

Hawick Community Council



MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COMMUNITY COUNCIL held on Monday, December 8, 2025, at 6.30pm within the committee room of the Town Hall, Hawick,

Present Cameron Knox (Chair)

Kev Marsh

Stuart Beck

John Campbell

Michael Robertson

Wilson George

Kyle Douglas

Ian Young

Graham Ford

Attending

Councillor Smart

Councillor Ramage

There were five members of the public in attendance.

Chair's Opening remarks- the Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Stating that Hawick was a great place to be, it was great news that Center Parc had received planning permission earlier that morning. This was an important positive step going forward, not only for Hawick but the wider Scottish Borders. Center Parc Scottish Borders, was like receiving an early Christmas present, providing a potential great boost for local tourism, extra employment for the local area going forward that the Borders deserves. The Scottish Borders had become a destination area which would bring financial benefits to the area. 800 jobs during the construction phase and 1200 jobs when the Parc opened, Scottish Enterprise (SoSE) had calculated by attracting 350,000 visitors each year, and supporting 1200 jobs it would boost the local economy by £27m each year. £450m is to be spent creating Center Parc, a great news story.

Another great news story was the Christmas market once again with great success despite the weather.

Unfortunately, last week the chair informed the meeting that he had received an email from Braden George stating that he was standing down from the community council with immediate effect. Braden had been an integral part of the community council since he joined six years ago and along with Euan Welsh became the youngest community councillors in the Scottish Borders and it was believed in Scotland. On behalf of the members of the community council the chair thanked Braden publicly for the work he had done for the community, it was much appreciated and wished him well for the future.

Declarations of Interest- the Chair reminded members of their obligation to declare any conflict of interest ahead of discussions during the meeting. This was noted.

Apologies for Absence - Apologies had been received from Stuart Mactaggart, and Councillors McAteer, Marshall, Cox.

Adoption of Minutes - of Meeting of Monday November 10, 2025, which had been circulated to members earlier. There were proposed for adoption by Kevin Marsh and seconded by Wilson George.

Matters arising –

Shopwatch campaign – Michael Robertson informed the meeting that the campaign was working well, it had attracted 24 businesses. He updated the meeting about an attempted break-in at Farmfoods which resulted in CCTV being obtained and circulated, which had subsequently been passed on to the police. There had also been an incident at B and M, where two young people had attempted to steal a quantity of vodka and whisky, the WhatsApp

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had been used to highlight this, and five minutes later they were denied access to LIDL. The chair thanked Mick for his endeavours and hoped that the system wouldn't be required in the run up to Christmas, but it was there if needed. Ian Young also asked for it to be recorded that McFaddens Baguette Shop had become aware of counterfeit money in the town.

Active Travel Network – The Chair advised that there was to have been an update from Councillor Cox on her scheduled meeting with project manager Conor Price regarding issues in and around North Bridge Street. Due to Councillor Cox not being present this would be carried forward. The secretary advised that a letter had also been sent to Conor Price on behalf of the community council, but no response had been received.

ACTION POINT- Councillor Cox to advise on North Bridge Street meeting.

Dangerous trees Wilton Lodge Park – the Chair sought an update from Keith Johnson; He advised that a stakeholders meeting had been held on November 11 and the issues were to be put forward to parks department manager Stuart Young to push for an inspection. Michael Robertson asked about the overhanging trees around the War Memorial, this was also being investigated.

ACTION POINT – Keith Johnson to advise on progress.

St. Mary's steps – concerns had been raised about the dangerous conditions of the steps due to leaves etc. The Chair highlighted that this had been raised on the Monday meeting, and were cleared the following day by member Michael Robertson, who was rightly praised for his prompt action.

Wulliestruther Boardwalk – Michael Robertson had been to investigate the walk and had taken photographs of five areas he felt could be improved. he would forward these to the Chair to send onto the Criminal Justice team for action.

ACTION POINT – Mick to forward photos to the Chair to progress.

Dog mess – Michael Robertson raised his ongoing concerns over dog mess, he felt it was now up to elected member to take things forward. He highlighted that Councillor Smart had planned to take the matter to Council level last year. In response Councillor Smart advised that she was hoping to join with the possibility of traffic wardens. This was still ongoing, and part of a review body which had subsequently been set up. If they were likely to employ wardens, and if so hopefully for all aspects parking, dog mess and litter. Mick stated this had now been going on for over a year. He hoped action would begin to be taken. he had also received posters from the dog warden at SBC; ad these would be posted once the weather improved.

Common Haugh campervan issues – Ian Young advised tat he was aware that a man had been charged as a result of issues surrounding the antisocial behaviour at the Common Haugh towards campervan visitors. He hoped word would spread, and that visitors would also learn that action was now being taken. Councillor Smart updated the meeting, that as councillors they had held a meeting with police officials in the last week. It is on the agenda, patrols had increased. She felt it wasn't about criminalising the youngsters, who probably thought it was hilarious but it was to get the message through that it wasn't something that was welcome, and the consequences were that people would feel frightened, they would stay away from Hawick which had a knock-on effect to the town's tourism industry. Mick asked about CCTV in the area, and what impact that could have. Councillor Smart indicated that there was CCTV on the toilet block at the Common Haugh. It was the council responsibility and could be asked by asking SBC. Councillor Ramage pressed that this had been the reason that the previous job of work with Cameron Knox and Kevin Marsh had been undertaken, when they were looking at expanding the CCTV portfolio, not simply keeping it at the 16 locations previously used, as the town had indeed changed over the years, and new locations were needed.

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Councillor Smart also indicated that she felt there were some dark spots within the Active Travel Network which would benefit from CCTV.

The chair spoke regarding the Center Parcs announcement that as a community council the town needed to be on the front foot to get the High Street shops, including the issue of dog dirt, the street looking clean, to see Hawick as a welcoming place for all the visitors coming. Not to offer up a poor first impression. To get the High Street looking at its best. Mick Robertson felt this needed to start as quickly as possible. Cameron was clear work was starting now by Center Parcs, and as a town we needed to be the same. Graham Ford advised he had spoken to the CEO Craig McKinlay, and they were keen to work with towns to move forward. Graham spoke about what would the first impression be of Hawick now, and what will that look like in 2029. As a town we need to be moving now as time was tight. He felt the need to set up a working group now, to bring everyone on board including the likes of the Hawick Development Trust to have a real look. Graham asked if there was a possible role for Center Parcs to play in helping the town address some of the antisocial activities including dog fouling. Could they find money to support a dog warden for Hawick. Cameron Knox felt it was a question worth asking. It was agreed to write to Center Parcs once a townwide meeting had been friendly. To ensure Hawick was ready. Councillor Smart enquired what role the Town Team had in this. Keith Johnson advised that their group was already undertaking town clean-ups. There was a need to connect everyone. Councillor Ramage also felt the need for many people to sit round a table to plan a way forward on the back of the positive news. Graham Ford suggested writing to their Irish counterparts to find out what they did as a community when the announcement was made that Center Parcs was coming there, to get some understanding.

ACTION POINT – to contact the Irish community for advice, to coordinate a townwide meeting to look at what is needed for Hawick going forward.

Antisocial debate – the Chair advised the meeting that following last month's meeting, he had sent an email to Stuart Fletcher from Police Scotland asking if he would attend the meeting. He had not received a reply. He had also sent an email to Ali Granger but similarly had not received reply. He had heard on the grapevine that Rory Culverwell had been planning to attend, but this had not happened. Subsequently there was no opportunity to hold the planned debate. The Chair made members aware that the Police Scotland report for the month had arrived late in the afternoon and asked if members had had an opportunity to scrutinise it. Mick Robertson felt receiving the report at 4.30pm was no use to anyone. The Chair highlighted local issues from the report for members. Officer Allan Patterson spoke of having issued eight tickets in one day to traders on the High Street to attempt to address on-street parking and advised there were more parking tickets issued in Hawick, than anywhere else in the Scottish Borders. The discussion centred around parking, and dog fouling, and the hope to revive dog wardens for the local area. Councillor Ramage spoke of her role on the council parking review body. There were ten points the group are assessing and were currently on point three. Number ten was to look at decriminalising parking. But she felt the money would come back to the council which would help pay for wardens going forward. Graham Ford asked if it was possible to get all 68 other community councils across the Scottish Borders to write to the council to show their support for decriminalizing, which would perhaps push the issue forward quicker. This was supported by chairman Cameron Knox.

ACTION POINT – secretary to write to other community councils.

Treasurer's Report – vice-chairman presented the treasurer's report which had previously been circulated in the absence of a treasurer.

Town issues –

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Freeperson of the town – Stuart Beck highlighted that he had raised the question at a previous community meeting several years ago about making Julie Forrest a free person off the burgh. This time he was looking at making Julie a free person of the town. Which would involve community council, elected councillors, the provost council could organise an event to take it forward to recognise what Julie had done for the sport of bowls and for putting Hawick on the map. Councillor Smart spoke of there being quite a few statues in Wilton lodge Park of gentleman sports stars and this may be an opportunity to have a female statue. Stuart Beck hoped to achieve free person award, before exploring the statue idea. Councillor Ramage indicated she had received similar requests from other people regarding Julie Forrest, and she agreed to investigate it further.

ACTION POINT – Councillor Ramage to make enquiries.

Borders College – Stuart Beck asked if there was any progress regarding Borders College on Buccleuch Road since it had been vacated. It was understood to have been bought by the south of Scotland Enterprise (SoSE), but he wondered if the high school could have been using the building, especially while the rebuilding process was underway. Councillor Ramage had attended a meeting alongside Councillor Marshall and McAteer with the chair of Borders College. That discussion had been held about a possible faculty for the school; it was felt this was the direction things would head. But it evolved to be bought by SoSE, but there were no apparent plans going forward when it would be re-opened.

ACTION POINT- Councillor Ramage to make enquiries.

Christmas Event - the chair reported that the Christmas event had been held on what was a very dismal day but despite the weather, it had been a tremendous day, and townspeople had attended in their droves. The children were all eager to see Santa, and his wife and Robbie Bear also proved a hit after returning from hibernation. 31 stalls had been sold, the afternoon entertainment was a major hit, but at a point the entertainers were very much up against the worst of the weather. All the entertainers were thanked, and the honorary provost, and it was hoped the weather would prove kind next year. On the subject of selection boxes, which were distributed by Santa – and Mrs Clause, a pre-event plea attracted donations from Johnstons of Elgin, and members of the public with an estimated 350 selection boxes distributed on the day. The Community Council are extremely grateful for the donations. The chair also thanked the tireless work of the volunteers from various town organisations who helped erect and dismantle the stalls and gazebos, and to Keith Johnson for erecting and dismantling the performance stage. The chair also took the opportunity to thank the community council members and volunteers who had made themselves available to erect the Christmas lights along the High Street.

Christmas tree – the chair expressed his hope that more money could be made available from the Council to buy a bigger Christmas tree to be put up at Trinity Gardens. From 20 ft, to 30ft preferably. Ian Young advised that he had received a lot of negative comments about the size of the tree. The chair highlighted the comparison with the Christmas tree at Langholm which was deemed significantly more impressive. Michel Robertson bemoaned that the same discussion had taken place 12 months earlier. The chair advised that the Council had offered a 20 ft tree for free, but a 30ft tree would cost another £1000. Mick Robertson felt that it was time that the Community Council went down the route of supplying their own. Kyle Douglas suggested that a community fund raising appeal may be a route to explore.

ACTION POINT – to look at supplying our own tree for next year, and to investigate a fund-raising drive ahead of the purchase.

Hawick in Bloom – There had been no report as Wilson George was unaware when they were taking place.

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ACTION POINT- The secretary agreed to ask the subgroup convenor Margaret Hogg to add Wilson George to the contact list.

Resilience Group – Kevin Marsh advised there was no report, other than that he was aware of a yellow weather warning for the following day, it was a wind warning, and not a rain warning. Michael Robertson asked if a meeting could be held to look at training and kit. Graham Ford raised his concerns around the missing person incident at the Christmas Market, and the time it took for the emergency call to go through and be responded to. Kevin Marsh

ACTION POINT- Kevin Marsh to convene a resilience group meeting, and the missing person response time would also be raised with the appropriate service.

Fund raising – nothing to report.

Hawick Development Trust – chairman Bryan Bell presented an update for members.

A7 Action Group – Councillor Ramage advised that she had taken over as chair while Marjorie McCreddie had taken a step back while recuperating from an operation. The next meeting is scheduled for February 26, to be online. Michael Robertson asked if there was any progress over safety concerns at the Burns Club bridge. This had been highlighted at a community council meeting in February by Donnie McLeod. Mrs Ramage agreed to take it to the next meeting.

Common Good Fund – Councillor Ramage advised that the next meeting of the group was a special meeting to be held on December 15. Mick Robertson raised his concerns that no major assets in the town would be sold off, after the issue had been brought to light. Councillor Smart provided an update, and reassured that no sell off would take place.

Renewable developments – the chair advised that the next wind farm which had come on the radar was Mid Hill which was south-west of Hawick and had plans for 13 turbines, of a height of 200 metres. The public exhibition had been held in February, followed by another in October.

Hawick Reivers – Kyle Douglas had attended a meeting on November 11, early discussions had taken place around the 2026 Festival, including bands booked to perform (Western End), members of the Community Council would once again be called upon to help at the event, especially on the fireworks night on the Saturday.

Correspondence – There was none.

Any other business -

Walled gardens – Councillor Smart provided an update on a motion that herself and Councillor Ramage had put before the Council, there were early plans to explore renovating the gardens to open it up as an educational opportunity for local primary schools and to the wider community.

Date of the next meeting – to be held on Monday, January 12 in the committee room of Hawick Town Hall starting at 6.30pm.

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