
Hawick Community Council



MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

held on Monday 9th August 2021 at 6.30pm at Hawick Rugby Club

Present:	Cameron Knox (Chair)	Marion Short (Vice-Chair)
	Margaret Hogg (Secretary)	John Campbell
	Braden George	Wilson George
	Keith Irving	Duncan Taylor
	Euan Welsh	French Wight
Attending:	Councillor Ramage	Councillor Turnbull
	Billy Fletcher Burnfoot CC	Graham Ford (Hawick Paper)

There were two members of the public also in attendance.

- 1. Chair's Opening Remarks** – The Chair welcomed everyone to the monthly August meeting which was the first for some 18 months able to be held face-to-face again. The Chair expressed gratitude to Hawick Rugby Club for use of their premises.

Condolences were expressed on behalf of HCC to the family of the late Jamie Batten, who had passed away the previous week. Jamie was a real character and stalwart of Hawick and particularly within the Burnfoot Community and he would be truly missed by all who knew him.

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 Jim Adams, Alan Wear and John Wilkinson as well as Councillors McAteer and Marshall, and Brian Bouglas, Future Hawick.
- 4. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of 12th July 2021** – The Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting – Proposed by Marion Short and Seconded by Duncan Taylor.
- 5. Matters arising** –
Hawick Honorary Provost Achievement Awards Board – it was noted that the Chair had almost completed the compilation of a list of recipients of these Awards, with only names of 6 participants missing from the year 2000 to date. Once this information was completed, a sub-group of HCC members would be formed to take this project forward to fruition.

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

Defibrillator for Wilton Lodge Park – The Chair reported that this matter was in hand with Avril's Trust.

20mph speed warning signs on A7 – It was noted that Councillor Turnbull had discussed this matter with Philippa Gilhooley, SBC, and due to fixed time meters on the main A7 to control speeds at Hawick High School, this would not be used as a normal 20mph area with buffer zones etc. The sign there would be recalibrated, and this work would be carried out in time for the school term resuming.

Wilton Lodge Playpark – Electric Shocks – Marion Short advised that she had contacted Jason Hedley, Craig Blackie and Fiona Cameron, SBC since the last HCC meeting to express dissatisfaction on SBC's response to resolving this issue. The response was that they had tried to soak the mats to diffuse the shocks however on seeking an update before the meeting, both Jason Hedley and Craig Blackie were on annual leave. Marion would continue liaison on their return and report further.

Councillor Ramage advised that following a query raised by Marion Short at the last meeting, she had also contacted SBC regarding the reason for 2 gates within the playpark and it appeared that this was for use as an escape route for anyone in fear or feeling intimidated.

Marion Short confirmed that her query was specifically in relation to the gate behind the Fort and that there were in fact already 2 gates to the front of the playpark, one perhaps used for cleaning equipment access.

French Wight confirmed that the gates had been agreed at the initial stakeholders meeting during development of the play park, and this indeed related to the need for escape routes in relation to any incidents of intimidation.

Sluice at Common Haugh – The Chair confirmed a letter had been issued to Scottish Water and the response received from that authority had been circulated to HCC members. It appeared that both authorities were blaming each other for the delay.

Councillor Turnbull had been copied into Scottish Water's response and had in turn contacted SBC, who confirmed that Scottish Water required a redesign of proposed works. It was expected that an update on this matter would be presented at the earliest to a future Common Good Meeting, however it looked more likely now that it would be next year before the sluice would therefore be in place.

Tree Management – The Chair advised that an invite had been extended to SBC for a representative to attend tonight's meeting. HCC members had been copied the response from John Curry, SBC's Service Director – Assets and Infrastructure. Due to multiple enquiries across Scottish Borders from both the public and Elected Members received by SBC, he had tasked Officers to review SBC's approach and agree on updates for their Tree Management approach and guidance. This was to ensure greater consistency and that their approach complemented other key policy areas such as climate change crisis, biodiversity, and habitats as well as other social considerations.

The review would be completed late Summer/early Autumn when a representative could then attend an HCC meeting to consider the review outcomes.

Councillor Ramage advised that she had contacted Yvonne Gilfillan, McLaughlin & Harvey who had undertaken to replant several trees throughout the town, to suggest that they consider replanting more trees at the Violet Woods, where it had been previously highlighted that this area had not had the requisite numbers of trees replanted to offset those numbers removed.

Roundabout at Teviotdale Leisure Centre – It was noted that Marion Short had written to Bear Scotland to thank them for works carried out to date, which had greatly improved visibility at this roundabout. A further meeting was scheduled for 19th August when it was hoped that further planned works would be made known to complete on this renovation.

Banners at the Tennis Courts – Marion Short reported that whilst the banners had been cut down a while ago, these remained in situ behind the wall still to be removed. Councillor Marshall had undertaken at the last meeting to contact Yvonne Gilfillan, McLaughlin Harvey to see if they would remove, as a representative from the Tennis Club had previously been prevented from doing so, or if they would permit access for their removal. She had written to remind Councillor Marshall on this. Councillor Turnbull advised that it was his understanding that McLaughlin Harvey had been contacted and had stated it was not their responsibility to remove however it appeared that the issue of then permitting access to the Tennis Club needed clarification as this had been previously denied. Hopefully Councillor Marshall would be able to clear up this matter to allow the removal of these banners.

Lamppost at Salisbury Avenue – John Campbell expressed his thanks to Councillor Turnbull for having the matter of exposed wiring rectified at this location.

6. Police Scotland Report – The Chair welcomed A/Sergeant Craig Thomson to the meeting.

French Wight queried that other than in the case of robberies, there appeared to be a vast drop in solvency rates. A/Sergeant Thomson explained that figures were distorted due to requirements for different methods of policing during lockdown. Fewer crimes were reported due to the change in people's habits. It would take a year or so for people to get back to normal before the figures would again reflect more accurately.

Marion Short expressed concern at the higher level of common assaults and crimes of dishonesty and queried what the definition of the latter was.

A/Sergeant Thomson advised that in terms of assaults these were now being better recorded, with greater confidence in the Police to progress.

In terms of dishonesty crimes, these included theft, shoplifting, and online fraud which played a big part in terms of increasing crime numbers, with false messages being often received asking people to click on links or phone dodgy numbers etc.

Duncan Taylor thanked A/Sergeant Thomson for his attendance and went on to express his concerns regarding recent behaviours around water and the high number of associated deaths resulting. It was known heatwaves were to happen during this Summer and he queried why therefore Police warnings regarding behaviours around water were not released until after the heatwaves instead of beforehand. A/Sergeant Thomson was requested to take forward the suggestion that those warnings in future should pre-empt anticipated heatwaves.

In terms of reports to Police on antisocial behaviour, the July Report highlighted on the Police attending, there was often nothing witnessed. Duncan Taylor stated it would be helpful to know average response timescales from reports being received to the Police attendance. A/Sergeant Thomson advised that this information could be requested via a Freedom of Information request, but this was not publicly available information. He advised that Police generally attended as quickly as possible, following risk assessment and the level of potential harm to individuals.

It was noted that many incidents were witnessed on Facebook stating that the Police had been notified but had not turned up. A/Sergeant Thomson advised that generally however, this was not the case and no report had been received by the Police.

John Campbell asked if CCTV in Hawick High Street would help solve some of the crimes being reported. A/Sergeant Thomson confirmed this would be the case, however, evidence from CCTV would require to be of good quality and referred to assistance provided by Ring Doorbells which did provide good quality information for Police solving crime. Proper signage of recording required to be in place.

Wilson George asked if the Police were aware of the traffic chaos along Hawick High Street, however, whilst agreeing that this was a problem, the Police were not the responsible authority to resolve, and this was a matter for the Roads Authority. He had concerns that people were getting frustrated, and short-cuts were being taken causing further frustration within neighbourhoods then affected. Driver behaviour required to be improved. A particular problem appeared to be at the Morrisons Roundabout and temporary traffic lights might be a solution.

The Chair thanked A/Sergeant Thomson for his attendance, and it was noted that Sergeant Paul Begley would be returning to his post from the following week and anticipated to attend future HCC meetings.

7. **Treasurer's Report** – The Chair in the absence of the Treasurer spoke to the July Treasurer's Report previously circulated to HCC members. The Total Opening Balance was £21,587.91. Movement in the month was in HCC 1 account following the receipts of £2,500 from the Fallago Grant for Williestruther improvements, £260 stallholder fees, and £40 expenditure on posters for the Summer Market; In the Christmas Lights/Event Account, the sum of £132.55 was paid to SSE for unmetered Festive Lighting. The report showed a healthy total closing balance of £24,178.26 for expenditure within the Hawick Community.

Any members with any queries with this Report should contact the Treasurer.

8. **Public Forum & Town Issues**

- (a) Condition of Tourist Information Board, Common Haugh – As a Welcome Host, Euan Welsh advised that around half of tourists to Hawick presented at the Common Haugh and due to the exit at the Burns Club not being available, they used the exit where the Information Board is located.

He advised that the information contained was out of date and the quality of pictures etc did not give a good impression to tourists. A new map was also required.

Councillor Turnbull concurred that damage had been done to this Information Board due to flooding when the electric car charger in this vicinity was also damaged. He

understood that the Information Board was to be replaced possibly to an electronic type, through a claim on insurance. Councillor Turnbull undertook to progress this matter with SBC to update information and determine any proposals to replace this Information Board.

The Secretary advised that Hornshole Greenway Group were working alongside other partners, such as Future Hawick, Town of 1000 trails, Hawick Rugby Club to look at aligning all signage throughout the town. Should it be the case that the Information Board itself needed replacement, this should be borne in mind.

- (b) Naming of new development at old Peter Scott Mill as “Pesco Mills” – Members unanimously agreed that the renaming of this development as Pesco Mills was most appropriate, tying this back to its original use as Peter Scott Mills and what many locals knew the development as.

Braden George stated he understood the Developer, Martin Buckley, to be interested in giving back to the Community, however ideas put forward were allegedly being blocked by SBC Planning Department who allegedly were being un-co-operative. There were employment opportunities as well as opportunities to bring more tourists to the area.

Councillor Turnbull confirmed he had been in discussion along with Councillor McAteer on ideas presented, with all other Councillors on board. He undertook to progress this matter with SBC Planning and report back to a future HCC meeting.

- (c) Hawick High Street Bollards – The Chair confirmed the frustration expressed by members of the public who could not understand why SBC had denied the painting of our bollards in blue and gold, especially when Galashiels’ bollards were recently painted gold. It was considered that the blue and gold colours would add to complement the planters and to brightening the town and enhance the visibility of these for drivers.

It was noted that the gold bollards in Galashiels linked to the Golden Thread of the Tapestry, and associated costs had been paid from public parking charges in the town.

Following discussion, it was agreed to write to SBC in support of Hawick’s bollards being repainted blue and gold and suggesting that Parking Meters could be installed on the High Street to generate income required. Parking Meters would also encourage more through put of vehicles on the High Street and maximise income within local shops.

9. Reports from sub-committees

- a) A7 Action Group –Councillor Turnbull expressed his continued frustration at the lack of any progress in relation to water coming from the banking on to the roadway at the Dunk/Parkdaill area. He requested that this matter be raised again at any A7 Action Group meeting. French Wight agreed with people’s frustrations and that this matter had been on the go for some years. He confirmed that no meetings had been held for some time but as soon as meetings resumed, this would be discussed as it was a standing agenda item.

It was agreed that Marion Short raise this matter when she meets next with Bear Scotland/Transport Scotland on 19th August regarding the Roundabout at Teviotdale Leisure Centre.

- b) Summer Event – The Vice-Chair reported provision for 23 stalls, with most stallholders having paid fees due. There was one vacancy presently, which she would endeavour to fill. Volunteers were necessary to erect and dismantle gazebos and she had approached

the Mosstroopers Club regarding this. It was noted that Hawick Youth Rugby had volunteered. It was likely that stalls would require to be erected from 7am to allow stallholders access and set up time.

Christmas Event – The Chair reminded HCC members that the snowmen and trees would require repair and repainting in time for this event. A date would be set for completion of necessary works once the Summer Market and the Tour of Britain through Hawick events, were concluded.

- c) Hawick Common Good – No report. The next meeting of the Common Good was scheduled for 17th August 2021.

French Wight raised a query as to why an issue raised by him proposing a hard standing for parking at Acreknowe like that which had been a great success at Williestruther, had not been approved by Councillors. Costs were to have been covered by McLaughlin Harvey.

Councillor Turnbull advised that there had been a site meeting of Councillors, who agreed that there should be no development there. They concluded that two lots of parking would spoil this area and this additional development was not needed.

It was queried whether the hardstanding for Scottish Water would then remain as this was development at this site. Councillor Turnbull confirmed that this was a permanent structure for Scottish Water.

- d) Williestruther Boardwalk Improvements - French Wight advised that Criminal Justice had confirmed they were now able to commence agreed works. He and Marion Short would meet shortly with Criminal Justice now that the Fallago Grant had been received to progress this project. A budget of £7,200 was ring-fenced for completion of works.

The Chair expressed his thanks to Duncan Taylor and French Wight for strimming works they carried out along with himself on the paths around Williestruther. Whilst SBC had carried out works too, nevertheless these additional works helped to further enhance visually and with accessibility.

- e) Hawick in Bloom – It was noted that Sponsors plaques had now been received free of charge from Wilson Signs, with most of these now in place on the planters.

The Chair advised that he had received feedback from a member of the public expressing their gratitude to Hawick in Bloom volunteers for all the lovely planting throughout the town. It was good to have such recognition for the hard work put in.

The Chair advised that he had been invited to a walk-around Wilton Lodge Park as part of the review of the town's Green Flag Accreditation. Officials were impressed with the park, its Café, Pump Track, Fountain and Museum and it was hoped that our Green Flag Accreditation would be retained.

- f) Wind Farms – French Wight reported that in relation to Pines Burn, it was hoped to expand its life span from 25 to 30 years. This would be addressed by SBC Planning in October. The number of turbines proposed were also being varied.

The Chair advised that consultation material on Teviot Windfarm was ongoing. Jamie Leslie, Muirhall Energy, had requested to attend HCC's October Meeting to provide feedback on outcomes of this consultation.

- g) Bandstand Events – As had been reported previously, these events were cancelled for 2021.
- h) Tour of Britain (Hawick Stage) – Keith Irving reported that there would be a further meeting the following evening, to which Euan Welsh confirmed he would attend on behalf of HCC.

Bikes had now been approved by SBC and placed above Hamish Smith's shop. Bikes with flowers were also now in place at the entrances to the town at Buccleuch Road, Wilton Hill and Haughhead.

A sample of a Team Jumper was still awaited from Colin Wilson but expected imminently. There would also be 6 life-size images of cycling greats, with permissions being sought to have these cited at different locations throughout the town e.g. Bridal Shop, Pump Track. The former Dorothy Perkins/Burtons shop frontage was also suggested.

It was also proposed to have a Best-dressed shop competition (cycling theme). Euan Welsh to confirm at the meeting who would be the responsible person to arrange this. Finally, it was proposed to have the yellow and blue town flags erected on the High Street.

10. Updates from Community Partners

- (a) Foundation Scotland - Nothing to report.
- (b) Future Hawick – No report in absence of Brian Bouglas.
- (c) T & L Area Partnership - Community Fund 2021/22 – The Chair confirmed that the Assessment Panel would be himself and the Vice-Chair, along with Katherine Scouler and Alistair Cook. The Community Fund would be on the agenda for approval at the next T&L Partnership Meeting, whereafter the T&L Community Fund could then be opened.

11. Planning Issues – There were no planning issues for consideration.

12. Correspondence –

- (a) UK Government Community Ownership Fund – The Chair advised that there would require to be discussions in the first instance regarding Hawick's assets and those which might potentially be under any threat. To assume responsibility and set up such type of projects would be a huge undertaking, especially for any volunteer sector.

Councillor Turnbull explained following his discussions with Shona Smith, SBC, regarding the complexities of securing this type of funding.

After much discussion, and highlighting of some potential projects, it was concurred that whatever project might be subject to any application, this would require to be building on an existing foundation, with Business Plans, funding avenues, public consultations, and other associated requirements all in place, and most importantly fully supported by all the different agencies involved. This might be difficult within proposed timeframes. On the face of it, the fund of £150m appeared high however when broken down across the UK, may not be so lucrative or sufficient. Meeting the funding criteria would not be without great complexities.

13. A.O.C.B –

- (a) John Campbell raised the matter of a Disabled Parking Space being placed within a turning bay at Salisbury Avenue. The disabled person resided at no. 11 however the space itself had been created outside no.9.

Braden George advised that the Community Council used to be consulted on Disabled Parking Spaces and wondered if that consultation was no longer in place. Marion Short advised that some residents within the Beaconsfield area were also frustrated at the number of disabled parking spaces there.

Councillor Turnbull undertook to investigate these matters and report back to a future meeting.

- (b) The Chair had received a request for erection of a set of steps at the Dunk to allow easier access to the river. Councillors to take this request forward.
- (c) Euan Welsh raised that there was a lack of attractions for tourists coming to Hawick and considered that reinstatement of Putting/Crazy Golf/Patong facilities at Wilton Lodge Park would be welcomed. None of these facilities were available across the Scottish Borders and would be considered attract further tourism.

Duncan Taylor expressed his support for exploring this matter further, backed by the other HCC members.

- (d) It was raised that the Give Way signs at either end of Yarrow Terrace as well as at Lockhart Place required repainting. It was agreed that signage throughout the town needed looked at, whether this be repainting, installation of missing/new signage or updating of existing signage.
- (e) Keith Irving raised that the pathway from Lyle & Scott linking to the Mote was overgrown. The Chair confirmed that this was the responsibility of HCC as part of Core Paths, and he would contact Dan Wolfe to attend to.
- (f) The Chair advised that Ron Smith, Hawick Rotary Club was carrying out a Fundraiser walk over the Minto Hills, with Hawick in Bloom being a beneficiary and encouraged members to support him.

14. Date of Next Meeting – It was agreed that the next meeting of HCC would be held on **Monday, 13th September 2021 at 6.30pm.** Proposed venue Lesser Town Hall – to be confirmed.