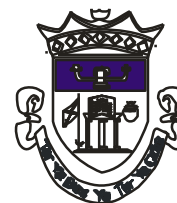

Hawick Community Council



MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL held on Monday October 20 at 6.30pm within the Lesser Town Hall, Hawick.

Present Cameron Knox (Chair)

Kyle Douglas

Stuart Beck

John Campbell

Braden George

Stuart Mactaggart

Michael Robertson

Ian Young

Wilson George

Graham Ford

Attending Councillor McAteer

Councillor Smart

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

Chair's Opening remarks – The Chair welcomed everyone to the October meeting of Hawick Community Council. He welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new council, also welcomed the new members and hoped they enjoyed their time on the people's council of Hawick.

Mr Knox informed members that since their previous meeting, the roles of secretary and treasurer had remained unfilled. But it was his pleasure to announce that Graham Ford from The Hawick Paper had come forward to volunteer. Mr Knox proposed to coopt Graham onto the community council, which was seconded by Michael Robertson.

Mr Knox advised that the post of treasurer was still vacant at this point, which was being covered by vice-chairman Kevin Marsh. He asked if any member wishes to be treasurer to step forward. It was not seen as being as onerous as the secretarial role.

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.

Apologies for Absence – Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of HCC vice chair Kevin Marsh and Councillors Ramage and Marshall.

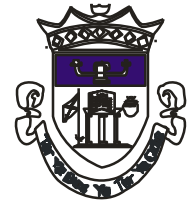
Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of 14th July were approved as an accurate record of the meeting - Proposed for adoption by Stuart Beck and Seconded by John Campbell and for the inaugural meeting on Monday 8th September – proposed by _____ and seconded by Braden George.

Matters arising –

Mote Lights – Michael Robertson advised that Councillor McAteer had an update on the lights. Mr McAteer advised that the Council don't have a proposal to light the path to the rear of the Mote Park. Because they have lights up the centre path of the Mote Park there is no real requirement. The cost of installing the lights would be such the budget couldn't be found from the Small Schemes Budget and therefore at this stage it won't be going any further. Mr Robertson thanked Councillor McAteer for his endeavours and accepted the matter was finished for the time being.

South entrance to Hawick – Michael Robertson raised that at the previous meeting he had highlighted the condition of the south entrance to the town, and praised the efforts that had been made, and the huge

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improvement to the area. It was seen as being more welcoming. Councillor McAteer that the balance between wildflowers had to be managed, the Council had agreed to do the cuts in that area, and he agreed it looked much better.

There were no matters arising from the inaugural meeting in September

Code of Conduct – the chairman advised members that the copy of the Community Council Code of Conduct would be distributed to members to be signed for record only. HCC members must abide by the terms of Scottish Borders Council Code of Conduct. All agreed.

Authorised signatories – the chairman advised that he had now had to remove Margaret Hogg and Jim Adams as signatories on the Hawick Community Council account and add Graham Ford along with current signatories himself and Kevin Marsh.

Police Scotland Reports – the chairman advised that they had not received reports from sergeant Grainger over the previous few months. But PC Mortimer had returned from his holidays and was in attendance to present the September report.

PC Mortimer advised of six high school students participating in a work experience week at the Hawick Police Station covering various aspects of local policing.

PC Mortimer advised on local mental health statistics for September, Police in Scottish Borders attended 214 mental health related incidents, 42 missing person enquiries and 95 domestic abuse related incidents. The Hawick and Hermitage area had 23 mental health calls and three missing persons.

PC Mortimer read out a comprehensive list of assault incidents, antisocial behaviour incidents, shoplifting and theft.

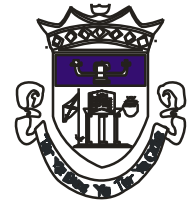
Michael Robertson asked if he could look to reignite the previous shoplifting campaign which had previously been attempted by Hawick Community Council. While a member of the public asked, if the Police was now a response unit. He felt that the lack of Police walking along the High Street was enabling antisocial behaviour including parking, shoplifting and the use of E-scooters on the pavements. The member of the public advised that when he did see Police walking along the High Street, shopkeepers were quick to move their cars from on-street parking sites. PC Mortimer advised on the time constraints around officers which was preventing them from tackling such issues.

The chairman advised that the manpower was no longer there and the days of a PC walking the beat were very much a thing of the past.

Stuart Beck reported the theft of the mobile police person from Hawick on 3rd and 4th October from Buccleuch Road. PC Mortimer agreed to take details and the matter would be investigated. It had been stationed at Weensland, and Mansfield and had been making an impact.

Michael Robertson raised concerns over criminals having free reign. PC Mortimer was unable to offer his opinion on that assertion. A discussion ensued over the level of shoplifting in the town. Cameron Knox advised he attempted to initiate the shoplifting campaign three years ago with little response from shopkeepers but was happy for Michel to take it forward. Councillor McAteer stated that the reality was there was not enough PC to cover a huge area. Policing was being focused on mental health issues, and not necessarily on being able to walk the beat.

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The chairman highlighted two quad bikes which had been stolen from Skelfhill Farm over the previous weekend, which had been returned to their owner. That was a positive for the Police and the quads were now back on the farm.

A member of the public reiterated previous concerns over the need for a yellow box at the Princes Street/Wilton Hill junction to prevent motorists from encroaching into the area and preventing flow of traffic. The lady was advised this was a Bear Scotland matter.

The chair thanked PC Mortimer for his attendance

Treasurers report – there was no report due to having no treasurer in post, and Kevin Marsh being on holiday.

Public Forum and Town Issues

SBC and Live Borders review – the chairman advised that a special meeting of the Council will be held on Thursday 20th November where the report will be discussed as a stand alone item, however the report will be published on the Council website on Thursday, 13th November and a link would be published for people to watch the meeting online.

Closure of Bank of Scotland – the chairman advised that the community council had been approached by Gemma Machie, the regional manager responsible for Hawick for Cash Access UK, she has agreed to attend the November meeting of the community council to provide a short presentation to raise awareness of a potential banking hub and services on offer in Hawick.

Wilton Lodge Park trees – Stuart Beck highlighted safety issues around trees in Wilton Lodge Park. advising on dead trees and unsafe trees. Mr Beck indicated that he had raised the issue last year, but nothing had been done. He identified a particularly dangerous dead tree near to Volunteer Park adjacent to the Active Travel Network.

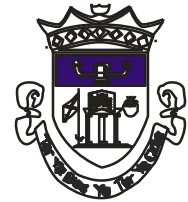
Dog Mess campaign – Michael Robertson had been in contact with the Scottish Borders Council dog warden; he is to receive leaflets and posters and will carry out a drop around the town to continue to try to address the ongoing issue. A member of the public highlighted her attendance at a recent award ceremony in Kelso, where the issue of dog mess was discussed. She encouraged the community council to be prepared to re-visit the initiative of providing poo bags receptacles. Michael Robertson asked if the dog warden could provide poo bags but was advised to approach SBC. The chairman reminded members that costs would be associated with the community council being involved with providing poo bags but if it was possible it would be addressed.

Active Travel Network– Ian Young highlighted pedestrian safety concerns on part of the active Travel Network adjacent to the Santa Marina restaurant where cars were also using the pathway, he asked if a sign could be erected to make people aware. Councillor McAteer would take the matter forward.

Dog officer – a member of the public informed the meeting that following his freedom of information request to Scottish Borders Council last year, he had learned that no fines had been issued by the dog officer. In response Councillor McAteer advised it was Police Scotland who were responsible for enforcement through the Community Action Team which had been disbanded six months ago.

Tower Knowe cobbles – Graham Ford highlighted the area adjacent to the Homecoming statue at the Tower Knowe. He raised the point that the area was a focal point for visitors, but was often blighted by dog mess,

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discarded cigarette ends and other items making it not look its best. He asked if the streetsweeper could be used to address the area, or perhaps the Criminal Justice Team. At this point Ian Campbell highlighted a weed growing on the High Street near to his shop which had not been addressed for months, which was described as a new tree growing.

Waste ground between Sainsburys and ALDI- Stuart Mactaggart asked a question on this area of ground, which he had previously asked in December, and if there were any plans afoot. Providing a succinct update Councillor McAteer advised plans were imminent. Which was welcomed by Mr Mactaggart

Reports from Sub-Groups

The chairman advised that the members of each subgroup and groups within the town would be determined at a separate meeting, it was hoped to discuss this at the Christmas event meeting

Christmas Event – providing an update Cameron Knox that stallholders were queuing up to be part of the day, entertainers were being organised, and the Christmas lights erection was scheduled to being on Sunday October 26 after the lights had been PAT tested on Monday, 20th October. All members were invited to attend.

Hawick in Bloom – The chairman read out a comprehensive report from convenor Margaret Hogg - HiB held a very successful Afternoon Tea Event on 14th September, the purpose of which was to recruit new volunteers, and we managed to get 17 so that was great. It wasn't just gardening people we needed, and we've now got access to transport, access to ladders and people to go up those for hanging the baskets, extra hands for maintaining planters and to help with the bigger areas at the War Memorial and Allars Crescent. So, all in all, a very worthwhile and enjoyable afternoon – and the food was great. Thanks go to the Elected Members and HCC members who supported that event.

Our focus at the present time is on preparing for winter planting which will take place on 31st October. The boxes are being given a fresh paint in brown, which will get people used to that colour for when the sustainable planters are hopefully put in place for next Summer. We are engaging with Solway Recycling with regard to those planters. Whilst the blue and yellow paint was thought a good idea to match the bollards, unfortunately, the plants were somewhat lost and there were colour clashes. Hopefully, the brown will show the plants off better.

Looking ahead, the focus early in the New Year will be on holding another Plant Sale around May time. Whilst that means a ton of work for the volunteers, if the first Plant Sale held in May this year is anything to go by when we raised £3,300, those efforts will be worthwhile.

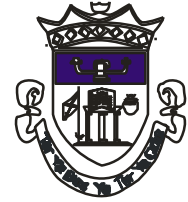
Correspondence-

Chairman Cameron Knox advised there had been no correspondence.

A.O.C.B

Michael Robertson asked about the decision not to accept a potential new community councillor. Cameron advised that the applicant had been a member of a neighbouring community council and they had subsequently been contacted following the application, they had received complaints from the public regarding the applicant's behaviour, and replies from elected members, following the advice it was decided to reject the application because of the standard of behaviour. Michael Robertson supported the decision.

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Role of community councillors – A question was posed by a member of the public on the roles of each member of the community council. They were reminded of the earlier advice that a meeting was scheduled to confirm new representatives on the subgroups and who would join representative groups within the town and would be reported back at ratified at the November meeting.

The member of the public continued to ask what brought people to be on the community council. The chairman spoke of his pride in his town and for the betterment of the town. Michael Robertson spoke of his pride in the town and why he continued to raise antisocial issues particularly dog fouling. Chairman Knox spoke of some of the activities the community council were active in, these included the Christmas Event and market, putting up Christmas lights etc.

The member of the public continued to press what each member of the community council did. Michael Robertson was concerned that the lady felt they were not doing much. She advised this wasn't the case.

The chairman read out the subgroups, and the groups the community council had representation on. Michael Robertson offered to provide a list, following an attempted interjection by Wilson George the lady stood up and left the meeting.

Hawick Music Club – another member of the public enquired if funding was available for Hawick Music Club, he was informed no money was currently available from the community action fund.

Date of next meeting –

Was agreed for Monday 10th November 2025 at 6.30pm to be held in the Lesser Town Hall