
Hawick Community Council



MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

held via Zoom on Monday 12th July 2021 at 6.30pm

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

Attending: Councillor Ramage Councillor Marshall
Councillor Turnbull Graham Ford (Hawick Paper)

There were no members of the public in attendance.

1. **Chair's Opening Remarks** – The Chair welcomed everyone to the monthly July meeting of HCC and thanked all for their attendance via Zoom. Subject to the First Minister's speech the following day, he hoped that meetings could resume on a face-to-face basis next month.

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 agenda items, they should make it known at the start of the discussion.
3. **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of HCC members Braden George and Alan Wear, as well as Councillors McAteer and Paterson, and Brian Bouglas, Future Hawick.
4. **Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of 14th June 2021** – The Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting – Proposed by French Wight and Seconded by Duncan Taylor.
5. **Matters arising** –
Hawick Hon Provost Achievement Awards Board – it was noted that this project was ongoing, and that the Chair was in the process of compiling a list from the year 2000 of recipients of these Awards. The Chair suggested, and Members agreed, that once this information was available, that a sub-group of HCC members be formed to take this project forward.

Dog Poo Bin – Parkdaill/Jooglie Bridge/Wilton Lodge Park Circular Route – Councillor McAteer to update on progress at next meeting.

Hawick Core Paths – The Chair confirmed that all paths apart from the path between the bridge at Crowbyres and Hardies Hill had been completed, the latter having large amounts of giant hogweed requiring to be cleared. Following contact with Fiona Cameron, SBC, they had undertaken to have this removed and cleared.

Defibrillator for Wilton Lodge Park – The Chair reported he had contacted Avril's Trust with this suggestion, however, was awaiting a response. He would update at a future meeting, once such a response had been received.

20mph speed warning signs on A7 – It was raised that this sign was still to be recalibrated. Councillor Turnbull undertook to check that position with Philippa Gilhooley, SBC as he considered signage on the A7 would be the responsibility of Bear Scotland. All other signage agreed as part of the trial was now in place.

6. **Police Scotland Report** – The Chair expressed his disappointment that antisocial behaviour within both Wards had increased considerably in the month, probably due to increased daylight hours but hopefully this would see a decrease going forward.

It was hoped that Sergeant Paul Begley would be able to attend in person at the next meeting, to provide additional information required.

7. **Treasurer's Report** – The Treasurer spoke to his June 2021 report with a Total Opening Balance of £21,998.01. Movement in the month was in HCC 1 account following the receipt of £1,780 for CC Grant for 2021, and expenditure of £2,190.10 for plant costs from the Hawick in Bloom Account. The total closing balance was £21,587.91.

The £2,500 Grant awarded from the Fallago Grant Fund would hopefully be forthcoming next month, and there would also be income generated from Summer Market stallholders' fees. Electricity costs of £132.55 for power for the Christmas lights remained to be deducted, albeit members agreed this cost was very reasonable, particularly given the extension of lights last year.

8. **Public Forum & Town Issues**

- (a) Wilton Lodge Playpark – Electric Shocks – The Vice-Chair expressed her thanks to the Hawick Paper for their article on this matter the previous Friday. She herself had experienced an electric shock from the gate into the playpark. She had been approached by 2 members of the public who had advised that this had been an ongoing problem affecting many adults and children alike. Following her contacting local Councillors and SBC, the response from Fiona Cameron, SBC was that this was down to a build-up of static electricity due to certain types of clothing being worn. It had been suggested that woollen clothing should best be worn. This was not considered a satisfactory and acceptable response. Furthermore, the Playpark Inspector had stated that this issue was not able to be cured.

It was discussed that the gate should be earthed or alternatively rubber placed along the top and down the side of the gate as a solution. This was a popular park and greater usage was likely to create potential for more static.

Councillor Ramage reported she had been in touch with Jason Hedley, SBC who had stated this issue was because of the spell of good, dry weather and this would not

happen in wet or poor weather conditions. She undertook to take this matter forward with SBC to request that the gate be earthed.

Councillor Marshall advised of his frustration at this issue, which should be able to be resolved easily. He suggested that the Chief Officer, SBC be included in any future correspondence as responses received and lack of any action was not acceptable.

Continuing the subject of the playpark, the Vice-Chair then raised an issue on behalf of a member of the public querying the necessity for 2 gates within the playpark. This made monitoring of multiple children under the care of one person more difficult. Security-wise it would be easier if there was only one access and egress.

Councillor Ramage considered this may be for emergency purposes and at the request of the Vice-Chair, Councillors attending were asked to take this matter forward for consideration and response.

- (b) Pathways to Millers Knowes from Weensland Road and Riverside Walk from Denholm to Hornshole – The Vice-Chair acknowledged that clearance works may have already been completed however if not, she was sure given the response that works in both these areas would go ahead imminently.
- (c) Roundabout at Teviotdale Leisure Centre – The Vice-Chair again thanked the Hawick Paper for its article highlighting the unsightly condition of this roundabout. Following correspondence since September last year with Bear Scotland regarding necessary works as per agreed Plans, she had at last had a successful meeting with them along with Councillor Marshall.

Agreement had been reached as to necessary works, and a follow-up meeting was scheduled in August. Already there had been 3 trees taken down, weeds removed and some periphery tidying.

As there would be electricity available at this site, HCC could consider putting a Christmas Tree there this Christmas enhancing the look further at Christmas time.

Councillor Marshall confirmed the meeting had gone well, and planned works would make a huge difference once tidying was complete, with increased public safety and sightlines. Works also included tidying of grass verges on the Dovemount side and shrubbery near to the Bridge.

- (d) Fountain at Wilton Lodge Park – French Wight reported that the plumber had advised him that the pump had been affected by sticks and other objects being deposited in the Fountain. It was considered that more regular inspections should be undertaken to ensure that clogging in future was prevented. It was noted that the issue with the pump not working had now been rectified and the Fountain was now fully operational again.
- (e) Banners at Tennis Courts/Cricket Club – The Vice-Chair advised that these had now been cut down however they would require to be removed, as no access was permitted to the area where they had then fallen, due to flood protection works. Councillor Marshall undertook to contact Yvonne Gilfillan, on her return from leave to dispose of these or allow access for this purpose.
- (f) Sluice at Common Haugh – French Wight requested, and Members agreed, that HCC write to SBC/Scottish Water regarding the ridiculous delays in bringing this matter to fruition. Councillor Turnbull agreed that a letter should be issued and confirmed that it was Scottish Water who was responsible for delaying works.

- (g) It was reported by John Campbell that the first lamppost at Salisbury Avenue had a space allowing easy access to wires. Councillor Turnbull undertook to have this issue rectified.
- (h) The Vice-Chair raised the matter again as to the possibility of having a bridge linking Weensland with Lower Mansfield. Councillor Marshall agreed that he had had many people requesting this to happen and confirmed this would be raised again at the next meeting with the Flood Protection Group. He would press for this and report back to HCC in the future.

9. Reports from sub-committees

- a) A7 Action Group – Nothing to report.
- b) Summer Event – The Vice-Chair reported that next week, invoices would hopefully be issued to all stallholders for fees for stalls. Event Posters were ordered and would be available imminently and raffle sheets would be issued too. Raffle sheets would be available from ILF Imaging, Dorwards and Wilton Lodge Park Café, with sheets also available within Barrie Knitwear and Johnstons of Elgin. If anyone had ideas of other venues for selling, they should advise on these. HCC members could also help with selling.

The Chair reminded everyone of the 4 main beneficiaries – Dementia Café, Hapi Project, Escape Youth Services and Reaching Out Congregational Church and urged everyone to play their part in selling tickets.

Christmas Event – John Campbell suggested that collection tins could be placed in local shops. It was noted that only £32 was realised previously doing this through the Christmas Candles initiative, however further consideration could be given nearer the time.

- c) Hawick Common Good – John Campbell enforced that there was continued frustration with the lack of the sluice at the Common Haugh coming to fruition. There was also frustration at the planning process for windows to be inserted at the Angling Club, however Councillor Turnbull confirmed that these windows had now received planning consent.
- d) Hawick in Bloom – Since the last meeting, all summer plants had been planted along the length of the High Street, an area of ground at Allars Crescent had also been planted as had the War Memorial at Wilton Lodge Park. In addition, the Round Close had also been given a good tidy, so all in all volunteers had to be congratulated on all this work which had helped once again to brighten the town.

Duncan Taylor added his well done to the volunteer carrying out works at the Round Close which was looking great. This area was used much more at this time, due to access via Millport being blocked because of Flood Protection works.

- e) Wind Farms – French Wight reported that Philip Kerr had circulated information regarding the sale of forestry around wind farms but there was nothing specific to report on any further progress with the wind farms affecting our area.

The Chair reported on a proposed large Wind Farm development concerning Moffat CC, who had carried out a very professional consultation with residents there. This consultation was perhaps one that could be replicated in the T&L area, once at that stage.

- f) Bandstand Events – As had been reported in the Hawick Paper, the Chair confirmed that these events had now been cancelled due to continuing Covid restrictions and requirements of SBC as a result.

The Vice-Chair advised that many people had expressed sympathy for HCC who were attempting to hold these community events and had been prevented due to restrictions. They had expressed frustration at other events across the country, e.g. the football and tennis being able to proceed with large crowds and the requirements imposed on HCC to put in place pre-ticketing, barriers etc which to them seemed unfair. The Chair also mentioned the Scottish Opera being permitted to hold an event recently in the Civic Space without what appeared to be any restrictions in place. Nevertheless, HCC would need to ensure that the Bandstand Events for next year were bigger and better than ever.

- g) Williestruther – French Wight reported it had not been possible to meet with Criminal Justice due to continuing restrictions. Funding however had been secured from the Fallago Environment Fund which the Vice-Chair explained was funding of £500 up to £2,500 specifically for pathway maintenance and improvement of paths which had been used more during the Covid lockdown periods.

The first estimate received for Williestruther was £3,417, however due to Covid, works could not proceed. With price increases since in wood, the cost rose to £4,001 and then increased by another £700, meaning a total estimated cost of £4,701. Since then, a further estimate had been accepted and with the ring-fenced amount of £4,701 together with the Fallago funding of £2,500, totalling £7,201 this would allow the completion of this project in late Summer, including additional boardwalk, membrane, and gravel. This funding was expected imminently.

- h) Tour of Britain (Hawick Stage) – Keith Irving reported on a document prepared by David Killean, Hawick Cycling Club, much of which proposed actions contained in that document awaited approvals from SBC. The idea of hanging bikes on brackets along the High Street had now been dispensed with, in favour of having flower baskets at each of the roundabouts to the Town. Keith was awaiting a sample of shirts from Colin Wilson for sizing purposes.

The Chair advised that Derick Tait, Future Hawick had put in a funding bid to SBC for £2,000 for decoration of the town. Each of the primary schools were to adopt a shirt, with Trinity School having the Trinity team shirt allocated.

There would be events in Wilton Lodge Park the two preceding weekends. The route was still to be made public, albeit this was thought would be south out of Hawick, starting at North Bridge Street, along High Street and south to Robertson, Tushielaw, Gordon Arms and towards Innerleithen. Team buses would be located in Duke Street. Barrier requirements were still to be clarified.

10. Updates from Community Partners

- (a) Foundation Scotland - Nothing to report.
(b) Future Hawick – No report in absence of Brian Bouglas.
(c) Resilience – Nothing to report.
(d) Scottish Borders Council's Community Councils Review – The Chair reported that all HCC members had been circulated the letter from SBC requesting comments regarding the

review. Any observations should be emailed to the Secretary to co-ordinate a response to SBC as soon as possible.

- (e) T & L Area Partnership - Community Fund 2021/22 – It was noted that the Chair, Vice-Chair, Katherine Scouler along with Alistair Cook yet to confirm, would form the Assessment Panel. Once confirmed, details would be passed by the Chair to SBC.

The T&L Partnership Survey – online consultation was ongoing, and he urged HCC members to input into this consultation, with a deadline of 1st August for responses.

- 11. Planning Issues** – Members were circulated details of the 1514 Club’s planning application to embed their 1514 Memorial Stone into the large flower bed maintained by Hawick in Bloom at the Horse Monument. HCC Members’ responses were all positive. The Secretary reported that Hawick in Bloom volunteers also had no concerns when their views were sought last year.

12. Correspondence –

- (a) FOI response from SBC regarding Tree Management – HCC members had been circulated with the response to an FOI request to SBC regarding this matter. Two spreadsheets had been received, detailing the trees which had been surveyed and proposed works. No costings had however been received, with the response stating that these were not available.

Keith Irving considered that this information took us no further forward especially as no details of costs were forthcoming. He considered that contractors must be making money from the wood from felled trees. He had spoken with a former member of the Parks Department who had advised that in the past, the local community were made aware of any tree felling and given opportunities for use of the wood and felt that this type of dialogue would be beneficial today.

He also advised that despite SBC’s surveys, they had missed the oak tree at the top corner of Wilton Lodge Park where a large branch had recently come down. There had also been the case previously of a dangerous tree at the Violet Woods which had fallen onto a car, also being missed from their surveys.

Councillor Marshall advised that there had been an undertaking that SBC would plant 2 trees for every one felled. He agreed that when tree survey reports were being carried out, HCC should be consulted with. He would pay more attention to the matter of tree management in future and considered it would be more beneficial if surveys were carried more regularly rather than every 5 years.

French Wight considered that SBC were not felling trees for the sake of it and Councillor Marshall agreed, as SBC officers had stated that felling trees was both an emotive issue and costly and had to be a last resort if they were deemed dangerous.

There was discussion around erosion of the riverbanks at the top of the park, and the formed islands where water was being pushed down both sides, however Councillor Ramage advised that she had made SBC aware of this but had been advised there were no planned works in place. She had also contacted John Curry, SBC as reported at a previous meeting, regarding the tree felled at the top corner of the park and which SBC

stated they did not do but they had cleaned up the mess left there, and considered it essential that information had to be obtained regarding who was responsible for commissioning this tree to be removed. Councillor Marshall agreed that there should be records in place.

Duncan Taylor considered that it would be beneficial also to have information on trees replanted, so that this could be monitored to ensure SBC promises on replanting were adhered to. Keith Irving reported that in the last 5 years SBC had cut around 8 or 9 trees in the Violet Woods and had only planted 5. Councillor Marshall advised that the Flood Protection Group were to be planting 2 trees for every one taken out, but he had no information on where these trees would be being replanted and this information should also be forthcoming.

Members agreed that a representative from SBC be requested to attend the next meeting of HCC for further clarification on tree management. HCC members' questions to be forwarded to the Secretary as these had to be forwarded to SBC 2 weeks before the meeting date.

- (b) Response from CEO, SBC to HCC letter of support for Councillor Ramage – HCC members had been circulated with a copy of the HCC letter and response from SBC. The Secretary read over the main points raised with SBC which related to the conduct of Councillor Rowley in his response to Councillor Ramage's question raised, the Standards to which Elected Members required to adhere to and seeking assurance that all Hawick Councillors would be respected when acting on behalf of the Hawick community and raising questions. The letter also requested that the question be properly answered, and that SBC put in place the comparable resources as for the Railway to Tweedbank.

The response from the CEO was that compliance with the Standards was a matter for the Monitoring Officer and not her as the CEO. She could not therefore give any commitment that there would be no further outbursts against Councillors; Councillor Rowley was content that he had responded in full to the question raised; and that SBC was 100% committed to the extension of the Borders Railway to Carlisle, albeit did not give any response on replicating allocated resources put in place for the Railway to Tweedbank.

Councillor Ramage stated she had now drawn a line under this matter. She had met with Councillor Rowley and David Parker to confirm her unhappiness with the response which she had found disrespectful and threatening. She had had that treatment previously and considered that no personal views should be part of any response. She merely wanted to know what SBC was doing regarding the economic and business case for the railway, which had been done for the previous phase of the Railway to Tweedbank where an Officer had been put in place to overview this.

She thanked her fellow Councillors and Community Councils for their support and considered that this had actually served to raise the profile of the Borders Railway extension.

- (a) John Campbell raised the long delay, attributed to estimates for works, at the old Armstrongs building. Councillor Turnbull concurred at the time taken, however hopefully some activity would be seen in the near future.
- (b) John Wilkinson asked when the defibrillator at the foot of the Cross Wynd would be reinstated. The Chair confirmed he would arrange this when out of his Covid isolation.

On the matter of defibrillators, John Campbell asked as to the possibility of having information posted clearly around the town, as to the location of the nearest defibrillators. French Wight advised that there was an App which could be downloaded to provide this information, and the Chair confirmed that this information was also available on Avril Trust's website. Signage would be a good idea, as not everyone had access to mobile phones or the internet.

14. Date of Next Meeting – It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on **Monday, 9th August 2021 at 6.30pm**. It was hoped to hold this meeting in public, and suggested venues were the Lesser Town Hall, Evergreen Hall, or Hawick Rugby Club. This would be confirmed.