
Hawick Community Council



MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL
held on Monday 21st October 2024 within the Lesser Town Hall, Hawick at 6.30pm

Present:	Cameron Knox (Chair)	Jim Adams (Treasurer)
	Margaret Hogg	John Campbell
	Braden George	Graeme King
	Stuart Mactaggart	Michael Robertson
	Duncan Taylor	John Wilkinson
Attending:	Councillor Cox	Councillor McAteer
	Councillor Ramage	Councillor Smart
	Colin Hope, HDT	Keith Johnson, Town Team
	Sergeant Alison Granger	PC Ryan Stewart

There were 8 members of the public in attendance as well as Graham Ford from the Hawick Paper.

- 1. Chair's Opening Remarks** – The Chair welcomed everyone to the October meeting of Hawick Community Council which was a week later than the normal cycle due to local holidays.

The Chair advised there was no microphone for use that night, and requested when people spoke, if they could stand, to maximise potential for hearing and recording purposes.

He reminded everyone in attendance that the meeting would be recorded by HCC and on behalf of the Hawick Paper for minuting and reporting purposes.

- 2. Declarations of Interest** – The Chair advised that if any members had a conflict of interest in any agenda items, they should please make it known at the start of the discussion.
- 3. Apologies for Absence** – Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of HCC Members Stuart Beck, Kevin Marsh and Euan Welsh and Councillor Marshall.
- 4. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of 9th September 2024** – The previously circulated Minutes of the last meeting were approved as an accurate record of the meeting - Proposed for adoption by John Wilkinson and Seconded by Jim Adams.

5. Matters arising –

Proposed Outdoor Gym on walkway between Laidlaw Terrace & the Wee Haugh – Councillor McAteer confirmed that there would not be any outdoor gym at that location.

Wilton Lodge Park – Football Pitches – Councillor Ramage confirmed that issue had been reported to SBC and the response received was that there would be a need for 6 months good weather to enable holes to be filled. The pitches were however required for the football season and so that matter had been left in the hands of the Clubs to determine when best that work could be done.

Commercial Road Garage – It was noted that there was in fact no pavement at all in front of the garage itself. A wide trailer had also been noted as parked on the double yellow lines at that location, preventing easy passage between that and the other vehicles parked immediately in front of the garage itself. It was noted that a multi-agency approach including the Police and Bear Scotland was being taken and was ongoing to try to resolve the parking issues at that location.

Michael Robertson updated that 2 cars reported as parked within the Common Haugh had now been removed.

New Footbridge at Mansfield/Weensland – It was noted that Councillors had not heard anything further on the naming of that footbridge but would make some enquiries with SBC officers.

Trinity Steps – Councillor McAteer stated he had been advised works would be carried out during the October holiday to make steps safe. He would make enquiry as to the outstanding works.

Proposed Lithium Battery Storage Units at Calaburn – Stuart Mactaggart wondered if there had been any further development on that proposal, however it was noted that the matter remained with SBC at pre-planning stage. He urged that HCC keep on top of that matter. The Chair confirmed that HCC was a statutory consultee for planning applications and would be notified if and when that proposal reached that stage.

St Leonard's Park – The Chair advised that the Chair of the Friends of Hawick Mair, Philip Murray, had met with representatives of SoSE and at present the Group were preparing a Business Plan and Building drawings. There would be another meeting on Wednesday, 23 October after which a further update would be provided.

Lights at Mote Park – Michael Robertson referred to advice given to him previously to make an application to the Small Schemes Budget in 2025 to enable provision of some lighting at the bottom end of the Park. He wondered when the best time would be to apply and was advised that would be in March 2025. Michael asked if any Councillors would like to visit the area in order to evidence how dark it was at night-time.

Councillor Smart said she may consider such a meeting if necessary.

St Leonard's Hut – Disabled Access works etc – Michael Robertson enquired if all works had now been completed at that location. Councillor Ramage advised that SBC had done as much as they were able to in terms of disability requirements. Any further requirements would need to wait for 2025 budget. To date, £23,000 had been spent on works including a disabled access, foundation works, new flooring, decoration etc.

Bikes at 3 entrances to the town – It was noted that all 3 bikes, which were an eyesore, had now been removed.

6. **Hawick High School – Senior Pupils Update** – Due to school holidays, there was no update report.
7. **Teviot Day Care Services – Presentation by Brian Fowler** – The Chair advised that there would be no presentation to the meeting, as Mr Fowler had intimated he would be unable to attend (despite agreeing previously to the changed date).
8. **Police Scotland Reports – September 2024** – The Chair welcomed Sergeant Alison Granger and PC Ryan Stewart to the meeting. HCC members had been circulated the reports for September and he asked for any members' questions.

The Secretary advised she was heartened to note that the level of antisocial behaviour particularly around Burnfoot shops had now reduced as a result of mobile CCTV installed there. She hoped that trend would continue. She had also noted problems around the misuse of e-bikes and scooters within Burnfoot but also other areas of the town.

Sergeant Granger advised work was ongoing by the multi-agency Problem Solving Partnership in Burnfoot. Surveys had been sent out to agencies who had attended the meeting in August. Working together was key for success, and she thanked everyone involved.

They were now working on an Action Plan, with 4 main objectives being Seeking funding opportunities to benefit the community; Tackling antisocial behaviour, with high visibility patrols at Burnfoot Shops etc; Tackling illegal use of off-road and e-bikes and scooters – the CAT have been working with the Community Officers Mortimer and Patterson and individuals had been charged recently but more work needed doing; and Enhancing Public Trust and Confidence in the Police – it was vital that the local community felt supported by the Police, and they would continue to have Police presence at as many community events as possible.

Sergeant Granger concluded by saying that lack of legislation to prevent misuse of e-bikes and scooters did not help them. Legislation had not kept up and whilst they did take what action was possible, there had to be better legislation put in place to better deter such misuse.

Issues of persons drinking and causing disturbance at Trinity Gardens was raised, and it was noted there were no bylaws in place for the Police to enforce drinking in public places such as at that location. It was queried how long it might take for a bylaw to be put in place.

Councillor McAteer advised that bylaws were at one time on SBC's agenda but then taken off, and so it may be prudent now to raise again with SBC. HCC may wish to consider sharing their concerns and determine whether they would support a ban on outdoor drinking. It was noted that Jedburgh CC were also looking at whether a bylaw should be introduced as a tool to eradicate public drinking and resultant nuisance being caused in its central square.

John Campbell queried who had right of way when driving from the Library on North Bridge Street towards the Horse. There were barriers on North Bridge Street at its junction with Union Street and it seemed traffic coming in the opposite direction considered they had right of way to then turn right into Union Street and ignore that oncoming traffic coming from the Library side. He queried whether there should perhaps be a Give Way where the barriers were, or some other measures put in place to prevent confusion. The consensus appeared to be that driving from the Library to the Horse on North Bridge should be continuous, with only traffic from Union Street having to Give Way. Any oncoming traffic wishing to turn right into Union Street should Give Way as normal, to any oncoming traffic from the Library.

Councillor McAteer agreed that it was a valid point to raise, as there was some confusion there. He would report the matter to SBC roads for their views. It was also noted that the Car Wash at the junction of Union Street with North Bridge Street did not help, as vehicles were often queued out onto North Bridge Street.

Marjorie McCreadie confirmed that a Community Officer had visited her following her raising an issue at last month's meeting, and she was happy to report that she had seen a reduction in issues being experienced in her area.

Finally, it was noted that whilst some parking tickets had been issued during the month across the Borders, locally PC Patterson had been concentrating on visiting all local schools, including Trinity, to monitor and move on illegal parking there.

The Chair thanked Sergeant Granger and PC Stewart for their attendance. Sergeant Granger advised that Chief Inspector Fletcher had intended to attend HCC's meeting originally scheduled for 14th October, but unfortunately that date had been changed and he was unable to attend that night. He would endeavour to attend an HCC meeting in the near future.

- 9. Treasurer's Report – September 2024** – The Treasurer reported an Opening Balance of £17,452.76. HCC 1 account started at £5,539.21 with income of £72.38 from Bank Interest and expenditure of £396 for Debrillator equipment and £600 for Core Paths Maintenance, leaving a Closing Balance on that account of £4,615.59. Of that balance, the sum of £1,566.76 remained ring-fenced from Fallago Grant Funding, to be used for pathway maintenance.

Christmas Lights/Event Account started with a balance of £957.55. Income from stallholders' fees amounted to £1,215 and expenditure of £106 was incurred for a Market Operator Licence, leaving a closing balance on that account of £2,066.55.

Hawick in Bloom Account opened with a balance of £4,357.14. A donation of £20 had been received from a member of the public, resulting in a closing balance of £4,377.14.

Community Benefit Fund/Foundation Scotland Account opened with a balance of £6,598.86. Income from the underspend on the Bandstand Events of £230 was

received and expenditure on new Christmas Harps of £1,600.94, Winter plants at £340.58 and cabling to enhance HCC's Sound System of £370.12 , resulted in a closing balance of £4,517.22.

The total Closing Balance from all accounts was £15,576.50.

Members approved the Treasurer's Report.

10. Public Forum and Town Issues

Thomson Bridge – Duncan Taylor said he had noted paintwork needing attention on that bridge, which was a relatively new bridge, and he wondered if that could be seen to, as it would only get worse. Councillor McAteer advised he would ask that question and report back.

Continuing on the theme of paint works, it was also questioned when Langlands Bridge would see an upgrade. Councillor Ramage advised she would continue enquiries on that.

Designated Disabled Parking Spaces – The Treasurer asked what happened when a person who had been provided with such a parking space, passed on. Councillor McAteer advised that the family should provide SBC with that information, and the parking space would then be removed. It required however SBC to be notified.

Trees at Wilton Lodge Park – The Treasurer highlighted trees which had fallen some time ago at that location and wondered when those might be removed. One in particular near the Dunk and another near the Bandstand. Councillor Ramage advised she had been constantly reporting to SBC on fallen trees and would follow up on when progress might be made for their removal.

Drinking Fountain at Wilton Lodge Park – The Treasurer advised that the handle on the water fountain was now missing and whilst it had been working after recent repair, it was now not working again. Councillors were requested to report necessary repairs to be actioned to get the fountain working once again.

Cottage at Mill Path – A member of the public enquired who was responsible for the garden area containing roses and a sycamore tree, which were now past their best, at that location. She had been approached by an elderly resident of that Cottage, as whilst she was willing to manage that area of garden, it did not belong with her property. It was noted that the property likely belonged to Scottish Borders Housing Association (SBHA) if not privately owned by her. Compliments were paid for the work carried out at Allars Crescent by Maureen Toogood, a volunteer with Hawick in Bloom.

Lighting at the Howegate and Drumlanrig Square – A member of the public raised that the street lights at that location were not bright enough and that area was really dark. There had been only 2 lights actually working the previous weekend, one at the Beauty Shop and one at the Pub. All other lights were not operating. Braden George advised that same issue had been raised before, and lights had been fixed however some were now not operating again. Street Lighting should be reported through SBC's portal. Each street light had a reference number on it, and that should be recorded and reported. Michael Robertson undertook to record the reference numbers of lights not working, and to report on to SBC.

The big central light there had been out for some considerable time last year, and whilst fixed briefly, shortly thereafter that had gone out again. It had been noted then that there was a problem with the supply. Councillor Cox advised she would make further enquiries on the lights being fixed.

Overgrown Bushes behind Melgund Place – A member of the public enquired about those which were behind her property. Branches which had been chopped had all come over into her back yard and onto pavement areas there. Councillor McAteer assured that SBC Officers had visited the site some two weeks previously and had agreed to remove all the self-seeding trees along Waverley Terrace side. He confirmed branches would also be removed as those had been added to the initial report to SBC.

Lorries mounting the pavement at corner of Robsons Funeral Directors – A member of the public raised that lorries navigating that corner – she stayed directly opposite Robsons – were mounting the pavement immediately at her house causing bits of her roughcasting to fall off. She enquired as to the possibility of having a rail erected there to prevent the pavement being mounted by vehicles and to keep them away from further damaging her wall. It was thought that it was the furniture lorries accessing Loch Park. Councillor McAteer confirmed he would advise SBC's Road Safety to review.

Untidy entrances to the Town – John Campbell raised that matter again, in particular the wild flowers. Councillor McAteer advised that at the A7 South entrance, there had been some partial cutting of the wild flower area but not right to the 3G pitch, however that would in time be cut once time for reseeding had been met. The Grass Management Pilot Scheme would conclude in October, and results of that would then be made available. It was urged that people record their views on SBC's platform. He also advised that the Sonny Murray Monument had also now been reinstated at that area.

Michael Robertson advised that it was important entrances to the town were much better following the pilot. Councillor McAteer agreed however it had to be noted that there were mixed views on wild flower areas – some people were not in favour however others were. Consultation feedback would determine how matters would progress. Michael went on to enquire about removal of the 3 bikes at the town's entrances, and it was noted those had now been removed since the last meeting when those were discussed.

Councillor Smart advised that with regard to biodiversity and rewilding, it took a certain amount of time for the different species to establish themselves – one set of plants may do well one year, and the following year they might not be quite so good. Annuals and perennials rotated themselves naturally over time, but they took time with always being maintained and cut previously. She understood why some people considered those areas to be messy, however, nature was messy, and biodiversity needed to be encouraged. From 240 countries across Europe, Scotland were currently 23 from the bottom of the biodiversity table. SBC had already declared as a climate emergency and we needed to step up to the plate there and do what was possible in terms of biodiversity. 2024 had been a terrible year for insects due to the wet Summer weather and we required to do all we could to encourage biodiversity.

Putting up with a bit messy area, was in her view, worth doing, albeit that did require to be in appropriate areas. The local sensitivities like the entrances to the town and the local cemeteries were perhaps not ideal but we did require to look at areas across the whole of the Borders for increased biodiversity. People liked poppies but they only grew in their first year and did not tend to come back a following year. Different species of insects needed different plants and we might see some plants as weeds however the likes of dandelions were always the first to come out in the Spring of each year just at the point when insects started to fly, and without dandelions being there, there would be little else for insects to feed on.

The Chair said it would be interesting to hear the results of the Grass Management Pilot later in the year.

Sandbed Post Office – The Chair raised whether that post office would likely open again. Duncan Taylor advised there was a For Sale sign in the window there. Councillors had not heard anything further on that. It could only be hoped that perhaps another business may incorporate a post office centrally within the town.

Councillor McAteer advised that the town was well served by the Post Offices within Dickson Street and at Burnfoot. He was aware however that people who were not necessarily near those facilities may struggle with access issues to those.

11. Reports from Community Partners & Representative Groups

- (a) Christmas Event - The Chair advised that the next meeting of the Group would be held on Wednesday, 5th November at 6.30pm within HDT Offices. Christmas Lights would start to be erected on Sunday, 27th October, meeting at 9am at the Town Hall Basement. Any volunteers especially with ladders were encouraged to help.
- (b) Hawick in Bloom – The Secretary reported that on Friday, 10th October, the HiB volunteers had met at the Horse and all the planters from the Station Bridge right along to the Civic Space had now been planted with winter pansies. She expressed thanks to all the volunteers for their efforts. The War Memorial had been tidied and the winter plants would be planted there the following day. Thanks were expressed to Peter Barker and Keith Douglas for their help with the planting there, and to the small group of Hawick in Bloom volunteers who would also be helping and who maintained the War Memorial all year round now. She also thanked Michael Robertson for his help during the Summer with watering at the War Memorial. Finally, thanks went to Maureen Toogood for her excellent garden work at Allars Crescent. That area had also had a good tidy for winter. Finally, thanks were expressed to Duncan MacDougall and George Patterson who tended the pathway at the Round Close, which had also recently been tidied.
- (c) CCTV – Nothing to report. A meeting with SBC officials had still not as yet been organised.
- (d) Resilience – Annual SBC Resilience Training Day was scheduled for November, and HCC Resilience Group would also welcome any further volunteers who would be interested in helping to sign up by contacting HawickCC@gmail.com
- (e) Fundraising – No specific update, however as agreed at the last Christmas Event meeting, HCC would have a stall at the Market Event to sell cake and candy. Any contributions would be welcomed.

- (f) Planning – The Chair reported on one major planning application in the month regarding the new Hawick High School. Members had been asked for comments and Margaret would circulate Members' response for approval prior to forwarding to SBC Planning Department.
- (g) Bandstand Events – No update to report.

12. Reports from Community Partners & Representative Groups

- (a) Hawick Development Trust (HDT) – Colin Hope, Chair, reported HDT were concentrating on 2 main themes presently – the Clean-up of the High Street and Tourism Development.

On the High Street Clean-up, there were two aspects to that – gutter clean at roof level where weeds etc needed to be removed, and on the lower level, they were still trying to get the pavements cleaned and gutters cleaned too. Councillor McAteer had stepped in to try to help engagement with CARS on the upper-level roof gutters clean and to obtain names and addresses of residents and owner occupiers to approve progressing with that.

On the pavement deep clean there had been an issue previously about the Trust being required to warrant that work - if any one tripped on a pavement slab for the next 3 years, the Trust would be liable. The Trust was unable to take on that responsibility. It was hoped that matter could be resolved before Christmas.

HDT were working behind the scenes with regard to 80 High Street. They had agreement now with the 4 main parties involved, being HDT, SBC, SBHA, and SoSE and there was a commitment now to, if feasible – and a Feasibility Study would be carried out to determine- to convert that building into social housing use. The Trust had applied for a grant for that Feasibility Study, which they hoped to hear the outcome of in mid-November.

So the building would be mostly utilised for social housing – there were a few owner occupiers there, and the Green Café would be used for commercial purposes. The Plan would be for the Trust to obtain 2 flats as commercial premises, providing them with a revenue. The Memorandum of Understanding was being drafted, and things were progressing well.

The Trust would be meeting the current owner of the building the following Wednesday, and they hoped to determine what his aspirations were, what he was expecting to happen with the building and to tell him what was expected from CARS and the transfer to social housing.

The other theme being worked on was to develop Hawick as a Tourist Destination, to drive up visitor numbers and help the local economy. The Bridge Guest House was currently under SBC ownership and meetings were to be held with SBC officials, the Trust and the Flood Defence Group and Colin hoped those meetings would occur within the next couple of weeks. Those would discuss an Asset Transfer of that building into community ownership. Bed spaces for visitors was

dire within the town, and the closure recently of the Hawick Hotel had not helped with that. So the idea was to get some accommodation back into that building and a Tourist Information place as well.

The Chair thanked Colin for his update. He was sure that Conor Price had said at a previous update to HCC that the Bridge Guest House would be gifted back to the town to be used as meeting rooms and a Reivers Museum. He would check previous Minutes. Colin advised he was not aware of that, as it may have preceded his time. The Chair enquired, given the idea was to increase bed spaces within the town, whether it would be a better idea for purchase of the Hawick Hotel given those bed spaces were all there and ready. Colin advised that he had not had sufficient time to investigate any such possibility but he agreed it would need to be looked at seriously.

The Treasurer advised he thought he had read that 80 High Street first and second floors were for sale priced at £125k. Colin advised he thought that figure had just not been updated.

- (b) Foundation Scotland – Nothing to update.
- (c) Town Team (TT) – Keith Johnson, Chair reported that the Place Plan which went before the Borderlands Board in mid-September had been endorsed. That had been a thorough and interesting process. That endorsement meant that the Borderlands Board would now accept submissions for funding from Hawick Place Plan projects. That submission had to be made in a particular format however and Keith said that the form was ‘a piece of torture’.

The TT were currently working on a Town Investment Plan for Hawick, based on the Place Plan and projects contained therein. There had been a team specifically set up to deal with that Town Investment Plan to ensure that projects were validated as eligible for Borderlands and any other funding requirements, which were generally based around community prosperity, sustainability and so on. They were working on that now in order to bring forward the necessary information to meet requirements for the funding application submission. Projects nearest the stage of meeting the funding requirements would take priority. The TT would be getting in touch with the various organisations associated with projects to see at which stage each project was at for submitting a funding application.

There would be an audit trail right from the post-it-notes right through to the projects, to ensure there was a reason for that project being supported.

Colin Hope advised that there were 21 projects in the Place Plan however only 3 or 4 would be assessed as the ones that were at a more advanced stage to progress on first.

- (d) Teviot & Liddesdale Area Partnership – Councillor Ramage advised that the next meeting of the Partnership, which she hoped would be a blended meeting, would be held on Tuesday, 19th November within the Business Centre. A blended meeting would suit better for the more rural members.

- (e) A7 Action Group – Stuart Mactaggart advised he could not attend the last meeting in person but nevertheless was able to report that there were some concerns raised regarding the condition of the Langlands Footbridge however it was unclear who had responsibility for that footbridge. Councillor Ramage confirmed that was SBC. She would chase that up.

There had also been discussed some adverse effects on the traffic situation on the A7 at Wilton Hill and the TLC roundabout as a result of the installation of the new toucan crossing at Mart Street at its junction with Duke Street. Marjorie McCreadie confirmed that traffic was gridlocked and nose to tail at certain times of the day. Sometimes that was as far up as the Police Station. Tommy Deans, Bear Scotland said he would have a team look at that situation. There was a lot of sets of lights along that road.

Stuart went on to report on the preparation of a new A7 Action Plan and Jim Adams, Treasurer he said had already mentioned the Dunk area previously. Bear Scotland advised that works were in the budget. The corner at the Dunk had been ongoing for quite a number of years. Marjorie McCreadie reported that some repairs had been carried out at that corner by digging out soil at the back of the wall. Each member received a hard copy of all Bear Scotland's work, being done, in the pipeline or to be done in the future. According to Bear Scotland, it was in their pipeline to make a bridge across from the A7 at Parkdaill into the park to take away walkers from the Dunk Corner, however that would be subject to finance required. The A7 Action Plan as stated was being renewed, and a meeting would be held on Thursday, 28th November in the Committee Room upstairs at Hawick Town Hall to discuss that one item.

Marjorie McCreadie advised there was still time for HCC to provide any comments on what they would like to see in the new A7 Action Plan. Comments would require to be submitted by 27th November.

- (f) Wind Farms – The Chair reported he would be attending a meeting with Muirhall Energy, along with other affected parties, on 23rd October regarding the Teviot Wind Farm. It was hoped at that meeting to finalise the agreement on Community Investment Funding, should that development be approved.

At the present time, HCC received community benefit funding from the Langhope Rig Community Fund which was administered by Foundation Scotland. For Teviot Wind Farm, Muirhall Energy had proposed that a Company Limited by Guarantee, and having a Board Structure, be set up for administering community benefit funding. That Board would be made up of T&L Partnership area representatives, who would then make decisions on applications received for funding from groups within the T&L area, under set criteria, and determine successful applications for funding to be distributed.

Mid Hill Wind Farm was now in for scoping. That was a large windfarm up the Borthwick Valley. Upper Teviot & Borthwick Water CC were the statutory consultees. Hawick CC was not a statutory consultee but would nevertheless be

making comment when contacted as a non-statutory consultee. That development proposed to consist of 42 x 200m turbines.

And so, it was being proposed to have Teviot Wind Farm on the Mossypaul side and Mid Hill on the opposite side up the Borthwick area.

In addition, SPEN were proposing a Cross Border Power Line connection to the National Grid. Connection would come from Galashiels North around Hawick and down to Newcastleton to the Scotch Kershope area where the English would pick up to route into England. There was no direct route planned on the English side presently and discussions were ongoing.

Stirches Energy Park, who gave a presentation to HCC recently, were holding a public consultation event on Thursday, 7th November within the Lesser Town Hall, Hawick between 3pm and 7pm. That would give the wider public hopefully more information than what was actually presented to HCC's meeting, which was insufficient at that time, only showing a rough sketch of where that would be located across from Newton Farm and towards the Heap Hills. They did not divulge however the exact location nor was information provided sufficient to allay safety fears. There was a lot of information not provided. He encouraged everyone to attend that consultation.

- (g) Hawick Common Riding Committee – Braden George advised there was nothing major to report. There had been an event the previous Friday, where 88 people had attended.
- (h) Hawick Reivers – The Secretary advised that planning was ongoing for the next Reivers Festival. Their next Committee meeting would be held the following night, Tuesday, 22nd October 2024.
- (i) SBCCN – The Chair wondered if that Network had been resurrected yet. Councillors were unsure of the position with that and thought it was still functioning. The Chair confirmed there had been no correspondence from SBC nor the Network for some time now.

13. Correspondence – There was no other correspondence to discuss.

14. A.O.C.B.

Aligning the AGM & Re-election Dates- The Treasurer raised that HCC's AGM would be held in May 2025 however all HCC members would then be up for re-election in September 2025. He wondered whether it would be better to align both of these, rather than have duplication of appointing Office-bearers at both of these meetings. Re-election of office-bearers only changed a few years ago to happen in September, as a result of all HCC previous members resigning in one go, and the majority of current members being elected in September 2019.

The Chair advised that would mean a change to the Constitution and would require SBC's legal department input. Councillor McAteer raised that the elections of CCs were not every year. The question was raised how other CCs operated, and it was noted each CC was different and operated in line with their individual terms of office.

The Chair agreed that HCC look into that suggestion further. In terms of HCC, all members would be up for re-election in September 2025.

Eric Faulkner Convention - Marjorie McCreadie raised that many attending the meeting that night would remember the Bay City Rollers and in particular Eric Faulkner whom she said had a great connection to Hawick. Over the past 6 years, she along with Derick Tait as part of the Welcome Hosts Initiative had been involved in that Convention. She had been contacted again, and the organisers had been dismayed to hear of the demise of the Welcome Hosts. They had approached her to employ her to continue with that work but on a paid basis. That had come as a surprise and she said she would think about that offer. She had taken advice from various people however had determined not to accept that offer on a paid basis and had advised them that as that work was for the town, she would accept that challenge but not on a paid employee basis. There would be no cost to the Convention, and she would carry out duties on a voluntary basis.

The Convention had been held two weekends past, and there were great benefits to the town from that, with the money spent in the town, the Dinner held at the Cogsmill Hall where 38 attended, ferried by Hawick taxis. They had held a Treasure Hunt type event, which meant people had to go into local shops for clues and that often resulted in additional purchases for those shops. There had been visitors to the town from Scotland, England, Ireland, Wales, Switzerland, Belgium, Netherlands, Brussels and more. Each year they came, and it was a joy she said to be involved with those visitors. Last year there were c.80 people in attendance, with part of that attraction being to celebrate 50 years of the Bay City Rollers. There had been a massive Ball held in the Caledonian Hotel in Edinburgh. Next year, visitors had said they would like to visit over the time of the Music Festival in Hawick, and due to the shortage of accommodation in Hawick itself, she had encouraged that bookings be made now.

James Wilson Statue – Duncan Taylor reported that repairs had now been effected to the hand on that statue.

South of Scotland Destination Alliance (SSDA) – A member of the public asked if there was any connection between the Community Council and any other community groups with the SSDA. Colin Hope advised there was such a link in that HDT was a member of the SSDA and also SoSE who had a Tourism Development Manager with whom they also had linkage. HDT were currently working with those organisations on the shortage of bed spaces within the town. It was noted that SSDA had a page on the Scotland Starts Here website referring to Teviotdale, Eskdale and Liddesdale and that did a good job on promoting Hawick itself.

- 15. Date of Next Meeting** – It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be Monday, 11th November 2024 at 6.30pm within the Lesser Town Hall, Hawick.