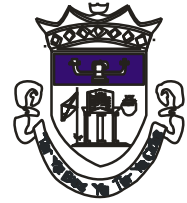

Hawick Community Council



MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

held on Monday 13th February 2023 within the Theatre, Heart of Hawick

Present	Marion Short (Chair) Jim Adams (Treasurer) John Campbell Wilson George Duncan Taylor French Wight	Cameron Knox (Vice-Chair) Margaret Hogg (Secretary) Braden George Keith Irving Euan Welsh John Wilkinson
Attending:	Councillor Ramage Councillor Smart Gillian Douglas, SBC	Councillor Richards Mike Burns, Flood Protection Group

There were 3 members of the public in attendance, as well as Jason Marshall, Hawick Paper.

- 1. Chair's Opening Remarks** – The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologised for the late notice of the change of meeting venue. Grateful thanks went to Ewan Jackson, Live Borders for allowing use of the Theatre at Heart of Hawick at such short notice, when SBC did not honour the booking made for Hawick High School Assembly Hall. She apologised if advertising of the venue change had not reached anyone interested in attending.

The Chair went onto say she was happy to see the painting of the bollards in the High Street had commenced, and it was her opinion that the new colour was certainly more noticeable when parking than the previous black colour. It was queried whether the new blue & gold colour would only be along the High Street, and whether the remainder would remain in black. It was commented that the High Street only was covered by HCC's survey, as it had been previously agreed by other groups within the town to conform to Brunswick Green colouring of remaining bollards and new signage proposed for throughout the town. Councillor Ramage undertook to confirm.

The Chair asked Councillors attending to give consideration to regeneration of our High Street now that Savers Shop had closed, and the closure of M & Co shop being imminent. This was not solely an issue for Hawick, with many other towns within the Borders and across Scotland experiencing similar demise of their High Streets.

Councillor Ramage advised that SBC and Councillors did not have the answers to that, and it would require community input and everyone coming together to work creatively towards finding a resolution for its revitalisation. She mentioned that Melrose had a lot of individual craft shops to attract, however there was not the disposable income in Hawick to sustain that type here.

The Vice-Chair concurred stating that the traditional High Street had now seen demise primarily as a result of increased online shopping. Previously our High Street had grocer shops, bakers, butchers, outfitters, the Store (Co-op) but these were all now unfortunately gone, and even Edinburgh had been badly affected with closures of its larger department stores and was now a shadow of its former self.

The Chair advised the meeting would be recorded by HCC and the Hawick Paper for minuting 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 please make it known at the start of the discussion.
3. **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of HCC Member Kevin Marsh and Councillors Cox, McAteer and Marshall.
4. **Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of 9th January 2023** – The previously circulated Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting – Proposed by Braden George and Seconded by French Wight.
5. **Matters arising** – Litter from Burnfoot Road End up to Appletreehall Road End – Councillor Ramage confirmed that Bear Scotland had been contacted and had responded to advise that this was not their responsibility. SBC had subsequently agreed to attend to this.
Christmas Window Competition – the Secretary confirmed that Certificates to the Winning shop and others had now been distributed with an apology for the delay in their receiving these, due to circumstances outwith HCC's control. The Silver Salver had been engraved and provided to the winner. The invoice for certificates would be forthcoming for payment.
Top-up Tap – It was noted that the Tap location had been confirmed by Scottish Water to be at the junction of Duke Street/Mart Street which would form part of the Active Travel Network under construction. This would require to go through SBC's planning process. It was noted that Kelso were also receiving a Top-up Tap.
6. **Police Scotland Reports – January 2023** – The Chair had noted within the Scottish Borders there had been 26 missing persons enquiries, one of which had received much publicity for a girl missing from the Galashiels area. That number was of concern – with 3 of those being in Hawick & Denholm and 5 in the Hawick & Hermitage area.

It was noted that most of the antisocial behaviour and vandalism cases for Hawick & Denholm appeared to be within the Burnfoot area, albeit there were a number of cases also in Hawick & Hermitage. It was also noted parking tickets were ongoing in the area but the general consensus was that the situation in Hawick appeared no different and parking remained chaotic. The number of disabled spaces also appeared to be on the increase.

The Vice-Chair commented that there were 56 mental health cases in the month, which also appeared high and would undoubtedly cause further strain on police resources available.

7. **Hawick High School Update** – Pupils were unable to attend due to school holidays. Duncan Taylor reported that a Burns Supper had been organised by senior pupils and he thanked them, as well as those from within the Community, such as Michael Aitken, Rotary Club, Burns Club for their input, as well as the Hawick Paper for their great coverage of that event, which had been very successful. He went on to also thank Claire Williams from the

Languages Department for her help and input. This had been the first such Burns Supper event following the pandemic.

That day (13th February 2023) had been the last day for Vicky Porteous, Head Teacher, and Lisa Scott would be Acting Head Teacher until such time as a replacement was put in place.

- 8. Update from Flood Protection Group – Upcoming Traffic Management on Mansfield Road -** Cameron Knox declared his interest in this agenda item, as an employee of Marsh & Riddell, Contractor working on behalf of the Flood Protection Group.

The Chair welcomed Mike Burns, Senior Project Manager accompanied by Gillian Douglas, SBC to present to the meeting.

Mike advised he would provide a brief update on the progress of the Scheme and its current position and what had happened since Christmas time, and secondly traffic management proposed for Mansfield Road which had closed that day for 3 months. He said ideally the update would have been provided prior to that closure but that had not proved possible.

At the outset, he stated the Scheme remained on programme and on budget. They were very much on target for completing the flood defences by September this year. There had been a full two-week shut down over the Christmas period when construction works had completely ceased, however stated everyone would remember on 29th and 30th December, flooding had come very close with the river rising to 2.8 metres. Flood defences in place (almost 70%) had however worked exactly as they should have done, allowing his team to focus on areas where defences were still in progress or incomplete, with minor overflow at the bottom end of Mansfield Road.

He went on to report a very busy year ahead. The river environment would be worked on from May to September as in previous years. Pre-Christmas, the new pedestrian footbridge linking Weensland with Mansfield had successfully gone through planning and that bridge would be delivered next year.

Two works contracts were currently being worked on in parallel. One with McLaughlin Harvey and the other with SBC Contracts, who over the last 6 months had completed works from the Volunteer Park up to the A7 south end of town and who would now be working for the next 18 months on the Waverley Walk delivering on Active Travel Network structure and the footbridge mentioned.

The next newsletter would be distributed next week throughout the town, and that focused on Mansfield Road and project artworks across the town. In the next quarter, progress would be on the glazing panels being installed to fill the gaps across the town. It was highlighted by Councillor Ramage that a panel already installed appeared to be shattered at the Common Haugh.

Regarding traffic management on Mansfield Road, whilst it had never been the intention to close off Mansfield Road, piling activity along the length of that road from the Treatment Works to the Hamilton Road roundabout (Phase 2) had proved challenging and they were unable to drill that piling to its required depth. The design had therefore required to be tweaked and to accommodate that meant the construction of the footprint of the road had turned out to be more onerous than envisaged and required the closure of that Phase 2 section of road. A slide was shown which split Mansfield Road into 3 Phases – Phase 1 would

not require any closure, Phase 2 required closure from 13th February until 19th May (14 weeks) with diversions through Burnfoot. There were already traffic calming measures previously installed in Burnfoot, with a 20mph speed limit in place. They had now installed two pedestrian operated crossings at the Post Office and opposite the Burnfoot Hub, with a view to mitigating and making things as safe as possible for pedestrians during the increase in traffic through that area. They would also look to minimise their own construction vehicles coming through Burnfoot.

Phase 3 – that was the last 100 yards towards the Hamilton Road roundabout - there would be a traffic lane created and it was hoped that those works would be carried out during the same period as Phase 2 works.

That concluded the presentation and questions were then raised as follows:

Keith Irving asked if there were any proposed changes to signage at Hornshole Bridge and had Sat Nav been informed so that large HGVs in particular were discouraged from crossing that Bridge?

Councillor Ramage responded to confirm that SBC had undertaken to contact Sat Nav companies to divert vehicles from using Hornshole Bridge and to use the other main routes but that had been ongoing for some time. It was noted that signage at that location had been tweaked however SBC were aware of other signage required e.g., exiting Hamilton Road and other signage would be tweaked or installed once all works in that area were bedded in.

French Wight commented on the glass panels being inserted and asked about responsibility for cleaning of these following completion of the project. Mike advised that this would be part of the hand-back to SBC and it would be for them to take on responsibility for cleaning these panels and indeed for the whole Scheme itself.

French continued in relation to the Common Haugh, there was a big gap where the flood gate was sited. The path there had been paved except for 15-20 ft which would have benefitted from being temporarily paved, rather than pedestrians currently having to walk to the Cobble Cauld and back down again to access the bridge. The response was that water testing of the flood gate would be carried out at the end of March, and once that testing had been completed, the flood gates would be opened, allowing easy access to the bridge.

Keith Irving reported on two metal panels - one on the road and one on the pavement and another plastic panel on the pavement which had a kink in it. He had witnessed a lady tripping on the plastic one. This feedback was welcomed, and it was confirmed this would be investigated immediately and rectified.

The Chair reported she was aware that a similar presentation had been provided to Burnfoot Community Council and she wondered about any feedback from Burnfoot residents, given the impact of the 3 months closure particularly for those residents. Gillian Douglas advised that she had attended Burnfoot Community Council meeting where everyone there were positive on the measures put in place to mitigate impact however now that the closure had been put in place that day, it may be that complaints or issues would now be forthcoming. The Community Action Team would be monitoring safety concerns, and a letter had been issued to all the pupils at Burnfoot Community School with advice on safety as well.

The Chair wondered if it were a “double whammy” with the closure of Mansfield Road and at the same time the Waverley Walk. Councillor Ramage confirmed that she had attended the presentation at Burnfoot CC and it was indeed a case of waiting to see how matters panned out in terms of road safety of children in Burnfoot with the closure of Mansfield Road, however pointed out that part of the Waverley Walk was actually open now which was good.

Mike advised that there remained around 5 or 6 weeks of construction to go at Waverley Walk. They would not be able to complete works to tie in at the Leisure Centre end which interfaced with the A7 due to fiddly construction works required. It was recognised that having the A7 south onto the roundabout as a single lane was not ideal but that tie in would just require to wait until these works were completed.

Concerns were raised regarding affects to businesses at the foot of Mansfield Road as well as access to the recycling centre. Gillian Douglas confirmed Conor Price was reviewing this. There remained access to that area, albeit it was recognised through taking a much longer route than previously as a result of Mansfield Road closure.

The Chair thanked Mike and the team for their presentation and it was agreed that the presentation slides would be forwarded to the Secretary for distribution to Members.

- 9. Treasurer’s Report – January 2023** – The Treasurer reported an opening balance of £24,901.88, with expenditure for Williestruther Improvement Works totalling £5,564.40 and payment to Ryan Paterson, Electrician for £1,008.58 for Christmas Lights works. £400 had also been paid to Hawick Youth Rugby for their help with gazebos at the Christmas Market, £50 for Hunt the Duck competition forms and £9 for engraving of the salver to the winner of the Christmas Best Dressed Window Competition. An invoice for the printing of Certificates for that Competition was awaited. £50 had also been paid to Future Hawick which was an annual payment for use of their premises for meetings and £177.28 paid towards the cost of First Response training for a member of the Resilience Group. Income in the month was £36.54 in respect of Bank Interest. This resulted in a closing balance of £17,679.16.

The Treasurer further explained that c.£4.5k of the balance of £7,834.31 on the HCC1 account was ringfenced; Hawick in Bloom account had a balance of £5,243, which appeared healthy, however plants in 2022 amounted to c.£4.5k so that was not really the case particularly given the consideration, yet to be discussed, on reintroduction of hanging baskets; and finally, £2,354 of the balance of £3,718.99 was ringfenced for purchases on new Christmas lights from the Foundation Scotland account.

The Chair confirmed with the ever-rising cost for plants for Hawick in Bloom, together with the ongoing need to pay for an electrician as well as running costs for the Christmas Market event, it had been discussed to transfer funds from HCC1 to those accounts, in order to help sustain those activities. There was further uncertainty in these times, to assume electricity costs for powering of our Christmas lights would also be sustainable to shopkeepers to continue to pay these in future.

The Treasurer’s Report was approved by Members.

10. Public Forum & Town Issues:

- (a) CARS Legacy Project – The Vice-Chair advised he had been in communication with Sarah Altrock, Project Officer regarding a high-level gutter clean and maintenance along our High Street. CARS were wondering if HCC, alike to Jedburgh CC, would be prepared to take a

lead on this project. There would be no cost or expense to HCC as all costs incurred would be paid through the CARS Scheme. A CARS Steering Group Meeting would be held the following Wednesday, when more detailed information would be forthcoming which could be reported back to HCC thereafter.

The main aim of the CARS Scheme was to maintain traditional buildings along our High Street (built pre-1919) and within the Hawick Conservation Area from the Baptist Church to the Sandbed. There was a significant amount of money available within the Scheme to be spent and owners and shopkeepers within this conservation area were asked for their buy-in to this Scheme.

It was noted that the poor condition of the gutters had long been of concern to HCC members involved in the erection of Christmas lights and the impact those conditions were having on the lifespan of our lights. Urgent works on guttering were indeed needed.

It was considered that HCC's involvement would be to front face and be responsible for governance of the Scheme. Further information would however be forthcoming from the next meeting. CARS had already been involved with other shop frontage and other improvement works on the High Street, which had gone well.

Members agreed in principle to lead on this project, subject to more information on what that role exactly entailed being clarified following the next CARS meeting. The Vice-Chair would provide this feedback.

- (b) A Way Forward for Hawick Meeting - The Secretary reported that she along with the Vice-Chair had recently attended a meeting of a newly formed Group at Mansfield Rugby Club, along with representatives of many other groups within the town. This Group was seeking to include every non-profit organisation in Hawick (currently c.210) to work together for the betterment of the town. Each Group had been categorised into specific sub-groups such as Culture, Arts & Crafts, Education, Sport, Religion and so forth.

The Group were looking to build on the Mapping & Place-making workshops which had been held in the town over the last year. The Group would initially be facilitated by the Honorary Provost, and outcomes would be widely reported on via the media, including social media for total transparency.

There was a consensus from those attending that meeting, that the concept of working together was a good idea to determine what our priorities were and what was best for Hawick rather than having that dictated to us. In principle everyone was positive, and we were tasked to review the list of groups identified to ensure every group would be represented. There would be another meeting of the Group held on 1st March in the Town Hall, in conjunction with SBC, but this Group would lead on that meeting. This would be open to anyone wishing to attend.

Councillor Smart concurred that the meeting had been very positive. Duncan Taylor asked if there would be a Town Board or Town Team formed, which had been spoken about, and it was considered that in course there may be such a Board or Team formed with responsibility for progressing on agreements reached, however what that Group might look like or be named had not yet been confirmed.

- (c) Town Clean-ups – The Chair advised of two proposed clean-ups. One, spearheaded by Suzanne Rennie, was for a litter-pick and tidy around the Slitrig Crescent area and planting of new plants, under the guidance of Jake Coltman, within the gardens there. The other

was a litter pick and tidy around the Pump Track area at Wilton Lodge Park, being organised by Kevin Mitchell.

The Chair had hoped it might have been possible to co-ordinate all of the different area tidying on the same day as the one proposed to be held by Hawick Community Council, albeit a date had not yet been set for that. Following discussions, however, it was noted that the tidy at Slitrig Crescent would proceed on 12th March. Regular monthly clean-ups of this area would follow, and a specific group had been set up to allow this. Suzanne Rennie had stated it may be possible to co-ordinate their next monthly tidy with the HCC spring clean date, when that was determined.

The tidy of the Pump Track was scheduled for 22nd April. Keith Irving advised that this was to coincide with events happening in May and coinciding with each other. There had been a request to erect an Expo Village as well, and he requested permission for use of HCC's gazebos for these events, which was approved.

Braden George advised that Hornshole Greenway were also planning a tidy, and that this was in conjunction with the Big River Clean up.

The Chair welcomed the involvement of other groups and had noted arrangements were in hand for assistance with the provision of litter pickers, black bags and uplift of rubbish. It was noted there had been previous issues with litter pickers with those being handed out unfortunately not always being returned. The Chair advised that these groups may wish to consider applying to the Area Partnership Fund for purchase of their own supply of equipment to help with these tidy-ups. SBC no longer provided litter pickers.

It was considered that it would probably be more beneficial to have separate dates for tidying up various areas, as this could have benefits in availability of resources to help.

It was suggested that HCC's tidy coincide with ensuring the town was tidy for the Common Riding. The Vice- Chair advised that this was normally held prior to Easter, albeit the Easter holiday was earlier than normal. The Chair would determine a couple of dates for consideration and revert to HCC members to see which best suited.

Marjorie McCreadie requested information on the events being held and referred to by Keith Irving, as this would benefit for inclusion in the Welcome Hosts Brochure. The Brochure would be going to print on 28th February. Any other events happening should also be notified for inclusion. Keith to advise Marjorie accordingly.

- (d) King's Coronation – SBC had issued a survey to HCC and other CCs asking if they had any proposals to mark this occasion. The response was that HCC could not hold any commemorative event without funding and members would require to agree if there was appetite to do so. Any event would mimic that held previously to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Councillors advised that a decision would be taken at an SBC meeting on Thursday, 16th February whether the provision of £50k funding to Community Councils would proceed or otherwise.

The decision by HCC would depend on the outcome of that meeting on provision of funding.

The Coronation itself would be held on Saturday, 6th May, however any HCC event would likely be held on the public holiday, Monday, 8th May 2023. The cost of holding the Queen's Jubilee Event was thought to be in the region of £1,400.

- (e) Wilton Lodge Park – Jim Adams raised the general untidiness of the Park and believed staff resources may be the issue with one Parks Department staff member on sick leave. There appeared to be no back-up to maintain his work. Tidying of leaves seemed to be the main issue in adding to general untidiness.
- (f) Derelict Buildings - Duncan Taylor advised a member of the public had contacted him regarding children again on top of the derelict N Peal building. This had been reported on many occasions previously and Councillors were requested to make contact with the appropriate parties to have this building once again properly secured. Councillor Ramage advised that SBC Officers had been inspecting derelict buildings across Scottish Borders, and she would contact John Curry, Director to arrange for security again of that building.

John Wilkinson advised that he had recently had to empty the old Glenmac building in Cross Wynd of at least 30 children. They had also been causing havoc at the Town Hall Vaccination Centre and staff there had contacted the Police to attend. The kids had by then disappeared but he reported the issue of his having to remove them to the Police, who stated they knew who the kids were. Since that incident, the premises had been semi-secured but a representative of SBC who had subsequently attended, had advised him that they only assumed responsibility for the first level of the building, with the remainder being down to the owners to manage. That building had been set on fire previously and that could easily happen again.

It was suggested that there was perhaps a lack of activities for the children to engage in within the town. It was stated however that from c.210 groups previously mentioned in the town, surely children could find something to do from within them. In reality it was argued possibly only around 10 of those would be suitable for kids.

- (g) Speed Signs - John Campbell considered the number of speed signs now in place from the Galalaw roundabout into town showing 40mph and then 30mph followed by 20mph signs, was a waste of money. He also queried the proposal of a one-way system for Duke Street however was advised that HCC had made comments on that proposal to SBC for their consideration
- (h) Emptying of Bins/Fly tipping - French Wight advised that every bin from the Cobble Cauld down was full to overflowing and sought to have SBC recognise that more regular emptying was required in order to keep the area tidy. Things did not appear to be getting any better. It was thought these were supposed to be emptied every Tuesday and Friday. The Chair advised she had once again reported a bin on the riverside walkway from the Bridge at Johnstons down to Weensland which was also found to be full and rubbish was now being dumped to the side of this bin.

Councillor Ramage said that the issue of emptying bins in the Common Haugh area had been previously reported on numerous occasions and the issue unfortunately remained however she would take forward again.

Councillor Smart advised she was aware of a fund to replace bins previously removed or vandalised and she would be happy for anyone to notify her of any bins that had been removed or taken away for whatever reason and had not been replaced. She would then seek replacement through this fund.

It was noted that a bed, mattress and headboard had been lying albeit tied against the fence outside flats on Weensland Road for at least the last 10 days. It was noted that 4 x 3-piece suites had been witnessed as deposited outside Beattie Court and another suite and fridge freezer deposited at Lovers Lane.

- (i) Saturday Market - French Wight asked if there was any movement on the Saturday Market resuming. Councillor Ramage confirmed that the one interested party had intimated there was no point in starting the Market again until such times as all Flood Protection works had been completed.
- (j) Information Boards - French Wight then enquired about the condition of Information Boards in the Common Haugh, and Councillor Ramage confirmed these were to be replaced.
- (k) Benches - A member of the public advised on 3 benches from the Volunteer up the riverside - whilst the concrete frames were there, the boards for sitting on had not been replaced. Keith Irving advised that this situation was the same with 2 benches at the Violet Woods. Councillor Ramage would take these matters forward.
- (l) Town Hall Lift - Marjorie McCreadie referred to the lift in the Town Hall which remained out of order. SBC had advised that this would not be repaired in the near future. This was not good news in terms of bookings and requiring disabled access. Due to having to secure alternative venues for A7 Action Group Meetings, this would now cost that group in the region of £30 each meeting, which was not good.

Councillor Smart advised that she had entered a question on this to the next SBC meeting the following Thursday and would report back on the response. She said she would be asking not if but when the repairs would be carried out.

Councillor Ramage confirmed she had previously queried this matter and she was surprised that repairs in the near future were not planned. A fellow Councillor was unable to access the Council Chambers due to her disability, and this situation was not acceptable. It was good that Councillor Smart had entered her question, and they would await the response to that.

11. Reports from Sub-Committees

- (a) **A7 Action Group** – Marjorie McCreadie confirmed that the next meeting would be held on 24th March in The Well, Bourtree Place, Hawick. Calling papers would be issued two weeks prior to the meeting date.
- (b) **CCTV** – The Secretary thanked Sergeant Alison Granger for arranging the meeting, albeit she (Sergeant Granger) had subsequently been unable to attend. Nevertheless, accompanied by Kevin Marsh, the Secretary had met with Stuart Ward, Police Scotland Crime Manager, who had a wealth of knowledge on the installation of CCTV systems across the whole of Scotland. Valuable information had been provided by way of a Checklist for consideration by HCC members. CCTV would not resolve all issues but should be viewed as a tool to enhance practices already in place. The checklist had been circulated to the CCTV sub-group members and would form the basis of the next CCTV meeting to be held the last week in February or first week in March. A date would be determined around Sergeant Granger, who had agreed to provide crime profiles to allow 'hot spots' to be identified, as it was not a case that we would replicate existing camera sightings but determine these in line with the crime profiles.

Once we had completed the checklist, which included camera specifications, coverage and powering as well as other considerations, we would then be in a position to issue the

Specification of our requirements to contractors and determine costings and consideration of funding.

- (c) **Hawick Common Good Fund** – The next Common Good Meeting would be online on 24th March at 4pm.
- (d) **Hawick in Bloom** – The Secretary reported a meeting was held the previous week to consider Summer planting requirements. Unfortunately, due to frost and excessive rain during the winter, the cordylines within the 6 larger planters had been badly affected. It was hoped that these could be nurtured but failing that, they would require to be replaced. One cordyline had been removed altogether.

The plan was to have all planters including perennials which were more sustainable along with a reduced number of bedding plants and costs were currently being sought to achieve this. It was planned to also include more perennials at the War Memorial along with bedding plants to maintain colour there, however, in adding perennials the number of bedding plants with higher costs to continually replace, could also then be reduced.

Initial costs would be higher with having perennials however these would be slightly offset with the reduction in costs for lower numbers of bedding plants required.

A request had been received for hanging baskets to be reinstated along the High Street, and letters were being delivered to High Street shopkeepers and businesses to gauge their thoughts on this request and to see if they would be prepared to help financially.

It was proposed to purchase reservoir baskets, which would require watering and feeding once or twice weekly as opposed to ordinary baskets which needed daily attention. Costs of reservoir baskets were higher, so initial costs may be higher but may be able to be reduced in subsequent years.

In other Border towns, shopkeepers were known to help so we would await the outcome from our survey. It was hoped that this would be favourable, as having hanging baskets reintroduced would again permit Hawick in Bloom to enter Floral Gateway Competitions along with the other Border towns. At the present time there was no point in doing so, as we simply were not in a good position to genuinely compete against these other towns who had hanging baskets.

Councillor Ramage advised that John Curry had responded to a request made by the Secretary to her to clarify requirements and costs of SBC stress-testing. The response received from Mr Curry was that the majority of standards had attachments which could hold baskets under 5kg, however, it was noted that there were no lamp-posts on the High Street. It was proposed that hooks at the bottom of the brackets used for Christmas Harps would be utilised to hang these baskets. Councillor Ramage undertook to correspond further with John Curry on stress testing requirements, given clarification of that proposal.

Councillor Ramage advised that discussions were also ongoing between John Curry and Dumfries & Galloway Council regarding stress testing for cross street Christmas lights, previously requested.

- (e) **Wind Farms** – The Vice-Chair along with French Wight had attended a meeting with Muirhall Energy on 1st February, along with 8 other Community Councils affected by the Teviot Wind Farm (TWF). This meeting had been very informative, with the main point of the meeting being to agree in principle the setting up by the Community Councils affected

of a Company Limited by Guarantee to govern and administer the Community Benefits generated by the TWF.

There would be a Board set up, with 2 Community Councillor representatives from each CC, and the benefits placed into a central fund. The Community Councillors would then consider applications for community benefits and determine where monies would be spent. They state that a substantial amount of money would be made available. Muirhall Energy would also provide £10k set up costs for such a Company Limited by Guarantee.

At the start of construction, the fund would benefit from £500,000 per annum during each year of construction for community benefits. It had been pointed out that the Wind Farm was still within the planning process, and if it were approved, it would be 2033 before further progress. A number of the other Community Councils had already given their in-principle approval. This method was reported to have worked at Crossdykes, Langholm.

Agreement in principle was therefore being sought as soon as possible from HCC to the setting-up of a Board and a Company Limited by Guarantee. If the majority of CCs affected gave their approval in principle then this would proceed. Whilst it was possible to delay joining the Company at a later date, any CC doing so would then not have any say on how monies were spent.

Funds would be index-linked from the date of commissioning and community investments monies paid on the wind capacity of the turbines.

French advised that the wind farms changed hands on a number of occasions but once this in-principle agreement was signed, they had been advised that any future owners would require to preserve this. The 3 main consultees, being SEPA, Natural Heritage Scotland and SBC, had not yet responded.

HCC members gave in-principle agreement to setting up such a Company and Board, subject to this approval not being used in any planning application. The Vice-Chair would respond accordingly to Muirhall Energy.

12. Updates from Community Partners

- (a) Friends of Wilton Lodge Park (FoWLP)** – Duncan Taylor declared his interest in this agenda item as a member of FoWLP, HCC and Live Music Hawick. The Vice-Chair reported that he and Duncan Taylor had attended a meeting of this group within the Museum the previous week. The meeting had been very positive and supportive of the proposed events.

A calendar of events was proposed and one of the main points discussed was whether HCC would finance the bandstand events this year. The crazy golf was under discussion to be reinstated, a new Wilton Lodge Park Brochure to be circulated shortly and hopefully via the Welcome Hosts. Marjorie McCreadie said that Welcome Hosts had trialled providing leaflets in the past which had not worked. Stuart Beck advised that Future Hawick may be able to assist. There would also be a circus held up the Park the same weekend as the King's Coronation. It was planned to update the SBC Facebook page and that of Wilton Lodge Park to promote the events.

Duncan Taylor advised there was also discussion around signage at the entrance to the Park however that would be picked up by Gordon Muir when all town signage had been agreed. There was also talk of some of the really old signs being removed altogether.

The Secretary asked if there were any schedule of costs for the Bandstand Events. It was noted that this was c.£4k plus insurance of £600 last year. Duncan Taylor considered £600-650 per artist, plus £700 for a PA system and engineer and £200 for insurance, but there was talk at the meeting of extending the number of Sundays from 4 to 6 to accommodate requests from the Saxhorn and Pipe Bands and others expressing interest to perform. There were also leaflets and posters to be prepared and printed and so he considered it would not be any less financially than the £4.6k costs for last year.

Commitment to funding was required now, to allow artists to be booked in advance.

- (b) **Future Hawick (FH)** – Duncan Taylor advised that seeds had now been sown for rewinding of the bank on Weensland Road and trees had been planted on the Killinghouse Brae. The Town App, which was an online phone directory of businesses in the town and events, had been delayed as a result of Apple not being able to accept the configuration. Soft Launch of the App was scheduled for March. Finally, FH were in possession of the results of the survey on St Leonard's Park and would speaking with stakeholders and to members of the Steering Committee, and informally with the Common Good Fund Trustees. A press release would go out this week on survey completion rates, with full publication of results by the end of this month. Thereafter, a new Business Plan would be prepared to reflect the results.

Marjorie McCreadie reiterated that the Welcome Hosts Brochure would go to print on 28th February. A lot of businesses had pulled out their funding for this year and some new businesses had come in, but unfortunately some of those had also now withdrawn.

Along with Derick Tait, she would be attending a meeting at the High School on 7th March, where it was hoped to speak to the upper aged school pupils to gauge interest in their becoming a Welcome Host. She understood that a date still had to be arranged for a Summer Jobs Fayre in Hawick and this would be another event to try to attract interest in becoming Welcome Hosts. 23 Campervans were confirmed as attending the Reivers Weekend.

They would have a Visitors Shop again, and regarding leaflets discussed earlier for distribution on Wilton Lodge Park events, that could be a solution for their distribution rather than providing directly to the Welcome Hosts.

- (c) **Foundation Scotland (FS)** – The Chair advised that two reports were required to be submitted imminently. Additional Christmas lights had been purchased for 2023 display, due to many being faulty and also faulty sockets. The remaining Foundation Scotland monies c.£1300 she would request approval for this sum to be carried forward. That would then enable the report on confirmed expenditure to be forwarded.

With regard to the proposed Distribution Plan for 2023/24, some ideas from HCC members on how monies might be spent had been suggested e.g., on funding Bandstand Events, funding to Hawick in Bloom Group, and audio equipment for presentations at meetings. A Provost's Achievement Award Board had also previously been discussed to be funded or another alternative was to reintroduce Grants for organisations in the town. If say £10k funding was available, 10 grants of £500 each could be made to use half of the funding. FS may allow expenditure or may not, to hold a King's Coronation Event if HCC

members decided to proceed with this, and SBC not providing funding. Members were asked to decide which suggestions should be included in the Distribution Plan for 2023/24.

Duncan Taylor considered that the grants which were previously awarded through FS funds, had now really been superseded with Partnership Funding, so those groups were not missing out but getting funding from a different source.

After much discussion, Members agreed Distribution Plan expenditure be on Bandstand Events, Hawick in Bloom, and a PA system. Duncan reiterated that he had purchased a PA system for c.£549.

- (d) **Frederick Douglass – Unveiling of Plaque at Myreslawgreen** – The Vice-Chair reminded HCC Members of this unveiling, to which they had all been invited. This would take place the following day at 1pm. The US Consulate General would perform the unveiling.

- 13. Planning Issues** – Keith Irving enquired if any Councillors were on the Planning Committee and were aware of any conditions placed with the planning permission granted to the new 24-hour gym in the former Glenmac Mill, Teviot Road. He had received 3 complaints of loud music being played at 12 and 1am and windows being open whilst people were exercising. He wondered if there were any regulated times for music being played. Councillor Richards undertook to investigate this and report back.

The Vice-Chair advised there were no restrictions on decibel levels within the Planning Application itself and it would be Environmental Health restrictions which would dictate these he considered.

14. Correspondence –

- (a) Scottish Borders Walking Festival 2024-26 - The Chair advised of an email from SBC on behalf of Keith Robeson, Senior Countryside Ranger, seeking CCs to register interest in running the Scottish Borders Walking Festival for years 2024-26. The Chair advised that she had in previous years been involved with this project, and it was extremely resource intensive not to be understated, and a decision would need to be made by members on this. We had declined this a couple of years back. This could not be done solely by HCC members and other groups would certainly need to commit to this.

From a positive point of view this would attract people into the town and help our local economy, but it was agreed this project would most certainly require participation from other groups to help organise, such as Town of 1000 Trails and other walking groups. Duncan Taylor suggested that once Hawick was in a better position and looking its best again, following completion of Flood Protection works, perhaps this could be considered then e.g. 2026.

Lack of accommodation in the town was a major hurdle previously, and the package was not just about the walks but included a myriad of other things too. Online searches may make detailing accommodation easier, and it was noted that there was a project ongoing to detail all accommodation availability within the town, so that might also be available. The previous Hawick Walking Festival had also included part of the Borders Abbey Way as well as Common Riding routes, and shorter routes which also needed to be made available for those not able to participate in longer walks. It really had been a logistical nightmare to organise and there would need to be real buy-in from a number of persons willing to contribute towards its organisation if it were indeed decided to register interest.

The Chair advised she would email HCC members after the meeting, to gauge whether they wished to register interest or otherwise. It was not clear at that stage, whether interest could be expressed for 2026 only and this could be checked by her.

- (b) Morrisons Roundabout - Regarding a previous suggestion by HCC member Jock Campbell for traffic lights at the Morrisons roundabout, and coverage in the Hawick Paper regarding that, a letter from a member of the public had been received. This stated that traffic lights there might not work, and they thought the best solution might be to remove the central island at the roundabout altogether, in preference of a smaller roundabout like that at the Sandbed which allowed lorries to navigate round that much more easily. An alternative suggestion made was to erect a warning sign on Weensland Road approach to that roundabout, to alert them that large oncoming vehicles may cross the central line to navigate that corner of the roundabout. At least someone has been interested in the article and had put forward these suggestions for consideration.

Councillors were requested to forward these suggestions to the appropriate body for consideration. Councillor Smart agreed to find out if there were any plans for works to that roundabout. It was suggested Philippa Gilhooley might be an appropriate contact person at SBC and the Chair agreed to pass the letter on to her.

- (c) Email re Missing Person - An email had been received from Catriona Paton, Divisional Commander, Lothians and Borders Police to personally acknowledge her utmost thanks and appreciation for all the support provided by members of the community in response to the disappearance of an 11-year-old girl from Galashiels on Sunday, 5th February, who was thankfully found the following evening. The response had visibly demonstrated the level of care and commitment that had driven the actions of many people in our area. As Divisional Commander, she had been encouraged by the willingness of the community to step forward and support her and her staff, the other emergency services and other groups. She stated she was very keen to maintain this positivity, community cohesion and support to each other and would remain available should there be anything she could help with over the coming days and weeks.

The Chair stated she was unsure of who within Hawick might have been involved with this case, however, considered it was nice to receive this thankyou from her.

- (d) Email re Painting of Campervan Bays - An email had been received with suggestions on layout of white line painting of bays within the campervan area at Common Haugh. Councillor Ramage confirmed this email had been forwarded to the Flood Protection Group. There were no plans to complete these works until later. It was agreed to advise the writer accordingly, and also make them aware that there was no requirement for campervans to be parked in the designated campervan area, and they could park anywhere within the Common Haugh which suited them.

15. AOCB – SBCCN - Wilson George advised of an email which would be circulated shortly regarding a seminar to be held by Scottish Borders Community Council Network (SBCCN) in October, to gauge interest from CCs to attend.

16. Date of next meeting - The next HCC meeting would be held on Monday, 13th March 2023 at 6.30pm within the Assembly Hall, Hawick High School.