

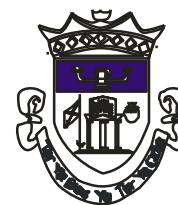
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# Hawick Community Council

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## MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at 6.30pm at Hawick Lesser Town Hall

Present:	Cameron Knox (Chair) Jim Adams (Treasurer) John Campbell Wilson George Duncan Taylor French Wight	Marion Short (Vice-Chair) Margaret Hogg (Secretary) Braden George Keith Irving Euan Welsh John Wilkinson
Attending:	Councillor McAteer Councillor Paterson Councillor Turnbull	Councillor Marshall Councillor Ramage

There were eight members of the public also in attendance, along with Graham Ford, reporting for the Hawick Paper.

- 1. Chair's Opening Remarks** – The Chair welcomed everyone to the monthly October meeting of Hawick Community Council and advised that since the previous meeting, design proposals were now in place for our new High School. It would be interesting to see the outcomes of public consultation to take place, given that the original Henderson Technical and old school buildings were proposed to be demolished. He went on to advise that history was in the making with a proposed new footbridge linking Weensland and Mansfield, which would be great, especially for the people within these areas of the town.

It was reported that the Chair and Vice-Chair had attended the first meeting in a while of Burnfoot Community Council (BCC) and the Chair extended congratulations to Billy Fletcher and Ashley Sim who had been appointed Chair and Vice-Chair of BCC respectively and wished them well in their new roles. It had been suggested that office bearers of HCC and BCC meet soon, to assist BCC with some pointers towards their success going forward.

It was noted that HCC and the Hawick Paper would be recording the meeting for minutes and 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. Councillor Ramage intimated her declaration of interest in respect of Item 9 as a member of SBC's Planning Committee.
- 3. Apologies for Absence** – Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of HCC member Alan Wear and the pupils from Hawick High School, due to their school holidays.

**4. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021** – The previously circulated Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting – Proposed by French Wight and Seconded by Wilson George.

**5. Matters arising –**

Hawick Honorary Provost Achievement Awards Board – The Chair reported that only 4 names were now required to complete the list of recipients since the year 2000. He hoped to have the list completed by Christmas.

Sluice at Common Haugh – The Chair requested an update from Councillors, and Councillor Turnbull advised that a little progress had been made with further details awaited from Norrie Curtis, SBC's Solicitor and Frank Scott of SBC. The sluice would be under discussion at the next meeting of the full Council in November when he would then be able to update further.

Mrs Marjorie McCreddie, member of the public and Administrator of the Welcome Hosts initiative, advised that in her role of liaising with the campervanning community, it would be helpful to be included and have input into discussions on this matter. She had not been included nor kept aware of what was happening, with her only source for information being through the Hawick Paper. Councillor Turnbull undertook to advise Norrie Curtis, SBC to ensure this communication going forward.

Councillor Paterson advised due to the spiralling costs for the sluice with constraints placed by Scottish Water, SBC were currently looking at ways to reduce costs. Organising a meeting with Scottish Water however was proving difficult.

It was raised as to whether the sluice in its current form and at a cost of £10k was required, as it was understood that a £300 green box over what was already in place in other areas was a much cheaper and easier method and all that was wanted by the campervanning community as being adequate for their needs. This might reduce the current timescales being experienced.

John Campbell advised however that Scottish Water would then require to empty that waste, which would incur costs, however a sluice would go straight into the waste system without such costs being incurred.

Councillor McAteer confirmed frustrations of Councillors in the timescale for progressing this matter. Whilst the lesser option (of a green box) was noted, Councillors had been hoping for something quite special given the ongoing upgrading works to the car park at the Common Haugh, with designated parking for campervans and so on. He stated that no-one should be in any doubt that Councillors were pursuing this matter rigorously and were not giving up. He was not aware however of any negotiations with Scottish Water on costs. He had not been advised of this and would have liked to know if this was the case, as he understood these costs at the start to be under the ceiling set.

High Street Bollards – The Chair reported that a response from SBC to HCC's recent letter of support for painting of the bollards had advised that these would now be painted in a trial area soon, and that consultation would take place to ascertain the public's views thereafter.

Traffic Chaos in Hawick – The Chair confirmed that following the previous meeting, HCC had written to SBC regarding this unacceptable ongoing issue and had received a reply stating that SBC were currently reviewing options available and would be in touch again shortly.

Frederick Douglass' Memorial – Following discussion between the Chair and Brian Tait, President of the Hawick Archaeological Society, it was noted that that organisation would welcome a joint project with HCC to mark the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Frederick Douglass' anti-slavery speech at Myreslawgreen. A joint application would require to be made to the Hawick Common Good Fund for costs of a proposed plaque and any celebratory event to mark the occasion.

HCC members agreed a formal approach be made to the Hawick Archaeological Society regarding a joint application from HCC and their organisation for this purpose.

6. **Police Scotland Report** – It was noted that no police could attend the meeting due to Cop26 training. There were no matters raised on the reports.
7. **High School Senior Team Report** – Due to October school holidays, there was no report presented.
8. **Treasurer's Report** – The Treasurer spoke to his report circulated to HCC members previously. The Opening Balance amounted to £24,166.21.

HCC1 account – income generated in the month to this account was £968.50 from the Summer Market prize draw and residual stallholder fees, with expenditure totalling £1,617.30, attributable in the main to donations of £250 each to 4 local charities from the Prize Draw proceeds, and donations from stallholders' fees totalling £250 made to Hawick Youth Rugby and the Mosstroopers Club for their assistance with erection and dismantling of gazebos.

Winter Planting costs of £1,241.97 had been paid from the Hawick in Bloom Account.

The Total Closing Balance was accordingly £22,275.44. It was noted that invoices for improvement works at Williestruther Loch had not been received but may be forthcoming next month.

Members approved the Treasurer's Report.

9. **Guest Speaker – Jamie Leslie & Carol Douglas, Muirhall Energy** – The Chair welcomed Jamie Leslie, Project Manager of Muirhall Energy and Carol Douglas, Community Officer to the Meeting, to give an update on the proposed Teviot Wind Farm and recent consultation and exhibitions which had taken place.

Jamie thanked HCC for the invite and opportunity to provide an update on their recent activities. He advised that there had been five days of consultations and public exhibitions in total, including a day in Hawick which had had good attendance.

In terms of the process, he advised Muirhall would take on board the comments received. They recognised they were newcomers to the area, and it was important to have obtained the feedback from Hawick residents who would be affected.

Since the public consultations, Crossdykes Wind Farm between Langholm and Lockerbie had opened and Muirhall were very pleased and proud of that. This was the largest subsidy Wind Farm in the UK and had been a shared ownership project. It was hoped to follow that model for Teviot Wind Farm.

In relation to rising gas prices, Muirhall were continuing to explore how they could provide energy locally at discounted rates and had also engaged with SoSE and SBC with a view to attracting businesses to the area who were interested in clean renewable energy. If anyone had any ideas on how to work together to attract businesses, they would be keen to learn of this. A subsidiary company would be required further down the line.

It was noted that a lot of the feedback provided related to provision of energy at discounted rates and whilst there were many complexities in relation to achieving this, for example with many companies going bust, nevertheless they would continue to explore this further.

The Planning Application would be submitted in the New Year, taking account of feedback from consultations. To put context on timescales, they had submitted the Planning Application for Crossdykes Wind Farm some seven years ago and had just finished construction earlier in the year. Applications to Scottish Government would be submitted early next year, with further engagement on the project throughout.

Braden George sought assurance given the impact on Hawick and the surrounding area that there would be further consultations planned as not everyone had the ability to attend the one day held recently in Hawick. Carol Douglas responded saying that once they had the office open at the Old Post Office in Hawick, which they hoped would be early in the New Year, there would be people on hand to concentrate on specific queries and for consultation.

Jamie reinforced the importance of people speaking out, and he would be happy to attend further HCC meetings to update on progress. There were lots of information in an application and he appreciated that information needed to be broken down to ease understanding for people.

A question was raised as to the level of shared ownership available and with whom that shared ownership would be with. Jamie advised this to be up to 10% shared ownership for Teviot Wind Farm. For whatever reason on the Crossdykes project, 5% had been agreed and this was by all the local Community Councils involved who had set up their own organisation and had bought a 5% share at a discounted rate post-construction and reduced risk. Those Community Councils received a loan from the Scottish Government through the Energy Investment Fund (EIF) at a good rate of interest, and they also used part of their Community Investment Fund to pay off that interest. In 6 years, they would start to see annual dividends. Crossdykes Wind Farm over its lifetime would, it was anticipated, generate around £8m to the local communities through the Community Investment Fund and the shared ownership an additional £4m, and so provided real opportunity for local community groups to become involved and to receive revenues from this.

It was confirmed in responding to a public member question, that once communities received their dividends, they were free to spend as they saw fit within their communities, subject to some restrictions such as spend on religion or politics.

The size of the populations and communities involved in the Crossdykes Wind Farm was asked about, and it was noted that this included larger towns such as Langholm and Lockerbie but also smaller communities such as Eskdalemuir, not dissimilar to those communities involved in the Teviot Wind Farm.

It was asked if there had been any involvement with the A7 Action Group and whilst it was noted there had not been to date, Jamie stated he was aware of this Group and would be happy to meet with them.

The Vice-Chair asked if there had been any consensus of feeling on how the exhibition had gone. Hawick was a big community, and it would be interesting to learn of perceptions. Jamie advised that Hawick had seen the most attendance of the 5 days. They were still reviewing the thirteen comments received and were happy to share the questions and feedback with HCC. Broadband was noted to be an issue as well as phone signal in some areas. Whilst they could help with broadband, he was unsure whether this would be the case regarding lack of phone signal in some parts.

French Wight stated his concern at the low level of only thirteen responses in relation to the size of Hawick. Jamie advised that there had been a high number of people attending however that was the number who had provided written feedback.

Duncan Taylor expressed his frustrations with the current wind farm technology, and that during the Summer when there was no wind blowing, the need to revert to fossil fuels. He asked if during the lifetime of this project, whether there would be progress around storing of energy when the wind was blowing for use later when there was no wind. Jamie advised that in terms of the application they would be including a solar element and so were looking at ways when not windy for continuing to produce energy. In terms of storage, they had two battery storage projects ongoing, but storage was not in the present application, as technology on this was evolving. If there were opportunities for battery storage, they would certainly explore this.

A member of the public asked how real the intent was to supply energy to local people at discounted rates as she considered this to be very important and local people would be impacted in different ways by this Wind Farm.

Jamie advised that it was not about giving a private wire to individual properties. There were many ways to progress this but confirmed it was an absolute desire for Muirhall to explore this further. He could not say it would absolutely happen, but it was certainly something they were looking to do.

Jamie stated that it was inevitable usage would continue to go up in the future, and industry would be using more energy, for example with electric cars etc, and the need for on demand electricity would only increase.

The Chair thanked Jamie and Carol for their attendance and offer to return to a future meeting.

## **10. Public Forum & Town Issues**

- (a) 20mph speed trial - French Wight queried if any feedback on the success or otherwise of this trial would be forthcoming, and the Chair advised that Community Councils had entered their feedback which was currently he understood being reviewed by SBC.

It was noted that Councillors had met with representatives of Napier University and that the briefing given was highly technical in relation to this trial. It required community input to add value. It was very much in academic format and hinted that the 20mph speed should be dropped further, based on their statistical evidence.

It was hoped that when the Report was published that this would be in plain English for ease of understanding. It was agreed all that was required from the Report was straight forward information – Does it work; Where does it work and where does it not work?

A member of the public stated she had found the 20mph speed to be problematic as a cyclist, especially with cars slamming on brakes. Councillor Paterson advised that he had found people's views to be very mixed with some in favour of the lower speed of 20mph and others very much against.

- (b) Request for Warning Signs for Deer at the Nipknowes – Braden George advised of a dead deer on the road from the Golf Club up the Nipknowes. This was a busy road and he asked for a Warning Sign for Deer in the vicinity to be erected. Councillor Paterson advised of another sign he was pursuing for Wilton Lodge Park re car access and agreed to take this signage request forward too.

## **11. Reports from sub-committees**

- (a) A7 Action Group – It was noted that no meetings had taken place since the start of the pandemic.

Mrs McCreadie advised that she had received an email update from Bear Scotland stating the 40mph speed limit had been approved and they had since ordered signage which would be in place early November. New safety barriers were now in place at Parkdaill and topsoil would be replaced and debris removed by Contractors. The crash barrier location had created some sections of slightly narrowed footway. As part of the Flood Protection Scheme, they were working with SBC, Sustrans and Transport Scotland to help deliver an offline cycle facility from behind the High School through Volunteer Park and emerging onto the A7 at Buccleuch Road.

A7 Action Group members expressed frustrations at the lack of meetings of the group and lack of any communication from either of the two joint Chairs. It was noted that one of the Chairs of this Group was scheduled to visit Hawick the following day and Mrs McCreadie stated she would speak with them regarding this unacceptable position and request a meeting.

The Vice-Chair agreed that the pandemic was not a valid excuse for not holding meetings, given the availability of vehicles such as Zoom or Teams for this purpose. She asked if it would help if HCC wrote to the joint Chairs requesting meetings be reinstated as soon as possible, and this was agreed by members.

Councillor McAteer advised that the A7 Action Group was set up for a very specific purpose. Bear Scotland had been responsive to him about local needs for Parkdaill and whilst there had been frustration at the length of time taken, nevertheless he was confident of 40mph signage being erected. Barriers had been a shambles but on his contacting Bear, they had responded very quickly.

A photograph taken a few days earlier was circulated, showing loose coping stones which had been pushed out on a small retaining wall at the bank. This wall was the responsibility of Transport Scotland, but the banking was privately owned. There were real concerns that the wall was a danger, with trees behind also needing attention. Councillor McAteer advised that Councillors were duty bound, having been alerted to this danger, to action and he undertook to write to Transport Scotland the following day to demand a Safety Audit of that stretch of road and request details of when works would be done. He would then report back on any response received to HCC.

Duncan Taylor asked if there was anything constitutionally that meant the Chairs required to be elected members or could any other members of the group assume that position. It was noted that the Constitution at the present time stated that sitting MSPs be invited to take the position of Chair. There had been a move previously to have an independent Chair, but this was not met with favour.

- (b) Christmas Market - The Vice-Chair reported there were 37 stallholders confirmed, with a reserve list of seven in place, and that she had managed to secure gazebos for all 37 stalls. Road Closures had been notified to SBC, and No Parking and Road Closure Signs requested to prevent parking in the required areas for stalls. Barriers were also on order. Wetherspoons had been approached to act as a collection point for the public donation of selection boxes, and Johnstons of Elgin would also be approached. Selection boxes would be distributed by Santa to close off the event after the lights switch on. The collection of selection boxes and these collection points required to be publicised on our Website and Facebook pages. The Hawick Paper could also advertise now to tell the public where they could donate selection boxes.

Volunteers were welcomed to help, starting with erection of gazebos from 6.30am on Saturday, 4th December 2021. It was noted that Hawick Youth Rugby had confirmed their help.

There would also be a "Hunt the ducks" competition again this year. Entertainment was still to be finalised by the Chair, and appropriate forms completed for SBC. Alan Wear was progressing completion of repairs and painting of the snowmen and trees. It was noted that a new Santa Claus suit was required.

The Chair advised that a meeting of HCC members would take place shortly specifically on finalising arrangements for this event, including a date for erection of the Christmas lights.

- (c) Hawick Common Good – John Campbell reported that the Common Good had discussed the Common Haugh resurfacing for car parking; the matter of the sluice had already been discussed earlier in the meeting and was ongoing; the request for signage at Williestruther had resulted in advice that campervans, swimmers, canoeists and so on could not be stopped from going to the loch however new signage to warn of dangers of using the loch would hopefully be erected; the request for additional life-saving equipment had found that requirements were met, however, additional equipment would be looked at; finally, it was noted that one party had expressed interest in Hawick's Saturday Market.

Duncan Taylor stated that whilst the Loch Inspector had stated requirements were met, it would still be beneficial to review and add to if possible.

- (d) Hawick in Bloom – The Secretary reported that winter plants were due for delivery the following day. Volunteers would arrange planting over the next couple of weeks within

the planters and at the War Memorial. Two new planters were on order, and she thanked Ron Smith, Hawick Rotary Club for his donation of £250 from his recent sponsored walk over the Minto Hills. This donation would almost cover the cost of the new planters. Another meeting of the volunteers was scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

- (e) Wind Farms – French Wight reported that Pines Burns had been extended for 5 years but had nothing further to report as far as Teviot Wind Farm. The rapid rise in energy prices was again highlighted and work ongoing within the communities involving SBC and CAB. People needed to know where to go for advice as these aggressive charges would undoubtedly have a major impact on people. Councillor Ramage referred to the Anti-Poverty Reference Group set up by SBC under its Anti-Poverty Strategy and issues could be taken to this Group. The difficulties were however in getting people to come forward.

## 12. Updates from Community Partners

- (a) Foundation Scotland - The Vice-Chair reported that HCC members should bear in mind that the next allocation of funding would be in January 2022, when discussions would be required by HCC members on options and proposals for expenditure of this funding allocation. Duncan Taylor enquired as to the likely funding amount which the Vice-Chair advised, based on previous years, would likely be circa. £8,000 but could be more.
- (b) The Teviot & Liddesdale Fund 2021/22 – The Chair reported that this Fund had opened on 1st October and would close on 12th November 2021. The fund was circa. £7,000 for Hawick inclusive of the share from Upper Teviot & Borthwick Water. SBC would assess applications made to this Fund and pass to the Panel thereafter for their consideration. It was noted that Awards of Funding would hopefully be finalised at an Area Partnership Meeting around 6th December 2021.
- (c) Scottish Borders Community Council Network (SBCCN) AGM – It was noted that Wilson George and Jim Adams, Treasurer, had attended this AGM on 29th September 2021. Wilson had been voted onto the Committee for the next 2-year period. The next meeting would be 24<sup>th</sup> October when the Community Empowerment agenda would be under discussion.
- (d) Williestruther Boardwalk – French Wight advised on progress with extending this boardwalk. He had a further meeting with Criminal Justice the following week to finalise outstanding works and hopefully get the gravel to finish off the pathways.

## 13. Planning Issues – There were no planning issues for consideration.

## 14. Correspondence –

- (a) The Secretary advised that thank you letters had been received from the charities awarded £250 donations from the Summer Market Prize Draw, as well as from Hawick Youth Rugby and the Mosstroopers Club who had received donations raised from Stallholders' fees.

## 15. A.O.C.B –

- (a) The Chair reported that Hawick Saxhorn Band had requested representation from HCC to attend their Meetings. Euan Welsh agreed to act as HCC's representative.
- (b) The Treasurer gave advance warning of the Hawick Servicemen's Club's involvement in plans to mark 50 years in 2023 of the town's twinning with Bailleul.

Councillor McAteer stated that a sub-committee under the Provost's Council and involving various interested parties might best be formed to take this matter forward in a structured way.



- (c) John Campbell queried what was happening with the old Armstrongs building. Councillor McAteer recognised this was a slow process and advised that this was currently out to public contract. Councillor Marshall advised there would be a Council Briefing the following week and they would then be able to update further after that.
- (d) John Campbell enquired whether the tree on the Liberal Club building had been chopped down. A member of the public at the meeting, and who lived close by, confirmed it had not and that there was also a broken pane of glass which could be dangerous needing attended to.

**16. Date of Next Meeting** – It was agreed that the next meeting of HCC would be held on **Monday, 8th November 2021 at 6.30pm within the Lesser Town Hall.**