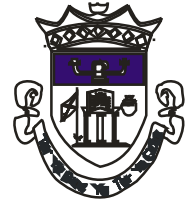

Hawick Community Council



MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

held via Zoom on Monday 14th June 2021 at 6.30pm

Present: Cameron Knox (Chairperson) Marion Short (Vice-Chairperson)
Jim Adams (Treasurer) Margaret Hogg (Secretary)
John Campbell Braden George
Wilson George Keith Irving
Duncan Taylor Euan Welsh
French Wight John Wilkinson

Attending: Councillor McAteer Councillor Marshall
Councillor Ramage Councillor Turnbull
Derick Tait, Future Hawick William Fletcher, Burnfoot CC

There were 2 members of the public also in attendance, as well as Jason Marshall and Graham Ford on behalf of the Hawick Paper.

- 1. Chairman's Opening Remarks** – The Chair welcomed fellow HCC members, Councillors, and the public to the monthly June meeting of HCC and thanked everyone for their attendance via Zoom. He hoped that this would be the last meeting via zoom and that meetings could move back to being public face-to-face meetings from July, restrictions permitting.

He hoped everyone had enjoyed their Common Riding with family and friends, and that hopefully the Common Riding would also be back to normality again next year.

On behalf of the Community Council, he thanked and congratulated Hawick Common Riding Committee including HCC Members, Braden George, and Euan Welsh as part of the film crew, for the tremendous virtual common riding events publicised - concerts, interviews, and reminiscences. He hoped that even a small number of virtual events would continue for future years.

The Chair also congratulated HCC member, Ex-Cornet Alan Wear, on his recent marriage on the Friday of the Common Riding to Julie Hodgins, his Cornet's Lass and conveyed best wishes to them from the members of the Community Council.

Finally, it was noted that the meeting would be recorded by HCC and the Hawick Paper for reporting purposes.

- 2. Declarations of Interest** – The Chair advised that if any members had a conflict of interest in any discussions, they should make it known at the start of the discussion.
- 3. Apologies for Absence** – Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of HCC member, Alan Wear.

4. **Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of 10th May 2021** – The Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting – Proposed by Wilson George and Seconded by Jim Adams.

5. **Matters arising –**

Hawick Hon Provost Achievement Awards Board – it was noted that following the last Hon Provost Meeting, verbal approval had been given to go ahead with this Board, however formal written approval would be forthcoming. The Chair advised that following receipt, archive work would be required to determine all the recipient names etc.

Wilton Lodge Park – Tree Felling and Town Hall Office Clearance – The Chair reported that a response had been received on these matters and would be taken under Item 13 – Correspondence.

Town Clean-Up – 16th May 2021 – it was noted that the clean-up had now gone ahead, albeit later than normally planned, due to Covid restrictions. This had been a success, well supported by enthusiastic townsfolk, young and old, and Community Councillors. It had also been good to see local organisations, including members of Future Hawick, Hawick Volunteers Group, Hawick Youth Rugby, and Hawick Common Riding Committee members all working together on this initiative to the benefit of the town. Several areas had been covered including the Howegate, Drumlanrig Square, Buccleuch Street, Drumlanrig Bridge, Tannage Close, Waverley Walk and at entrances to the Moor. Quite a few black bags of rubbish had been collected along with removal of a great variety of dumped items. Two hours of work had made a big improvement in these areas, nevertheless it remained of concern that it lay with volunteers to pick up such litter dropped by a minority of people who see fit to deposit and leave this for others to attend to.

Marion Short, Vice-Chair, thanked Councillor Turnbull for providing information on the shop owner at Tannage Close. The wasteland there of bushes, shrubs, trees etc appeared to attract dumping of litter etc and her letter had asked the owner to take responsibility to clear up all the wasteland, right to the bottom of Teviot Crescent. Once a response had been received from the owner, she would report back to a future meeting on this.

Dog Poo Bins – Parkdaill/Jooglie Bridge/Wilton Lodge Park Circular Route – Councillor McAteer advised that SBC had responded favourably and had agreed to the provision of one bin, and he was currently in consultation with residents at Parkdaill as to its location. Going south, about 100 yards from the last house at a seating area towards Martins Bridge, was being suggested currently as the best spot. That location would mean the bin would be away from the actual Parkdaill houses but nevertheless on the route which HCC Member Braden George had mentioned. The bin was to be ordered and would take a few weeks for installation._

Braden George had asked as to the possibility of having 2 bins - one at lay-by near Branxholme Bridge as well as at the suggested location. After discussion, whilst Councillor McAteer undertook to ask SBC the question, this location would take the bin out-with the circular route originally mentioned.

6. **High School Pupil Update** – It was not possible for any update to be provided at this meeting, as S6 pupils formerly attending had now left school, and new House Captains appointments had not yet taken place.

- 7. Police Scotland Report** – The Chair confirmed that this report had previously been circulated to HCC members with the request for any questions to be forwarded to him to forward onto Police Scotland, to allow responses for this meeting. He advised that questions raised by the Secretary had been responded to and would be circulated.

In terms of the report, the Chair considered it had been disturbing to read of 3 assaults on school staff within 2 primary schools in the town. This behaviour was very worrying and must be dealt with firmly.

Councillor Ramage as a former teacher agreed and had highlighted these assaults at the monthly meeting between Councillors and the Police (Craig Thomson), asking for further information on whether it had been one pupil responsible for the two assaults at Stirches School or otherwise. The Police had undertaken to investigate and respond further.

Councillor McAteer advised that he had discussed with Sergeant Begley and Acting-Sergeant Thomson that where there were unusual or exceptional crime statistics or solvency rates e.g., rape crime numbers were unusually high in this report, it was incumbent upon Police Scotland to provide further information and not for others to have to request from them. The Police had understood and agreed with the entitlement for further explanation. This would however need to be monitored in future reports.

Councillor Turnbull advised that hopefully the Police would be back to attending meetings after the summer break and subject to restrictions. He discussed however the lack of manpower within the Police to cover 67 Community Councils' meetings in the area.

It had been previously suggested to extend on Ward Members meetings face-to-face with the Police via Teams rather than Zoom, and there was financial assistance available from SBC to enable this, when perhaps the Chair and one other HCC member could attend to exchange queries and obtain information. This would then result in everyone at the public HCC meetings "singing from the same hymn sheet" so to speak. Sometimes, statistics could be distorted, especially when these were being presented for the whole Scottish Borders area rather than the Hawick area of particular interest at this meeting. Perhaps this was a good way forward and he would try to take this matter forward further.

- 8. Treasurer's Report** – The Treasurer spoke to his May 2021 report with a total Opening Balance of £20,594.05. Movement in the month was in Hawick in Bloom Account where a further £185 had been received in donations; there had been expenditure of £147.97 for two new planters and paint to repaint all the planters. Summer planting costs of £2,190.10 would be deducted next month and there would be additional costs for Winter planting later in the year. Foundation Scotland – the Grant balance of £1,366.93 had now been received, bringing the total of that account to £8,631.07. This total included ring-fenced monies (£4,000 each) for the proposed Bandstand Events and for Williestruther extension to boardwalk. It was noted that the cost of wood was thought to have increased by 40% however the small contingency remaining would hopefully cover any additional estimated costs.

The total closing balance was £21,998.01.

9. Public Forum & Town Issues

- (a) Sandbed Post Office Services – The Chair expressed his concern on his recent attendance at this main post office at 2.40pm the previous Friday at the lack of service available to renew his driving licence. He had been advised that the relevant machine had been switched off and would not be available until the following Monday. This is despite a closing time of 5pm on that day. This driving licence service is only available in 3 Scottish Borders locations - Hawick, Kelso and Peebles, and it was unacceptable that he had had to travel 44 miles to the Kelso Post Office, where he had received an excellent service, to enable his driving licence renewal. He wanted to make people aware that this service, and the same applied to any passport renewal, was not available during all opening times, as advertised.
- (b) Borders Railway Extension Film – This film was being produced in conjunction with all 8 T&L partners. This project had started with Alchemy looking at archived material as well as interviewing and filming people from Newcastleton District Community Council. It was now the turn for Hawick's people to come forward to be involved with filming and interviews to promote the social and economic benefits the extension to the railway would bring to Hawick. Sound bites would only be 2 or 3 minutes long so the more people the merrier. If any members were interested in becoming involved or knew of others who may be interested, they should contact the Chair who would pass on details to Alchemy to allow filming to proceed.

Continuing the theme of the Borders Railway, the Chair stated he himself and he was sure all the other Hawick Community Councillors, would have been shocked and disappointed to hear and read of the verbal attack on Hawick Councillor Clare Ramage by Councillor Mark Rowley, Mid-Berwickshire, at a recent SBC meeting, for asking a legitimate question on the scale of support from SBC for the extension of the Borders Railway from Tweedbank to Carlisle.

The Chair wished to confirm to Councillor Rowley and all other Scottish Borders Councillors that all Members of Hawick Community Council fully supported the extension of the railway to Hawick and beyond, which would bring great benefits to the town. The Chair confirmed that HCC also supported questions raised by any of Hawick's Elected Members on behalf of the town and trusted that there would be no repeat of Councillor Mark Rowley's outburst to Councillor Ramage.

Burnfoot Community Councillor Billy Fletcher confirmed Burnfoot Community Council's full support also.

Councillor Ramage responded saying she had been so angry at the time and had never been spoken to in that manner before. The question had been put to her by a couple of residents, as there had been various talk about the railway taking 20 years to be realised. In the response, not only was Councillor Rowley then disrespectful to her as a Councillor representing her area, but to all the people in Hawick.

The question posed to SBC was "With the return of the Border rail to Galashiels, we now need to be proactive with the second phase. Hawick being the town furthest south in the Scottish Borders is suffering because of the lack of infrastructure. Yes, we're currently building business units, but these have to be easily accessible. During the first phase of the Border Railway to Galashiels, a project office was set up by SBC and an officer was seconded. We need to be setting out an economic and business case for the extension of this railway now. Why are SBC not allocating resources to support the

extension, comparable to the resources committed to support the first phase of the Borders railway to Tweedbank?"

Councillor Ramage considered this to be a straightforward question. The residents had been trying to get answers from SBC without success, and she had agreed to ask an open question at the full Council meeting. The response from Councillor Rowley lasted about 10 minutes, of which three-quarters had been threatening and totally disrespectful. From her notes of the meeting, she advised on a couple of points from his response. "Normally I thank a Councillor for asking a pertinent question but I'm not going to thank Councillor Ramage. It's a disappointing question because it questions this Council's commitment, that this admin put on the table. The short answer to the question - this is trumped-up nonsense, this is dangerous stuff, potential harm. You read in the paper she's ripped out a page from the Hawick Councillor Playbook - create a stooshie, talk your town down, and hope to get on the front page of your local paper".

Councillor Ramage advised she had been appalled at the response which had been relentless until eventually Councillor Parker had tried to stop him, but he had still carried on. When trying to support your town, she did not expect to be treated like that. It was in the Councillor's Standards that you should be respectful of your fellow Councillors. She had however received so much support - letters, phone calls which had been positive and had made her feel better, but she had been very upset and angry at the way she had been treated by this Councillor.

Jock Campbell asked if this behaviour would be treated as misconduct and the Chair remarked that this would be for SBC to determine.

Councillor McAteer confirmed that the attack was disappointing and an attack on all Hawick Councillors and uncalled for. He considered that all the Councillors wanted the railway, including Councillor Rowley, and the response was deflecting from the actual question raised – what had SBC done so far on the railway which did not compare with what was done initially on phase one. All Councillors needed to continue to push for this railway and continue to ask the hard questions.

Duncan Taylor seconded everything stated already and suggested that HCC and BCC each write to SBC explaining their dissatisfaction at the way Councillor Ramage was treated and stating this should not be allowed to happen again.

Marion Short then gave an update on the Borders Railway Campaign Group. Marion declared an interest on this. She advised that she had recently been appointed Interim Chair, with the previous Chair standing down for work commitments.

In dealing with Borderlands, they had stated the Group were doing most of the work at the present time. The Campaign Group had met with Transport Scotland and the Minister of State for Railways at Westminster. It was now known that the 4 main objectives of the National Transport Strategy coming from Holyrood, were to reduce inequalities throughout the area; to help to deliver inclusive economic growth; to take climate action (SNP Manifesto is to increase decarbonisation so the Group had now asked for a double track from Tweedbank south to Carlisle and for electrification of the line); and finally for improvement in health and wellbeing.

Currently the Campaign Group were awaiting the outcome of the Union Connectivity Review due in August and hoped that Borders Rail would feature heavily in that.

Another meeting of the Campaign Group would be held next week with Rachael Hamilton MSP. As with Councillor Ramage's comments earlier, in seeking SBC's commitment to progressing the second phase, the Campaign Group were seeking a cross-party group of MSPs being formed at Holyrood, as for the first phase, and she hoped that the meeting with Rachael Hamilton MSP would gain further support for this.

Finally, the Group had also been in contact with Forestry & Land Scotland in relation to further deterioration of Whitrope Tunnel to ensure that this was remedied quickly. Forestry & Land Scotland advised that they could not take responsibility for this as it was a historic building site. The Group had then contacted John Lamont and John Stevenson to apply pressure on Borderlands to have remedial works carried out as a matter of priority, so that this did not impact in the short term on the rail carrying on through Whitrope Tunnel and on to Newcastleton. All in all, the Campaign Group work was going well albeit there was plenty of work to do.

- (c) Fountain in Wilton Lodge Park – French Wight advised that tens of thousands of pounds had been spent on this fountain, which was not working, and he understood that to have been the case all year. He had been advised that there was a problem with the pump which was not big enough to cope. Wilson George commented that he had witnessed a plumber there a few days earlier attempting to repair this after taking out a load of mud and rubbish.

Councillor Marshall agreed with French Wight's sentiments. It was not good enough that this fountain was not working, and a report should be requested from SBC on works required and when it was proposed it would be back working. If there were technical issues, these should be brought to light. The tourist season was on us, and this fountain was a good feature. It would benefit tourists and townsfolk to know what was happening.

- (d) Update on condition of Leisure Centre roundabout – Marion Short reported that she had been in contact again with Bear Scotland on plans prepared by Amey and accepted by them, which works they stated had been budgeted for this year (2020/21) at this roundabout. A response received stated that HCC should be assured that these works had not been forgotten about and would be done. She had again responded to Bear Scotland to highlight that unless she initiated communication, nothing was ever forthcoming from their side. This project had been ongoing for many years, and there was extreme frustration and despair at the condition of this roundabout now, given recent rain and sunshine, and this now looking like a proverbial jungle. She had asked for works to be imminent. She would continue communications but had been left wondering what priority these works were for Bear Scotland.

Councillor Marshall expressed huge gratitude to Marion for keeping this matter to the fore. He had also been in communication with Bear Scotland that morning and been in discussion with Councillor McAteer. He hoped that Bear Scotland would not use the excuse of this being a diversionary route for the Flood Protection as being the problem. This roundabout was a gateway to the town and an eyesore.

- (e) Hawick Core Paths – Grass cutting – The Chair reported that paths at the Scawmill, Targets, and Slitrig had had their first cut, with the second one scheduled for September. These paths were all now accessible for the public.

- (f) Tour of Britain – Update from Steering Group Meetings – Keith Irving reported that Derick Tait, Future Hawick was currently preparing a bid for funding for all activities, however there was a desire to hang bikes on the High Street where HCC normally would hang the harps etc at Christmas. He stated that Tosh Scott had advised him that he had spoken to someone on HCC who had advised that there would not be a problem with this, but Keith could not find any HCC member who had spoken with Mr Scott. Keith advised that he had been put in charge of Town Decoration for the Tour and that HCC needed to identify and decide on ideas for such decoration to brighten the town.

Currently there was no confirmed route plan. It was known that they would be going south leaving the town, but it was not known whether they would circuit the town first. The one idea Keith had had, was to have jerseys painted of the six main teams participating, along the same lines as the wooden Santas and trees painted and used for decoration at Christmas time, and to have these hung along the High Street. He had thought about approaching local artist Judith Murray to do the painting, and for the Men's Shed to cut the wooden templates for painting. Materials required etc would need to be made known for bid purposes.

The Chair advised that bikes would not be appropriate for hanging on existing brackets used by HCC for Christmas decorations. There would also be the issue of stress-testing required by SBC and the costs associated with that process might be prohibitive. Marion Short agreed with the Chair's comments.

Derick Tait confirmed that any costs could be included within the bid, but Future Hawick considered matters were not as far forward as they should be, given there were only 10 weeks left to the event. All plans and costs required to be brought together within the next 2 weeks to allow consideration by SBC and their response.

The Chair asked if it could be determined whom Tosh Scott had spoken with within HCC. Councillor Marshall confirmed he had spoken with Tosh Scott who had sought his support with plans and had mentioned hanging bikes along the High Street using existing brackets for Christmas decorations. Councillor Marshall had assumed that Mr Scott had been in contact with SBC for the relevant approvals to allow this. He hoped that Mr Scott was not confusing their conversation that he had approved this as him being the HCC member.

Keith Irving stated he was looking for other HCC members to join the Steering Group as he was already committed to works at the event and could not assume responsibility for all activities agreed. Euan Welsh advised he had missed the first meeting due to Common Riding filming however he would attend future meetings of the Steering Group. Wilson George also offered to be included.

Jock Campbell suggested that bikes could be tied to the metal bollards along the High Street, however Keith advised that there would be barriers in front of these all the way along the High Street so the bikes would then not be seen.

Billy Fletcher suggested that bikes could be put on stands at entry to the town however without knowing the official confirmed route, it was not known at this stage where these would require to go. Billy also suggested to involve the schools with the painting of the jerseys, however Keith explained that it had been proposed to have a competition

involving the design of jerseys by the schoolchildren and for each school to adopt one of the six team jerseys.

Further updates would be given on progress at future HCC meetings.

- (g) Wood carving of Steve Hislop- Jock Campbell stated he had been advised that SBC had been offered a wood carving of Steve Hislop but had declined this, advising there was nowhere to put it. Councillors in attendance stated they knew nothing about this. Councillor Marshall stated that the only matter involving Steve Hislop was that his statue at Wilton Lodge Park needed cleaning, and he confirmed that this work had been arranged.
- (h) Manhole Cover - Keith Irving advised on an issue with a manhole cover at the foot of Beaconsfield Terrace and the noise that was generated when vehicles drove over this. Residents were having to put up with that noise, which was horrendous.

Councillor Marshall advised that the issue had been reported and HCC member Braden George confirmed that it had now been rectified.

10. Reports from sub-committees

- a) A7 Action Group – Now that Bear Scotland had had time to settle in, French Wight queried with Councillors whether there had been any movement regarding the Dunk Corner.

Councillor McAteer reported that he had received an email update from Transport Scotland which he had circulated to the Parkdaill Residents Group on the proposed 40mph speed limit at this location and would forward this to HCC members via the Secretary. This order had now gone through the legal process. There would be a requirement to carry out some consultation, albeit Transport Scotland and Bear Scotland did not foresee any issues with that, and Councillor McAteer stated the Parkdaill residents would certainly have no issues. The new speed limit would hopefully be in place by late summer.

In terms of the road layout and proposed signage, this was all underway. There was no definitive date, but these were clearly on their agenda. On the road layout, issues around whether there should be a footbridge etc, were part of ongoing discussions, and we could be reassured that this matter was now showing progress.

In terms of the fundamental design of the road, there were no immediate solutions other than engineering around signage to reduce the speed limit and risks, and longer term they were aware that this remained to be resolved.

Councillor Turnbull advised on some progress on the 4 areas where water was still leaking off the banking, and repairs carried out to drainage behind the blocks on the road. He would circulate this update to HCC members.

- b) Summer Event – The Vice-Chair reported that the Hawick Reivers Group had agreed to provide additional gazebos required for this event. Invoices for stallholder charges required to be issued to stallholders in July to save collection of these on the day. SBC Licencing Officer had confirmed everything was in place regarding the licence application and layout plan, and so everything was now in place.

- c) Hawick Common Good – John Campbell reported that there was still no progress with the sluice; Mr Bannerman had applied for a grant for the Black Community Project; and there was another meeting of the Common Good on Friday at the different time of 9am.

Councillor Turnbull advised of a busy meetings' schedule that day and the need to change this time, and Councillor Marshall advised that the sluice was on the Agenda again for Friday's meeting.

- d) Hawick in Bloom – Margaret Hogg reported that most of the summer plants had been planted by the volunteers last week. She was hopeful to recommence face-to-face meetings shortly with the volunteers, restrictions permitted, to work on future planned works.
- e) Wind Farms – French Wight advised that Philip Kerr and some members of the other Community Councils had been walking around the Penchrise area taking photographs at various vantage points, with a view to having these published and to show what the effects of the Teviot Wind Farm would make. The Chair confirmed that the photographs would show the negative impacts on some areas, which had not been previously considered.

The Chair advised that comments for scoping information had been sent to the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit by 21st May deadline. They were now collating all information before consultation later this year.

- f) Bandstand Events – The Chair reported that progress with these events had been halted due to current Covid guidance in place. It had been thought that 9 concerts could be held however SBC had stated that these would need to await additional Scottish Government Guidance on 28th June. Current guidance stated that events needed to be ticketed and sold prior to the event, whether free or not, with controlled entry and exit, and sanitiser stations in place, which would be challenging given the proposed location. Numbers would also need to be limited to 100, with 2 metre distancing in place and cross-barriers in place over the event area.

It had been suggested by SBC to consider reducing to 4 events to be held in August, when it was hoped that guidance would change and there would be less restrictions than in place.

Members agreed due to current constraints in place being too onerous, to reduce to 4 events in August in the hope that restrictions would reduce on 28th June, when matters could again be reviewed.

Keith Irving suggested an alternative location be considered at the Walled Gardens where barriers would not be necessary and there would be a single entry and exit point. Members considered this to be a good idea which would take less stewarding.

Euan Welsh suggested that the events could be live streamed to others elsewhere to avoid numbers being exceeded.

Councillor Turnbull confirmed that a one-way system could easily be created at this suggested alternative location.

The Chair advised he would discuss the potential with SBC and Keith Johnston, Friends of Wilton Lodge Park, to move the venue to the Walled Gardens and determine the restrictions at that location.

John Campbell queried the matter of insurance for these events, and the Chair confirmed that this would be put in place as was the case in previous years.

11. Updates from Community Partners

- (a) Foundation Scotland - Nothing to report.
- (b) Future Hawick – Derick Tait, Chair of Future Hawick reported as follows:
 - (i) Welcome Hosts – the Hosts had commenced duties that day and he reported things had gone well and he looked forward to a busier tourist season than last year.
 - (ii) 2nd Shop Local Campaign had come to an end, and this had also worked really well, as had the 1st Shop Local Campaign. Future Hawick were now looking to develop a Shop Local App for social media, where shops could promote their produce, discounts and display their wares.
 - (iii) St Leonards Park Project – The Steering Group made up of interested parties was now in place and the first formal meeting was scheduled for Wednesday to progress. SoSE had declared their interest with this Group.
 - (iv) Community Enterprise Manager: The situation on the appointment of a Community Enterprise Manager remained the same as reported at last month's HCC meeting.

The Chair thanked Derick Tait for his report.

- (c) T & L Area Partnership - Community Fund 2021/22 – The Chair advised that the Community Fund remained paused as reported at the last HCC meeting. He confirmed that Hawick would receive £4,921.60 funding from Fund A, with applications scored on the HCC Matrix scoring system used for award of Foundation Scotland Grant Funding, which the other partners considered was a fool-proof and excellent system. This would now be forwarded to SBC for their approval.

The maximum award would be £500, with applications assessed by a Panel of 2 Community Councillors and 2 members of the public. Two names of the public had already been received but it was open for other public members to express interest and volunteer to sit on this Panel to adjudicate grants up to £500. HCC would determine the successful 2 public members should there be more than 2 names forthcoming. Billy Fletcher, Burnfoot Community Council advised that they had 2 volunteers from the public to sit on their Panel.

In terms of Fund B, totalling £24,606, applications would be assessed by a Panel of 8 Community Councillors. Thresholds of a minimum of £500 and maximum £5,000 awards had been suggested. HCC Members agreed with these thresholds.

Marion Short asked if there would be any split of the Fund, similar to the award of Foundation Scotland Funding where this was split between micro grants of £250 and other grants of £500. The Chair advised that the scoring system would determine awards to be made and there would be no split.

It was noted that Southdean had already recruited 4 public members to sit on their Panel with the other partners yet to confirm their public members.

Councillor McAteer referred to the Build Back a Better Borders initiative and the Chair confirmed he would send all information from the last meeting regarding this to HCC members. Councillor McAteer advised that this would assist with Marion Short's earlier point, as this was a fund for new projects of c.£0.5m and whilst vague at the present time, this fund would be opened soon and available. Applications to this fund would be assessed by Council Officers and Councillors and unfortunately not by the Communities, but there was a need to be ready to apply to this fund for any local projects. The Tour of Britain and plans locally to mark this, was such a local project worthwhile of application to this fund.

- (d) It was noted from French Wight that he was meeting with a representative from Criminal Justice the following Sunday. This was with a view to walking the Williestruther Project to determine required works, considering continuing price increases for extending the Boardwalk there. He would update members at the next meeting.

12. Planning Issues – None.

13. Correspondence –

- (a) An email had been received from Brian Bouglas, Future Hawick seeking HCC's support in a proposal to further extend the cycle/walk pathway between Selkirk and Hawick.

Wilson George advised that this matter had previously been discussed by HCC in the past however costs were considered prohibitive.

Derick Tait, Future Hawick, confirmed this was not at the stage of a formal proposal, but Future Hawick were looking to gauge interest from various organisations to enable a proposal to be put forward on this.

Keith Irving considered this was an excellent idea. At the present time there was no infrastructure to encourage walking or cycling and this extension should be supported.

Members agreed in principle to support a proposal for this extension, subject to further information being forthcoming.

- (b) The Secretary reported HCC had received a further response from John Curry, SBC on tree-felling/maintenance and clearance of the Town Hall offices. The response stated that the last external tree survey had been carried out in December 2020 and only 8 trees across Hawick, Burnfoot and the Denholm & District areas which were identified for works were those within the spreadsheet provided by Councillor McAteer. The next survey was not due until December 2025. Those works had been completed, preventing any option of securing wood from felled trees for utilisation in Hawick. It would be good to have more input at the stage of tender, as suggested by SBC, to have knowledge of trees earmarked for works, so that a request could then be made for use of the wood locally and for this then to be built into their tendering process.

In relation to the use of sub-contractors by their appointed Contractor, there was confirmation that the Council did not interfere in sub-contractor selection other than to ensure that they were competent.

There was an offer for a representative from SBC to attend a future HCC meeting, as requested, with questions to be forwarded to SBC to allow the appropriate representative to attend to answer these questions.

Members agreed to request a representative to attend the next HCC meeting and the secretary requested feedback on questions to be posed. It was confirmed that Councillors had been copied into SBC's response.

Keith Irving requested that a Freedom of Information Request be made to SBC seeking copies of the reports determining the trees should be felled, together with costings and information on what happened with the wood from these felled trees. He was aware of a letter to SBC issued along the same lines, which was not responded to, so this request should be made under Freedom of Information.

Councillor McAteer reported that he had contacted the Service Director regarding the lack of transparency and process around any formal Strategy on trees. SBC state there is a 5-year inspection Strategy, but timelines around this were not formalised and clear. He would be having an audio call with the new CEO of SBC and had raised that issue with her. More information was required and in a timelier fashion. His request coupled with HCC's request for representation from SBC at a future meeting would hopefully secure better information.

- (c) The Chair reported he had been contacted by a Molly Lynch, Producer of BBC Radio 4's World at One News Programme looking for a sound bite to sell Hawick. With staycations, they were looking at destinations which were not regularly visited and an approach to Visit Scotland had advised that Hawick was the least visited of the tourist sites in terms of domestic overnight tourism. He had contacted her to agree to provide a sound bite and would update members on this at the next meeting.

14. A.O.C.B –

- (a) John Campbell raised the matter of green waste which currently went into general waste bins and subsequently into landfill, costing £96 per ton to dispose. He suggested if green bins were reintroduced, that waste could be composted, lessening our carbon footprint by 25%. English Councils were being encouraged to reintroduce the green bins and he wondered if local Councillors would take this forward to SBC.

Councillor Turnbull agreed in principle, but any progress on this would likely depend on the outcome of Council elections next year and outcomes from G7 discussions currently on changes regarding climate controls.

- (b) John Campbell requested an update on the speed restriction signs recognising that other towns had now had all their signs installed. Wilson George confirmed that there was one sign in place at St Cuthbert's Church and Councillor Turnbull advised that some had been calibrated and advised that Councillors were on the case to have these installed as soon as possible. He also referred to the 20mph project and advised that once the pilot period was completed, there would be a report to determine whether this limit would be permanent or otherwise.
- (c) Billy Fletcher, BCC advised of a proposal to hold a litter-pick in Burnfoot and asked for support in arranging this. Councillor Marshall advised he would provide the necessary support for this to happen.
- (d) Councillor Turnbull referred to the grassed banking from 100a to 128 Weensland Road and advised that the grass had been cut on the flat level but the machine to enable

cutting of the rest of this banking was faulty and away for repair, resulting in this banking now being in poor condition. He would continue to monitor this.

- (e) Councillor Turnbull also reported on the mess of the pavements on both sides of Weensland Road from the top of Trinity Steps to Mart Street roundabout. These pavements had not been cleaned for months and he was pursuing the Network Manager at SBC. The whole road had been earmarked to be resurfaced but that work was delayed due to SGN works to be carried out. He would continue his attempts to have this matter rectified. In addition, the connecting staircase from Weensland Road to Douglas Road East required steps to be improved, however ownership was currently disputed. SBC had tidied the grass banking at the junction of Douglas Road East and Weensland Road meantime due to visibility issues.
- (f) Braden George raised an enquiry seen by him on Facebook, as to the possibility of having a defibrillator placed at Wilton Lodge Park around the location of the pitches and Pump Track. The need for defibrillators had been highlighted recently following an incident at an international football match, and he wondered whether this would be possible, given the level of sport played at this location. It was noted that the nearest defibrillator was at Wilton Dean Hall, some fair way from this location.

Members agreed that this idea should be investigated further, and the Chair undertook to contact Avril's Trust regarding this.

- (g) Provost McAteer advised on an SBC consultation that week on the redesign of services (Fit for 24) which importantly would include Live Borders the body responsible for Museums, Libraries, and sports facilities etc. This consultation would be about learnings from COVID and how services were used and accessed over the last couple of years. HCC would be key in terms of addressing local people's concerns and managing feedback, as albeit dates for re-opening of services were published, further investigation showed that service provision would not be on the same basis as was the case pre-Covid. Given that restrictions were ongoing, that might require to be the case, nevertheless any threat or impact on services needed to be monitored and any local concerns addressed.
- (h) Provost McAteer spoke to a previous request for additional bollards in the town to prevent unauthorised parking, and his personal preference was to have the black bollards painted a brighter colour on the street, e.g., blue and gold. It was noted that the Steering Group for the Tour of Britain coming through Hawick were looking to brighten the town for that event, and it was thought that some of the existing parts should be considered at the same time by way of having such a brightening effect.
- (i) Councillor Marshall advised of a positive site meeting with SBC's Road Officers at East Stewart Place and agreement to patching works being carried out particularly at the top end of the road. If there transpired to be any budgetary constraints he would envisage use of the Small Schemes monies, which he was confident would be supported by fellow Councillors. There were also issues with drainage at the bottom end of this street, as well as a footpath issue and he would update progress on these at a later date.
- (j) Braden George asked for line painting in car parks in the Longcroft and surrounding areas, as parking was a real issue there. Councillor McAteer confirmed if Braden could forward an email listing the areas affected, he would take this matter forward.

15. Date of Next Meeting – It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Monday, 12th July 2021 at 6.30pm. It was hoped to hold this meeting in public, subject to restrictions and a decision on this would be taken and advised nearer the time of the meeting.