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# Hawick Community Council

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MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL  
held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 within the Lesser Town Hall, Hawick  
(immediately following AGM)

Present: Cameron Knox (Chair) Kevin Marsh (Vice-Chair)  
Jim Adams (Treasurer) Stuart Beck  
Braden George John Campbell  
Graeme King Stuart Mactaggart  
Michael Robertson Duncan Taylor  
John Wilkinson

Attending: Councillor Cox Councillor Ramage  
Councillor Smart

There were 10 members of the public in attendance, as well as Graham Ford for the Hawick Paper and PC Allan Patterson, Police Scotland.

1. **Chair's Opening Remarks** – Following immediately on from the AGM, the Chair welcomed everyone to the Monthly May Meeting and advised 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 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 Margaret Hogg and Euan Welsh and Councillors McAteer and Marshall.
4. **Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> April 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.
5. **Matters arising** –  
Refurbishment of the James Thomson Bridge – The Chair advised that HCC member Graeme King had been in contact with SBC Officials with a view to the Bridge being power-washed. Unfortunately, Graeme had to report that despite two attempts, there had been no response from SBC. He would follow-up again on that.  
Trip Hazard with Concrete slabs in front of the Bandstand – The Chair advised that issue had been reported to SBC's Property Officer, who had undertaken to inspect,

with a view to relaying any slabs as necessary. There had been 20 new slabs laid in that area previously.

6. **Police Scotland Reports – April 2025 –** It was noted those had been circulated to HCC members before the meeting, and the Chair asked for any questions. Michael Robertson congratulated the Police on apprehending the person causing havoc around Burnfoot on an electric motorbike. He feared that he was on course to kill somebody otherwise. PC Patterson confirmed that it was not a normal motorbike and that he had cause to follow the culprit, who it turned out was simply unable to control the bike. It was also asked whether the issues continued with culprits on quad bikes, and PC Patterson advised that he had cause to stop one quad bike in the Howegate a few days earlier, due to the noise. On inspection the exhaust had been defective however the driver undertook to have that repaired. There were a further 2 quad bikes known to be being used around the town, however these bikes were fully legal and the only issue was in catching the drivers when exhibiting any careless or dangerous driving.

PC Patterson referred to callouts to the Violet Woods at Wilton Dean where a gang-hut had been made by children. A fire-pit however had also been made, requiring the attendance of the Fire Service. He himself had been walking in that area 2 days after that initial attendance and had found a fire still smouldering underneath growth, which obviously remained a serious risk. He had to request return of the Fire Service again. Claims from parents to leave the children alone had been made to him and that the children responsible were doing no harm. They were clearly not taking account then that there was a high safety risk with use of that fire-pit in a wooded area.

E-bikes and e-scooters continued to be a problem. Many people classed these as kids toys however they were classed as motor vehicles. For adults using these, they are subject to Road Traffic Regulations and there is a requirement for Insurance, registration with DVLA, for them to be taxed, MOT'd and licenced, and the user must possess a full driving licence. He had also spoken to many kids using these in respect of their safe use. Some did not even use helmets. Parents continued to buy these for their children and seemed unaware of their dangers. He had chased many kids using these away from the Pump Track. The kids were not bad kids, however, unaware of the dangers and more education was needed.

PC Patterson extended his thanks to Councillor Ramage for her input to having lines painted at the garage in Commercial Road to prevent parking on the pavement there, which had reduced substantially the number of complaints regarding that. Councillor Ramage confirmed that work had been done by Bear Scotland.

It was noted that HCC would be receiving a Pop-up Bob Policeman as an aid to prevent speeding. Councillor Ramage said she had asked Bear Scotland about the placing of Pop-up Bob however that would be at HCC's discretion. Bear Scotland did have a week for traffic checking which they intimated they may use at the same time as the pop-up Bob was put in place. The Chair thanked PC Patterson for his attendance.

7. **Borders Sport & Cultural Estate Review** – The Chair advised that this Consultation Report proposed to close the Textiles Tower, Heritage Hub, Wilton Primary School's Swimming Pool, and relocate Hawick Library to the Leisure Centre, ripping the heart out of the community. A broad summary of the Review was that it gave significant opportunities for Live Borders to take operational decisions which would help address financial pressures including staffing and pricing. It gave opportunities to invest in key facilities, which would allow expansion of services, increased usage and generate additional income for Live Borders. In addition, the review allowed significant opportunities to explore changes to facilities including co-location of services, community asset transfer and open market sale. Finally changes to Library service provision mainly through co-location of those services into other facilities and the expansion of global library services. The Chair emphasised that Councillors and townsfolk had to stand up to defend what Hawick had and to keep it. The diminution of services should not be allowed to happen. All other towns would be acting similarly.

Councillor Cox advised that was not a definitive report and only what the Consultants had recommended. Councillors thought that more could be done to keep services open but what needed to happen was that people needed to be encouraged to use them, if nothing else but to prove that they were successful. The Councillors would not go along with the recommendations but facilities needed to be used so that there was no excuse to close them. Councillors would not go along with what was being recommended.

The Chair agreed that it appeared the Consultants had only looked at figures like accountants, and not the impact on the communities in losing those buildings. He agreed that the services needed to be used.

Councillor Ramage suggested it had been a very cold review, with no experience of the town. To take for instance the Climate Change Vault from the Heritage Hub to St Mary's in Selkirk, and the talk about the merger of materials that had already been merged before in 2007 when coming to Hawick, was not acceptable. Heart of Hawick comprised 3 historical buildings – the Tower being the oldest, the Corn Exchange where the Heritage Hub was and then the Hawick Hub itself and those were really important buildings that needed to be fought for. Andrew Carnegie gifted the Library to the people of Hawick and to think that the Consultants proposed to move the books into the humid atmosphere of a Leisure Centre beggared belief. She knew her fellow Councillors were going to fight against proposals as these would mean the loss of a number of historical buildings, and whilst it was easy to suggest those buildings could become community assets, there were only so many community assets able to be taken forward. Creative ways had to be found to keep them going and she agreed with Councillor Cox in that it was about encouraging people to use services. There had been a lot of mismanagement and lack of maintenance of these buildings and suddenly they were facing huge bills because of that. Finally, she had contacted Jenni Craig, SBC, who had advised that engagement with communities would hopefully start in the next couple of weeks. There were a number of ways in which communities could engage with a Digital Survey first. SBC would be running the

consultation from May to August and Councillor Ramage thought that was unfortunate being over the Summer holidays when people could be away. People had to have a strong voice and she encouraged the community to have their say and put forward their views.

Councillor Smart also agreed that it had been a hard-nose approach. The report contained some discrepancies and inaccuracies and those needed to be challenged. The library was a key issue for her personally – somewhere she went every Saturday to obtain books, do research and educate herself and she would not be the person she was without that service. She also held her surgeries there too. She had spoken with the librarians and between them they came up with the suggestion to hold a public meeting specifically in relation to the library. Townsfolk needed to have their say. Staff had a lot of good ideas to bring forward and she thought that their voices had to be heard as well, and a meeting would allow everyone to have actual input and not just via surveys. She would try to organise such a meeting as soon as she could. A public meeting could also provide an opportunity for people to meet to determine how they could challenge those proposals and agree what they actually were going to do. It was in their power.

A member of the public advised that the library was much more than just a place to obtain books but also supported people with sight difficulties, helped people who struggled with instructions, provided book reading services for youngsters, photocopying services and so on. People nowadays were living longer and needed that help and support and the library currently offered a great deal of that. The Chair agreed stating it was not just a book-lending service but a community hub for information and support.

Councillor Ramage said that she had been horrified to learn that Live Borders had turned off the Wi-Fi in the library. They had many computers in place that people could now not use to apply for jobs and so on. Councillor Cox said she had been told that new computers were to be supplied and once that had happened, the Wi-Fi would be turned back on. She went on to advise that one other thing that had not been taken into account by the Consultants, was that Center Parcs were coming to the area. Friends of hers had visited Penrith recently and before Center Parcs went to that area, Penrith had been a bit run down. After spending the weekend there, they had said it was a completely different and better place, with little artisan shops, lots of people around and so on. Center Parcs and its impact on the town was not considered in the Review and should have been. More visitors could likely make use of facilities and our historical buildings when Center Parcs opened and that had not been considered.

Bryan Bell, Chair HDT stated his understanding was that the Wi-Fi had recently been upgraded at the Library, hence it being switched off. HDT had used the library when they had carried out the person-to-person survey on banking services in the town the previous week and had used the Wi-Fi then. In relation to Penrith, he understood that HDT had received an invite to go there to determine what they could learn from Center Parcs being there on the whole visitor economy. In relation to the Review

Report, HDT would be having its own brainstorming session with its members on that, but he wondered who he would liaise with following that. If Councillors could advise, he would be grateful.

Michael Robertson said he did not wish to lose any of the services or buildings and was encouraged to hear the 3 Councillors unified in fighting for these. He wondered whether the Review should have concentrated on Live Borders management, as there seemed to be a lot of mismanagement. It was noted that the Chair of Live Borders had stated they were going through a period of change, renewal and growth with a strong focus on services and improvement. The new CEO of Live Borders would receive a salary of some £99k, and it was stated she would work closely with the staff and engage with communities. That seemed strange when at the same time, proposals were to reduce by 50 staff and she would remain on that high salary, along with other fellow Directors on salaries of some £80k +. Wi-Fi being switched off appeared to be a bad management decision.

Philip Kerr, Chair of Southdean CC said he would respond to proposals on their behalf but also with the loss of the Area Partnerships, that took away the opportunity to comment on a broader basis. He was now however on the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership as a Community Representative for all 69 CCs with his focus being on Teviot & Liddesdale area and the impact of the Review in those areas. He talked about a matrix he had prepared. He was interested in the broader picture as Community Representative and advised that Karen Gateson from Hawick was also on that Partnership as a Social Enterprise Representative.

The Vice-Chair advised that he thought these were public amenities and not designed to make money – libraries for example. He referred to a Public Service Obligation (PSO) which was in legislation, meaning that the Local Authority were obligated to provide certain facilities regardless of their commercial viability. These included buses, trains, cultural facilities, swimming pools, sports facilities and so on. So there was a general obligation on SBC to provide services listed which were not commercially viable, and to try to offload those to Live Borders as a profit-making, surplus-making venture, he considered was nonsense. So when looking at closures he suggested that Councillors should look in more detail at PSO. It was nigh on impossible to make money out of libraries, swimming pools, Town Halls etc however the Review had not seemed to consider anything of that piece of legislation.

Michael Robertson considered it was crazy the salaries given to Management, and the Chair agreed, given the proposed reduction of staff who had given good service, some over a long length of time. Adding on pension contributions and other on-costs, some £5-600k per annum was in respect of management salaries alone, when supposed to be a Charity. Savings on those salaries would surely have helped and not only for services affected in Hawick.

David Chapman, Town Team & The Arches Project, stated from his own experience, there were certainly management issues at TLC. The café appeared not to be open long enough or at the busiest times. When he visited, he was unable to get a cup of

coffee after 3pm. The staff were not to blame. The Chair also understood their booking system needed looked at and Live Borders had received funding for that. He thought people should be able to turn up and pay at the counter and others stated they had experienced locked doors when attending for pre-paid sessions.

Councillor Smart said she had spoken to library staff and they had been demoralised with the outcomes of the Review, and particularly in how the Review outcomes had been presented to them. That was at a weekend and a bank holiday time, when not all would have checked their work emails. The staff felt completely disregarded in the whole process. Being on the frontline, however, it was the staff who had to take the complaints from the public. They could see what was happening was not good.

A member of the public concurred about the booking service failures and having had experience of not being permitted in to use the services, when the service required was clearly not full. People appeared to be booking but not turning up. No common sense appeared to be being used by staff in those circumstances. She had experienced much better service in an Edinburgh leisure facility and the place was full.

Michael Robertson suggested that the Chair or CEO respectively be invited to attend a future meeting of HCC. The Chair agreed a letter would be issued. It was agreed that Catriona McAllister, CEO should be invited.

David Chapman advised that in relation to his involvement with the Arches Project, the public were not engaging in surveys and it appeared to be a major job for people to get involved. They appear disillusioned and surveyed-out. Meetings may be better.

The Vice-Chair referred to visitors he had, who had attended the Leisure Centre last October for a swim and were asked to download their App for use. They were not local and did not wish to do so and were basically turned away. The Centre was not busy and it appeared staff were simply not encouraging its use. That attitude would most likely lead to visitors not returning to Hawick.

Duncan Taylor referred to mismanagement and to high hire costs for use of facilities. The Town Hall was a fantastic venue, relatively recently refurbished, but only c.800 hours of use last year, compared to some other border towns where their halls were not in such good condition, and that was embarrassing at that lack of use. It appeared that was as a result of overcharging, and there appeared to have been no kind of commercial initiatives in place. Live Borders were a private company, with amazing resources, but given complaints being highlighted, suggested that they had failed. Various pronunciations of Live Borders meant they could not even get their own company name correct.

Duncan agreed there was consultation fatigue. He had attended the consultation event by Live Borders last summer and there would only be about 50/60 people there over the whole day. That was always going to result in that Review Report, as

everyone could see money going out the door. Energy costs, footfall after the Pandemic – any sensible accountant would look at Live Borders and acknowledge that as unviable. He knew many staff from Live Borders who knew this was on the cards because they could see themselves the lack of numbers coming over their doorsteps but also people being turned away from the swimming pool without the App. He did not blame the Consultants preparing the report but rather Live Borders performance over the last 10 years or so, as that was what had led to the Report now under consideration.

The new CEO/Chair they were new staff and not to blame. Therefore if the new CEO on her £100k salary then does a good job and keeps the library open, and bowling alley and so on, that salary would in his view be worthy, however if Live Borders goes bankrupt and back into Council's hands and services get closed down, then those salaries would not be deserved. Their results should be judged. He would urge when Councillor Smart organised the meeting she referred to regarding the library, it was essential people turned out.

John Campbell asked the Councillors if the report had taken account of that consultation referred to. Councillor Ramage considered they did not go into the Library or the Heritage Centre. They did go to Textile Towerhouse and Hawick Hub but she did not know where they obtained all their information. It was considered a lot would be from database decisions recorded automatically.

David Chapman wondered regarding success or failure, at what point and who was accountable to see where the CEO and her new plans were – were there specific dates for performance to be gauged. If in December 2027, and it was a failure that would be too late.

Duncan Taylor asked if SBC had governance over Live Borders and it was thought as the single Trustee they had. Therefore, SBC would need to put those deadline dates in place for performance review. SBC were creators of Live Borders along with for example SB Cares which needed to be taken back into SBC again due to its performance failures. SBC required to set Terms of Reference to see what that success looked like.

The Chair concurred there were lots of issues raised, and hopefully HCC would be able to have a presentation from Live Borders at a future meeting.

- 8. Treasurer's Report – April 2025** – The Treasurer advised that the Opening Balance overall was £28,870.54. The individual accounts were explained as follows:  
HCC 1 Account – opened and closed with a balance of £5,072.01. That balance included £1,566.76 Fallago Pathways Grant ringfenced for use on pathways.  
Christmas Lights & Event Account – opened and closed with a balance of £2,038.36.  
Hawick in Bloom Account – opened with a balance of £8,802.03. Income of £600 had been received for hanging baskets, and expenditure amounted to £160.97, resulting in a closing balance of £9,241.06.

Community Benefit Fund Foundation Scotland – opened with a balance of £12,958.14. A further Cost of Living Grant was received for £500 and expenditure amounted to £6,893.53 in respect of costs of summer plants and bandstand events, resulting in a closing balance of £6,564.61.

The overall Closing Balance for all accounts amounted to **£22,916.04**.

Stuart Mactaggart enquired about the Fallago Path Grant remaining ring-fenced. The Treasurer advised that money must be used for pathways maintenance, and the Chair confirmed that some works were required to Williestruther, and that work required to be progressed.

## **9. Public Forum and Town Issues**

Proposed Reduction in Full-time Fire Brigade Service in Hawick- Michael Robertson advised of his concerns at reading the proposal in the Hawick Paper to reduce Hawick Fire Service from a full-time service. He thought that was unacceptable. The Chair advised that an email had been received from Greg McLeod, Crew Commander, Hawick Fire Brigade Union and arrangements had been made for the Fire Service to present to HCC at our June meeting.

The Chair read out part of that email stating that in replacing the existing Wholetime service with a Day Staffing Model, would mean the crew would only be available during the daytime hours during weekdays, with only On-call cover being provided in the evenings and at weekends. The On-call crew would not always be available and in the absence of a Wholetime appliance, the next nearest cover was over 20 minutes away from either Selkirk or Jedburgh, who were also On-call stations that were not guaranteed to be available to fight any fire in Hawick. The change would result in a substantial reduction in fire cover not only for Hawick but also for the surrounding rural areas that depended on the service.

The email went on to say that Hawick Fire Service were deeply concerned that these changes could compromise the level of emergency response available to the community, increase response times, and ultimately put lives and property at risk. The Wholetime Appliance provided consistent, immediate cover 24/7 – something which could not be replicated by the proposed Day Staffing arrangement.

Michael Robertson raised concerns in respect of any night-time fires and on-call services then having to cover such a wide rural area. The Chair thought there were currently c.20 firefighters in the town on 5 Watches, and that would apparently be reduced to 6. With the likes of Center Parcs also coming to the town, that was an immediate reason for the status quo.

Councillor Ramage advised Councillors also had a meeting arranged with Greg McLeod soon on that proposal.

Dead Trees at Wilton Lodge Park – Stuart Beck advised there were 20+ big trees at Wilton Lodge Park which were in need of inspection. Councillor Ramage undertook to progress.



Dog Fouling – Michael Robertson enquired of Councillor Smart on any further progress on that issue. He had recently been to 5 different European countries, with many dogs witnessed, but with no dog mess around.

Councillor Smart said that was being progressed via SBC and the need for a Warden Service to tackle parking issues and other issues such as dog fouling. A Working Group had been set up by the Council. Councillor Ramage confirmed that Group had not yet met but would primarily have under consideration the issue of illegal parking.

Michael Robertson advised the issue of dog fouling had been raised by him way back in October, and on looking at Facebook, many townsfolk were continuously raising their concerns around that issue as well.

Michael Robertson thanked the Provost for presenting the Cornet's Badge on Election Night.

Additional lights at the Mote – Michael Robertson enquired on progress with that, which had been raised back in February. Councillor Smart confirmed that was subject to budget in the new financial year, which she acknowledged was now, and she would pursue that matter again. He wondered if the costs of 3 lights would be possible to be met from the Small Schemes Budget.

Seagulls – David Chapman raised an issue with seagulls particularly in his area of Langlands Road. Councillors thought those were protected animals and not much therefore could be done.

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

(a) Christmas Event - Nothing to report at this time.

(b) Hawick in Bloom – The Secretary's report was read out by the Chair in her absence, which stated Plants had been delivered for the hanging baskets and those had now been filled and were being allowed to settle before hanging on the High Street. The plants for the War Memorial and the Planters would be delivered and planted the week before the Common Riding.

Plant Sale Fundraiser – A very successful Plant Sale Fundraiser had been held on Saturday, 3rd May. It had been a great team effort in ensuring the success of that event, both by HiB volunteers but also additional volunteers who had helped – Alan, Laura, John, David – apologies were expressed if any names had been missed. Grateful thanks also went to our sponsors who made donations – Wrights Hardware, Morrisons, Sainsbury, Hunters Bakery, Geo Harrow & Son Home Bakery, Ian Campbell Butcher, Hawick RFC for a loan of their card readers. Funds raised amounted to just over £3,300. (Audience Clapping ensued). A lot of work had gone into planning the event and special thanks were extended to Maureen Toogood without whom, the event would simply not have been possible. Those funds would help boost our project funds to replace our planters.

(c) CCTV – Nothing further to report.

(d) Resilience – Nothing to report. Stuart Beck asked if there were any future meetings planned, and the Vice-Chair advised he had not received any notice of meetings scheduled from SBC.

- (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 an invoice for insurance had been received that day in respect of cover for the events, and he would be arranging for payment of that.

## 11. Reports from Community Partners & Representative Groups

- (a) Hawick Development Trust (HDT) – Bryan Bell, Chair reported as follows:  
Survey on Banking – It was noted that HDT had carried out a survey of residents from the TD9 area on how and why they used the local banking facilities. The survey had attracted in excess of 400 responses, which was a positive number, and they were grateful to the residents who took part. A report had been prepared following that survey, and along with their research on online banking and postal services, the report discussed the need for post office services and the need for a Banking Hub should the Bank of Scotland close. The report had been forwarded to Councillor McAteer and to Gillian Jardine, SBC. He understood the report would be discussed at a meeting of SBC that day. They awaited further communication to see how that could be moved forward.  
Former TSB – The Trust he said had looked at that building with a view to it becoming a Post Office or a Banking Hub, however it was understood that the property would be going to public auction in the next month or two, and the Trust were not in a position to put in any offer due to that timescale and third-party requirements on licences and so forth.  
Former Liberal Club – It was noted that had now been sold to an Estate Agents in Lancashire and as a result the Trust had formerly stepped back from any further interest in that building.

The Chair thanked Bryan for his report on behalf of HDT and there were no questions raised.

- (b) Foundation Scotland - nothing further to report.
- (c) A7 Action Group – Nothing to report. Michael Robertson raised his concerns at the length of time for traffic light requirements at the Sandbed recently, for what appeared only to be a bit soil needing sorted. The Chair considered that was the Water Board, and Councillor Ramage agreed there were also issues with the lights sticking on red on occasions causing traffic chaos. The issue was in multiple organisations being involved in jobs, and follow-up continuing to not happen timeously, with one company being responsible for the actual work, and another being responsible for finishing works.

Maureen Toogood advised travelling north bound on the A7 at Dovemount, it was easy to see the traffic lights to the left-hand side, however, the right-hand side lights were behind a lamppost and not easily visible. Councillor Ramage advised that had been reported to Bear Scotland previously. That junction would be looked at again in due course when consultation on all changes made in relation to Flood Protection works took place, as to whether those changes would remain permanent or otherwise.

- (d) Hawick Common Good – The next meeting would be held on 21<sup>st</sup> May.
- (e) Renewable Developments – The Chair advised of a number of Wind Farms on the go presently. Mid Hill Wind Farm - The consultants were undertaking public consultation on 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> May, and the nearest turbine was c.4.5 miles from Hawick starting at Chisholm up past Hoscoate on to Meadshaw and Eilrig. There would be a horse-shoe effect from Teviot Wind Farm, Mid Hill and in the opposite direction there was Newcastleton and Kershope.

Philip Kerr advised on 2 which appeared to be under the radar- one at Hartsgarth Newcastleton with c12 turbines and a new one at Chesters with 10 – and there was Woodland Ridge connected to the Hawick sub-station 150MW as well as the likes of Windy Edge, Teviot and Millmoor- some 300 turbines across 13 sites, albeit some would not happen. In addition, there would also be a plethora of battery and storage units to consider in the Autumn, possibly coinciding with the time of the HCC elections.

The Chair advised that all of that power unfortunately would not benefit Hawick itself nor indeed Scotland but would go south of the Border. He also enquired when the map of all renewable sites would be forthcoming, awaited by local Community Councils. Philip Kerr advised that Highland Council had just completed one, and he looked forward to seeing that.

Philip Kerr went on to advise that the first £7k of community benefits was with Foundation Scotland for Hawick. The next monies would be received at the end of September and would be indexed by inflation each year going forward. It would be one annual payment. Borders College were to receive a 28% share, however there was uncertainty whether that would remain in Hawick and where that money would then go.

- (f) Hawick Common Riding Committee – Braden George reported on a new Cornet having been elected the previous week, and the Common Riding was now on the way. Michael Robertson enquired on any progress with the Mair Upgrade. Braden reported that remained at the Planning stage presently. Michael Robertson asked if there was a Business Plan in place, and Braden undertook to find out.
- (g) Hawick Reivers – The Secretary reported in her report that a Debrief Meeting had been held on 15th April. In all, the new venue at the Wee Haugh received very positive comments from the general public and would most likely continue for future events. Being the first time at that venue, there were some learnings which would be put into practice going forward. The next meeting of that Committee would be held on 17th June at 6pm within Hawick Development Trust's office, and anyone interested in joining that Committee would be most welcomed.

**12. Correspondence** – It had been reported previously about a request to HCC to host the Borders Walking Festival in 2025, 2026 or 2027. Office-bearers considered that the decision on hosting should fall to the new Membership of HCC following the elections to determine if they wished to host. Given HCC elections, hosting in 2025 would not be possible.

### 13. A.O.C.B. –

Center Parcs Consultation Events- The Chair advised that the next Consultation sessions regarding Center Parcs would be held within Hawick RFC on 20<sup>th</sup> May between 2 and 7pm and on 21<sup>st</sup> May between 11am and 7pm.

Long-distance Cycling Event within Scottish Borders – The Chair introduced David Killeen, who wished to address the audience regarding c.2000 cyclists who would be passing through Hawick as part of a world-wide event. David advised he was attending as a representative of Audax UK which was a long-distance Cycling Association in the UK. The event being held in the Scottish Borders would be one of the largest events in the UK, so it would be a major event coming to the Borders, attracting visitors from all over the world. Hawick Town Hall would be used as one of the Control Points. He introduced Sheni Jiwa who would be the Manager of the Town Hall Control Point, and as a former cyclist, and said he was far more able to speak about the event as part of the organising team and having taken part in former events.

Sheni advised the event named London-Edinburgh-London was an event he said which had been running since the late 1980s, and now on its 10<sup>th</sup> edition. It was a non-commercial event entirely run by volunteers and he was part of the 25-strong organising team. He had been coming to the Borders for years and loved it. They were excited to bring the event to Hawick for the first time and he thought people would be amazed by what they would see. This was not a race but a long-distance endurance challenge. Cyclists would set off on the Sunday morning from the edge of London, on a trickle effect over 12 hours, and would work their way up the country, and stop about every 50 miles at a rest stop to freshen up, get some good food, and sleep if they needed to. Their challenge was to ride from London to Edinburgh and all the way back again within 5 days. It was just under 1000 miles. Cyclists rode further each day than the cyclists on the Tour of Britain or Tour de France, and they could ride further than 50 miles per day if they so wished but fundamentally it was not a race. Cyclists would come from various parts of the world – 2000+ cyclists from 60 different nations had signed up – French, Italians, Spanish, German, Scandinavians and about 200 from USA and Canada and about 200 from India, as well as cyclists from Japan, Taiwan, Brazil, South Africa and Australia. They had about 900 volunteers to manage the event, signed up across the country to help man the Control Points.

On 4/5<sup>th</sup> August, initially a trickle of riders would arrive, coming from Brampton, through Newcastleton and into Hawick. They would park their bikes and enter the Town Hall. Caterers would be onsite to provide quality food, and cyclists would be able to rest there. They were hoping to put on videos whilst cyclists were resting and eating, to show off Hawick – it's Common Riding and other tourist attractions to promote the town. David would help with those displays so that riders from across the world would see what the area had to offer. It was an opportunity to promote Hawick and its many brands as a tourist attraction to the many world-wide cyclists participating.

The event would be a big operation - rider safety for instance was very important and people would be patrolling routes and there would also be Rescue vans. Some cyclists would not make it and there would be a Medical Team at every Point to look after the

riders. The trickle of riders would continue through Monday night and die down as riders rested and on the Tuesday morning, the big surge would happen. Many Village Halls had been hired e.g. Newcastleton and Roberton and there had been engagement with local cafes for opportunities to eat. The exciting time would be the Tuesday morning when there would be as many as 200 cyclists coming into the Town Hall to record they had been there and before they set off along the prepared route, filtered into traffic.

People would see various types of cycle machines probably never witnessed before – tandems, tricycles, sitting back cycles and so on. It would be quite interesting for the public to see. What they would like is to have a few banners, perhaps the jerseys from the Tour of Britain etc placed around the town to raise awareness and perhaps a bit of music on the Tuesday morning to add atmosphere. Sheni also thought it would be good to retain the bunting from the Common Riding if possible too. He sought volunteers to help in Hawick, with 50 already signed up from Hawick. David would hopefully arrange for a group of people to welcome in the cyclists and to send them on their next stages.

A formal application had been submitted to SBC regarding the event and the route and that would trigger notification to Emergency Services so that everyone was aware of what would be happening.

The dates were confirmed as 4 & 5<sup>th</sup> August, with some flyers available. Braden George asked if there were 2000 people coming through Hawick, how long a timescale that would be over. It was noted that would be over c.36 hours, based on that staggered start and consequent spread of riders.

Councillor Smart considered that the event would be fantastic for the town, and as a member of Hawick Belles, she would like to be signed up as a volunteer.

The Chair concurred that the event would indeed be a spotlight for the town and hoped the Hawick Paper would provide good coverage.

It was asked whether there would be multiple vehicles following riders, however, that was not permitted and could lead to riders receiving time penalties. The event was a self-supported event. Organisers provided food and rest but they did not wish friends and families following. It was not the Tour de France but a self-supported event and they did not wish vehicles clogging up the routes.

David advised that for the Tour of Britain, the efforts from within Hawick's community had been outstanding, so good that we were requested to host a second event, and he urged everyone who could to put in that effort again – to allow the Common Riding flags to remain up and to promote the event and in turn the town as best possible. In terms of music on Tuesday morning on the High Street, David would ask TD9 Radio to come along. It was also about promoting cycling to the local community too.

Michael Robertson asked about whether bikes would be put out again, and David advised he would contact Tosh Scott. The HAPI project may be able to help supply some bikes. With regard to cycling jerseys previously displayed, the Chair confirmed these were in the basement at the Town Hall.

Finally, it was noted that the hire of the Town Hall was at high cost, but was a wonderful venue and he hoped for the support of the townsfolk with this event.

The Chair thanked David and Sheni for presenting and wished them every success with the event.

Hawick Summer Sweep – The Chair advised on an email received from Hornshole Greenway stating that their last High Street Tidy Up with Primary Pupils had been in January 2025 and had generated many positive comments from the public with offers of help if they repeated that exercise. They were now inviting the townsfolk of Hawick to join them and to meet at Trinity Church on Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> May at 6pm. Volunteers were requested to please bring a sweeping brush and gloves. Volunteers would be split into groups and areas to give the pavements and town a Hawick Summer Sweep. Hornshole Greenway would supply the black bags and arrange to get all rubbish collected and disposed of. Children U16 should be accompanied by a responsible adult and dogs were not allowed. As well as the Street Clean-up, the area around Trinity Church would also be tidied for the Kirkin' of the Cornet taking place on Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> June. To enable that, the public were requested not to park vehicles in that car park on 26<sup>th</sup> May. Hopefully all the local organisations would encourage some of their members to go along for an hour or so to help.

Maureen Toogood advised she had been approached at the War Memorial by members of Got-2-Dance, asking if they could give something back to the town, and she wondered whether there was an opportunity to get their members involved. Maureen to speak with Gordon Muir, Hornshole Greenway with that information.

Gordon went on to say he thought that cleaning the streets was perhaps a pre-cursor to what was to come, and his opinion was that, whilst he did not wish to second-guess the outcome of the Live Borders Review, it was likely townsfolk would need to become more involved in activities across the town, such as with that clean-up.

Forthcoming HCC Elections – The Chair advised the last meeting of the current HCC membership would be on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> July, after which the election process would kick in. The closing date for nominations to the new Community Council would be 6<sup>th</sup> August. Members must apply to be nominated. It was hoped the inaugural meeting of the new HCC membership would be held around September time.

- 14. Date of Next Meeting** – It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at 6.30pm within the Lesser Town Hall, Hawick.