

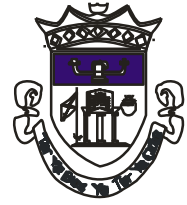
---

---

# Hawick Community Council

---

---



**MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL  
held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 within Lesser Town Hall, Hawick**

|            |   |  |
|------------|---|--|
| Present    | Cameron Knox (Chair)<br>Jim Adams (Treasurer)<br>Stuart Beck<br>Braden George<br>Stuart Mactaggart<br>Duncan Taylor | Kevin Marsh (Vice-Chair)<br>Margaret Hogg (Secretary)<br>John Campbell<br>Wilson George<br>Michael Robertson<br>John Wilkinson |
| Attending: | Councillor McAteer<br>Councillor Ramage   | Councillor Marshall  |

There were 12 members of the public in attendance including 6 representatives from Roxburgh Newshounds and Graham Ford as their mentor and attending also on behalf of the Hawick Paper

- 1. Chair's Opening Remarks** – The Chair moved on to the May Meeting of the Community Council following the AGM and welcomed members of the Roxburgh Newshounds to the meeting, whom he said were all budding reporters mentored by our own chief newshound Graham Ford. He hoped they would enjoy the meeting and he looked forward to seeing their article in due course. He advised they should feel free to ask any questions.

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 Graeme King and Euan Welsh and Councillors Cox, Richards and Smart.
- 4. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024** – The previously circulated Minutes of the last meeting were approved as an accurate record of the meeting - Proposed for adoption by Jim Adams and Seconded by Wilson George .

5. **Matters arising** – There were no matters arising from the Minutes.
6. **Hawick High School – Senior Pupil Update** – Due to Senior Pupils currently being in the midst of their exams, there was no update to the meeting.
7. **Police Scotland Reports** –
  - (a) April Reports - The secretary commented it was somewhat unusual to read that the Central Parking Office had run out of parking tickets. The Chair advised that 75 tickets had been issued Borders-wide in April, albeit that figure may have been affected due to that lack of supply. Hopefully figures would rise again in May if supplies had been restored.

The Chair went on to compliment Police Scotland for the successful drugs raid at a disused garage in Havelock Street. There had been a lot of online queries by townfolk as to what was happening with the large Police presence there. He understood the perpetrators had appeared in court and had been dealt with.

PC Fraser Mortimer then joined the meeting (after Item 9) and the Chair asked if there were any questions which members or public members wished to raise with him.

Duncan Taylor asked if the supplies were now in place for parking tickets however PC Mortimer said he did not know. The Chair said that congratulations had been made earlier to the successful drugs raid at Havelock Street, and PC Mortimer said that was due largely to intelligence from members of the public coming forward to report unusual activity in that area.

It was also noted that quite a number of mental health cases were reported, which then took more time out from dealing with actual criminality. It was asked if there was any evidence that mental health cases having to be dealt with by local Police were getting greater, which appeared to be being reported nationally. PC Mortimer advised that dealing with mental health cases did indeed take up much of the Police time, however, he was not aware that locally the numbers of cases were rising to the detriment of attending other incidents being received.

With regard to the CAT team, the Chair asked if it were from this month that team had been reduced to 6 officers and 1 Sergeant. PC Mortimer advised that indeed the team had gone down from 12 cops and 2 sergeants to that reduced number.

PC Mortimer went on to explain that the Borders had been split into 3 areas - North, South & East, basically to allow 3 pairs of 2 cops to cover. Hawick, Selkirk, Jedburgh, Kelso and St Boswells were classed as South, East was from Crailing up to Eyemouth and including Lauder and the remaining within the North.

The Chair said he had noted a campaign to recruit more Special Constables, which appeared strange that Police numbers were being cut in favour of recruiting more Special Constables to do Police work. PC Mortimer advised that they could not do Police work and were used to accompany police officers. They were not a substitute. There had been a team of Specials brought to Hawick to monitor any antisocial behaviour on the previous Saturday night, which had worked well. PC Mortimer advised that 'one shoe did not fit all' in respect of handling of people who all differed within the various Borders towns. Specials could help but they were most definitely not a substitute for local Police Officers.

A member of the public raised the matter of graffiti within the town, which seemed to be increasing. PC Mortimer advised that graffiti was being logged and investigated by a Police Officer in Hawick. He had been advised, and had not been previously aware, that graffiti artists were predominantly people in their late 20s/30s/40s and there was a record held in Glasgow of all graffiti artists, and they were apparently quite a specialist community, each with a style of their own. It was hoped from that record, the style of graffiti within the town could then be identified. CCTV cameras once resurrected could also help support catching those responsible.

Councillor Marshall advised that graffiti noted the previous week had been done with the use of lipstick and had now been cleaned off. He considered that the graffiti was primarily within built-up areas and the public had a role to play, and should be able to be relied upon, to provide information. There were many flats with windows in some of the areas targeted for graffiti, and if only one person even could be caught, the Police would then be able to do their job. He appealed that if members of the public saw anyone carrying out graffiti, they should most certainly report it. The graffiti was targeted towards flood protection walls, and we should be grateful for our Flood Protection Scheme, and not having to focus on graffiti which was an eyesore and ruining our town.

Councillor Ramage agreed and referred to a suggestion previously to have a particular panel available for graffiti, however she did not agree that would be a deterrent and work to save other areas. They would not keep to one area. The answer was indeed public reporting to catch those responsible. The public were the eyes and ears out there and who could help the Police to catch those responsible.

Councillor McAteer suggested the use of mobile CCTV cameras available from SBC and which could perhaps be used at the hot spots for graffiti for a while, to see if those responsible could be caught. Councillor Marshall agreed, and suggested the Police pursue that option with SBC to get mobile CCTV cameras put in place and the quicker the better. PC Mortimer was aware the cameras were in use

elsewhere at the present time, however, he agreed to try to progress on those being used for graffiti purposes in Hawick.

Braden George considered that education and awareness of the younger generation to be the way forward, however, PC Mortimer advised they had education programmes but the bottom line was respect, which in some cases was lacking. The Chair agreed education to be the way forward because if graffiti did not stop, it was our younger generation of today who would bear the costs. Graffiti was unfortunately a national issue and not reserved to Hawick alone. He reiterated the request that PC Mortimer take forward with the Police working with SBC to have mobile cameras installed.

(b) Proportionate Response to Crime Pilot – The Chair advised that Councillor Cox was to provide an update on that subject to the meeting, however, the briefing to Councillors by Police Scotland had been postponed from 22<sup>nd</sup> April until 28<sup>th</sup> May, and accordingly Councillor Cox would provide an update to HCC's June meeting.

**8. Treasurer's Report – April 2024** – The Treasurer reported an opening balance of £7,563.14 and closing balance of £8,950.04.

There was little movement during the month, with HCC1 Account having an opening and closing balance of £3,633.14; Christmas Events had an opening and closing balance of £957.55 and the Community Fund Foundation Scotland Account an opening and closing balance of £148.71.

Hawick in Bloom account had an opening balance of £2,823.74, with income from a Coffee Morning held of £546.90 and receipts from shops and businesses for hanging baskets of £840. There would be further income to come from hanging baskets. The closing balance of that account was accordingly £4,210.64.

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

**9. Public Forum & Town Issues –**

Riverside path from Weensland to Bridge at Johnstons - Stuart Beck queried that pathway remaining closed despite no works being carried out by Flood Protection.

The Chair advised that would be good to raise that issue at our next meeting when Conor Price and Robert Erskine from the contractors would be present. The Treasurer advised he had been around that area, and Flood Protection he considered were still working at the end of the Johnstons Bridge at the Trinity side.

Councillor McAteer undertook to attempt to get a date for re-opening from the Flood Protection Group.

Councillor Marshall advised it was his understanding that walkway should have been re-opened last year but for whatever reason that had not happened. Hopefully at HCCs next meeting, a definitive answer would be provided by Conor Price.

Grass-cutting within Cemeteries – A report had been received from SBC and had been circulated to members, and whilst it appeared that at Wilton Cemetery grass cutting would be to the second-in gravestones, that was not the case in relation to the Wellogate Cemetery, where it was stated the grass would only be cut to the first gravestone. That had been queried with SBC and Michael asked if there had been any further response. The Secretary advised that no further response had been received, and she would chase up on that.

Welcome Hosts – Following on from HDT's previous reports, and advice provided that due to lack of funding (it cost £23k each year for that initiative) the Welcome Hosts would not be in place this year. This year he explained that HDT were looking to initiate an 'Ambassador' role involving businesses and shops to provide similar information to tourists.

The Chair advised he had been approached to determine whether HCC would be willing to assume responsibility for the Welcome Hosts from next year. An immediate query raised was how HCC would then be able to fund, and the Chair agreed that would be one of the matters which would need further thoughts. He requested Members give that request their consideration and provide comments to the Secretary. It may be that the Ambassador role might work but we would need to wait to hear the outcomes of that initiative.

Marjorie McCreadie said she was pleased that someone had made that request, as she had heard from many tourists who were saddened to learn that the service was being withdrawn. She appreciated that the decision by HDT was down to funding but they had stated that they hoped to reinstate next year. Marjorie was however concerned that would not happen because if the Ambassador role turned out to be successful there would not be any walking host back on our streets she said. The Campervanning community had offered to raise funds, not for this year as too late, but were great supporters of the Welcome Hosts. There were 60,000 members of that community group, and even at £1 each, that would cover for 4 hosts for a 3-year period. It was worrying she said that publicity on this was waning, especially when she knew there were many people who wanted it. There were wind farm monies which could perhaps be used, crowdfunding, and take up of the campervanning community group offer of funding, and it would be great if those sources could be explored to ensure the Hosts were back in place next year. If some other group could take on responsibility that would be great.

Update from Robert Erskine, McLaughlin & Harvey – The Chair advised on an email update from Mr Erskine which had been circulated to members. The email stated as follows:

"The McLaughlin & Harvey Project Team for the Hawick Flood Protection Scheme (HFPS) are now in the final stages of completing remaining works in channel over the next 2 months. Please note that works are currently underway at the following locations:

- Mill Port – Access has been formed and a 20m long section of floodwall remains to be constructed at this location. There will be 6 concrete pours in total with the first planned to commence this week. Works will be completed in June.

- Mansfield Bridge – Access has been formed into the river at Mansfield Bridge to allow pile cutting, bank stabilisation and bed restoration to be completed over the next 2 to 3 weeks
- Hawick High School – Bed restoration works will commence in late May for a period of approximately 1 week. Works will be carried out from the dry side of the floodwall with pedestrian management in place along the footpath

The works will be carefully managed and monitored to ensure they comply with our CAR Licence and approved Methodology requirements.

MCLH will provide further details as the works are progressed and completed over the course of the next 2 months”.

## 10. Reports from Sub-Groups

- (a) Christmas Event – nothing to report at this time.
- (b) Hawick in Bloom – The Secretary reported a busy time for volunteers over the last couple of weeks. The wooden planters from the Station Bridge to the Tower Knowe had all had a fresh lick of paint. The paint had been kindly donated by Crown Decorating at Burnfoot Industrial Estate and grateful thanks went to Lindsay Neish and John Hogg for painting them all.

It was noted that plants had been delivered on Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> May and planted on Friday past. Unfortunately, she reported that poppy seeds had been scattered in some of the planters, and whilst that may have been a genuine attempt by someone to enhance, it should be noted that poppy seeds only served to affect plant growth severely and she urged whoever it was to please stop. As many of the seeds as possible had been removed and she hoped that practice would now not continue. There were plenty of other wild areas which would benefit from poppy seeds being planted, but not please in our planters.

Moving on to the hanging baskets, she reported those had all been filled that morning and would be rested and allowed to settle for one week before being hung on the High Street the following week. Grateful thanks went again to the 37 businesses and shops who had contributed to the costs of the hanging baskets and also to Wrights Hardware for their donation of compost supplies.

The War Memorial had received another tidy up and due to continued poor soil conditions at the front of the path leading to the Memorial, volunteers had now laid some chippy stones and a half-barrel planter on each side to visually improve that area. It was not good soil there, which was badly affected by water gathering which then went brick hard during summer months and meant plants did not survive. That, combined with dogs doing their business at that front area, needed the group to trial something new there.

The improvements and new layout at the War Memorial would be monitored, and hopefully with the aid of some repellent to dissuade dogs fouling around that area, that trial would prove successful.

- (c) CCTV – nothing to report at this time.
- (d) Resilience – nothing to report at this time.
- (e) Fundraising – the Vice-Chair advised he would shortly be organising a meeting in the next week of so with sub-group members, to progress some of the ideas for fundraising.
- (f) Planning – The Chair advised it had been very quiet on the planning front. It had been noted from the Hawick Paper that the initial refusal for change of use from a pub to a house at the former Deans Bar, had gone to appeal. It was queried why SEPA had as much power over planning decisions, however, Councillor McAteer advised that was a statutory position imposed by the Scottish Government however he was pleased to be able to confirm that the appeal had, that morning, been overturned and Deans Bar now had planning permission to proceed with that change of use, subject to some conditions imposed.

The refusal had been made under delegated powers by officers, quite properly doing their job and following the regulations which stated refusal if there was a flood risk within 200 years. Sensibly however Councillors had met with the Review Board that morning and that decision was then overturned.

- (g) Bandstand Events – Duncan Taylor firstly declared an interest due to his involvement as a Trustee of Live Music Hawick who organised entertainment for those events. He confirmed that some local artists including Devin Casson, Miwa Nagato-Apthorp, Hawick Scout Pipe Band and Hawick Sings had been booked, along with some other welcome visitors such as Rory McLeod, Cow Cow Boogie, Jenny Biddle and Joshua Burnside from Northern Ireland. There remained a couple of spots to fill, however, all was going well towards a full programme of events.

In conclusion he thanked Keith Johnson for his assistance with completion of the necessary application form and risk assessments required by Scottish Borders Council. He also requested a copy of HCC's Public Liability Insurance.

## **11. Reports from Community Partners**

- (a) Hawick Development Trust – No report received.
- (b) Foundation Scotland – The Secretary advised that HCC had now received confirmation that the Foundation Scotland Community Support Grant for 2024/25 would be £11,450.15. The Fund would now allow HCC to progress with our proposed Bandstand Events, Hawick in Bloom planting Summer & Winter, and for our Annual Christmas Event and additions to our Christmas Lights Display, with new harps to be purchased and some further string lights which needed replacement. Those events and purchases would not be possible without that funding.

### **Updates from Representative Groups**

- (c) Teviot & Liddesdale Area Partnership – Councillor Ramage confirmed the next meeting would be held on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024 within the Lesser Town Hall. It would not be possible to have a blended meeting due to ongoing technical difficulties.

The Chair advised that the T&L Neighbourhood Support Grant panel would meet

to consider Pot A applications week commencing 20<sup>th</sup> May. It was not known if any Pot B applications had been received. Councillor Ramage said she would enquire.

- (d) A7 Action Group – Stuart Mactaggart advised there had not been any meeting held since the last HCC meeting, however Marjorie McCreadie as Secretary of that group had forwarded an email to HCC, which had subsequently in turn been forwarded to HCC members, to give thought to any areas for improvement which could then be considered for inclusion in the review of the A7 Action Plan. Deadline for submissions was 6<sup>th</sup> September 2024.
- (e) Hawick Common Good – Councillor Ramage advised that the next meeting would be held on 22nd May 2024 online.
- (f) Wind Farms – The Chair advised of a meeting held of Community Councils on 20<sup>th</sup> April in Southdean Village Hall regarding community benefits, which unfortunately he had been unable to attend. He awaited an update from Philip Kerr on outcomes of that meeting. Once that was received, it would be forwarded to HCC members for information.

The Chair reported the good news that the last blade for Pines Burn Wind Farm had now been delivered, albeit much later than initially anticipated. He looked forward to roads affected being put back to rights. Councillor Marshall said it was important that all the roadways and street furniture affected across the routes be put back and reinstated properly. He offered to contact respective parties to determine some dates for reinstatements. Stuart Mactaggart stated he hoped that the damaged railings at the roundabout at Goffs would eventually be replaced as well.

Marjorie McCreadie commented that at the last meeting of the A7 Action Group on 15<sup>th</sup> March, Tommy Deans, Bear Scotland had advised they would be ready to commence reinstatement works as soon as the last blade delivery had taken place.

Councillor McAteer alluded to the works proposed to insert a new toucan crossing in Commercial Road which would mean disruption for 4 weeks in that area immediately after the Common Riding, and his concerns at the same time for works also proposed for a crossing at Mart Street. Stuart Mactaggart queried why it was necessary for a new toucan crossing to be placed in Commercial Road when the existing crossing he considered was perfectly adequate. Costs of doing that could surely be used elsewhere to benefit, e.g. sorting potholes and other issues he said. The 4-week closure would be further unwanted disruption for the town in the midst of the tourist season.

The Treasurer queried that the access to the bridge itself at that location was not wide enough to accommodate two persons – two prams together or two bikes - and so that change to him did not make sense. He went on to query what type of crossing was proposed for Albert Bridge and whether that would be a toucan. Councillor Marshall said it was his understanding that was still at the design stage for updating that crossing at that junction. He had heard nothing since December.



The Burns Club would be affected as a business at that location. Councillor Marshall said he would seek an update and report back to HCC on that. He did say that Tommy Deans from Bear was a very amenable person, and it may be that an invite should be extended to him to attend a future HCC meeting, and to make suggestions to him.

Braden George queried whether it was necessary to replace all street furniture or whether in some cases, changes made could remain. Councillor Marshall said it should not be forgotten that a major business, i.e., Morrisons, had been very badly affected by alterations and works carried out to the roundabout there. The quicker everything was back to normal, the better for the town.

A member of the public said he had been cycling the Active Travel Network many times, and it was his consideration that the crossing at the Albert Bridge was perfectly fine. Regarding the toucan proposed in Commercial Road, that was not part of the Active Travel Network with pavements either side and no cycle lane in place. Councillor Marshall suggested it might be good to have Tommy Deans attend the same meeting as Conor Price in June.

The same member of the public then raised that the children's play area at the Wee Haugh had been one of the first parts to be completed yet was still fenced off and unable to be used. He said there may still be some landscaping in that area to be completed, however, could not see any reason for its continued closure. That would hopefully be opened soon and, if not, could be addressed at our June meeting with Conor Price.

Councillor McAteer advised it was his understanding that regarding McLaughlin & Harvey there was not one section of the Hawick Flood Protection as yet signed off as completed.

Finally referring back to the Welcome Hosts, it was asked by the public member whether it would be possible to ask McLaughlin & Harvey for monies given all the disruption to Hawick.

Duncan Taylor advised that McLaughlin & Harvey had contributed and donated to many causes within the town over the last few years, referring to one example being the Health & Wellbeing Days held at Wilton Lodge Park. He supported what Braden George had stated earlier, and asked that if reinstatements were to be done, that they be done in a future-proofed way. As far as he knew, there would be a Phase 2 of Pines Burns, and rather than reinstate to have then to do again, could reinstatement works be planned in such a way that they would be easily adapted again for any Phase 2.

He also wanted to clarify that repeatedly the figure of £100m was stated for the Flood Protection Scheme, however it was his understanding that one-third of that was actually from Sustrans for the Active Travel Network. Councillor Marshall

confirmed 80% of that figure came from the Scottish Government and the town should be grateful for the Active Travel Network works carried out.

Duncan Taylor said the works carried out in the Laidlaw Terrace area were superb and looked fantastic. He referred back to works carried out by McLaughlin & Harvey on flood protection and the benefits to him and neighbours (who had been flooded twice previously) and concluded we owed them along with the designers, funders and so on of the Scheme much gratitude, and we should focus on the improvements made to protect our town. Yes, the inconvenience and traffic chaos had to be considered he said, however the Flood Protection Scheme was designed to last decades (over 100 years) and the people of Hawick should be focussing more that the project carried out had been the most major happening in Hawick since the railway. There was too much focus on negatives rather than the wider picture and the benefits of the Scheme. What was going to happen he wondered when the railway came to Hawick that most folks in the town wanted.

Councillor Marshall agreed saying that there were around 17 other towns bidding at the same time as Hawick for a Flood Protection Scheme and it was important to focus on the positives, and we should be proud of what had been achieved.

John Campbell raised that new trees at the foot of Baker Street needed attention, and it was noted that those had now been staked and straightened.

- (g) Hawick Common Riding Committee – Braden George advised that the Election of a new Cornet had now taken place the previous Wednesday night. He made an appeal on behalf of the Committee for volunteers to help out at events – rideouts and at Ceremonial events. Everything was underway now and going to plan.
- (h) Hawick Reivers – Nothing to report at this time.
- (i) SBCCN – Nothing to report at this time.

**12. Correspondence** – There was no correspondence to report.

**13. AOCB** – Stuart Mactaggart complimented SBC's workmen at clearing the weeds from pavements along the length of Weensland Road, which looked so much tidier. It was noted that retired Councillor George Turnbull had done much of that work himself prior to SBC's attendance, and he should be commended for his work too.

The Chair advised that night was the last meeting which Councillor McAteer would attend as Provost, having been in that post for 7 years. Watson, he said, had stood up and fought for Hawick and its townsfolk. He had seen Hawick through Covid and asked those questions on behalf of townsfolk at SBC HQ and would continue to do so on our behalf. On behalf of HCC members and members of the public attending, he thanked him for his service to the town as Hawick Honorary Provost. A round of applause then ensued from all in attendance.

**14. Date of next meeting** – It was agreed that the next meeting of HCC would be held on Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 6.30pm within the Lesser Town Hall, Hawick. The Chair then wished everyone a great Common Riding.