
Hawick Community Council



MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL held on Monday 8th April 2024 within Lesser Town Hall, Hawick

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

There were 6 members of the public in attendance. Graham Ford represented on behalf of the Hawick Paper, Keith Johnson and Gordon Muir on behalf of the Town Team, and Colin Hope on behalf of Hawick Development Trust.

- 1. Chair's Opening Remarks** – The Chair welcomed everyone to the April Meeting of HCC, stating it was nice to be back in the Lesser Town Hall following meetings in Hawick High School since the start of the year.

The Chair expressed sadness at the passing of ex-Chairman of HCC, Ian Turnbull. Ian had been a very active and diligent member of HCC a few years back and had also been involved in many other groups within the town as well as being past Chairman of the A7 Action Group. He will certainly be missed by all those who knew him. HCC's condolences were expressed to his wife Pat and his family at this sad time.

The Chair went on to advise that HCC held its Spring Clean-up the day before (7th April) in some very inclement and poor weather. A small, but very enthusiastic group, had set off from the Common Haugh to clean central areas of the town. That team certainly made a significant difference to the places visited, in particular at Tannage Close. He thanked in particular the members of the public who turned out to help – Graham Ford, James Quirk, Richard Tyler, Keith Johnson and John Hogg. Their support was very much appreciated by HCC members in attendance.

The baton moved on in the afternoon to Hornshole Greenway, where volunteers there cleaned up part of the Greenway and again made a big difference to the litter lying there.

Roughly in total for both the morning and afternoon's work, around 60 black bags of rubbish were deposited at the recycling centre. That meant 60 bags of rubbish taken off our town's streets by volunteers in terrible weather conditions. Townsfolk were responsible for that rubbish and those responsible should be ashamed.

He reminded everyone in attendance that the meeting would be recorded by HCC and by Graham Ford 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 Members Braden George and John Wilkinson and Councillors Marshall and Ramage.
4. **Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of 11th March 2024** – The previously circulated Minutes of the last meeting were approved as an accurate record of the meeting - Proposed for adoption by Wilson George and Seconded by Jim Adams.

The Secretary advised approval of the Minutes were subject to a change in spelling of Keith Johnstone to Keith Johnson. Euan Welsh also highlighted what he considered may be an inaccuracy at Item 9: Town Team Update. It should be clarified that the £7m funding available was for across the whole of the Borders and not just for Hawick.

5. **Matters arising –**

Slabbed area outside Lowrie Properties – Councillors had been requested to try to determine who was responsible for that area of ground. There was no update available however and that matter was continued.

Parking at Teviot Health Centre – Councillor McAteer advised of an offer he had made to NHS Borders and the Health Centre Manager to meet onsite regarding parking management, and that meeting had taken place. It had come to light, however, that NHS Borders were not interested in doing anything regarding the parking area as they did not see that as a priority and had no monies to spend anyway. They had no intention of reinstating barriers there as a control to only permit patient parking for those attending the Health Centre.

Regarding SBC's paid parking area, there was a long-term agreement in place between SBC and the NHS for 12 vehicles paid parking. It had been suggested that paid parking be extended to the whole of that parking area, however the NHS did not wish their patients to be charged and therefore that suggestion was not accepted by NHS. So, in effect, without NHS approval, there could be no changes made. The problem would only get worse and it could only be hoped that there may be a change of heart at some point in the future.

Railings to Wilton Lodge Park Gates – The Chair advised he was pleased to report these were now in hand to be painted prior to the Common Riding and would greatly tidy that area.

Mote Park – Additional lighting at bottom area – Councillor McAteer advised he had a proposal back from SBC officers for additional lighting but that was stated to be for the side of the school. He had put that offer back to Officers however stating that whilst additional lighting at the side of the school would be fine, what he had originally asked for was additional lighting at the bottom Liddesdale Road side. There was a cost issue and he agreed that whilst additional lighting to the side of the school might help, that was not where he had requested the lighting to be added. He would follow up on that with SBC Officers and report back in due course.

James Wilson Statue – fingers replacement – Councillor McAteer advised that the fingers had been replaced once before following recovery of those. Unfortunately, on the second occasion of being vandalised they had not been recovered. Beltane Studios, Peebles had been engaged to provide a cost of replacement fingers or it may even require to be a full hand, but he gave assurance that matter was being progressed.

6. **Hawick High School – Senior Pupil Update** – Due to school holidays, there was no update to the meeting.
7. **Police Scotland Reports** - As reports had only been received late afternoon that day, and some members may not have had the opportunity to review these, the Chair requested that members report any concerns or queries to the Secretary for onward submission to Sergeant Granger.

Duncan Taylor commented that following previously being highlighted by HCC, he had happily noted that the CAT team had responded, and vehicles parking within the Ambulance spaces at our Health Centres had been subject to ticketing.

The Chair also thanked Councillors McAteer and Cox for forwarding HCC's continued concerns regarding illegal parking on the High Street and Oliver Place, to the CAT meeting that morning. Councillor Cox advised that the Police Scotland reports held further information on that issue and the work of the CAT team.

8. **Treasurer's Report – March 2024** – The Treasurer reported an opening balance of £7,109 and closing balance of £7,563.14.

HCC1 account started with a balance of £3,179 and funding for HCC Members' First Aid Course was received of £419.60, resulting in a Closing Balance reported of £3,598.60. It was noted however that Bank Interest had since preparation of the March report been received of £34.54. Accounts had been forwarded to the Examiner, and those would include that bank interest and therefore a closing balance of £3,633.14. From that balance there remained £1,566.67 ring-fenced from Fallago funding for pathways. Thought should be given to pathways in need of repair where that money could then be utilised. Williestruther Loch may be an option as previously highlighted.

He expressed his concerns at the time taken, being some 5-6 weeks at times, from being advised of the funding being approved and receiving monies to account. That issue had been raised previously with SBC but did not seem to show any improvement.

Christmas Lights/Event Account showed a starting and closing balance of £957.55. The electricity bill for powering of Christmas 2023 lights remained awaited.

Hawick in Bloom showed a starting and closing balance of £2,823.74. Proceeds from their coffee morning held the previous Saturday would be added next month.

Finally, the Community Fund Foundation Scotland had a balance of £148.71.

There were no questions raised, and the Treasurer's Report was approved.

9. Town Team – Place Planning – Update from Keith Johnson, Chair & Gordon Muir –

HCC's Chair advised that from the very successful 'Have Your Say Day' sessions held last year, a Town Team had been established to take forward ideas for a Hawick Place Plan. He welcomed the Town Team Chair, Keith Johnson and Gordon Muir to the meeting to provide their Update.

Keith Johnson advised following on from the Have Your Say Day sessions, there had been a lot more information added from some 17 events held within the Town Hall, Burnfoot Hub, local schools, online sessions, supermarket events and so on. More recently and following on from developing the draft Place Plan and display boards, there had been various sessions held displaying those boards, including at the February HCC Meeting in the High School. Other consultations had also been held in the Library, with the boards continually moved around different locations displaying the draft Plan. Stakeholder events had also been held with both individuals and with groups directly involved with the proposed projects. A very well-produced business survey had also been made available for businesses to provide their views.

Engagement with two different age-groups of High School pupils and those attending Escape Youth Café had taken place, and a full day session within the Evergreen Hall. A town map displayed along with the Place Plan Boards received much interest from those attending. Consultants from the Paul Hogarth Group were also in attendance that day to answer questions. There was a stall with information for people to look at and raise questions also at the recent Reivers Market. So, all in all, a lot of information put out into the community and they had received a further 389 surveys from those consultations. That information had now been forwarded to the Paul Hogarth Company and to Atkins Realis, the two Consultant Companies dealing with the Place Plan. They would now work up the next draft Plan from that further information received. A Town Investment Plan would also be included with that next draft.

All of that would then be provided to the Town Team for their members to provide comments on, and any amendments or additions would then be provided for inclusion before being sent to SBC on 16th May. There would be a further review, taking account of SBC's comments and any others received, before going to the Borderlands Board on 28th June. It would be for that Board to then determine what projects they considered worthy of going forward. There was still some work to do before getting to that stage of submission to the Borderlands Board, but that hopefully provided a rough timeline on the next stages.

Gordon Muir advised that over the last 18 months, the Town Team had carried out as comprehensive a consultation as they possibly could, particularly with operating on a shoe-string budget. It would have been impossible to reach everyone, but he considered they had covered a really good cross-section and wide range of people as was possible.

Stuart Mactaggart asked once the Borderlands Board had considered everything following submission to them on 28th June, and whatever projects met with their approval, when would funding for approved projects then be expected.

Keith advised that would very much depend on what the project was. It may be that funding for some smaller projects would come quicker than that for any larger ones. For Scottish Borders area, Borderlands funding was all new. Dumfries & Galloway had more experience, and he would be happy to get in touch with that authority to see if any gauge on timescales for funding could be forthcoming.

Gordon Muir talked about the 'low-hanging fruit' projects which he clarified were perhaps projects which for instance did not require any planning permission and had the higher costs attached but were lower-level projects with lesser costs and so could be carried out for instance by volunteers. Those lower-level projects may indeed be quicker to receive funding and also be quicker to complete.

Colin Hope, also a member of the Town Team, advised that it had to be borne in mind the pot of money was to be divided across the 4 main Border towns and the allocated budget for Hawick for year 1 would only be c.£67k. The bulk of money available would be for years 2, 3 and 4 etc. Expectations would need to be managed, as nothing major was likely to happen quickly.

Keith agreed that the larger projects would be further down the line, and it had also to be borne in mind that there were other funding streams to source, as even with the share of Borderlands funding that alone would not cover the 40 or so projects identified. They had been advised that other funders would need to be looked at.

The HCC Chair asked at what stage the public would be consulted again and whether that would be before it went to SBC or perhaps before it went to the Borderlands Board. Keith advised that again the process was all new to them but at this stage, they were not sure what SBC would come back with. The Consultants would do their

very best to ensure the criteria for Borderlands Funding were met e.g. social and economic and legal factors etc.

Colin advised there was a 25-day stand still period and it had been discussed by Town Team Members to have information circulated through everyone's doors at that stage. He agreed that consultation had to be done.

The Treasurer raised concerns that we were now some 14 months down the road, with many projects identified but not really that much further forward, and as yet no proof of any monies forthcoming. Monies had also been spent on Consultants. Keith confirmed that Consultants costs were from a different fund source. The Treasurer advised that he was not decrying the process, with many townsfolk speaking about projects, but it was time at least to try and press forward with even a couple of the less costly projects, to show progress being made. Keith confirmed that there would be smaller projects which may be able to be funded out-with Borderlands Funding and that funding would allow quicker completions.

The Treasurer went on to say that many people in the town were completely fed up with the Flood Protection works and it would be good if that focus could then perhaps be turned, if they could see some of the smaller projects actually being done. Keith agreed, and the Town Team did not wish to carry out more consultation and over-consult so to speak, so they needed to get the Place Plan finalised and progress with funding opportunities.

Gordon Muir said he wanted to clarify that the Place Plan and the projects identified would not mean an end, as projects would continue to be added to in the future.

It was noted that the next Town Team Meeting would be held on 10th April.

The Chair thanked the Town Team members for their update.

10. Public Forum & Town Issues –

6-way Traffic Lights at Morrisons Roundabout - The Chair stated he had been approached by frustrated townsfolk regarding the 6-way traffic lights and road works at the Morrisons roundabout on Friday morning past, asking if that work had been scheduled, and what the works being carried out were for. Those lights and works had caused utter chaos right through the town – the High Street, Weensland Road, Wilton Hill and so on.

Councillor McAteer advised that those works had been planned but unfortunately appeared not to have been co-ordinated properly. Co-ordination of all the works happening around the town had been raised as an issue with SBC. Notice was provided regarding works taking place but unless those works were co-ordinated and a whole overview of other works within the town taken into account, then that notice appeared not to be very worthwhile. Councillors were pushing not just for notice of works but co-ordination of all works as effectively the Utility Companies just did what they wanted with little consideration to other works happening. It was little wonder

townsfolk were fed up. He had been party to conversations with Utility Companies, to little effect but there definitely needed to be more structure to better co-ordinating works to be carried out. The main problems did lie with the Utility Companies.

Stuart Mactaggart asked if it could be presumed that the way Utility Companies worked then, would have an impact all over Scotland and not just within Hawick and other Border towns. Councillor McAteer advised that a communication role appeared to be in place but not a co-ordination role, and he considered that much more could be done in terms of co-ordination of works, and that included transporting of the wind turbines as well and other road works going on around those timescales. It was little wonder townsfolk were frustrated and fed up. He confirmed however the matter of co-ordination was on SBC's Agenda.

Wilson George advised that he did receive notification of works but could not recall any notification of those works happening, which confirmed what Councillor McAteer had been saying.

Councillor Cox agreed with Councillor McAteer, and she held up a list of SBC's Planned Works. She said however what that list lacked, was specific detail on dates for those works to proceed. Councillor McAteer agreed that there were only projected dates identified but nevertheless advised that list of works should be viewed as a good news story, with over £1.5m being spent to upgrade streets and roadways around Hawick. The problems arose when Scottish Water and other Utilities came along to carry out works, and that was his point, it was then the lack of co-ordination of all works taking place which caused the chaos and frustrations.

John Campbell said that had long since been happening and recalled seeing holes being dug up in the road by one company and then re-laid but very shortly thereafter the Water Board or Gasmen would come along and dig up the same hole for their purposes. He agreed co-ordination was key.

Active Travel Network – Meeting with North Bridge Street Residents - Wilson George referred to a meeting with North Bridge Street residents, with works planned in that area, and the public being up in arms. The Vice-Chair recalled that was in regard to Active Travel Network works and at the last update to HCC by Conor Price, he had assured North Bridge Street residents who were in attendance that nothing would happen with those plans. Last week a Road Closure had been issued and works started. Councillor McAteer confirmed those works were stopped, and at the meeting referred to, what was being proposed was certainly not what he had been led to believe would be happening in North Bridge Street. He understood from a previous meeting, that the Active Travel Network was not required in North Bridge Street and on Thursday night past he saw an Active Travel Network in North Bridge Street – one lane effectively for bikes with the southbound cyclists effectively to use the roadway. Understandably that meeting did not go well and it was back to the drawing board. Most importantly, he did not believe that the community of that area had been properly consulted, and that needed to be done.

Road Closures – Communication continued - The Treasurer continuing on the theme of communication and co-ordination, and referred to a road closure notice received regarding resurfacing works at Rosebank Road starting that day (8th April). The notice stated that traffic would be closed from the Auld Man's Seat to the junction with Renwick Terrace for the first 2 days, and the following 2 days the road would be closed from the Renwick Terrace junction to Burnflat. Traffic would then require to use Crumhaughhill Road as a diversion whilst the road from the Renwick Terrace junction to Burnflat was resurfaced. He had used that road today, only to find, without notice the contractor had started resurfacing works in reverse order to that contained within the Notice. Councillor McAteer requested he be advised in an email of that, in order to take forward to SBC.

Former Buccleuch Hotel - John Campbell advised that a pane of glass was missing from the former Buccleuch Hotel and he was concerned that pigeons would be accessing there. Councillor McAteer advised that he had reported that matter to Environmental Health Section as the door was also open at the front. His concern was kids with any ill-intent accessing that building too and the potential risk for fire.

Buccleuch Road Toucan Crossing & Resurfacing Works - The Vice-Chair referred to Buccleuch Road and a 75metre section proposed by Bear Scotland for resurfacing works for insertion of a new toucan crossing at that location. The road was to close for 2 nights. It appeared, he said, that they had not resurfaced all of that section of road but had nevertheless painted some zig zag lines right up a crack in the road which it was thought would ultimately end up as a pothole. Councillor McAteer confirmed that was a Bear Scotland issue and should be raised by the A7 Action Group with Bear Scotland. He thought there were more works to be completed, but that matter should be addressed directly with Bear Scotland.

Toucan Crossing Duke Street - John Campbell enquired when the toucan crossing would be inserted at the top of Duke Street. Councillor Smart advised that would be done following completion of all the wind turbine blades being transported through that area, as well as all other works completed around there.

Graffiti - The Treasurer reported that the graffiti had been removed last Thursday from the wall at the High School, which was good news. He was unsure if other graffiti had also been removed.

Hornshole Greenway – Gordon Muir apologised that he had misled HCC members at its last meeting by saying that Hornshole was the responsibility of Hawick Common Riding Committee when in fact that had never been the case and responsibility lay with Hornshole Greenway.

He wanted to express once again his profound concerns regarding large lorries continuing to use that road and crossing the bridge there. That afternoon he and John Hogg had been over-seeding wild flowers at the Memorial and whilst there, a large lorry had arrived clearly exceeding the weight limit. Lorries continued to make a mockery of signage and something more had to be done. It was noted that 2 further bollards had recently been damaged, and enquiries were being followed up to determine responsibility. Unless SBC gave backing to reduce the weight limit to 3 tons so as to stop those lorries using that road, it may be that all bollards would need to be removed. In that instance last week, the lorry who took out those bollards had

proceeded to do a 3-point turn, then drove up the steep hill and took a right turn onto the main road, in the face of oncoming traffic.

Michael Robertson asked for confirmation that new signage was in place, which was confirmed. Councillor Cox asked what the weight limit was and it was noted that was 10 ton. Gordon Muir advised it had been reduced to 3 ton but SBC then raised again. It was suggested perhaps a height restriction be placed with a bar across the road to prevent high vehicle lorries to access or to make use of other traffic management measures available. It was the consensus that something more had to be done by SBC.

John Campbell advised that workmen had attended at a property in Branhholme Road and dug up a drain there but residents were complaining they had never returned. He was not aware if that were a sewage problem but when raining, the hole had apparently been filling up. Workmen had come from Glasgow and may be Scottish Water. It was suggested that the residents be advised to make contact again with whoever they reported the issue to in the first instance to chase up on workmen's return.

11. Reports from Sub-Groups

- (a) Christmas Event – nothing to report at this time.
- (b) Hawick in Bloom – The Secretary was happy to report that 37 businesses along the main High Street and central areas had confirmed they would participate with paying for hanging baskets again this year. Invoices for hanging baskets would be issued within the next few days. Plants for the hanging baskets and the planters were due in May.

A very successful Coffee Morning had been held on Saturday, 30th March when profits realised were £546, which was an excellent amount in today's economic climate. Special thanks were extended to Kat Yule of Kats Corner Shop for donations of tea, coffee, milk and sugar, and to Morrisons for supply of biscuits. Also to Trinity Church for use of their Hall, and to the excellent kitchen staff Pat Yule, Pat Wight and Anne Adams, the ladies who helped with preparation of teas, coffees etc. Irene George was also thanked for her help, as being out-with the Hawick in Bloom volunteers who had also helped greatly on the day.

- (c) CCTV – The Vice-Chair reported on meetings held with SBC Officers, with the last update from Councillor Ramage being that SBC's proposal for Hawick was that 16 existing cameras would be replaced at a cost of c.£100k. The cost of the proposal by HCC to install 32 cameras was c.£150k for double the number of cameras, taking account of hot spots identified following public consultation and which would allow monitoring of river levels to alert on potential flooding. At the present time, there was therefore a chasm of what HCC were proposing against that now being proposed by SBC. He understood that another meeting was to be organised by Naomi Sweeney of SBC

Councillor Cox advised she had the costings and the difference in costs appeared to be that SBC were looking at those being spread over a 10-year period, and a

cost of £1.7m across the whole of the Borders, and as stated, to cover 16 cameras for Hawick.

- (d) Resilience – The Vice-Chair advised there had been emails received over the previous weekend in relation to Storm Kathleen however SBC had not considered it necessary to open the Bunker as a result of down grading of wind speeds, albeit at Craik those had been 80mph. There was a warning out for that night and the following day as a result of expected heavy rain and a call would be made by SBC on whether the Bunker would require to be opened. If so, HCC's Resilience Team would liaise with Councillor Marshall and the Flood Protection Group.
- (e) Fundraising – the Vice-Chair advised that it had been planned to have a Farmer's Market in the town on 4th May, however it had transpired that many of the stallholders already had another event to attend that day. Accordingly that date may require to be postponed if sufficient stallholders were not available and given the onset of Common Riding events, the Sub-group would get together and determine when best that Farmer's Market might now be held.
- (f) Planning – The Chair advised there were no major planning issues to report. Only one application had been received during the month, which had been straightforward.
- (g) Bandstand Events – Duncan Taylor advised no further update at this time.

12. Reports from Community Partners

- (a) Hawick Development Trust – Colin Hope advised there were quite a few projects currently being worked on but sometimes it felt that progressing on those was like wading through treacle.

He reported that the Trust were working on a Tourism Strategy document for the next 10-15 years and as a baseline to look at where Hawick was and what it needed in terms of bedspaces, and what it had as attractions and so forth. That baseline Brief would hopefully be done by the end of that week and he would report back to HCC on that.

With regard to the deep clean for the High Street, HDT were awaiting a price from a contractor on that. They had streamlined the process for that which had originally proposed hiring or buying of machinery in favour of obtaining a price from a contractor to do that work. Hopefully that work could take place sooner rather than later, subject to funding.

There had been a couple of new major projects brought to the Trust over the last few weeks – the first being direct contact from the owner of 80 High Street which was the former Liberal Club and for the Trust to take ownership of that property. In parallel with that, he referred to the Bridge Guest House, currently under the care of the Flood Protection Group albeit under SBC's ownership. He understood that Group were nearing completion of their flood works, and that Guest House would then be returned to SBC for use for the benefit of the town. That had moved on somewhat, and Colin advised there was now agreement with SBC for their Architects Team to help the Trust to write up a proposal for that property. The draft proposal was there, which was pretty well detailed, however, there

would need to be consultation on what the building should be used for, and then taken forward.

In terms of funding and monies required for such projects, he had been in early discussions with the Scottish Land Fund, who would primarily be the source of funding for buying private properties, and then asset transfer from the Council. Their funds were constrained and their criteria for obtaining funding was getting tighter and tighter. Getting a proposal together to the Land Fund that they would be confident with – generally the costs would not be any issue – but any proposal would need to include for that building being taken into proper care and for proper redevelopment. For redevelopment of for example, Bridge Guest House, would be c.£1.5m and that money could not be got until ownership of that building had been secured. If you cannot then get the money from the Land Fund to buy the building, you then cannot get to that next redevelopment stage, and that all ends up going in circles.

Colin advised, as per his previous reports to HCC, he had been pursuing SBC and SoSE to recruit a Project Officer or more particularly an Economic Development Officer for Hawick, to pull all projects together, source the funding required, appoint consultants to take projects forward and satisfy funding criteria and so on. He had come up however against a brick wall, with SBC advising that would need to be done on a project-by-project basis. He had been able to demonstrate success in 2019 following the allocation of £70k to Hawick for a one-year trial to develop that type of role. That argument had been dismissed pretty much as not having worked in Galashiels. The point he tried to make was that development needed then in comparison to that now which was much greater, there had to be movement on having that role funded. SBC's argument was that they could not fund that for Hawick and then for the other towns, but they would see what they could do on a project-by-project basis.

If that role could not be developed, then folks were going to get increasingly frustrated at nothing happening. It was Colin's view that there would be nothing major happening in Hawick, as HDT were a team of volunteers and were doing what they could on projects. He expressed concern at what would happen with the Town Team projects and who would take those forward. Taking the example of The Arches initiative, he questioned who would be able to work on that proposal. Even for 2 years, having an Economic Development Officer work on projects would generate a revenue stream, which would enable the Trust to then take on and fund that role to the benefit of the whole of Hawick and also provide support for other Hawick projects. He was getting nowhere and felt he could not take that matter further. He had met with Councillor McAteer that afternoon about what he considered needed to happen now. Town-wide effort was needed to take further, even up to Hollyrood or Westminster for a fundamental change. The problem was that capital monies would be provided to redevelop the likes of the Liberal Club but not the money to work the proposals on the revenue side of things. That was a strategic change needed and that would only happen if the town as a whole moved on that. There were 4 Councillors in attendance at the

meeting, and Colin requested their support on that front and also support from HCC. It had to be put to all funders SoSE, SBC, Holyrood, and the question asked of them how they expected projects to happen without that role being put in place. To put matters into perspective, there were in excess of 200+ community groups within the town, so taking hours worked per week for each of those groups, could equate possibly to c. £1.9m value of work put in by volunteers, and yet it was not possible to obtain funding of £35k pa for that one post. That seemed ludicrous and the matter he said needed tackling at a higher level.

Councillor McAteer agreed with Colin's point that there was a lack of willingness and understanding of what funding was available and then how to actually access that. At the moment when that question were asked, you were pointed to someone who could advise where to source, and actually the gap of being told where to go for funding and how to then take that forward, needed to be bridged. He agreed that volunteers were greatly relied on but the stage had now been reached for actively seeking funding for projects to get those moving forward. Clarity was required on whether money would be forthcoming or not as, at the end of the day, there was much effort going into projects by volunteers, but to proceed only to then be told there were no monies available would be an utter waste of time. A bit of realism he said was now needed to get potential funders, with a view to being made aware whether funding was available or if it were an asset transfer, that was doable, because certainty needed to be had at the outset. There were many projects identified but there was a clear blockage in progressing further and he agreed with what Colin was trying to achieve.

John Campbell enquired whether Colin had engaged with the local MSP or MP. Colin confirmed that he had spoken with John Lamont, MP who in turn had indicated he would engage with SBC but that was before he himself had spoken with SBC, and so he had required to hold him back on that, to allow him to speak with SBC first. He had not spoken with John Lamont since. Decisions had been made at that higher level to award funding, but unfortunately there had not been consideration given to the recruitment of staff to get projects over the line. He would be speaking to Councillor McAteer again on how best to get the likes of those hierarchy together to meet round the table.

Councillor Smart advised she would forward Colin the email about an Architectural Heritage Fund, who would provide development grants. That may be appropriate for the likes of the Liberal Club.

Duncan Taylor advised he was concerned about having buildings transformed and lack of potential support in the longer term for those, and the lack of revenue remaining available. He gave the example of long-term lottery funding to Burnfoot Community Hub but which now had restricted usage. He was interested to learn where the revenue then came from in such instances when interest and usage then dropped and they were then not viable in the market place.

Colin responded to advise if the Trust took on such a project, it would be for them to make a business case to ensure viability. That would be needed anyway to secure the funding in the first place and it would need to be demonstrated that whoever was taking on that business was a viable organisation.

Keith Johnson advised that in terms of Borderlands funding, viability of any organisation played a big part in securing funding, and reassurance was required that any project would be profitable and sustainable in the longer term.

Euan Welsh requested an update from HDT on the Welcome Hosts. Colin advised they were looking now at local shops, businesses and hospitality sector providing a year-round service. There had been an initial meeting held with a few of those traders and a core of those attending were quite happy to take part. They were now working up some details on how that would happen. They did not target the whole town but only a few shops, and different types of outlets to start off with.

Councillor McAteer advised, going back to the very good question raised by Duncan, it would always be a challenge to those managing projects and therefore that question was one hard to answer. Some funders would allow keeping funding, but Duncan was correct in that a revenue stream longer term was necessary. He referred to a project in Newcastleton derived from poor housing which had been turned into a centre including for educational purposes but they were now up against it to meet monthly costs. It was indeed very challenging to maintain a guaranteed revenue stream and a hard question to answer.

Gordon Muir advised the Town Team were still waiting to hear the general recommendations within the Place Plan from the Consultants to suggest what the cornerstone of Hawick's economy could be going forward. They were at a real watershed moment. Tourism would also play a big part in that, but once that was known, that may help answer part of Duncan's concerns.

- (b) Foundation Scotland – nothing further to report, pending notification of grant for 2024/25.

Updates from Representative Groups

- (c) Teviot & Liddesdale Area Partnership – The Chair reported a meeting held on 26th March, with good attendance from Hawick HCC members. An around the table review of the Area Partnership had been held, with many interesting points raised which Clare Malster, SBC's Participation Officer would take forward to SBC.

The Chair reported that the T&L Neighbourhood Support Fund for 2024/25 would be £42,465 equally split between Pot A and Pot B with each Pot then having £21,232.50. HCC and Burnfoot received 2 shares, equating to £4,246 each for grants for locally constituted groups to apply for funding within their respective areas.

Finally, Keith Johnson, had given an update on the Town Team, which had been well received by members attending, not only from Hawick but from other T&L Partnership members also attending.

- (d) A7 Action Group – Stuart Mactaggart advised there were no updates to report.
- (e) Hawick Common Good – Nothing to report.
- (f) Wind Farms – The Chair advised that representatives from the Pines Burns and proposed Teviot Wind Farms had been invited to attend a meeting on Saturday, 20th April in Bonchester to move forward on community benefits. An update would be provided to a future HCC meeting.

On the delivery of blades for Pines Burns, delivery was now extended into April due to various delays. They had originally hoped that all blades would be delivered within 38 days and we were now into around 180 days with more blades yet to be transported.

- (g) Hawick Common Riding Committee – No update available in absence of Braden George.
- (h) Hawick Reivers – The Secretary congratulated the Hawick Reivers Committee on yet another very successful Festival, despite challenging high wind levels on the day. They had received great support from both townsfolk and visitors alike. A great amount of volunteering work went in to ensure the event could proceed. The Committee had held their debrief meeting, when minor improvements were highlighted, but all in all, the event had once again been a great showcase for Hawick.
- (i) SBCCN – No update, as SBC yet to develop on how the Network would function going forward.

13. Correspondence – There was no further correspondence to report.

14. AOCB

Location of Defibrillators in Hawick - Councillor Smart referred to an email she had sent late on that day regarding her attempting to establish the most effective means for the public to find a defibrillator in the town. She had determined two excellent sources of information – An App called Crowdsay and the British Heart Foundation website. Both however were not completely comprehensive and one glaring omission from both of those sources was HCC's defibrillator at the side of the Town Hall in Cross Wynd. She requested that an HCC member take on the responsibility of having that defibrillator registered on the App and website mentioned.

Following those two sites being updated, Councillor Smart indicated she would like then to liaise with the Hawick Paper to have some sort of campaign to highlight any other defibrillators that may have been missed in the town – there were currently over 40 defibs in the area – and then to get information out there regarding these 2 sites. Both sites would use the searcher's location to find the nearest defibrillator to them. She thought it would be good to have information on HCC's website linking to those 2 sites, and on HCC's Facebook page too. Notices could be placed in public places and perhaps pubs and restaurants and cafes too.

The Chair asked if sites highlighted whether defibrillators were 24/7 accessible and Councillor Smart confirmed they did. Searchers would be told only where their nearest defibrillator was, and not every single one in the area. Her one plea for that night, was to ensure that an HCC member took on responsibility for registering the Cross Wynd defibrillator on the Heart Foundation website and Crowdsay App.

Borders Railway Meeting – Councillor McAteer confirmed that further to reporting in the Hawick Paper, he would also be attending the forthcoming Ministerial meeting regarding the Borders Railway.

- 15. Date of next meeting** – It was agreed that the next meeting of HCC would be the AGM to be held on Monday, 13th May 2024 starting at 6pm within the Lesser Town Hall, immediately followed by the May Monthly Meeting.