

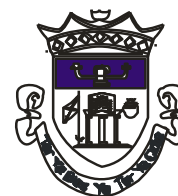
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# Hawick Community Council

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**MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL**  
**held on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 6.30pm within the Lesser Town Hall, Hawick**

Present: Cameron Knox (Chair) Kevin Marsh (Vice-Chair)  
Jim Adams (Treasurer) Margaret Hogg (Secretary)  
Braden George John Campbell  
Graeme King Duncan Taylor  
Euan Welsh

Attending: Councillor Cox Councillor McAteer  
Councillor Marshall Councillor Smart

There were 17 members of the public in attendance, as well as Graham Ford for the Hawick Paper and PC Fraser Mortimer, Police Scotland.

- 1. Chair's Opening Remarks** – The Chair welcomed everyone to the April meeting of Hawick Community Council back in the Lesser Town Hall. He advised that if any members wished to raise a question, they ensure that was through the Chair. 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 went on to advise 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, Stuart Mactaggart, Michael Robertson and John Wilkinson and Councillor Ramage.
- 4. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025** – The previously circulated Minutes of the last meeting were approved as an accurate record of the meeting - Proposed for adoption by Duncan Taylor and Seconded by Jim Adams, subject to item 5 Gable Ends at Teviot Crescent, to reflect that the resident had written to the Contractor responsible for works associated to the new Business Centre and not the Flood Protection Group.
- 5. Matters arising** –  
Hawick High School – The Chair reported that a response had now been received from Lesley Munro, Director of Education & Children's Services (following letter issued by HCC on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025). The response had been circulated to Members. It was

encouraging that once the Internal Plans for the school were more fully detailed for activities within the school, further consultation would take place with the community and stakeholders. That would hopefully be within the Summer term.

Refurbishment of the James Thomson Bridge – Councillor McAteer advised that would not be imminent. SBC had no plans in place to refurbish and were of the view that any upgrades were not necessary at the present time. Duncan Taylor advised he had received an email from Councillor Ramage, who had been told that any refurbishment certainly would not be within this current financial year. So it would be at least 2026/27. Duncan's response had been, given the Bridge had been closed for Flood Protection works, it would have been excellent to have had tidy up works done then, as he considered that was a missed opportunity and the bridge would need to be closed when eventually that upgrade to painter work was to be done.

Heras Fencing at Teviot Crescent – Gillian Neish, a resident at that location, confirmed the issue of securing the fencing there, had now been completed.

6. **Police Scotland Reports – March 2025** – It was noted those had been circulated to HCC members before the meeting, and the Chair asked for any questions. The Secretary said she had noted there had been ticketing of vehicles illegally parked in the vicinity of local schools at Trinity, Drumlanrig and Wilton. She wondered if ticketing had served to improve that situation. PC Mortimer said he had spoken with PC Patterson responsible for those patrols, and his view was that there had been some improvement, albeit further patrols would be carried out.

There being no further questions from HCC Members nor the public attending, the Chair thanked PC Mortimer for his attendance.

7. **Notice of Proposed Change to HCC Constitution – Term of Office from 2 to 3 years (commencing post Elections 2025) – to be considered at AGM on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025** – The Chair advised of due Notice provided in relation to a proposed change to the Term of Office from 2 to 3 years. Members had duly received the required notice for consideration, to allow that change to be agreed or otherwise at the forthcoming AGM scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> May. Any change would be effective from election of the new Community Council.
8. **Treasurer's Report – February 2025** – The Treasurer advised that the Opening Balance overall was £16,953.26, and the Closing Balance £28,870.54. The individual accounts were explained as follows:
  - HCC 1 Account – opened with a balance of £5,020.65. There was income from Bank Interest of £51.36, resulting in a closing balance of £5,072.01. That balance included £1,566.76 Fallago Pathways Grant ringfenced for use on pathways.
  - Christmas Lights & Event Account – opened with a balance of £2,018.36. An uncashed cheque from December 2023 for the sum of £20 had been added back into that account, resulting in a closing balance of £2,038.36.
  - Hawick in Bloom Account – opened and closed with a balance of £8,802.03.
  - Community Benefit Fund Foundation Scotland – opened with a balance of £1,112.22. The Grant for 2025 had now been received for £11,845.92, resulting in a closing balance of £12,958.14.

It was noted that was the last Treasurer's report for the year 2024/25, and accounts were now with the Auditor for approval. Members approved the April Treasurer's Report.

## 9. Public Forum and Town Issues

Havelock Bank – Trees – John Campbell expressed his thanks to SBC for their attention to the trees at that location. Whilst it had taken some time to attend to those, nevertheless he appreciated efforts now made.

Lovat Mills & Hawick High School – John Campbell expressed his concerns regarding the length of time taken by Planning to approve works at Lovat Mills as opposed to those at the High School. Insurances were to come down in price, as a result of flood protection works being completed.

Councillor Marshall advised he along with Councillor McAteer had supported Lovat Mills expansion, however the decision to reject planning permission arose as a result of the National Planning Framework document currently in place. SBC Planning Officers applied that guidance however that was not acceptable to the Community or indeed any business which wanted to expand along Commercial Road (where Flood Protection was in place). In relation to the High School, their Design Plan compensated for what was required in relation to the Flood Scheme being in place and was agreed. The issue remained that close on £100m had been spent on creating a Flood Prevention Scheme and the Scottish Government Regulations in partnership with SEPA provided guidance on what could be passed and what could not. Councillors agreed that the issue was with that Framework which did not work well when Flood Prevention works were in place. Common sense had to prevail in those circumstances, however SBC Officers were tied to applying that Framework as it stood, and so they were not in the wrong in doing that. Change needed to be reflected in the Framework itself.

Councillor Marshall advised he had attended the Appeal Hearing in relation to Lovat Mills, and he said credit was due to the Planning Committee who then unanimously agreed to that appeal. The Framework required to be looked at so that any future applications did not meet with that initial resistance from Planning. The title of Commercial Road, and any businesses looking to locate there, speaks for itself and businesses had to be encouraged into Hawick.

Councillor McAteer reiterated that it was the process that was wrong and not the Council Officers in making those initial decisions and following the guidance currently in place.

John Campbell wondered if contact with John Lamont and Rachael Hamilton might throw further weight into making the required changes.

Councillor Cox agreed with Councillors Marshall and McAteer, that the Planning Framework was the issue and needed to be further looked at.

Tiles outside Hawick Museum – The Treasurer considered that despite previous repairs to the tiles at that location, further work was now required. He wondered if

that had been reported by anyone to Councillors previously, and if not, he would like Councillors to take forward for further inspection. He considered tiles were now a trip hazard especially for toddlers.

Random signage – The Treasurer reported on a closure the previous weekend of Brougham Place, stated to be on the left-hand side, however the following day, the closure was on the right-hand side down Baker Street. However, Baker Street was open. Perhaps there had been a mistake or someone had been responsible for moving signage which was irresponsible.

Millport Area – The Treasurer stated works in that location appeared to be taking too long a time to reach completion. Councillor Marshall suggested HCC may wish to write to the Flood Protection Scheme to raise that issue, however, Councillor McAteer advised that works at Millport were extra to that initially planned and not the responsibility of the Flood Protection Scheme. He was unsure when all works were then scheduled for completion. Duncan Taylor, also a resident of Millport, confirmed that it was monies from CARS for additional works in that area and SBC Contracts were carrying out the works. He considered there was only a tiny section of work – about 2 metres – remaining to be completed now. As a resident, he had not been hugely inconvenienced and had found SBC Contracts workmen to be incredibly helpful and good natured in allowing residents to access their properties. The quality of stonework really was fantastic and he had no complaints. He did not consider it would take much longer to be concluded on. He expressed his disappointment however that works he considered to be needed to the Thomson Bridge would overshadow the good works to Millport.

Banking in Hawick – The Chair referred to the imminent loss of Santander and now on top of that there was the withdrawal by the TSB Group of their mobile facility to Jedburgh which was stated to be ‘to provide better service’. He could not understand how taking that service to Jedburgh would benefit customers in Hawick when some customers did not have access to a car and the bus service to Jedburgh was not the best. Other than write to the TSB, he did not know what the answer would be, however access to banking facilities were getting less and less within the town. It was a sign of the time with online banking, however, there needed to be a fight to keep banks in the town.

Councillor Cox agreed and advised there would be a meeting involving Hawick Councillors the following Friday at 11am to discuss banking and Post Office services within the town. Councillor McAteer said there was stark reality to be had, in that we were now looking at the last bank in town. These were business decisions and try as they might to reverse those decisions in what was now a digital age, would be very difficult. He considered as a collective we should be considering why in Jedburgh there was a Banking Hub proposed, which he said was deserved, however in a town of 3000 people and Hawick having 16,000 people, the fight should be for Hawick to also have a Banking Hub. There was plenty office space in Hawick to accommodate that and in his view we should be changing direction and looking towards having a Hub for Hawick.

The Treasurer recalled a report in the Hawick Paper recently regarding a businessman in the town looking to provide Post Office Services, which had been rejected as being

0.1 of a mile out with the required radius. Post Offices at Burnfoot and at Dickson Street did not provide a full Post Office Service, requiring townsfolk to travel to Galashiels for those services not available in Hawick. It was difficult to agree with that decision, when there was someone willing to provide that service.

Councillor Marshall said he could not speak in relation to that specifically, however, all of the comments raised at the meeting would be discussed fully at the Councillors' meeting on the Friday.

Councillor Smart advised she had written to Andrew McIntyre, Head of Government Affairs at TSB when she had heard the news regarding the move to Jedburgh. She had now forwarded his response to the Secretary to share with HCC members. The main points of the reply, albeit generic, were stated to be to consolidate the service at the Banking Hub and he said that approximately 10 customers were using the pop-up every month but they knew that 85% of those were already using other local services like the Post Office or Banking Hub. When TSB launched that service in 2021 it was before Banking Hub Services were introduced. Since then the Banking Hub in Jedburgh had opened as part of 15 that were currently available in Scotland - a figure likely to increase over the next 18 months. It did also state that decisions where to locate Banking Hubs were independently taken by LINK following a community assessment which was usually deployed when a bank branch or Post Office cash service was closed in a town. Councillor Smart was not aware whether that had been done in the case of Hawick considering the Post Office cash machine was also closed the same time as the Post Office. Under the current criteria, the response stated that Banking Hubs were only deployed in communities where the last bank in the town was closed. Given there was a Bank of Scotland in Hawick, it stated it was unlikely a Banking Hub would be deployed whilst that was in place. Despite that, anyone could request a review of their community's access to cash from LINK, including members of the public, local politicians and community groups. There were more details on the LINK Scheme available to click into on the response.

Bryan Bell introduced himself as the new Chair of Hawick Development Trust (HDT) and advised that they were also looking into this change, and had started talks with Cash Access UK, who were the Post Office arm which ran the Banking Hubs. They shared concerns regarding that change to Jedburgh.

Re-opening of TLC Pool – The Chair advised that we awaited with bated breath the re-opening of the pool at TLC which had disappointedly been closed the previous week. Hopefully temperatures would get up to the required standard and the children would at least get 3 days of their school holidays remaining to make use of that pool.

Derick Tait, HDT re Welcome Hosts – Derick advised he was aware of much discussion at HCC's last meeting in which his name had been mentioned. He considered it appropriate to provide a statement regarding the Welcome Hosts and had the approval of the HDT Board to provide that to the meeting.

With regard to the lack of response to the Bus Company emails, he said those who were in regular email correspondence with him round about the turn of the year, were well aware he had experienced severe problems with the sending and receipt of

emails. A good many which had been sent to him did not come into his Inbox and he presumed a good many he had replied to, would also have not reached their destination. That resulted in his requiring to change his email address and internet provider and even now, he had no access to his old email address. Derick said he fully accepted that an email would have been sent from the bus company concerned, but unfortunately that was one of those emails which did not reach his Inbox. That was an extremely regrettable situation, however in the world in which we live, such issues happened.

When Mrs. McCreadie received her email, had she picked up the phone as she had done often in the past to discuss Host matters, that situation could have been resolved without much fuss. Instead, for reasons and motives to which he was not party to, she chose to make it a public issue at the last HCC Meeting which was to the embarrassment of HDT's representatives present at that meeting and, on a personal note, pretty much ruined a friendship which had been based on mutual trust and respect.

With regard to visiting buses, Derick pointed out that last year, despite being instrumental in setting up an Agreement to welcome buses and despite being offered an enhancement to her annual administrative fee, Mrs McCreadie chose to cease any further involvement. Faced with that situation, Trust volunteers gave up their time to do the necessary, free of any charge and to ensure that the buses were welcomed to the town. Accordingly, the Trust honoured its commitments made and had nothing to reproach itself for in that respect.

Lastly, since the Hosts were discontinued for very valid reasons, including those espoused by Mrs McCreadie herself at a Trust Board Meeting, there had been much ill-informed gossip and speculation about the Hawick Welcome and its future. So, whilst it was still very early days, and one or two knock-backs had already been suffered, HDT were looking to develop a Tourism Strategy fit for purpose and fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and any group wishing to join them in developing that Strategy would be most welcomed. Meantime, if the gossip and speculation were to continue, he asked that everyone provided the relevant facts.

Wheelie Bins- Old Dump- A member of the public said she had brought up at a previous meeting about the numbers of wheelie bins at that location. She had noted an article in the Hawick Paper following that meeting but had not heard anything since. Councillor Marshall advised the response he had received from the Refuse Department was that they fully recognised there were several hundred wheelie bins located there, however asked if more time could be afforded to them to start removal of these. He confirmed the bins were in line to be removed.

## **10. Reports from Sub-Groups**

- (a) Christmas Event - Nothing to report at this stage.
- (b) Hawick in Bloom – The Secretary advised that the Summer plants had been ordered and paid for. She was pleased to report that 42 shops and businesses on the High Street had signed up to having a hanging basket again this Summer, which she said was a great response. She thanked those participating.

As previously reported, HiB were looking into replacing wooden planters, and she advised that a prototype of a planter made up of recycled materials and made by a local group would be viewed by volunteers the following Wednesday. The group were taking the opportunity to review what planters were in place, their location and impact, sizes and design, to inform those replacement requirements.

Finally, she advised again that a Plant Sale Fundraiser would be held on Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> May at the Old Parish Hall. There would be lots of plants of various kinds on sale as well as some vegetables. For those non-gardeners, she encouraged them to come along for a tea/coffee/bacon roll or traybake to help funds. Funds raised would go towards replacing planters under a phased programme.

- (c) CCTV – Nothing further to report.
- (d) Resilience – Nothing to report, however he encouraged anyone who would wish to be part of HCC's Resilience Group to contact HCC- E: hawickcc@gmail.com
- (e) Fundraising – Nothing to report.
- (f) Planning – The Chair advised there had been no major planning issues in the month.
- (g) Bandstand Events - Duncan Taylor advised he continued to book more artists and requested release of Foundation Scotland funding to allow insurances to be paid and booking of bandstand etc now.

## **11. Reports from Community Partners & Representative Groups**

- (a) Hawick Development Trust (HDT) – Bryan Bell, Chair said he had been voted as Chair of HDT on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, taking over from Colin Hope.

The Trust was pleased to announce it had completed the purchase of the property at 80 High Street, currently used by the clothing shop INIS. That purchase had been facilitated by a grant from the South of Scotland Enterprise along with the hard work of a few of the Trust's volunteers. He was grateful to all involved. That purchase had given the shop confidence in being able to continue trading for the foreseeable future and allowed it to maintain job security for its 3 members of staff. That shop was one of many which needed to be kept trading, in view of the sad loss of the Borders Pet Rescue shop due to a new landlord coming in and increasing their rent to unacceptable proportions, and in the case of INIS, the Trust were able to prevent that from happening.

The Trust had started looking at the viability of obtaining premises towards the Sandbed end of the High Street. The Treasurer earlier was correct in stating there was a statutory limit to how close a Post Office could be set up and that particular newsagent was not within that boundary. The idea of taking the Sandbed end was that would be close to the original Sandbed Post Office site and hopefully within that statutory boundary. That would be a phased approach and HDT would hopefully be able to encourage the Post Office to let that set-up go ahead. If and when Bank of Scotland closed its branch, that building could be extended to provide a Banking Hub. That was the concept of that development, which he said was still at a feasibility stage, however, he would appreciate the support of the

Council and the local SBC Councillors to HDT to help make that a community-led project.

- (b) Foundation Scotland - Nothing further to report other than as stated earlier by the Treasurer that the 2025 Grant of £11,845.92 had now been received.
- (c) Teviot & Liddesdale Area Partnership – The Chair advised that item would now be deleted from the Agenda, as Area Partnerships were now no longer operating. SBC were looking at alternative ways in which to engage communities, and he looked forward to their report findings in due course.
- (d) A7 Action Group – Mrs McCreadie said they had hoped to launch their new 10-year Plan in late Spring/early Summer, however that would now be held back to see what might happen if Center Parcs received planning permission and came to the area. Discussion had taken place with Tommy Deans regarding the prospect of having a cut-out Policeman, following that being raised at a previous HCC meeting, and he saw no problem in that going ahead and offered his assistance if required. The pathway from the A7 at the Dunk, and over into the Park, she said was still an idea and would hopefully progress once monies became available. That matter was still live. Finally she stated there had been no HCC representatives attend the last two A7 Action Group meetings.

A member of the public raised her concerns that on coming along Princess Street to join the A7 at the traffic lights, frequently vehicles coming from the A7 north and travelling towards town were blocking that junction and vehicles from Princess Street turning right were then unable to move. She wondered if a yellow box or some other sort of road markings could be inserted to prevent that happening.

Councillor Marshall agreed that was an issue he had witnessed regularly. Conor Price, Flood Protection would need to be making a decision soon on whether changes made at that junction would remain, following community consultation. He agreed that a yellow box or some other road markings would be necessary if that junction layout were to remain, and in addition the sequence of the lights needed to be reviewed. He thought those had been altered to accommodate for when the blades for the wind turbines were travelling through. Finally, the metal barriers along Princess Street were being looked at for removal soon as well. Conor Price had been made aware of these issues and Councillor Marshall would speak with him further, along with Tommy Deans, Bear Scotland to try to obtain a more permanent commitment regarding that junction.

Councillor Marshall advised he had pressed Conor Price hard regarding the Dovemount issues as well, as Transport Scotland had discussed about the ATN extending into that area. Bear Scotland were doing a piece of work to enhance mobility in that area, which he said was fine, however he sought commitment that parking spaces would not be diminished.

A member of the public advised she had witnessed delivery vans turning right from the bridge at the Leisure Centre towards the library. The Chair advised that issue had been raised a number of times at HCC meetings, and the problem

remained that there was no signage in place to prevent that. Councillor McAteer confirmed that a sign would be put in place however timing was not known. Should any driver however turn right and be involved in an accident, they would be subject to a careless driving charge. That junction should not have been left like that however at the present time, due to lack of signage, it was actually not illegal to turn right.

- (e) Hawick Common Good – Nothing to report.
- (f) Renewable Developments – The Chair advised that SBC's Planning Committee had objected to the Teviot Wind Farm Development and that would now move on to a Public Enquiry.

He advised that a meeting of all Community Councils within the Teviot & Liddesdale Area was now imminent and would happen by the end of the week or next. Discussion would be around all of the Renewable Developments – Wind Farms and BESS, proposed for our area.

On a positive note, he advised that the Community Benefit Funding Agreement for Pines Burns Wind Farm had now been signed and HCC would receive c.£6,000 by the end of April. That fund would be administered by Foundation Scotland.

Stirches Solar Energy Farm – the Chair advised Ib Vogt had held a further public consultation day in the Town Hall recently. He invited Blair Breton to speak on behalf of neighbouring residents to that development.

Blair provided a hand-out to HCC members and public members in attendance. He stated that Solar Farm was a town-wide issue, due to that location being readily seen and being very scenic and providing an outstanding view right across to Ruberslaw and surrounding land. The proposal was to build a BESS right next to the road on what was currently green pasture land.

Screening Report – As the development would be over 50KW, it was necessary for submission to the Energy Consents Unit in Glasgow. A Screening Report was required for Scottish Borders Council, which he said was somewhat inaccurate. Accordingly he had written to SBC's Planning Department to advise the report was understated and in some cases not stated at all. He had been advised by SBC Planners he had no role in the screening process and would require to wait for the official planning stage. He stated that the person carrying out the survey had been in a car and that location was a walking route and one from which a walker would see much more than someone sitting in their car. An even better view would be had from a horse and there were many horses using that route.

The site was over 139 acres, which was not a small development, and ran right down to the A7 following the Boonraw Burn up towards the viewing height, stopping about 120m below that. They had spotted the viewing point from the car and were now proposing to build a 10m tree screen. They would need to insert saplings to grow as that screen, in one of the windiest locations to be had. There had been 2 x 55 knot gales during the past winter, snapping trees in the wood and saplings would, he considered, fail simply because of the climate.

Photographic Basis- The residents had embarked on a photographic survey using ILF Imaging, Lesley Fraser, and had highlighted on those pictures where the solar farm would be cited. They intended providing that photographic survey as part of their objections. He considered the ECU would have no idea of what the layout there would look like.

Borders Abbey Way- The Borders Abbey Way was described as one of the great footpaths in Scotland and had been there since 1986. Efforts to climb those paths were only for the real purpose of seeing great views at the top.

Other views – The group had also widened their survey to the Ridge Road at the top of the hill, as from there, the whole Solar Farm could be viewed, and on leaving from the Boonraw junction going south, a growing image would be seen of the Solar Farm stretching up the hill to the north of the actual farm.

Housing Offset Distance – The land offset between the houses and the Solar Farm was adequate as for normal Solar Farms. He advised he had not come across any other Solar Farm across the UK however which had been located on a hill or undulating land. That proposed was up in the hills which were overlooked on 3 sides by higher vantage points. Ib Vogt were saying they were far enough away from houses but residents were actually looking down the hill towards the Solar Farm, and his group would argue with the planners that was a whole different situation to looking horizontally.

Energy and Profit is not for Scotland - He advised he had a contact with SPEN and could show that Scotland had been in surplus for electricity generation for some decades. That surplus was growing more and more and hence the new Cross Border Grid connection had admitted that fact, by getting the power out of Scotland. The Stirches Solar Farm and BESS would connect to the local sub-station and the demand was not going to be in Scotland, which had enough electricity, but would go South. He could argue therefore that this Farm was not part of Net-Zero. There would be no benefits for Hawick, with no additional local employment but just a pile of disruption. When Ib Vogt were finished, they would simply sell it on. They were not in the business of running the Farm long-term.

Proliferation – The proliferation of kit around 6 or so projects around Hawick he considered was over-concentration in one area. That was happening because there were few gaps in hills – you either went down on the East coast, came through here, or followed the M74, and that was focusing a lot of companies on this particular route.

Monitoring – Ib Vogt had admitted they could not establish a Monitoring Solution. Normally systems would be monitored down Comms links and were important especially in relation to BESS to allow their switching on and off. That was a safety implication and as they already had 3 Solar Farms in place, there should then be a Monitoring System in place.

Market Conditions - The energy market he said was 'up in the air' as could be seen from the British Steel debacle at Scunthorpe, and British Industry was being made uncompetitive as the British Model was based on the gas price. Gas prices were high but did not fall as part of the energy mix and would form lesser a part as time went on.

As an aside, the proposed Stirches BESS was 13MW, and that to the North Sea was a 15MW single wind tower which stood at 1000ft tall. That put this development in context and was not insignificant in the Scottish mix. So those arguments would be pushed hard.

He concluded by saying that if the worst came to the worst (and approval was given), the group were looking for Planning Conditions to be included.

- Should the operator or owner of the site change, that would need the approval of SBC each time
- A Bond should be put in place to restore the site in case of default. Ib Vogt were looking for a 40-year lease. Very few companies asked for 40 years, as that technology would probably be overtaken within 10-15 years, particularly if Fusion Power came about. That was now being demonstrated in California – less energy than output.
- To comply with UK Fire Regulations and for their BESS Regulations to be implemented.

The Chair thanked Blair and the group for sharing their concerns, and we would await the outcome of IB Vogt's recent consultation.

Councillor Smart shared Blair and the residents' concerns regarding the energy being generated from that Solar Park and that energy being used elsewhere and not even within Scotland. That Solar Farm could power all of the households in Hawick and yet it would not and would go elsewhere to the benefit of others and not help our residents, the economy of this town or even this country. That was something that had to be addressed.

The Chair advised that HCC Office-Bearers had been involved in a couple of meetings with Ib Vogt regarding Community Benefit if that development got past planning. Whilst their representatives had said there would be some Community Benefit, that however would very much depend on how much it cost the developer to set up the site. They were unable to provide any amount.

- (g) Hawick Common Riding Committee – No update to report.
- (h) Hawick Reivers – The Secretary reported despite inclement weather in the afternoon of the event resulting in the Market requiring to be cut short, nevertheless feedback she understood had been very good and the crowds were certainly out in support for that spectacle. The evening event of the torchlight procession went well, followed by a great fireworks display to conclude on a very successful event for the town. The Reivers Committee should be congratulated for all their efforts with the Festival and showcasing our town well once again.

**12. Correspondence** – The Secretary advised an email had been received asking whether HCC would like to host the Borders Walking Festival in 2025, 2026 or 2027. That matter still required to be considered in full by HCC members. There would be a lot of work involved in organising such an event and a lot of additional volunteers required.

**13. A.O.C.B.** – Councillor Cox referred to HCC’s proposed change to its Term of Office and wondered because MSPs, MPs and Councillors stood for a term of 5 years, why HCC were considering a less period of 2 or even 3 years. It was explained that SBC’s Scheme for Community Councils determined that period required to be 2 and no more than 3 years. It could be 4 years but only with their prior approval.

Councillor Marshall considered that as volunteers, there should be no dispute to any such changes to the Term of Office. MSPs, Councillors etc were paid.

Councillor McAteer advised for those not already aware, that the Project Lead for the Borders Railway had now been announced but more importantly Councillors had seen individual names involved on that project, and he said they came with decent and high-quality knowledge of railway activities which was really reassuring. That was really positive given the length of time waited to get to that stage. Everyone should contribute as much as they could to help that project proceed.

Councillor Marshall advised that following on the recent Review of Live Borders, a draft report would be circulated to Councillors within the next few days. That would later be made public. The Chair said it was worrying to learn that £1.8m had been provided to keep Live Borders afloat however a salary of the Chief Executive was stated as being c. £100k, which seemed a bit tough to take. HCC looked forward to release to the public of that document.

**14. Date of Next Meeting** – It was agreed that the next meeting would be the AGM to be held on Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at the earlier time of 6.00pm within the Lesser Town Hall, Hawick. The May Monthly Meeting would follow on immediately thereafter.