

5. Matters arising –

Closure of Albert Bridge – It had been noted as part of the Flood Protection Update at the last HCC meeting, that the Albert Bridge would be closed to allow installation of the last glazed panel. The Vice-Chair advised there had been no date as yet communicated for that closure however once that was made known, that information would be cascaded out.

Traffic signs to divert lorries and other heavy load vehicles from the High Street – The Vice-Chair confirmed that those signs were now in place.

Opening of the Wee Haugh – It was stated again during the Flood Protection Update that the playpark at that location would be opened within the two weeks following the meeting on 10th June. The Vice-Chair advised that had not happened, and wondered if Councillor Ramage had any update on that. Councillor Ramage advised that whilst that location was not within her ward, she agreed that the Wee Haugh needed to be opened as soon as possible, as there was also a Music Festival planned for that area in August. She undertook nevertheless to try to progress on a date for opening.

Traffic Cones littered around the town for various works – The Vice-Chair had noted some had been removed, in particular the one on the stone at the Dovemount roundabout.

£3m Levelling-up Fund – Councillor Ramage advised that she had contacted SBC Officers regarding that Fund for Hawick, as she had noted that it appeared the Fund criteria was around brownfield sites, however, due to Purdah, no response was forthcoming. She would continue to try to find out more on that.

6. Hawick High School – Senior Pupils Update – No report available due to school Summer holidays and it would likely be the September/October meeting before any Senior Pupil Team was in place to recommence update reports.

7. Police Scotland

(a) Reports - May and June 2024 – The Vice-Chair advised that the reports had been previously circulated to Members and asked for any questions on those. The Secretary had noted an assault on ambulance service crew members which she said was disappointing and unusual to note. She hoped that would be a one-off incident. It was also noted that there were no major incidents reported during the Hawick Common Riding and indeed within other town festivals and celebrations.

Parking tickets issued across the Borders reduced to 16 tickets in June, which was disappointing given continued issues with illegal parking especially in Hawick High Street. Following previous correspondence with SBC's CEO on decriminalisation of parking, she asked if there had been any progress made towards that which could allow wardens to be deployed for low level crime such as parking going forward. Councillor Ramage undertook to enquire on that and report back to a later meeting.

John Campbell reported that a new High Street business intended contacting the police, as she had noticed that workers of businesses within the town were parking sometimes all day long, taking away spaces which should be available for the public to use whilst shopping. Hopefully the Police would respond positively.

(b) Proportionate Response to Crime Pilot – Update from Councillor Cox – In absence of Councillor Cox, this update was again continued.

- 8. Proposed Lithium Battery Storage Facility between Whitehaugh and Calaburn Farm, Hawick** – The Vice-Chair welcomed the delegation of residents who had attended the meeting to tell us of their knowledge on the proposed Lithium Battery Storage facility between Whitehaugh and Calaburn Farm. He also welcomed a representative from Upper Teviot & Borthwick Water Community Council (who was also a member of the Community Development Trust) given the proximity of the proposed storage facility bordering with her community.

As spokesperson for the delegation of residents, Bruce Mactaggart, introduced himself along with Dave and Maureen Toogood and David and Laura Addison as being the closest neighbours to the proposed facility.

He wanted to raise awareness within the local community of a pre-planning application for the erection of a 90MW lithium battery storage development in a field between Wilton Dean and Calaburn Farm. The development was circa.200 metres from their houses, and less than a mile from Hawick itself.

The site was owned by the recently formed Calaburn Renewables Limited and the project was being proposed by Greenswitch Capital, who were a small company based in Liverpool. It would however be run by a new company, set up by Greenswitch specifically for that project, and it would be their first venture into that type of development. Both companies involved were limited companies.

The development would involve changing from a productive agriculture grassed field to a massive industrial unit involving anything from between 30 and 90 shipping containers full of batteries attached to individual air conditioning units and converters. These would run 24 hours a day. Security fencing would surround the development. At the present time, Scottish Power were not involved with that development.

Bruce then advised of an aerial map of the area as it stood currently, which was circulating around the meeting room, as well as a photograph showing the battery storage units superimposed onto that photograph to reflect what such a development may look like. Bruce then passed over to Laura to express the neighbours' concerns and those for the community.

Laura thanked the Community Council for allowing them to bring the development to the attention of the community and to share concerns. The group had started research around Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and during that research,

concerns had been raised not only for them as neighbours but more particularly for the whole Hawick community. They were worried about the impact the development would have in construction time, in the operational time, and also the end-of-life time. Batteries had a limited lifespan and at end of life either needed removing or recycling and the land of course would remain where it was currently.

It had been recognised by her group that BESS played a part in the transition to renewable energy and she stated they were not against that. From what they had seen however in their research was that because of the speed of developments and the speculation going on around those, that developments particularly those around and close to communities were raising concerns for them and for others around safety, health, impact on the environment and the economics.

The biggest issue they considered was around safety and the risk of fire and then from that explosion and toxicity, with toxic fumes and toxic water run-off.

It was fact that batteries carried a risk of fire, and in existing sites where fire had occurred, both in the UK and around the world, specialists emergency response were required. Batteries would normally be left to burn as they could not be cooled, and there was a risk of thermal run away where one battery sets off another which then increased the risk of explosion.

The response at the present time was to let batteries burn however when that happened, that created toxic smoke and also cooling could lead to toxic water run-off. As Calaburn was at the top of a hill and above Hawick, then smoke would travel downwards and so the risk from toxic fumes to the town was alarming. The water run-off from that site ran into Wilton Burn which then ran into the Teviot. The Teviot currently was pure enough to supply water to the local Distillery however should there be any toxic water run-off, that would be a disaster for that business.

Another safety concern was about road users. The location around the site was single-track roads and well used by the people of Hawick, by walkers, riders and runners as well as residents. Whitehaugh Road, adjacent to the site, was one of the 1000 trails and a well-publicised walking route. All roads were narrow, with limited passing places and had a number of blind spots of concern, especially when during construction there would be a lot of HGVs transporting large shipping containers. In addition, concrete trucks as each container would require to sit on concrete slabs and probably cranes to enable lifting of containers into position. So concerns were not only around damage to the roads due to heavy vehicles traffic, as these would be repaired, but around the safety of road users with increased usage by heavy vehicles.

Moving onto health, there were a number of issues with toxicity being the main one. There would be dust pollution mainly during construction of the site, noise pollution not only during construction but also when operational, bearing in mind that at the moment that site was currently peaceful with only sounds of wildlife and that would be replaced by the containers, which needed to be cooled 24/7. Noise when

operational would be equivalent to refrigerated lorries parked up within the Common Haugh.

Mental health was also an issue with the area being used by the people of Hawick because it was a beautiful place and losing that for such a development would not be to the benefit of anyone.

On the environment, which was important to everyone, the development would be an industrial site and it would change the environment from being agricultural and a place of nature, to an industrial unit sitting there. There were concerns it would likely harm the wildlife and biodiversity with potential contamination and the batteries had an end of life and so there was then their disposal and recycling. There were also worries around the restoration of the site back its natural state. Given the nature of the speculation and that it was small companies involved, would there be any guarantee that restoration would actually happen should the site be built.

With regard to the economic impact to the local area, Laura stated that the group truly believed that the only positive economic benefit would be to the landowner. They could not see any other economic benefit to anyone else and considered the development would truly harm tourism businesses, equestrian businesses because of the riding, and holiday let businesses and should there be any contamination there would be harm to the wider businesses in and around Hawick.

Finally, any development would lower property prices in the surrounding area, increase risk in the locality and potentially insurance premiums. More importantly research showed that BESS needed to be constructed by specialist contractors and therefore local trades would not benefit and whilst they believed in renewable energy, the energy stored in these batteries would not benefit the people of Hawick as that would go straight to the National Grid. It was a myth that as it would be connected to the Stirches Sub-station and roads would be dug up there, it would benefit the people of Hawick however that would not be the case they had learned.

In summary, Laura hoped she had covered residents' concerns and those for the wider community and she believed those concerns should be considered via an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and at the Planning Application stage. At the moment the application was at pre-planning stage however the group wanted to share their concerns now. They were not experts but were happy to take questions.

Councillor Ramage advised that she had met with residents and having done some research herself, she had been shocked at the 'Gun-Ho' attitude which appeared to be being taken, in not taking into account the potential hazards involved. She had looked at a meeting of East Lothian Planning Committee held in early June, where she quoted "Councillors were told that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service had not been consulted by the Scottish Government as they were not considered a statutory consultee. A local Councillor had said he was surprised that there was no need to consult with the Fire and Rescue Service. He told the Committee that at a separate meeting with the Fire Service he had asked if there was a fire within one of those

units would they be able to deal with it. They had indicated to us that there were pieces of equipment they would require to put cooling material onto the batteries but that they didn't have that within the Fire Service".

Councillor Ramage considered there did not appear to have been any logical thought put into the development but considered that the group had presented their concerns really well. She had that day put forward a request that an EIA should be carried out. It was not appropriate to insert up to 90 units onto that site and not consider the impact on the nearby community and beyond.

Wilson George considered that the community had to be consulted. Bruce Mactaggart advised of legislation just passed by the Scottish Government for any green projects, which stated they do not necessarily require an EIA. Wilson George considered it necessary that an EIA was carried out, including views from the Fire Service which, in Hawick, was likely shortly to be only manned part time.

Bruce advised that the group were unable to speak to planning at the moment as the application was at pre-planning stage, however they had communicated and had sent letters via their MP and MSP. The Energy Consents Unit (ECU) in Glasgow were dealing with the matter at the moment but were inundated with requests as these developments were snowballing across Scotland. The EIA he believed was needed however the local Planning Officer had decided, after seeking advice of 7 different sections, e.g. ecology, development, landscape, archaeology etc. and only one department indicating it did not require an EIA (the Roads Department) to proceed anyway without one. All other departments stated they did not have sufficient information to justify whether they needed an EIA or otherwise. The Planning Officer however decided an EIA was not required (based on that one definite response from Roads). He had sent that one piece of advice to the ECU. At the present time, the group awaited a response from the ECU as to whether an EIA would be carried out or not. Planning's argument was that all those issues would be covered at the planning stage.

Stuart Beck asked whether it would be possible once the application reached Planning Application stage to have an open meeting involving the Planning Officer(s) to provide an opportunity to raise everyone's concerns. Bruce said that would be fine, however tonight was about raising awareness of the proposal. The group were preparing themselves now. He had looked through the pre-planning application and considered there were a number of anomalies which required to be addressed. It was stated for instance that there was a right of way to the side of the site, and that was incorrect as it was a road.

Wilson George asked if the group had made any approach to the Fire Brigade and it was suggested they also be invited to any open meeting to follow.

The Vice-Chair advised Cameron Knox, Chair, had received an email from a Geoffrey Kolbe whose focus regarding the proposal was around fire safety and the impact on the environment. Batteries had Direct Current (DCs) and the process of changing that

to ACs which were plugs etc, created a lot of heat. Councillors would be aware of that inventor process which had caused fires from TV installations within Council buildings previously. The battery system here was no different and Geoffrey having researched via the National Fire Chiefs Council had noted that 1900 litres of water per minute were required to cool any fires. Over the 2-3 hours required for cooling, usage required 25million litres of water. That run-off into water courses such as the Teviot with lithium would mean major contamination of that river, as well as the clear environmental impact that would have. A facility does therefore create an immense amount of heat and significant fire risk.

Bruce referred to an incident attended by West Yorkshire Fire Brigade where 5.5m litres of water were required to control that fire. In the pre-planning application it had been stated it would be 'state-of-the-art' technology, as safe as anything and there would be no problems whatsoever. He had asked the question why then they did not relocate elsewhere, at the very top of a hill far away from residential properties, preferably beside wind turbines, however, was advised that would not be convenient. Bruce had concluded the reason it was proposed at that location was it was only 50 yards from a source of water – Leahead Loch which held 5.6m litres of water, which would hardly be enough to control any fire. The location being on a hill he said would not take much for run-off ultimately ending up in the Teviot. SEPA at the present time, do not consider that to be a problem. Environmental Health state there may be a little bit of noise but that was their only concern.

Stuart Mactaggart considered that as a Community Council we required to lend our support and make every effort to stop that facility going ahead. As referred to previously, there appeared to be a rather 'Gun-Ho' attitude, benefitting only the land owner, and he personally did not want the unit to proceed.

The Treasurer considered that the area around the proposed site should be kept for walkers and cyclists and so on and not be spoilt by such a development.

Colin Hope, HDT asked if there would be any community benefits from the proposal, and it was again stated that the only payments would be to the land owner. Bruce advised it had been mentioned c.£250k pa for rent of that field however the landowner had stated it would be half of that amount c. £125k pa. Even taking it at £100K pa over the next 40 years, that would amount to c.£4m for a 20-acre field which could probably be purchased outright for £100k. He had asked then why the Company did not wish to buy the field. The simple answer appeared to be that they did not want to be held responsible for the 'end of life' of that field. It was noted that the contamination of a field was the site owner's problem, and so the Company would not own the site and therefore not be responsible for it.

A member of the public considered the unit being discussed could well be only the 'tip-off-the-iceberg' and with the General Election that coming Thursday likely to result in a Labour victory, he was aware that Ed Milliband and his Labour colleagues were about to make a big announcement on GB Energy which sought to impose for areas, such as the Scottish Borders with ideal conditions for wind turbines, fast-

tracking these on a monumental scale. Whilst he was not against wind turbines, Hawick and the Borders needed to have its defences ready to fight back on more of these types of developments and more turbines arriving on our doorstep.

Bruce in concluding, thanked HCC and everyone for listening, and hoped he and the others affected, had made everyone aware of the impacts of that development and on a personal note, he said: "In the grand scale of time, we as a community are only here for a very short period of time, and I believe as a farmer during my life, I am only a custodian of my countryside and my legacy is to try and protect and leave it in the best possible state I can."

There were handouts, with Contact information and links available he said for anyone interested in researching these developments further.

The Vice-Chair, in turn, thanked Bruce and Laura for their presentation and said he was sure it would generate a lot of debate and discussion in the future. The representative from UT&BW CC said further discussion and information was needed and she was keen to hear further at a future HCC meeting. She went on to say that she had just come from a wind farm meeting, as a resident as well as a CC member. There was the Teviot Wind Farm which was at Upper Teviothead and another big one up the Roberton valley also to consider with 42 turbines at a height of 200 metres. At least with those, there would be community benefits, unlike the development under discussion.

The Vice-Chair advised that further discussion on Wind Farms could be raised under that Agenda item.

9. Treasurer's Report - June 2024 – The Treasurer reported an Opening Balance of £20,308.51 and a Closing Balance of £22,476.64.

HCC 1 Account had an opening balance of £3,533.14 and income received was in respect of our Annual Support Grant from SBC and reimbursement of the cost of a venue hire, totalling £2,017.10. Expenses in the month amounted to £58.97 resulting in a closing balance of £5,491.27.

The Christmas Events Account opened and closed with a balance of £957.55.

Hawick in Bloom Account's opening balance was £4,218.96 with income from shopkeepers for hanging baskets of £210.00, resulting in a closing balance of £4,428.96.

Finally, the Community Fund Foundation Scotland opened and closed with a balance of £11,598.86. Monies would be diverted to individual accounts for projects as outlined in the Distribution Plan submitted for 2024/25 grant funding.

The Treasurer's report was approved by Members.

10. Public Forum & Town Issues –

Grass Management - Stuart Beck said he had heard about sheep accessing the Wellogate Cemetery over the weekend past. He suggested if SBC were not going to cut that area, as well as the Millers Knowes, they may wish to engage with local farmers to allow their sheep to graze there as a means to help manage the long grass. There may be some revenue to be had to SBC. A member of the public however did not consider that to be a good idea for cemeteries, given the sheep would also destroy flowers respectfully laid on graves by family and friends of the deceased persons. It could be however that graves could be fenced off by individuals.

E-scooters and Mobility Scooters - Stuart went on to raise concerns regarding youngsters with no helmets on running about the town on e-scooters at high speed and sometimes with 2 or 3 people on board, and also some people on mobility scooters also going too fast. People coming out of close doors and shops were being impacted and accidents were going to happen. Councillor Ramage undertook to raise that with the Police at their next meeting. Similar issues had already been raised regarding e-scooters used by kids wearing balaclavas in the Burnfoot area, which did not help with identification.

Conditions within the town - The Treasurer raised that O'Connell Street was a real mess with litter and whilst that area had been targeted at the last HCC litter pick it had not been finished and was in dire need of further attention.

He went on to raise the entrances to Hawick were untidy, with the height of the grass being unacceptable, and wild flowers were now just a mess. He considered the grass should be cut and entrances should be returned to being tidy and welcoming.

Councillor Ramage reiterated that SBC were piloting grass maintenance at the present time, and at the end of the season they would evaluate how that pilot had gone. She urged anyone with any complaints to record these on SBC's website. There would be nothing more frustrating if, at the end of the pilot, there were little numbers of complaints, when it appeared that many people were not happy. Complaints needed to be recorded. She agreed it was important that entrances to the town should be tidy.

It was noted that the area up Wilton Path opposite the Bamboo Box looked good with wild flowering there, however it was not known who was responsible for that area. It was suggested it may be SBC. Overall, however, not cutting the grass and wild seeding some areas instead were not acceptable as these needed to be maintained. In the likes of the Netherlands, they produced lovely wild flower areas, however, the real difference there was that these were properly maintained.

The Vice- Chair stated that as a Consultative Body, SBC should ensure that HCC was provided with the outcomes of the pilot.

Fountain at WLP - The Treasurer advised that the fountain pipework at the Bandstand appeared bent and accordingly was not working properly. Councillor Ramage said she would investigate further on that.

Temporary Road signage throughout the town - Finally, road signage throughout the town for road closures and flood works was a mess, and how people actually determined from some of that signage in place which way they should travel, was a mystery. Councillor Ramage agreed with that, having gone the wrong route when navigating the roundabout at Morrisons where signage was in place there to reinstate that roundabout. She had nearly caused a crash, which would have been her fault, due to signage being very unclear. It was noted that signage in the Terraces area of the town was also confusing.

Railings at Morrisons Roundabout - Stuart Mactaggart stated he hoped that with the reinstatement works being carried out at the roundabout at Morrisons, the damaged railings outside Goffs would finally be replaced as well. Those railings had long since been damaged and were an eyesore.

Renaming of Balcary Path - Stuart Beck wondered if there was any update regarding the path at Balcary House which had been suggested to be renamed after the Late Madge Elliot. It was noted that Councillor McAteer was to take that forward and Councillor Ramage undertook to seek any update from him.

Teviot Day Centre – Stuart Beck had heard allegations that staff there were to be redeployed as a result of the necessary paperwork not being done to get people into that service. Councillor Ramage agreed that further investigation was needed to determine why it was taking so long to get people into the Centre as it was a real-needed service in her view. There were only 2 or 3 people thought to be in the Centre and she did not want numbers to be impacted as a result of issues with paperwork.

Proposed Outdoor Gym between Laidlaw Terrace and the Wee Haugh - A member of the public requested help from HCC regarding the proposed outdoor Active Gym to be located immediately in front of Dovecot Mews and at the end of the lovely new pathway from the Library to Dovecote Mews. Properties at Dovecote Mews had livingrooms on the upper level and bedrooms on the lower, and her livingroom would therefore directly look onto that proposed gym area.

Also directly in front of her house was the Pumping Station for Flood Protection and the proposal was to have gym equipment intermingled with that pumping station. Next door to the proposed gym were also electrical works. Where she stayed, there were a number of other elderly people. She considered that a lot of rubbish would result as well as a lot of noise. Another quiet area was proposed further along with seating, and she considered neither to be necessary. If there was a flood, the pumping station only had a metal cover over it and she envisaged with perhaps youngsters congregating in the area, that could be damaged and then not be in a fit state when actually needed.

After all the disruption in her area with installation of the walls, and then the pumping station, she did not wish further disruption which would inevitably happen as a result of that proposed outdoor gym with pull-up bar, sit-up bench, exercise bench and so on, on an ongoing basis. For a gym to be located in front of elderly people's houses was ridiculous in her view and would be much better relocated elsewhere. Councillor Ramage undertook to visit the location and to progress this with fellow Councillor Watson McAteer.

11. Reports from Sub-Groups

- (a) Christmas Event – nothing to report at the present time. A meeting would be held in late August, to start preparations for the 2024 Christmas Event to be held on Saturday, 30th November.
- (b) Hawick in Bloom – It was noted that the planters and hanging baskets were looking great at the present time and another HiB meeting would be held in late August to prepare for winter planting requirements. It was further noted that a contractor engaged to carry out weekly watering had failed to turn up, and accordingly that meant additional work for volunteers.
- (c) CCTV – The Vice-Chair reported that all had gone quiet regarding a meeting which was to be organised by SBC Officers with HCC CCTV Sub-group members. Councillor Ramage agreed to progress on having that meeting arranged.
- (d) Resilience – nothing to report at the present time.
- (e) Fundraising - A meeting would be arranged before the end of July to progress on ideas.
- (f) Planning – No major planning applications to consider.
- (g) Bandstand Events – these would commence on Sunday, 21st July and for the following 5 Sundays, the last being Sunday, 25th August at the Bandstand at Wilton Lodge Park.

12. Reports from Community Partners & Representative Groups

- (a) Hawick Development Trust – Colin Hope, Chair, provided his report as follows:
The Trust had just completed its changeover to a Development Trust and they had held a Planning Session to set out what HDT proposed to do over the next 3-5 years. They would set out their proposals in a Strategy Document to help bring life to the town and that would also be informed by the forthcoming Place Plan and their projects. At the same time, HDT would be publishing information to advise people what the Development Trust was all about, what they were doing and what they hoped to do, with a view to encouraging additional involvement and membership to the Trust.

In relation to projects previously reported, Colin advised that there had not in general been as much progress on those as had been hoped. In relation to Tourism, the Trust were in discussions with the South of Scotland Economy Manager responsible for driving development of tourism in the Borders area. There needed to be engagement with the community to determine what tourism was wanted in Hawick. The whole idea was then to come up with a Marketing Strategy to sell Hawick to tourists and visitors.

In relation to the deep clean of the High Street which had been talked about since November 2023, with the original idea being to engage professional contractors to carry out these works, a demonstration had been carried out back in November time. HDT had since encountered obstacle after obstacle to get works carried out. They looked to engage a high-powered circular water cleaner but again SBC would not allow, stating that would then flush out the sand and grouting between paving stones and water would then get underneath and destabilise the slabs. It was

argued however that slabs would then be back-filled by the Contractors, however the last Colin had heard, SBC were looking for a 3-year warranty to be put in place, which The Borders Green Team as the local Contractors and being a charity whilst happy to do the work, could not provide any warranty for that timescale.

So, whilst engagement with SBC officers started well enough, members of HDT were now exhausted with the obstacles against them. Councillor Ramage had now been approached to set up another meeting with SBC Officers to hopefully clear the lock-jam the Trust currently faced.

North Bridge Guest House – the Trust were looking to take ownership of that and develop for community use. They were in process of discussions with the Scottish Land Fund to buy that building from SBC. They needed to clarify also how much support in progressing this, would be provided by Council Officers. The building was formerly a Guest House/Café Restaurant, and drawings would need to be prepared to reflect what the building would be used for.

In relation to the former Liberal Club, HDT were in discussions on what funds could be attracted as that was a huge project. CARS funding (c.£40k) had been allocated to make part of the building wind and watertight around owner residences but there were still other works needing to be done to exposed areas, with there being around half of that money remaining available for that work.

To get Scottish Land Fund to buy the building, HDT needed to be able to demonstrate what the building would be used for. There were a number of ideas being discussed and he would be meeting with one of the major Social Housing providers in the area to talk about the possibility of social housing. Colin was quietly confident something would happen, as otherwise it would be a huge problem for the High Street and the building would become beyond salvation.

Teri-bikes was now in operation. That organisation was set up to allow people to hire e-bikes. HDT had nurtured that organisation and their Constitution was now with the Regulator for approval. It would remain under the Trust's umbrella until 1st November.

Finally, Colin considered that there was perhaps some overlap in what HCC does, and what HDT and the Town Team does, and he proposed that there should be a regular meeting of those Chairpersons, to ensure each organisation was pulling in the same direction.

Stuart Beck suggested as a means of encouraging more people to join HDT it would be helpful to advise of their forthcoming HDT AGM date. Colin advised that was proposed to be held on 12th August. Before that, further information would be available on what HDT was about and what membership would entail to encourage more people to join.

(b) Foundation Scotland – nothing to report.

- (c) T&L Area Partnership – It was noted the last meeting had been held on 8th June with grant awards made to Escape Youth. No applications had been made to Pot B, and community organisations were encouraged to apply to that fund. It was thought the next T&L meeting would be held after the summer.
- (d) A7 Action Group – Stuart Beck reported on a successful meeting held at Langholm two weeks previously and the A7 Action Plan had received monies from wind farm benefits to Ashkirk, Lilliesleaf and Midlem Community Councils to help with preparation costs of that Plan.

The Sonny Murray Memorial reinstatement works were currently out to tender.

It had been agreed to change from holding meetings on Friday evenings, which no longer appeared suitable to members, and it was proposed meetings would now be held on the last Thursday of each month.

With regard to road works in Buccleuch Road, all works with the exception of the traffic lights were now complete; works in Commercial Road/Bath Street were on hold; Albert Road works were also on hold awaiting redesign of the necessary bridge works; Dovemount Place works were also pending, and finally works at the Dunk to the walls there had now started.

- (e) Hawick Common Good Fund – nothing to report.
- (f) Wind Farms – It was noted there was a residents stakeholders meeting held on Wednesday, 26th June within Muirhall Offices however there was no feedback from that in the absence of the Chair, Cameron Knox who had represented HCC there. Marjorie McCreadie had attended on behalf of the A7 Action Group and she stated as far as that group were concerned, their original consultation comments had not changed. She had noted there were 2 wind turbines to be removed, and Solar Panels were now also removed and there was no further defined route as yet to exit onto the main road.

It was noted there was a second wind farm proposed up the Robertson valley and crossing over towards Teviothead. It may be that whichever company had responsibility for that new proposed wind farm may end up also taking over the Teviot wind farm from Muirhall Energy.

Cameron Knox represented HCC on wind farms, and he would be able to provide further information in due course regarding that new one proposed, which had almost come in through the back door so to speak.

Colin Hope said he understood there was something in the pipeline regarding a collective of Community Councils being responsible for managing those community benefits, and he wondered if there was anything to report on that. The Vice-Chair advised he was aware of meetings with Community Council representatives in the T&L area, however the Chair, Cameron Knox was HCC's representative on that group and would be able to report further at the next HCC meeting, given his absence from the meeting at short notice. It was noted that discussion had been around the creation of a SCIO being set up for the purpose of

managing those benefits but it was agreed that the matter seemed to be dragging on, and there had already been deviation from the original levels agreed at the start, which were proposed now to be substantially reduced.

- (g) Hawick Common Riding Committee – no update in absence of Braden George, HCC's representative on that Committee.
- (h) Hawick Reivers – That Committee had recommenced meetings for planning of their next event, which plans were in early stages at the present time.
- (i) SBCCN – Not currently in operation, however the Vice-Chair would represent HCC on a new group being formed by SBC on non-financial support to Community Councils, and that Network would form part of those discussions. A survey required to be completed on how HCC considered SBCCN should operate and it was proposed to set up a meeting with the Office Bearers and Wilson George who had represented most and been a former Chair, for his advice on that body, to enable response to that survey.

13. Correspondence – there was no further correspondence to consider.

14. AOCB – John Campbell raised his concerns again of the broken window at the front of the former Buccleuch Hotel, which was yet to be boarded, and he considered that building would soon become a pigeon loft if nothing was done. The Vice-Chair declared an interest and confirmed there was now a joiner appointed to secure that building and board any broken windows.

15. Date of next meeting – The next meeting of HCC was earmarked to be held on Monday, 12th August. Last year, members decided not to hold an August meeting due to members' holidays. After discussion, Members agreed not to hold a meeting in August, and accordingly the next meeting would be held on **Monday, 9th September 2024 at 6.30pm within the Lesser Town Hall, Hawick.**