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of 10th January 2022** – 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** – The Chair reported that Place-related training was discussed at the Teviot & Liddesdale Area Partnership Meeting held on Tuesday, 1st February where it was reported that planning workshops would be held late February/early March. Once dates were confirmed, he would circulate the information to Members wishing to attend.

The Chair confirmed he had contacted Frank Booth regarding the issue raised by him on Exhaust Pollution particularly around schools, and Frank had agreed to contact the relevant SBC Officer to take up this matter.

The Vice-Chair stated following on from the 2 FOI requests discussed at the last HCC meeting, and SBC's responses having been passed on to other HCC members and Councillors, she, and Councillor Ramage had since met with SBC's Ross Sharp-Dent. He had advised his willingness to attend a future HCC meeting to discuss fly tipping and waste management in greater detail. His contact details had been passed to the Secretary to follow up on this for a future meeting.

From the information and graphs provided, the Vice-Chair had noted that food recycling was particularly low in Hawick, with Peebles recycling four times more. The Council perhaps needed to publicise this issue further. In relation to fly tipping, this also required more publicising to advise that the facility at Mansfield was free. In addition, she had enquired as to the possibility of having an "amnesty day" each month to allow all waste to be disposed of at Mansfield, including trade waste as a means of reducing fly tipping.

Councillor Ramage advised that the meeting had been informative, as she had not been aware of the lack of food recycling in Hawick (15%) in comparison to Peebles (60%). The Vice-Chair further advised that 35% of general waste included food.

Councillor McAteer advised that the lack of recycling of food waste had previously been raised by Councillors and the possibility of food waste being collected alongside garden waste. SBC had previously rejected that suggestion. It was his view that this might well be worth raising further. If we were to reintroduce garden waste and allow food waste to be included, he was confident that this would make a big difference in uptake. Other Councils were able to do this.

The Vice-Chair stated that garden waste had been mentioned at their meeting and these types of questions could be raised when Ross Sharp-Dent attended a future meeting. It was not just an SBC problem but a national problem.

Wall Plaques – The Secretary reported that all the Clubs had responded regarding plaques within their responsibility and confirming their duty for maintaining these. Frank Scott, as SBC's Property Officer had advised that he would endeavour to have all plaques looked at and cleaned as necessary prior to his pending retirement.

- 6. Police Scotland Report** – It was noted that whilst there had been Police attendance at the nearby recent Newcastleton CC meeting, yet again there was no police attendance tonight.

The Secretary stated that there had been a lot of successful activity around seizure of drugs of high value in the month, which had to be commended. She also raised her concerns at scammers impersonating Police Officers targeting the Scottish Borders area and suggested that this matter be highlighted to the wider public via our Facebook page.

- 7. Guest Speaker – John Curry, Scottish Borders Council** – due to technical difficulties, it was not possible for Mr Curry's presentation to be heard via zoom, and it was agreed he attend the next HCC meeting for this purpose.
- 8. High School Senior Team Report** – No report presented.
- 9. Treasurer's Report** – the Treasurer reported a closing balance of £21,174.29. He stated that there had not been much in terms of activity during the month – a total of c.£500 was paid out for donations to Hawick Youth Rugby and Hawick High School for their assistance in

erecting and dismantling gazebos at the Christmas Market, and prizes for Christmas competitions, as well as a £93 fee for website administration.

He raised his concern however at an invoice received for annual Insurance through SBC amounting to £527. This figure had more than doubled from the previous year's cost of £211.

The Secretary advised that the risk value of assets within HCC's ownership had been increased last year to account for the purchase of additional Christmas lights and gazebos. She did not consider it to be appropriate however that HCC required to pay insurance for Resilience Equipment within its possession, stating this should be the responsibility of SBC. It seemed that HCC being pro-active in ensuring a good display of Christmas lights and this year planning to add to the number of gazebos, all for the community's benefit, meant that insurance premiums would continue to increase. It was now getting to the stage that the insurance premium would account for one-third of HCC's total grant from SBC which was considered unacceptable.

It was noted that a breakdown of risks costs had been requested from the Insurers and was awaited however SBC's officer responsible for insurance renewals had advised that most of the other Community Councils insured for the standard £5m public liability cover with only a few having risk cover for assets, and at a much lower level than that for HCC.

The Vice-Chair considered that the Community Council was effectively part of SBC under Community Empowerment, and it was unfair that CCs required to pay for any insurance cover. She had had a recent meeting with David Parker, Convener, who stated he was appalled that HCC was required to pay for insurance particularly for Resilience Equipment.

Councillor Turnbull suggested contacting Heather Batsch regarding this matter. The Vice-Chair advised that she along with the Secretary would be attending the next meeting of Scottish Borders Community Councils Network (SBCCN) the following week and would raise this there. Heather Batsch was the secretary of SBCCN and would likely be in attendance.

Councillor McAteer expressed his surprise to hear of this insurance issue, again particularly insurance requirement for Resilience Equipment. He referred to SBC's Community Councils Scheme, which was currently under review, and stated he could not recall seeing anything within that Scheme regarding responsibility on CCs for payment of insurance. Councillors were under the impression that insurance was the responsibility of the Council and thereby also its activities and not for individual Community Councils. A definitive answer should be sought on this.

Members approved the Treasurer's Report.

10. Public Forum & Town Issues

- (a) Contact Centre Opening - The Chair enquired as to why the Hawick Contact Centre located within the Town Hall remained closed for face-to-face business. It was noted only 6 Contact Centres throughout the Scottish Borders were open on a part-time basis whilst larger ones like Galashiels, Selkirk, Innerleithen, St Boswells and Hawick remained closed. Whilst he appreciated works were ongoing in some of the offices in Hawick, he asked Councillors when Hawick Contact Centre would be open again to the public.

Councillor McAteer advised that this would be from 21st February at reduced hours of 10am-12noon and 2-4pm, which was a start. He advised however that many other premises were also working on restricted hours, and this should now be stopped in favour of full-time opening hours.

- (b) CCTV – Wilson George requested an update on this. Councillor McAteer advised that the sensible thing for HCC would be to follow the lead from Newcastleton CC who were prepared to share all the information on the work they had done on their CCTV once they had had the go-ahead and were up and running. Members agreed to await that time. The same offer had been received from Selkirk as well.
- (c) Paving slabs at the Museum and Bandstand – French Wight raised that the special paving slabs laid at these locations, and which had allegedly cost thousands, were breaking up and had holes in them, not helped by recent frosts making matters worse. There were trip hazards. He believed the same problem had happened with similar paving slabs in the Galashiels area which were being lifted for replacement.

Keith Irving stated the area around the fountain had this same issue.

- (d) Parking – Jim Adams referred to the continuing issue of drivers parking on double-yellow lines and cited an example of having been in Bridge Street the previous night at around 8pm and noted only two possible parking spaces being available. At 8.30am the following morning, the same cars remained in situ.

Councillor Turnbull stated that parking issues had been raised with the CAT and referred to a bottleneck of traffic often at the Coffin End of Oliver Place. The Roads Department had been contacted to have double yellow lines reinstated in that area.

Dog Fouling – A member of the public who had returned to Hawick recently to live, expressed his concerns regarding the amount of dog mess particularly along the High Street and his route from home at the Mansfield area. Another member of the public advised that campervanners had stated they were appalled at the state of the High Street with dog mess being the main topic of conversation. The riverside walk from Weensland/Oliver Park to Trinity was another poor area highlighted and concern was raised also regarding disposal of poo bags other than in designated bins. Concern was raised that this walk being closed for the following three weeks would likely result in dog mess moving to the main Weensland Road area instead.

The Chair of Burnfoot CC advised that the same problem prevailed in Burnfoot and they hoped to have dog poo bags made available from shops and the Hub in that area. It was noted that this initiative had previously been trialled by HCC however dispensers had been vandalised and set on fire.

Councillor McAteer agreed that this matter was now way out of hand. He reiterated that £570k per annum was paid for the CAT to deal with dog fouling, anti-social behaviour, car parking etc and unless they gave attention to dog fouling, this problem would continue. He had been advised that if someone reported dog fouling to them and were prepared to provide a statement, they would deal with that, however, that was what the Police did. The CAT required to be on the ground and much more proactive on this issue, otherwise this would only continue to worsen.

It was noted that Alison Grainger was the new Community Sergeant for Hawick, and Councillors would share these issues with her. She was keen to be involved and Councillor McAteer had been heartened that following vandalising of 10 cars recently, this had resulted in the culprit attending Court, which was a good result.

Councillor Turnbull advised that numbers of dogs in the UK had increased by c.3million. He considered that licensing of dogs would allow money generated from that to deal better with this ongoing problem. It was agreed that the dog owners were at fault and not the dogs themselves. Matter should be raised with Ross Sharp-Dent when he attends a future HCC meeting.

11. Reports from sub-committees

- (a) A7 Action Group - Marjorie McCreadie expressed her thanks to HCC for their support for the continuation of this group along with Langholm and Selkirk Community Councils. Oliver Mundell at a meeting held in December, had undertaken to write to all members of the A7 Action Group to explain what had occurred at that meeting. Members were to provide their responses to her to that letter by the deadline date of 20 February 2022. To the best of knowledge, no such letter had been issued and accordingly the other members would be unaware of events. As it was necessary to have full support of all members, matters were currently at stalemate. A meeting of Office-bearers was proposed to be called, where it was hoped to reconstitute the group.

Duncan Taylor agreed that Oliver Mundell had been given the opportunity to write to members for responses and suggested that Marjorie proceed to the next stage of meeting with Office-bearers to determine the way ahead and then to update all members of the group. Marjorie confirmed this meeting would be arranged following the deadline date being reached.

- (b) Queen's Platinum Jubilee Event – The Vice-Chair confirmed this event would be held on Friday, 3 June 2022 at the Civic Space from 2-4pm. She had successfully submitted a funding application to SBC for £1,476.37. There would be a light buffet, cake and soft drinks provided, and flags and balloons distributed to children. A commemorative coin would also be provided to the first 250 primary school children coming forward. The event would replicate a “street party” theme, with two bands playing and everything union jack orientated, e.g., tablecloths, napkins, bunting and balloons.
- (c) Hawick Common Good - John Campbell advised that the interest in running Hawick's Saturday Market was ongoing.

He also referred to the St Leonard's Park Project questioning Councillors how the Moor would be paid for, without income from cars at the Common Riding and queried what the process was for selling off Common Good land.

Councillor McAteer stated that many similar questions were being raised by townspeople. They had enquired of SBC's Chief Legal Officer to provide the Common Good, as trustees, with an explanation of who owned the property, and questions like what effect would this have on the Common Riding, on the farmer who currently leased the land from the Common Good, and how would it be managed and maintained would need answering. The Common Good had granted this Project £10k to carry out a Feasibility Study and that must answer all such questions. This project sounded interesting but much more detailed information was awaited.

Councillor Turnbull stated that public consultation was yet to be held when all questions would need to be raised and answered by Future Hawick's new Development Officer. Councillor McAteer concluded stating that ultimately it would be for the Hawick public to decide following consultation. The selling of common good property was not impossible but nor was it easy to do.

- (d) Hawick in Bloom – The Secretary reported that a meeting of the volunteer members had taken place the previous week, with the main topic to agree summer planting requirements. The members had also discussed having some fundraising events during the year to boost funds. A talk had been provided by a member of Langholm Chilli Club which members had found interesting. Some of the volunteers were now nurturing the free chilli seeds gifted, with a view to these being transplanted into one of Hawick in Bloom's planters. If there was success with growing of the chillies, these would ultimately be available for use by members of the public at no cost.
- (e) Wind Farms – French Wight advised that an application had been submitted for masts behind Tushielaw, adding to the proliferation of wind farms in the Scottish Borders. Whilst not directly in our area, progress with this would be monitored.

Regarding Williestruther, he confirmed works were almost complete. Poor weather had prevented full completion nevertheless what had been done now looked very good.

Keith Irving asked if anything had been said in wind farm discussions about a 200-year-old cottage which had allegedly been knocked down at Teviothead for an access road. Councillor McAteer advised this had been discussed at Upper Teviotdale but not in that strong context.

12. Updates from Community Partners

- (a) Foundation Scotland – The Vice-Chair reported that the Annual Report for 2021 had been submitted and now accepted. Grant funding of £9,598.18 for 2022 would not be used for community grants as in previous years. The Distribution Plan submitted for 2022 detailed funding would be used for provision of 2 new gazebos and associated equipment, which had received approval.

In addition, provision had been made to replace damaged Christmas lights and for extension of these, as well as to provide replacement trees and snowmen on the High Street. Once all costs were known, following an assessment of the Christmas lights and costs obtained for replacement trees and snowmen, these would be added to the Distribution Plan 2022 for approval.

The Vice-Chair went on to advise that applications had also been made to the Teviot & Liddesdale Partnership Fund for a further two gazebos and to City Deal which covered Edinburgh and Southeast Scotland. These applications for more gazebos were necessary given the condition of some gazebos shared within the community.

- (b) Future Hawick - The Chair read out a report from Brian Bouglas, Chair, Future Hawick. The report advised that Future Hawick had held a meeting via zoom on 31st January and would be meeting up with John Lamont, MP soon to update him on their activities. It was hoped that he in turn would update Future Hawick on anything relative to Hawick on their agenda.

It was reported that the Town App was progressing well, with relevant information being uploaded.

Various groups within the Community had recently met with a view to all groups working cohesively together. Another meeting would be arranged soon.

Future Hawick would be spearheading a new Festival of Wellbeing over the weekend 20/21st August 2022, following on from the Festival of Cycling held previously, supported by other local organisations. Meetings would commence the following week.

Funding had been secured from SoSE to award 20 x £500 micro grants for digital enhancement for Hawick. Further details on these grants would be forthcoming soon.

A very successful meeting of Future Hawick representatives, SBC officials, SoSE, politicians and Councillors had recently been held in relation to the St Leonard's Park Project proposals. He reported great interest and support being given by those attending. A Project Manager would be in place in the next two weeks, to help progress with a more professional approach.

Welcome Hosts – Marjorie McCreadie stated she considered the Welcome Hosts brochure for this year would be the best it had been, with continuing great sponsorship support from traders within the town and 14 new sponsors.

Marjorie reported a rally of 14 campervans had expressed interest in coming to Hawick for the Reivers Festival and they would be cited in the new area allocated in the Common Haugh. It was a pity that the sluice remained outstanding.

Duncan Taylor asked if the flood protection group had an information page in their brochure. Many people visiting the town did not know what was all going on. Marjorie reported that McLaughlin & Harvey planned to have information placed in the Welcome Host brochure to advise of their various planned works and the walls etc.

- (c) Teviot & Liddesdale Partnership – The Chair reported that the Pot A and Pot B Community Funds remained open for applications, with a deadline date of 25th February 2022. The sum of £5,833 remained within Pot A and £709 within Pot B. There was currently only one application (from HCC) to Pot A to be adjudicated on.

Duncan Taylor queried if this had been well enough advertised as he continually searched for such funding for other groups he was involved with. The Vice-Chair agreed that the Council tended to keep this quiet, and the Chair advised HCC did its best to advertise through its own website.

- (d) Scottish Borders Community Councils Network – Wilson George advised that the next meeting of this group would be held via zoom on Wednesday, 23rd February 2022. This meeting would be chaired by James Anderson, Eyemouth Community Council.

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

14. Correspondence –

- (a) The secretary advised that a thank you letter had been received from Hawick Youth Rugby for the donation they received for their assistance at the Christmas Market.
- (b) Loan Agreement Write-off Application – The Secretary reported that correspondence had been received in September last year from Hawick Community Energy Group Limited (HCEGL) requesting HCC sign off on a Loan Agreement Write-off application prepared by HCEGL on behalf of HCC. A copy of the Loan Agreement and other documentation had been issued to HCC along with the Write-off application for HCC's signature.

As HCC was not the named Borrower on the Loan Agreement under the Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES), this being between HCEGL and The Energy Saving Trust Limited, responsibility for sign-off by HCC was disputed.

Following guidance sought and received by HCC, HCEGL were written to by the Secretary on two separate occasions but did not accept HCC's position on this, which was that HCC was not the Borrower and only the Borrower could apply for write-off on the loan agreement.

HCC members subsequently had agreed it appropriate to engage a solicitor to act on its behalf. The solicitor corresponded with HCEGL on 11th January 2022 and members were advised at the meeting, that no further correspondence had to date been received from HCEGL. Members would be updated further as appropriate. The Secretary stated it was unfortunate that it had been necessary to engage a solicitor, with associated costs requiring to be paid from its funds, which were supposed to be used to the benefit of our community.

15. A.O.C.B –

- (a) John Campbell queried progress with the defibrillator being reinstated at the Town Hall. The Chair advised that new pads were scheduled to be received imminently, after which the defibrillator would be put back in place.
- (b) John Campbell then asked when the gable ends of the houses affected by the demolition of the old Armstrongs building would be reinstated. Councillor McAteer advised that at a meeting held the previous week, he had been assured that as soon as the Contract for works had been awarded, rendering and roughcast works to the gable ends of the houses would take priority over the proposed garden area works.
- (c) John Campbell requested an update on the Provost's Achievement Awards Board. The Chair advised that he had now secured all recipient names, however, other projects eg Christmas lights and gazebos would take priority for Foundation Scotland funding for 2022. The Board would therefore be on hold presently.
- (d) French Wight expressed his thanks to HCC for provision of new signage at Williestruther which he considered blended well within the environment there.
- (e) The Vice-Chair advised she had been contacted along with Ellen Halliday, Secretary of the Reivers Festival Group, by Yvonne Gilfillan, McLaughlin & Harvey who had been appointed to lead on a new Festival of Wellbeing to be held on Sunday, 21st August 2022 in Wilton Lodge Park. This was an extended brief from the Festival of Cycling held the previous year with a view to encouraging more health, fitness, wellbeing (including holistics) during an inclusive and all-accessible event which would have an array of activities and stalls. The Vice-Chair along with Ellen Halliday had been asked to assist Yvonne with their expertise of markets. It was noted that it was proposed that a bandstand event would also be held on that date.
- (f) The Vice-Chair also proposed that HCC, if acceptable, could hold a "Hustings" event within the Lesser Town Hall for the forthcoming elections. HCC could not Chair this event, but enquiries could be made as to a suitable person who could act as Chair. Duncan Taylor said he thought that Michael Scoular had chaired the previous one.
- (g) The Secretary on behalf of a member of Hawick in Bloom Group, highlighted a forthcoming event being presented by Hawick Music Club on 20th February featuring violinist Andy Sherwood and pianist Jim Letham, as well as an arrangement of the 'Road to Passchendale' by local musician Alan Brydon. She hoped townsfolk would support this event.

(h) The Secretary on behalf of Hawick Common Riding Committee requested members to volunteer their help with forthcoming Common Riding activities. Anyone interested should contact her.

16. Date of Next Meeting – It was agreed that the next meeting of HCC would be held on Monday, 14th March 2022 at 6.30pm within the Lesser Town Hall.