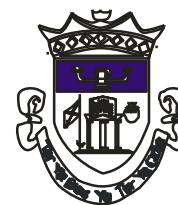

Hawick Community Council



MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

held via Zoom on Monday 8th February 2021 at 6.30pm

Present:	Cameron Knox (Chairperson)	Marion Short (Vice-Chairperson)
	Jim Adams (Treasurer)	Margaret Hogg (Secretary)
	Brian Bouglas	Braden George
	Wilson George	Keith Irving
	Duncan Taylor	Alan Wear
	Euan Welsh	French Wight
	John Wilkinson	
Attending:	Councillor McAteer	Councillor Marshall
	Councillor Paterson	Councillor Ramage
	Councillor Turnbull	Colin Telfer, Future Hawick
	Helen Clyne, School Captain, HHS	Abigail Potts, Deputy-Captain, HHS

There were 15 members of the public also in attendance, as well as Jason Marshall and Graham Ford on behalf of the Hawick Paper and David Henderson, Station Manager, TD9 Radio. Ewan Jackson, CEO of Live Borders was guest speaker in attendance.

- 1. Chairman's Opening Remarks** – The Chair welcomed everyone to the monthly February meeting of HCC and thanked the public for their support. He advised that anyone wishing to speak should raise their hands and that the Hawick Paper would be recording the meeting, for reporting purposes along with TD9 Radio.
- 2. Declarations of Interest** – The Chair advised that any declarations of interest in any agenda items should be declared prior to discussion of the item.
- 3. Apologies for Absence** – There were no apologies for absence intimated.
- 4. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of 11th January 2021** – The Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting – Proposed by Braden George and Seconded by Keith Irving.
- 5. Matters arising** – The Chair reported on the following matters arising:

Item 5 – Commemorative Board for Sporting Greats – costs sought from the Callants Club for the Ex-Cornets Board were £2.5k in 2014. It was anticipated that funding of circa £3.5k might be required. The Chair advised that further discussion was required on qualification criteria as a “Hawick Sporting Great” before any quotes could be sought and finalised.

Rent Review of SBC Allotments – it was confirmed a letter was sent to SBC detailing HCC's concerns, and we would address the matter when this is raised by SBC again in the future.

Teviot & Liddesdale Partnership Proposal – It was noted that a Zoom Meeting of T&L Partnership held been held the previous week, which found the partners were all very positive towards this Proposal.

The Partnership CCs now await two papers from SBC – one for the Community Benefit Fund and one for the Area Partnership going forward. Once these were received, they would be distributed to Members for their information, observations and comments.

Jedburgh Legacy Group – Meeting with George Burt – Brian Bouglas reported that this meeting had now been arranged for next Wednesday and he would email all HCC members with the details if they wished to join in the meeting.

Item 9(a) – The Chair advised that Conor Price (CPE Consultancy) Project Manager for Hawick Flood Protection Scheme, had agreed to join HCC's March meeting.

Item 9(b) – Councillor Turnbull confirmed that the matter of dog mess had once again been raised at the CAT meeting, and since then also with Police Scotland. The fundamental problem appeared to be that Hawick did not have a Dog Warden Service and despite funding of £560k (not £850k as previously thought) for the CAT, dog fouling remained a serious issue for resolution. Police Scotland re-affirmed that if any member of the public witnessed someone allowing their dog to foul, they should report it and they will act. Dog fouling was not only an issue in the Hawick area but across the whole of the Scottish Borders and he and his fellow Councillors would keep the pressure on with the CAT and Police Scotland on this matter.

Item 9(c) – Gritting – The Chair confirmed that a letter had been issued to SBC detailing HCC's concerns. No response had to date been received.

Item 9(e) – Garden of Remembrance – Councillor Marshall confirmed that amended plans had now been accepted by SBC as ready to be forwarded for planning consents. There would thereafter be public consultation on the plans and then the tendering process for works could take place. He praised the efforts of Kay Marie Hughes of Burnfoot Community Council for her efforts to have this matter progressed.

Item 9(f) – Councillor Paterson confirmed he had attended the business premises of the owner of the car park on several occasions since the last HCC meeting but without success. It was likely the business was closed due to the pandemic. The owner's details had been passed to the Secretary now for contact purposes.

Item 13 – The Chair reported that he had contacted Roddy Martin, Manager of the Unpaid Work Team at SBC via email but had had no response. He would follow up on this for the next meeting.

Finally, the Vice-Chair in recognising Item 11 – Updates from Community Partners – requested it be noted that HCC wished Derick Tait, Future Hawick, a speedy recovery from his recent illness.

- 6. Notice of Motion for Co-option to HCC – Euan Welsh** – The Notice of Motion for co-option to HCC was Proposed by Margaret Hogg and Seconded by Marion Short and accepted by all Members attending.

The Chair welcomed Euan to HCC as one of its youngest members and hoped he enjoyed his time on the Committee.

- 6a Hawick High School Pupil Update** – Abigail and Helen were asked how they thought home learning was going. They considered this to be working well, with teachers getting more comfortable with live lessons, however hoped that they could get back into the school environment as soon as was practicably possible.

They advised that meetings had been held with their teachers, to encourage discussion on Mental Health, as many pupils had stated they had been suffering from some mental health issues during the lockdown. Discussions had encouraged pupils to challenge themselves with doing more outdoor walking, and anything that might improve their mental wellness.

Councillor Ramage asked the pupils how their day was planned out. The pupils advised that live lessons were following the normal timetable of pupils, with other learning worked around these to reflect as a normal school day.

Duncan Taylor asked the pupils to share more information on the ambitious Walking Challenge being undertaken and it was noted that the Challenge was to cover 33 million steps up to 18 February and involved all staff and pupils. It was interesting to learn that in a normal day, individuals covered 1000 steps around their home, and so this meant 800,000 steps were already covered by the 800 pupils and staff involved in the Challenge. It was also noted that the target of 33 million steps reflected the amount of money (£33m) raised for the NHS by Captain Sir Tom Moore.

The Chair thanked the pupils for attending the meeting and congratulated them on their efforts with the Walking Challenge, which he offered to highlight through HCC's website, if they forwarded the relevant information to allow this.

- 7. Guest Speaker – Ewan Jackson, Live Borders (LB)**

The Chair welcomed Ewan Jackson, CEO of Live Borders to the meeting.

Mr Jackson gave an introduction on the work and responsibilities of Live Borders, including responsibility for 67 venues across the Scottish Borders. He went on to advise that Covid-19 had hit his organisation hard, with all venues being currently closed for a second time. In March/April the previous year these had required to close and they had started to re-open some venues, only then to have to close these again from 26th December when entering Tier 4 lockdown.

January through to March were generally strong months for income. Over the summer months had been bad enough for loss of income, however, losing January to March only adds to the challenges faced for recovery.

80% of LB staff were furloughed with others voluntarily supporting works within Health & Social Care, vaccination programmes within LB venues, supporting staff at SBC HQ and nationally with NHS on their Test and Protect programme. A range of digital services across sport, e.g. providing group exercises, as well as theatre shows from Towermill into Care Homes were also being provided.

LB was currently engaged in a comprehensive scenario planning exercise to assist in getting out of the pandemic, reflecting on information timings, uncertainties of tiering, customer confidence and public confidence overall which had been affected, as well as other variables. The opening up of venues would be in terms of Government Guidance, economics, and viabilities, with the highest priority being to protect staff, the services, facing challenges and trying to come out of the pandemic in a long-term sustainable way.

Sport & Culture had a budget of £11m - 50% chargeable to SBC and 50% generated by fees and charges from services and venues. SBC continued to pay their share however income was down £500k per month presently. Through the Furlough Scheme and other grant support provided it was stated the loss of income was currently manageable, but that there would be definite challenges to be faced in the next year. The tiering for the Scottish Borders would play an important role in recovery of these losses.

Since August 2020, LB had prioritised the re-opening of their income-generating services, with social distancing in place, track and trace, and by way of appointment only. The Library in Galashiels had been opened but with a poor response albeit the Connect and Collect service had delivered well. In Hawick, Towermill was re-opened and Teviotdale Leisure Centre had been the first of LB's Leisure Centres to open in September, with reduced capacity and with pre-bookings. The Heritage Hub had also re-opened followed by the Towerhouse which had been warmly welcomed by local crafts people. It had been hoped to re-open the Library on 11 January but this had not been possible due to the present lockdown. There had been no date reached for the re-opening of the Museum at Wilton Lodge Park, where visitors were largely from outwith the town.

In concluding the presentation, it was noted that planning for opening of services long-term was now taking priority with the hope that a "stop and start" situation would not prevail, which would be difficult both for the workforce to manage, as well as for communities. An understanding from the public was required as to the complexity of opening-up services and venues. There had been millions of pounds in income lost, but jobs had been retained as far as was possible. LB was currently working with SBC Officers at shaping the future for maintaining staff resources, getting services open and as quickly as permitted and to have these supported, all in a sustainable way.

The Chair thanked Ewan for his presentation and opened the meeting for questions.

Duncan Taylor declared an interest as a member of Hawick Archaeological Society. He questioned the non-opening of the Museum at Wilton Lodge Park and queried the statement made that visitors largely came from outwith Hawick, when this was the case in relation to the Jim Clark Museum which had been re-opened and where visitors were likely also to have been largely from outwith Duns. Duncan advised that townsfolk could not

understand why the Towermill Museum had been re-opened but not the Museum at Wilton Lodge Park.

Mr Jackson advised that the Jim Clark Museum was chargeable and income generated was able to be contributed towards other services. In relation to Towermill, its location on the High Street made it the busier of the two Museums and whilst consideration to re-open venues should not always be in relation to income, at the present time there was a deficit to address.

Duncan then queried why the Galashiels Library had been opened and not Hawick and the response was that there was similar usage of these libraries and it could have been either of these selected for re-opening.

Councillor McAteer advised Mr Jackson that in taking such a decision to open Galashiels Library and not Hawick had resulted in several enquiries to all Hawick Councillors from townfolk, and rumours arising that the library may not open again. Councillor McAteer sought reassurance that Hawick Library would open again. He also asked if Mr Jackson would liaise with SBC Officers regarding the atrocious condition of the library - an iconic building which had turned green in colour and had been plagued with pigeons and their deposits.

Mr Jackson agreed that the Hawick Library was the most attractive Library in the Borders both architecturally and for internal layout and size.

Councillor Marshall also sought assurances for the 39 members attending the meeting that these services and venues (Museum and Library) would re-open again as integral to the community. He went on to thank Live Borders for their support in relation to the Bowling Alley at Teviotdale Leisure Centre, where there were moves afoot to rename this after Julie Forrest.

Councillor Ramage re-affirmed what had been raised by her fellow Councillors in relation to the Library building and the rumours going around as to whether this would re-open. The Museum at Wilton Lodge Park she stated was a great resource for learning for the schools with exhibitions held etc and both these venues were very important to the people of Hawick. She then queried as to the split of £11m between Sport and Culture.

Mr Jackson responded to the latter query stating that the two areas supported each other and the monies were not divided up but used to make each as successful and available.

In response as to whether the Library and Museum at Wilton Lodge Park would re-open, Mr Jackson stated that there had been no discussion on this at any point thus far.

Mr Jackson went onto urge everyone in the community to make use of the services when they did re-open, stating as an example that membership of the libraries, even in Hawick, was reducing. If the Community did not want to see change, then it was encouraged to use all its facilities, albeit these would operate in a different way.

The Vice-Chair, Marion Short, then asked Mr Jackson questions which had been received by HCC from members of the public.

It had been noted from Mr Jackson's introduction that 80% of LB staff was currently furloughed with 12% working for LB in some form or another and so 8% were deployed elsewhere. In terms of numbers, what does 80% of staff equate to?

Mr Jackson advised that 184 staff were furloughed, some on full and some on part.

The Vice-chair advised that LB's website stated that the Galashiels Library was opening 30th September, and that this required updating. In addition it had been queried as to why there was a lot of online exercise and fitness classes available, but no online Bookbug sessions or any relevant links. Mr Jackson undertook to have the website updated and took on board the suggestion regarding Bookbug sessions.

Re-visiting what had been stated earlier regarding Library facility, the Vice-Chair added that the Hawick Library had 2 accesses and asked that this be considered as in favour when consideration of re-opening Libraries is again discussed. Mr Jackson stated that in carrying out any Risk Assessment, this would require a one-way system to be in operation and he was aware of this facility at Hawick Library.

Mr Jackson was then asked if LB had a Covid Exit Strategy available, to which he replied saying LB had several Strategies and undertook to publish over the course of the next few weeks details on its re-opening programme. He did not consider that there was a lack of information in place, but people may not be looking in the right places. The Hawick Paper could be a better way to communicate for Hawick people, in addition to their website and social media channels. He went onto say that lessons from the first re-opening had been learned, and he would use the comments received on communications to ensure better communications going forward.

Councillor Marshall asked if he could have Mr Jackson's assurance here and now that there was no intention to close Hawick Library in the short or longer term.

Mr Jackson responded stating he (LB) did not have the authority to close Hawick Library. Councillor Marshall then asked who then did that decision rest with. Mr Jackson stated neither LB nor SBC individually could make such decision. They both would have to make that decision together following discussion.

The Chair thanked Mr Jackson on behalf of HCC for his presentation and responses to questions. Mr Jackson then thanked HCC for its invite and confirmed he was willing to attend another meeting as LB services started re-opening again, if HCC so wished.

8. **Police Scotland Report** – The January report from Police Scotland was noted, with no questions raised on its content.
9. **Treasurer's Report** – The Treasurer reported a closing balance of £13,032.64. £850 was already earmarked from HCC 1 account. The allowance for 2021 was not expected until October/November time, if previous year's timing was reflected. HCC 2 account stood at

£167.63, with Xmas Lights fund showing a balance of £1414.98. Hawick in Bloom's balance was £3075.96, however the 2021 grant from the Common Good Fund for Summer and Winter planting at the War Memorial was still awaited. Foundation Scotland Fund of £5,995.24 was already earmarked as per last month's discussions.

The Treasurer's report was noted by HCC Members.

10. Public Forum & Town Issues:

- (a) Borders Railway Extension – Proposal to T & L Partners – the Chair advised that this Proposal had been submitted by Newcastleton Community Council to the T & L Partnership members, seeking their support.

Councillor Ramage declared an interest as she was on the Campaign for Borders Rail Group, who had set up a sub-group for TD9 to encourage the Hawick community to have a voice in the reinstatement of the railway. She considered this Proposal to the T&L Partnership would work nicely along with the work of the sub-group in highlighting what the benefits were to individuals in our community in having the railway reinstated, for example, travelling to work, further education and so on.

It was agreed that the Proposal be supported – Proposed by Jim Adams and Seconded by French Wight.

- (b) Traffic Congestion – Lorries in the Terraces area – Jim Adams reported that issues with lorries navigating through the Terraces area continued. This was particularly problematic at weekends, when more residents from the area had cars parked, and even emergency vehicles had encountered problems. An incident of an HGV being stuck the previous week in Lockhart Place was also highlighted. It was asked if there could be additional signage placed to warn HGV drivers of streets within this area being unsuitable for HGVs and what the potential was for having SatNavs used by these drivers changed to reflect more suitable roads.

Councillor McAteer advised that since August 2020, Councillors had voiced this issue with SBC Officers, and he was aware of vehicles in Wellogate Place having been damaged by HGVs passing. He advised that some signage was already in place however challenges remained for delivery drivers who needed to deliver there. The matter of having white lines at junctions had been agreed, however, this work had been delayed due to the pandemic.

Councillor McAteer confirmed that SBC is the authority to get SatNavs changed. The condition of streets was already an issue, and the HGVs were exacerbating the already poor condition of some roads. Councillors will continue to apply pressure on SBC Officers on this matter.

- (c) Potholes – French Wight advised that he had been in contact with Councillor Marshall regarding potholes. He had witnessed potholes in the vicinity of Iceland and Lidl being repaired the previous week for the 4th time, highlighting that these works could not be cost-effective as they were clearly only short-term fixes, and requesting when such repair works would be carried out properly.

Councillor Marshall expressed his similar frustration at the condition of our roads and advised of a communication from SBC requesting patience be exercised. An additional £2.2m expenditure had already been incurred on roads above the figure budgeted. Councillor Marshall would maintain communication with SBC on this subject but suggested that HCC invite a Senior Road Officer to present to a future meeting on the conditions of our region's roads and SBC's proposals to rectify. This was agreed by HCC members and contact would be made for such presentation to a future meeting.

The matter of insurance was then raised in relation to car damage from encountering potholes, and it was confirmed that it was essential for photographs to be taken and any incidents witnessed, as only 5% of claims last year had been successful. This could be communicated by the Hawick Paper to ensure drivers were aware of this for any proposed insurance claims.

- (d) 20mph speed limit - French Wight asked if this speed limit was being monitored by the Police in any way as he had not noticed any real difference by drivers in adhering to this new limit.

Councillor Turnbull responded advising that this was a Government-financed project over an 18-month period, and accordingly no statistics would be available until after the project period.

- (e) CCTV – French Wight raised the matter of CCTV discussed at our January meeting, and voiced his concern at being advised that SBC had no monies to service this going forward, however had agreed £316k expenditure for showcasing the Tapestry at Galashiels.

Councillor Turnbull advised of ongoing discussions with the new Police Commander on CCTV. It is believed that there is more CCTV equipment in good order than initially thought to be the case, and once the situation on this was fully known the way forward on CCTV could be discussed further.

11. Reports from Sub-Committees

- (a) A7 Action Group – It was noted that Marjorie McCreadie had a meeting arranged with Transport Scotland for the following Monday (15th February).
- (b) Christmas Event – The Chair advised that lights remained in situ but would be taken down as soon as was practicably possible.

The Vice-Chair advised that she had been approached by several stallholders asking as to the possibility of holding a similar event in the Summer, subject to pandemic restrictions at that time. This request would be kept in mind for future discussion and decision by HCC members.

- (c) Common Good Fund – nil report as HCC member Jock Campbell not in attendance at the meeting.

- (d) Hawick in Bloom – Nil report, albeit dialogue with volunteers was proposed by the end of February.
- (e) Wind Farms – Nil report as no progress in the month.

12. Updates from Community Partners

- (a) The Vice-Chair reported that Foundation Scotland had approved the 2020 Annual Report and were happy with our Distribution Plan for 2021.

Grants would be available from 15th February with applications available online or via hard copy, with a submission date of 31st March 2021. Grants would be publicised on HCC's website and Facebook page, as well as within the Hawick Paper.

- (b) Future Hawick (FH) – Colin Telfer, Vice-Chair presented the following report on behalf of FH.

Welcome Hosts – it was reported that the campervanning community were keen on returning to Hawick when possible and had intimated their willingness to pay towards the usage of a waste sluice proposed for installation at the side of the existing toilet block at the Common Haugh should this be approved by SBC. FH is contributing £500 towards costs for this project.

The Welcome Host brochures were to be used again, as dated 20/21 year, with no further charges for advertisements. Welcome Hosts service would hopefully be up and running again soon.

Photographic Competition – A photography competition on “What Hawick Means to Me” is being run until the end of June in conjunction with Hawick Camera Club. There are 3 age categories - primary school, high school and adults. Information was available on Social Media as well as on the Camera Club website. FH is providing cash vouchers and annual memberships to the Camera Club as prizes.

Duncan Taylor advised that a facebook enquiry had been received asking what the cash vouchers were for. Colin undertook to have this clarified on all the information provided.

Shop Local – this initiative is progressing through social media and FH is now interviewing local shopkeepers on the history of their business to give townsfolk an insight into where and when and how each business started. FH has also offered to identify and promote businesses offering a delivery or click and collect service. Consideration is also being given to the idea of a roaming cardboard figure in future, to identify those businesses signed up to this initiative.

Julie Forrest – it had been proposed at FH's last meeting to give a Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of Julie's achievements, and she was delighted to accept this. This

matter is now being progressed. Live Borders has also been contacted regarding the possibility of renaming the bowling stadium at Teviotdale Leisure Centre in her honour.

Town of the Horse – A diverse Steering group of 13 members had now been set up and they were to have their first zoom meeting the following night. The aim of the Group is to have public consultation on plans throughout the year.

Cold Calling – A ‘No Cold Calling’ Campaign is being planned for the town working along with Police Scotland and SBC. Residents in Wellington Court area have been surveyed with a positive response received towards this campaign. Feedback from Police Scotland on roll-out of the campaign is awaited.

- (c) Resilience – The Vice-Chair reported that the Resilience Group was coping well with the number of volunteers in place, however had some issues regarding Social Work clients and requested a meeting with Councillors McAteer and Marshall on these later.

13. Planning Issues – There were no planning issues reported for discussion.

14. Correspondence – There had been no correspondence received.

15. A.O.C.B. – None

16. Date of Next Meeting – It was agreed that the next meeting of HCC would be held on Monday, 8th March 2021 at 6.30pm via zoom.