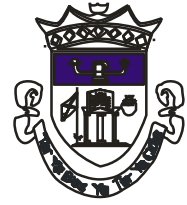

Hawick Community Council



MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

held on Monday 13th November 2023 within the Lesser Town Hall, Hawick

Present	Cameron Knox (Chair) Jim Adams (Treasurer) Stuart Beck Braden George Graeme King Duncan Taylor John Wilkinson	Kevin Marsh (Vice-Chair) Margaret Hogg (Treasurer) Jock Campbell Wilson George Stuart Mactaggart Euan Welsh
Attending:	Councillor McAteer Councillor Richards	Councillor Ramage Councillor Smart

There were 8 members of the public in attendance, along with Graham Ford, Hawick Paper.

- 1. Chair's Opening Remarks** – The Chair welcomed everyone to the November meeting of the HCC especially on such a dirty night weatherwise. There was a full and busy Agenda to get through.

He reminded everyone in attendance that the meeting would be recorded by HCC and on behalf of 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 Michael Robertson, and Councillors Cox and Marshall.
- 4. Adoption of Minutes of Meetings of 9th October 2023** – The previously circulated Minutes of the last meeting were approved as an accurate record of the meeting - Proposed for adoption by Braden George and Seconded by Wilson George.
- 5. Matters arising –**
Former Buccleuch Hotel – drug raid – the Chair advised previous reporting estimated the value of cannabis found at that location to be £0.5m however that value had ultimately turned out to be nearer £1m. Again, he expressed gratitude to the Police for their efforts and taking that value of drugs off our streets.
100 Steps – The Chair thanked Councillor Marshall, SBC's Fiona Cameron and Grant Turnbull for organising clearing of overhanging branches from that site and allowing daylight back in. He was sure that the clearance would be appreciated by members of the public who used those steps daily.

Trinity School gutters and Balcary Path – Councillor Smart advised there were no updates as yet regarding these issues.

HCRC – Disabled access request – Braden George confirmed the request had been raised at the last meeting of HCRC, where it was agreed to look into this matter.

Letter to former Chair, Marion Short – the Secretary confirmed that a thank you letter had been sent to Mrs Short, expressing thanks for her valuable services to HCC over the years.

6. Hawick High School – Senior Pupil Update

The Chair welcomed the two senior pupils (Rihanna Smillie and Joseph Wear) to their first meeting, as the direct conduit between the school and HCC.

The pupils advised of the recent Work Experience Week held, the first after COVID, where pupils from S4 to S6 went out into the world of work to increase their knowledge. They advised of pupils working with Hawick Rotary Club and learning of their planned fundraising projects for the year. Pupils had attended a Quiz Night held by the Rotary, where unfortunately HHS came last, nevertheless a great amount of money had been raised for the Club's different local charities.

HHS annual MacMillan Coffee Morning had been hosted and had raised over £700. An interhouse hockey and rugby tournament had also taken place between S1-S3 pupils, where students competed against other houses for house points. That event would be ongoing throughout the year.

Rihanna and Joseph along with the other members of the Senior Team - Grace Gibb and Stroma Beukes - had been honoured to be invited to lay wreaths at the War Memorial and at Stobs on Remembrance Sunday, which they had found to be very emotional in remembering those who had lost their lives in conflict, including during the First World War and many others. They had been grateful for the opportunity to pay their respects and widen their learning.

On Wednesday following, the Music, Art and Technology Department would hold a showcase event to highlight all the work being carried out in these subjects.

The Chair thanked the pupils for their attendance, stating that they had been busy and would surely be looking forward to the Christmas Dances in the new few weeks too.

Duncan Taylor advised that Joseph's granddad had been a valued member of HCC before his passing, and it may be that Joseph would find himself following in those footsteps in the future.

7. Police Scotland Reports – Reports had been previously circulated to members for October, and the Chair welcomed PS Mark Russell and asked for any questions on the reports. The Secretary had noted a higher number of thefts during the month, and asked if that trend was likely to continue in today's economic climate. Mark advised that the rise would likely continue especially with the onset of Christmas, and monies being tight. A Festive Campaign was in course of preparation, and there would be high visibility of patrols in and around the shops across the whole of the Borders.

A shop owner on the High Street, attending as a public member, raised an issue with one particular person causing him worry to open his shop. He had witnessed that person going from shop-to-shop stealing and had reported such to the Police. He had been advised that the

Police were not able to do anything to help. He emphasised his concerns in opening his shop and for two months his shop had been closed. He was aware of other shop owners and staff concern with that person.

PS Russell asked if when reporting, it had been a Police Officer he had spoken to and that was confirmed. It was also confirmed that a statement had been taken on reporting but the incidents were not, in that gentleman's view, recorded or progressed. He had shown pictures of the thief to the Police, who stated they did not recognise him, and so nothing appeared to have been done, as there had been no feedback and the thefts were continuing. The thief had been stealing since May and could be seen many times walking the High Street and ready to pounce.

Another shop owner confirmed the thefts were continuing, and enquired about a previous number which could be phoned to alert the Police as well as other shopkeepers to be vigilant. It would be good if something like that initiative could be reintroduced she considered. In particular it was shop owners like the two owners attending who were most affected. Staff in the national shops were probably not progressing matters the same by reporting to Police, as it was not their individual pockets being directly affected. Owners were the ones left out of pocket.

PS Russell advised he would discuss the matter further with both shop owners before leaving the meeting and obtain further details from them. He would in turn make enquiries with the Police as to logged crime reports and what actions had been taken and provide feedback to them.

HCC members confirmed of 'Shop Watch' initiated years ago by the Chamber of Trade which enabled shops to contact each other to watch out for thieves known to be operating in their area. A lack of deterrent appeared to be the issue nowadays, however, PS Russell considered that repeat offenders would be seriously dealt with by the Courts. It was noted that Citizens' Arrest was not appropriate for cases of shoplifting.

- 8. Guest Speaker – Colin Robson, Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) –** The Chair welcomed Colin Robson from CAB who were appealing for more volunteers, at a time of unprecedented demand for their advice services, amidst the present cost of living crisis.

Colin advised it was quite apt that his appeal followed on from the Police with similar issues (regarding theft) associated also to CAB in terms of helping out in the cost of living and forthcoming Christmas and its impact.

He gave a potted history of CAB – in 1938 a need to protect the public had been identified and CABs were established throughout the country, and 200 bureaux were established overnight. War was declared in 1939 and numbers peaked at 1,074 bureaux by 1942 dealing with war related issues, homelessness and ration books. By 1945, there were 60 CABs across Scotland. The Government cut funding later in the 1950s, and so each of the CABs then became charities. By 1965 CABs received c.1.25m enquiries for help and in 1974 CAB opened their Hawick office initially at 15a High Street. Over the years challenges in Hawick were the decline in the knitwear industry and de-industrialisation across the country as a whole. Last year saw 29m visits to online pages for help. And so, today, the CAB is in need of more volunteers to step up to help provide the advice and support now required. COVID was a big challenge, in particular for volunteers who were not technically minded to familiarise themselves with meetings on Zoom, Teams etc and CAB lost many volunteers during that time.

In relation to Roxburgh & Berwickshire CABs, there were offices in Hawick, Duns, Eyemouth and hopefully soon in Newcastleton. The main issues dealt with were providing free, confidential and impartial advice to citizens, with the main objectives being to empower people to make informed decisions and good choices in their lives, and also to influence public policy.

In the last financial year, clients benefitted to the tune of £1,877,786 in Roxburgh & Berwickshire areas and without CABs, that financial support would not have been forthcoming to those who were both entitled and in need of it.

In addition, volunteers dealt with 49 multiple debt cases and 281 single debt cases. For that year, they also dealt with 977 other issues, including employment, 308 legal cases as well as 4,118 enquiries regarding relationship, tax and benefit enquiries, and 528 housing related concerns and issues relative to utilities. All services were free and run mainly by volunteers, with one or two paid staff. Volunteers were supported and received training, and volunteering was good for enhancing CVs for other jobs. Appeals had been made through local papers and Border TV as well as attending meetings such as HCC and other Community Council meetings.

Colin thanked HCC for the opportunity to make his appeal, and stated he would leave leaflets for anyone interested in becoming a volunteer and gave direction also to CAB online.

The Chair confirmed that CABs were especially important in today's economic climate and sometimes a forgotten but very much necessary service and it would be a great miss if volunteers to keep the service going were not forthcoming. Colin considered there were c14 volunteers and whilst the Bureau would not disappear, the more volunteers meant a larger number of clients being provided with the necessary advice and support.

Braden George asked if volunteers required any specialist knowledge and Colin advised that volunteers would be supported through training and would not be on their own providing advice and information to any client, until they had reached the appropriate knowledge levels. Empathy and general life skills were desirable. Colin considered however that there was a tendency that those people already volunteering in a community were the ones more likely to volunteer in other required areas, and that in itself was challenging.

Duncan Taylor asked if there was a minimum number of hours that volunteers would require to commit to and whether those hours were during daytime. Colin advised ideally that would be for 6 hours per week but would be flexible, and it would be during daytime. The Hawick CAB opened Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays however other offices were open on different days.

The Chair thanked Colin for his attendance and hoped that some volunteers would be forthcoming.

9. Guest Speaker – Jess Burrows, CARS & Graham Hayward, Jedburgh CC – Gutter cleaning project proposed for Hawick High Street

Jess Burrows, Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (SHBT) introduced herself to the meeting and thanked HCC for their invite to speak tonight to provide an update on progress with the Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS). She gave a quick overview on Project

Management, Priority Building Projects, General Repairs Grants, Public Realm Scheme, Hawick Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) and Education and Training.

In terms of **project management**, she advised that the SHBT were covering SBC's Sarah Altrock's Maternity Leave for one year from April past. Stephanie Walker would be involved in the Education and Training side.

Hawick CARS would finish completely in March 2025 and that was the timescale for all projects to be completed and grant monies claimed, and so ideally now was the time for people to come forward for building repairs grants.

Priority Building Projects – It was noted there were 7 in total, including 80 High Street and the Former Liberal Club separately.

Regarding 80 High Street, an emergency package of repair works had been completed mainly on the turret and residential portion of the building and also for roof works, window works and so on, with £183,500 worth of grants offered to owners for those works.

One-third of available grant was currently sitting open for landlords/owners to bring forward their proposals for works on the other side of the former Liberal Club.

26 High Street – Works were completed at that location in 2021.

Former Queens Head – the owners had submitted a retrospective application on works which had been carried out, however CARS were not permitted to afford grants on already completed works. Discussions had taken place with the owners on a potential Phase 2 of works, but there was no progress on that. Accordingly it was agreed at the last CARS meeting to remove that project as a priority building, and to utilise earmarked grant funding on other projects before the Scheme finished.

24 High Street – owners were yet to come on board and so the grant allocation remained in situ until that went ahead.

4 Round Close – awaiting for owner to come forward with their plans.

Former Glenmac Mill – that project was on site, and the grant offer had been accepted. Only the historic section of the building would be covered by the CARS grant.

General Repair Grant Fund – That grant fund was for non-priority buildings – up to £5k for minor repair works and up to £15k for major repairs. The overall pot available was £490k for applications from owners of traditional pre-1919 properties within the Hawick Conservation Area to apply. A deadline date for applications had been set for 13th December with applications assessed in January. That was not a hard deadline but had been set to encourage some movement and applicants to apply. There would be another round for applications in Spring 2024.

There had been 7 projects carried out to date, one of which was the priority project at 26 High Street and there was one project currently on site at 19 High Street.

The Public Realm Project focused on the area outside of the former Glenmac Mill that had flood protection works carried out. The Flood Protection Scheme paid for the tarmac of that

area and CARS had available allocation to finish that using natural materials e.g. sandstone paving to the pedestrianised areas. Proposals had been produced by The Paul Hogarth Company and the next step would be consultation on those. Some budget reallocations would be required due to increased building materials costs since the initial CARS budget had been set.

The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) – That was being carried out by Montague Evans, Consultants and the hope was that would recognise the CARS legacy and set out development guidelines for those carrying out future works to preserve the character of the Conservation Area longer term.

Education and Training – A Skills Demonstration Day had been held back in May at Hawick High School and students tried stone carving, roofing, use of drones in construction, painting and decorating. More recently a smaller group of students undertook a Refurbishment Challenge whereby they had to come up with potential new uses for the Hawick High School building itself. An Open Day had also been held recently, with a stall set up opposite the Horse Monument, where pupils demonstrated stone carving etc for others to enjoy.

Upcoming events were Heritage Story Telling – MacaStory would be working with Burnfoot and Wilton Primary Schools where pupils would be encouraged to create little magazines containing stories of Hawick's past and that would finish with a show next year to other pupils, parents and the general community.

Next Spring, Craig Frew Work Experience Project would offer work experiences of repairing the wall at the Hawick Baptist Church and lastly a Brief had been prepared and would be tendered for a Community Art Project, where an artist would be invited to work with the Community in a series of workshops to create a legacy piece for display in either the Town Hall or Borders Textiles Towerhouse. It was proposed that artist would be appointed in January 2024, with a February 2024 project start.

It was noted that the CARS project covered the High Street, however that was only a small part of Hawick's Conservation Area, which extended to the Howegate, Drumlanrig Square, Buccleuch Street etc where there were also many dilapidated buildings. Kevin Marsh queried why those areas were not included, and whether they could now be so, especially if there were struggles to spend allocated funds within the High Street. Jess advised that was beyond her remit, with the Project's boundary set back in 2019 and she was unable to answer that. She was requested to take that query back to whoever was able to respond and undertook to do so.

The Chair alluded to the beautiful sculptures on buildings along our High Street, which others may not have actually recognised if they had never looked up and confirmed that a significant difference had been made to those as a result of the CARS project. He had been lucky to have been able to visit the former Liberal Club and to have seen the magnificent leadwork carried out to the Turret there.

Duncan Taylor asked about monies spent on the former Liberal Club and whether that had been matched by the owners. Jess advised that the Repairs Grant for general repairs was 75% of eligible costs and for a priority building that percentage could rise to 90%. Owners had to match fund the remaining portion.

Councillor Ramage advised she had previously stayed at 24 High Street when she first came to Hawick over 40 years ago, and that property had been in an awful condition then with damp, rotten windows and so on. She considered that building must have been of some age. She was frustrated and sad to hear that owners did not engage in the process, and wondered in those cases, what could actually be done to make that happen, as it did have a real impact on the High Street where buildings remained in a dilapidated condition. Some owners did not even live in the town and so how would engagement be achieved. Jess advised it was tricky and in the case of 24 High Street she understood the owners were not known and the Council were making attempts to determine that. In instances where the owners were known but unwilling to be involved, there was a Scheme whereby if most owners were willing to pay their shares but one or two were unwilling, those willing applicants could make a Missing Shared application to the Council, to cover the other share(s) up to £20k to help unlock works. Owners did have to be reminded however of their title deed obligations to maintain their share of buildings.

Jedburgh Community Council (JCC) & CARS - Gutter-cleaning Project – Community Councillor Graham Hayward was introduced by the Chair to the meeting to provide an insight on Jedburgh's successful gutter-cleaning project in conjunction with CARS on their High Street which HCC had under consideration to lead on for Hawick High Street.

Graham referred to the famous Corner Building in Jedburgh, which had required to be demolished and would require to be rebuilt. That had been as a direct result of gutters not being cleared, a problem with pigeons and a general lack of maintenance by the owners there.

Some years ago, a previous Community Councillor considered it would be simple to hire a cherry-picker and go down the High Street and just clean all the gutters. JCC on becoming involved with CARS quickly realised it would not be quite as simple a project as that.

Firstly, JCC received a grant of £1,800 which allowed the hire of a cherry-picker for 2 days and necessary equipment for a roofer. Before works could begin however, SBC required that all owners had signed off on the project and that owners had appropriate insurance in place. That necessitated an Agreement be put in place per building and there were challenges as not every resident within buildings were the actual owners and some of the owners were simply not known. Unfortunately those buildings would not have works carried out on them without insurance in place.

JCC started off with a poster and their members went round the properties in the project area and spoke with some owners/residents and all properties received a poster. They also advertised in their local Jed Eye paper. Quite a few people were very supportive, quite a few queried why only the High Street-facing gutters were being targeted and not the backs as well, and some wanted no involvement. It transpired about 50% of the buildings on the High Street ended up being part of the project.

It was anticipated that works would take 2 Sundays (trading days would not be permitted for works) however due to only 50% taking part, it took only 1 day resulting in savings on budgeted costs. One of the conditions of the Grant was that works being carried out had to be sustainable, and so shops and property owners had to contribute to allow works to continue in the future. With the Grant awarded by CARS together with contributions from shops and property owners, there was an end surplus of £3.5k. That would allow another round of works in February.

In terms of contributions, they looked for c.£100 per building and even based on 1 owner wishing to contribute within a building, they proceeded with works in the knowledge of surplus grant funding being available, and as previously stated they had ended up with a £3.5k surplus.

Graham went on to show a variety of pictures of the cherry picker and works being carried out. It had been a very windy day, which would be another challenge to be aware of.

In relation to documentation, it was noted that SBC had helped with the poster, which highlighted the various parties involved in the project. JCC prepared a document for sign off on the works. It was also necessary to obtain a road closure and, as part of that, they required to prepare a plan for parking off street. The Road Closure also required confirmation of insurances in place from the firm providing the cherry picker and from the roofer and Risk Assessments to be provided on all aspects of the works. SBC were very helpful with these documentation requirements.

JCC also prepared what was termed as a 'Control Document' which listed all the shops/owners of the properties where works were to be carried out. That document was used for invoicing purposes once works had been completed. Graham advised he would forward copies of the various documents to HCC.

Once all documentation was in place, they needed to ensure that the street was cleared before works could proceed on the day. It had been a brilliant achievement, having had all the parking notices in place the week before, that not one car had been left on the street, unlike what had happened at a previous Market event when one resident had gone away on holiday and left their vehicle parked. Other challenges had to be planned for, e.g. scaffolding which might be in place for other building repairs which would not allow access for a cherry picker, safety of pedestrians and as earlier mentioned, wind conditions, and therefore the number of bodies required to minimise risks.

And finally, members had to go round the properties to collect invoiced monies, and options were available to pay by BACS, cheque or cash. IDs for those collecting payments were needed and in the end, only 4 people did not pay. Some shopkeepers paid more than the due amount which offset those losses.

The Chair thanked Graham for his presentation, which gave a flavour to HCC on what would be required to lead on such a project for Hawick. He then requested any questions.

Braden George asked what the schedule would be for carrying out works again. Would this be on an annual basis for instance. Graham advised that JCC planned this would be every 2 years. Stuart Mactaggart asked if that would mean a need for all the associated documentation to be completed again. Graham advised that sign-off on works would again be necessary and in terms of being sustainable there would need to be commitment to contributions from shopkeepers and property owners again too.

The Chair then asked members if they considered this initiative would be worthy of consideration for HCC to lead on. No decision required to be taken that night, however any initial thoughts would be welcomed. Duncan Taylor advised he was supportive of the project, recognising though that it would be an awful lot of work for HCC members notwithstanding challenges and the closure of our High Street and so on. It was nevertheless worth doing to add to the CARS work and to make our High Street safer as well.

The Chair concurred it would be a huge project, with Hawick High Street being 3 or 4 times the length of Jedburgh, and many more landlords and residents to get sign-off as well as the many other hurdles and challenges to overcome as faced by JCC. HCC would need to consider the matter further and agree whether or not to proceed as lead.

Jock Campbell advised he thought Future Hawick/Hawick Development Trust were going to lead on gutter cleaning, however, the Chair advised that it was pavement cleaning that body had stated they would look to progress on. Duncan Taylor declared his interest as a Trustee of Future Hawick/Hawick Development Trust and confirmed that body had never discussed taking on the gutter cleaning project.

Councillor McAteer advised that following earlier discussion, he had forwarded the original document to Jess and HCC's Secretary which had set out the CARS project, and why that had been restricted to the High Street (in answer to the question raised by Kevin Marsh). Environment Scotland had provided the bulk of the money - £1.3m and they had set the criteria. A Steering Group had been set up including HCC, Future Hawick, Archaeological Society etc and they along with Councillors went along the High Street to identify the properties which needed attention. It was not that they did not see other buildings in need of attention but the criteria was set for the High Street.

The Chair concluded discussions stating that waterfall from the properties on days where there was heavy rain would be much reduced as well should this work proceed. He thanked Graham and Jess again for their presentations which had been very informative.

- 10. Treasurer's Report** – The Treasurer advised that the Opening Balance was £14,964.65 - there had been a total income received during the month of £1,321.32 and total expenditure of £738.86, leaving a Closing Balance of £15,547.11.

HCC1 account had an Opening Balance of £5,738.48 however ring-fenced monies within that account of £1,664 had now been spent for payment of new icicle lights for Christmas. That amount had been approved by Teviot & Liddesdale Area Partnership, as an underspend on Williestruther Improvement works, to be used for Christmas lights and a Santa's Grotto. In addition, Insurance of £639.52 was also ring-fenced to be paid for 2022/23. Another Insurance Invoice for 2023/24 would also be received in March 2024.

Christmas Event fund had a balance of £2,419.86 which he considered would be sufficient to cover the 2023 event.

Hawick in Bloom account showed a healthy balance of £5,228.63 however that was just over a year's plant costs and further funding would require to be resourced.

Finally, the Foundation Scotland Fund showed a balance of £1,647.42 however costs for a new audio system for over £800, as well as payment of new Christmas lights and Santa's Grotto – funding being split across that account and HCC1, remained to be paid for.

Members approved the Treasurer's Report.

11. Public Forum & Town Issues:

- (a) Teviot Day Centre for Dementia – Stuart Beck requested an update from Councillors on progress with that which seemed to have stalled somehow. Councillor Ramage advised that she along with Councillor McAteer had attended a recent meeting at the Community Hospital and were shown proposals on re-opening of the Day Centre. They had been

advised that would be in approximately 3 months' time. It had been hoped that would see it open over 5 days, then expanding hopefully on to 7 days. It had been a very positive meeting but inspection reports and other documentation required seemed to be the cause of timescales moving on. They hoped to commence the recruitment process for staffing very soon.

Stuart suggested that Teviot Day Centre remain on HCC's Agenda until that matter had been seen to be resolved, and that suggestion was agreed.

Councillor McAteer advised that one of the issues was receiving sign-off from NHS Borders and the consultation processes but hopefully after that meeting, matters would be seen to progress. He agreed HCC should continue with this on their Agenda.

Councillor Ramage also advised that public consultation on NHS Time for Change Conversations were being held on Wednesday, 15th November 2-6pm in Heart of Hawick and she encouraged members and members of the public to attend to have their say. Councillor McAteer agreed that such consultation was unusual for NHS and they were needing the public's help to determine their views on what people required, to help inform NHS services in light of pending substantial budget cuts.

- (b) Pelican Crossing at the Haugh – Jim Adams advised that on pressing the button to cross, it was taking far too long for lights to change to allow crossing. That was resulting in people thinking the lights were not working and crossing out with appropriate signals, which would he feared would ultimately result in an accident. Councillor Ramage undertook to progress on this matter.
- (c) Christmas Tree at Trinity Gardens – Jim Adams advised that the height and general look of that tree was not acceptable. Stuart Mactaggart asked if it were possible for HCC to supply a better tree as townsfolk had taken to social media branding the tree a laughing stock. It was agreed to contact SBC first regarding this to request a more suitable replacement. It had been noted that trees in Selkirk, Jedburgh and Kelso were similarly inadequate.
- (d) Railings on Morrisons roundabout, outside Goffs – Stuart Mactaggart queried when these railings, which had been in a state of disrepair for some time, were to be replaced. Councillor McAteer advised that SBC was responsible but any replacement would unlikely be so until after transportation of wind turbines for Pines Burns were completed.
- (e) Railings & Road sign at Tower Knowe end (outside No3 shop) – Stuart Mactaggart advised those had been damaged about a month ago. Councillor McAteer advised that this was subject to an insurance case.
- (f) Resurfacing of Langlands Bridge – Stuart Beck advised that issue had been previously raised and Councillor Ramage confirmed it had been the painting of the bridge that had previously been raised and it had transpired that half of the Bridge was the responsibility of Bear Scotland and the other half the responsibility of SBC. Councillor Ramage would progress on these and report back.
- (g) Traffic chaos caused by mid-morning Street Collections on High Street – Jock Campbell raised that as a continuing issue and queried on the 9 new vehicles which were supposed to have been purchased to alleviate that chaos and allow a vehicle for Hawick Depot and reintroduction of early morning uplifts. Councillor Smart advised that new vehicles were purchased but had to be sent back as there was an issue with crushing the bins. Councillor McAteer confirmed that there were vehicles being used in Hawick that came from across the Borders. It was not a Hawick Depot issue as such but depended on where the vehicle came from, which could well be Galashiels. That issue frustrated Councillors as well with constant complaints received by them, and despite taking vehicles up the Cross Wynd and back around and down O'Connell Street to allow better flow of traffic, that only

temporarily alleviated the situation. Councillors had tried to get vehicles to uplift as early as possible, but other traffic flow with people trying to get to work at earlier times was also challenging for vehicles then trying to get into Hawick. Councillor McAteer would share HCCs concerns once again but did not hold out much hope of getting any different answers, and frustrations would continue.

- (h) Speeding vehicles within The Terraces area of Hawick – A member of the public advised with the onset of frosty weather conditions, she had concerns at the speed of salt wagons driving within that location, especially along Twirlees Terrace. The 20mph speed did not seem to apply. She had witnessed a salt lorry speeding, and as a result the salt is deposited everywhere including onto parked vehicles with increased force. Councillors were requested to raise those concerns.
- (i) Campervan area – A member of the public raised concerns regarding the bins and bottle banks overflowing at that location and the untidy and overgrown area of weeds at the roadside behind the campervan area (and opposite the Community Hospital). Improvements to these areas, he said, would project so much better for Hawick, not only its townsfolk but more particularly visitors to the town and especially those using that site. Councillor Ramage advised that those issues were constantly complained about and requests to SBC to rectify. She referred to what had been done with a similar situation with overflowing bins in Burnfoot and was happy to refer the matter again to make the request for larger bins at the site. The member of the public stated he could not fathom why it was such a struggle to provide what he considered a simple solution to these issues. It was noted that was considered to be down to available budget.
- (j) Burnt-out Vehicle at the Common Haugh - The Treasurer referred to a burnt-out vehicle at the Common Haugh, and asked Councillors how long it would likely take before that unsightly vehicle was removed. That incident had happened the previous Friday night. Councillor Ramage undertook to find out.

12. Reports from Sub-Committees

- (a) Christmas Event - The Chair reported on a productive sub-group meeting held on 31st October 2023. All stalls had been allocated, entertainment had been organised for the afternoon and Santa would also make a visit. The next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 28th November to conclude on remaining actions. Keith Johnstone and John Hogg would also be requested to attend.
- (b) Hawick in Bloom – The Secretary reported that winter planting had now been completed within the planters and at the War Memorial – the latter thanks to Pete Barker and Keith Douglas. The winter cut-back and tidy at the Round Close would be completed that week thanks to Duncan MacDougall and George Patterson.

A replacement planter had been inserted at the Civic Space and painted.

- (c) CCTV – The Vice-Chair reported that he was awaiting a rescheduled meeting date to be arranged by SBC's Jason MacDonald. Councillor Ramage undertook to chase Jason on for a date. Following that meeting, HCC's CCTV sub-group would then meet to consider outcomes of that meeting and to move forward with necessary actions.
- (d) Resilience Group – The Vice-Chair reported on a workshop attended by the 4 Office-bearers held by SBC's Emergency Planning. That had been quite an eye-opener, emphasising that resilience started locally as well as for more major issues with a multi-agency approach.

A meeting of the Resilience Sub-Group had also been held the previous week and a strategy was now in place for progress. An inventory of resilience equipment had been prepared and he would be arranging a Press Release soon seeking volunteers. With the

oncoming winter, it was essential to have that group in place to enable self-mobilisation for the likes of snow-clearing, power cuts and so on.

- (e) Fundraising – No progress with that at the present time due to other priority workload.
- (f) Planning – There were no major planning issues to report.
- (g) Bandstand Events – Duncan Taylor enquired as to when it was likely that HCC would be determining if those Events could be financially supported by them. It was noted that the Distribution Plan for Foundation Scotland Langhope Rig Community Benefit Fund would be on the Agenda for the next HCC meeting with completion of that Plan detailing agreed expenditure due early February.

13. Updates from Community Partners

- (a) Future Hawick/Hawick Development Trust – Colin Hope, CEO had entered an apology for the meeting. Duncan Taylor advised on a Welcome Hosts report which had been very positive with c.4000 visitors to the Town. A meeting would be held the following Monday to address how that Initiative could be made more sustainable, and to look at various options on how that should work going forward.
- (b) Foundation Scotland – The Annual Report and Distribution Plan were due to be completed and returned early February as mentioned earlier.

Updates from Representative Groups

- (c) Teviot & Liddesdale Area Partnership – Councillor Ramage reported a meeting had been held on 7th November with the main theme being a talk by Ralph Roberts from NHS on ‘Time for Change’ discussed earlier in the meeting, and the fact that next year they predicted an overspend of £26m. That was why it was important for people to have their say at the consultation meeting to be held the following evening.

It was also noted that the Hawick Men’s Shed had been awarded £1,300 for computers. Place-making had also been under discussion with reports from both Denholm and Hawick on progress.

The Treasurer expressed his surprise at 21 of the 22 pupils moving on to secondary schooling had enlisted to attend Jedburgh Grammar rather than Hawick High however Councillor Ramage stated that was not considered unusual. Jedburgh also had a new campus and most pupils followed where their friends went.

Councillor Smart advised that the next round for applications to Pot A and Pot B had a deadline of 9th January 2024. Applications would then be assessed in February and approved at the T&L Area Partnership meeting brought forward to March.

- (d) A7 Action Group – Stuart Beck advised he awaited hearing back from Bear Scotland’s Tommy Deans on a site visit date. He also reported that group awaited hearing from Councillor Smart regarding the failed booking of the Town Hall raised at HCC’s last meeting. Councillor Smart advised no update as yet.
- (e) Hawick Common Good – The next meeting would be held on 22nd November at 10am.
- (f) Wind farms – The Chair advised that Jamie Leslie, Project Manager from Muirhall Energy had left that company and his role would be filled by the Senior Project Manager, Kelly Wyness who stated he would be happy to attend a future HCC meeting to provide updates on progress with Teviot Wind Farm.

With regard to Pines Burns Wind Farm, the Chair reported that the blade now stationary at Selkirk Golf Club would move again at 9.30am the following morning, and arrive at Homebase Roundabout at 10.30am, leave there at 10.50am and arrive at Morrisons

Roundabout at 11.35am and onto site. Councillor McAteer and the Chair had been interviewed by Border TV for that night's programme, with both advising that the transportation of blades and other materials had paralysed the town and would continue to do so until completion. It had taken 3 weeks to have 2 blades taken to their end locations.

The Secretary asked about any progress with agreement on Community Benefits and the Chair advised that a meeting date with the Developer remained outstanding.

- (g) Hawick Common Riding Committee – Nothing further to report.
- (h) Hawick Reivers – The Secretary reported good progress with preparations and funding opportunities were being sourced.
- (i) SBCCN – Wilson George reported he had attended a meeting the previous Thursday and SBC had under review how that Network should operate going forward. Councillor Richards advised that the general consensus was that the Network in its current format did not appear to be working, and it looked like views received were favouring operating on a locality basis.

14. Correspondence – The Secretary advised of a letter received from the A7 Action Group seeking a donation towards their operating expenses. A request had been made to determine what funding that group had and the purpose for which any donations would be used. The Secretary, however, then referred to other correspondence received from SBC on the recent review of Annual Support Grants to Community Councils, which clearly stated that our Annual Support Grants must be used for our operations and CCs were no longer permitted to pass funds from the Annual Support Grants to other groups by way of grant or donation. In her view, that meant HCC would not be permitted to give any donation. Duncan Taylor asked if it were possible to signpost the A7 Action Group to other funding routes, and the Secretary advised that SBC had stated their Community Engagement Officers would be available for any groups seeking funding. A response would be sent to the A7 Group advising of that availability.

The Chair advised that previous funding years ago to that Group had been from HCC2 account from funds raised by HCC itself. Presently HCC did not have any funds in that account.

The Secretary advised that SBC had issued its Review of the Scheme for Community Councils and the many ancillary documents to go with that reviewed Scheme. HCC members had been provided with a copy of all documentation, and a decision would require to be made on how these documents would be given appropriate consideration to allow HCC's response to SBC by their deadline date of Friday 12th January 2024. That may be by way of a short-term sub-group however the Vice-Chair suggested we may be able to start that discussion at the next Christmas Event meeting given there were not many outstanding actions for consideration that night.

It was noted that a review of HCC's Constitution and preparation of an Equality Statement and Complaints Procedure would be required to ensure compliance with that reviewed Scheme. The Secretary would contact Members for their views in due course, albeit HCC were very busy at the present time given the oncoming Christmas Market and progressing with a new CCTV system and reinstatement of the Resilience Group.

15. AOCB –

- (a) Jock Campbell enquired as to why rugby clubs had the use of the 3G pitch at Volunteer Park for free whilst the football clubs required to pay. He believed the charge was £62 per

hour with £20 on top for use of the floodlights per session. That meant in excess of £1k each month which was not affordable. There had also been an issue recently where all use had required to be cancelled. Duncan Taylor declared an interest, as a Hawick Youth Football member.

Councillor McAteer understood that Live Borders had inadvertently not completed relevant paperwork impacting on insurance cover for playing on that pitch and that was the reason for cancellation of playing there for a short period.

In relation to use of the pitch for rugby, he went on to advise there was an agreement in place with the Volunteer Park Sports Club who had inherited rights regarding rugby use of the pitch and football clubs required to pay a hire charge. On 1ST April charges were increased from £91 to £96 (5.2% increase). Clubs received a preferred rate of £78 and Juniors received a discount to £62. He advised that he was asking the same questions as raised by Jock Campbell as to why those high charges were being levied by Live Borders, and whilst he recognised they were barely keeping their head above water, that situation did not help the local football clubs. Alternative sources of funding needed to be looked at by the football clubs to help them. Councillor McAteer was in possession of hire charges across Scotland and those levied here were similar, if not a bit lower but he conceded the matter needed to be looked at.

Duncan Taylor advised that he had applied and obtained funding of £3,600 previously which had resulted in more teams being able to participate. In allowing players to play, that kept those youngsters from negative activity and meant healthier lifestyles. However, it was a constant cycle having to continually seek funding from the Common Good, which ultimately went straight back to Live Borders and a solution had to be found.

- (b) Councillor McAteer advised that SBC's Executive Committee would meet the following day and hopefully agreement would be reached on a 10% increase on Annual Support Grants for Community Councils and that coupled with reductions in insurance cover and an increase in pathways funding would be a step in the right direction to help. Festival Grants and a report on grassed spaces and headstones would also be under consideration, and it would be a very important meeting he thought.
- (c) Councillor McAteer referred to the railings mentioned earlier in the meeting on Morrisons roundabout and was happy to be able to report 'hot of the press' that replacement railings were in situ at the Hawick Depot. Likely timescale for replacement was by the end of January 2024.

16. Date of next meeting – The next monthly meeting of HCC would be held on Monday, 11th December 2023 within the Lesser Town Hall, Hawick starting at 6.30pm.