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# Hawick Community Council

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## MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022 within the Lesser Town Hall, Hawick

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

There were 6 members of the public in attendance, along with Graham Ford, reporting for the Hawick Paper.

- 1. Chair's Opening Remarks** – The Chair welcomed everyone to the June meeting of HCC. The Common Riding was now past, and after two years delay because of the pandemic, the feedback was that it had been well received and restored some normality. She thanked the Honorary Provost for his role in the ceremonial events and John Hogg and Ian Nichol, Chairman of Hawick Common Riding Committee and Master of Ceremonies respectively, and the Cornet and his party who had carried out their duties with energy and enthusiasm which had endeared them to everyone in the community and had done the town proud.

She also thanked temporary waitresses who had helped at the Provost's breakfast, along with herself, namely Lorna Reid, Libby Smith, and Lesley Fraser.

The Provost concurred it had been a fantastic Common Riding, with an exceptional Cornet and Cornet's Lass along with the other principals who had indeed done the town proud. He quipped it was only 260 odd days to the next Common Riding.

Duncan Taylor asked if the blue and yellow bunting could be left up a bit longer as a mark of continuing respect to the situation in Ukraine. This could be a talking point for Welcome Hosts and visitors to the town. Braden George advised that the bunting was due to be taken down the Sunday after the Vertish Hill sports, however it was agreed this matter be addressed with the Common Riding Committee to determine the possibility of leaving this up until the end of the Summer.

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

4. **Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022** – The previously circulated Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting – Proposed by Wilson George and Seconded by Duncan Taylor.

5. **Matters arising –**

**Conflicts of dates for CC meetings** – The Chair confirmed that an email had been issued by the Secretary to the T&L Partnership CCs to determine when they held their meetings. Not all had yet responded however from those who had, she reported that their meetings did not overlap at any point with HCC meetings, which were held the second Monday of each month.

**New greenhouse for Walled Gardens** - The Chair asked Councillor McAteer on progress with the new greenhouse to be installed at the Walled Gardens. Councillor McAteer advised that a date was still awaited. He was under the impression that the works would be on a schedule of works for completion.

**Broken slabs at Museum** –Councillor Ramage confirmed she had chased this matter up, however a response to her enquiry was still awaited. She would hopefully be able to provide an update to the next HCC meeting.

**CCTV** – The Chair advised that a sub-group of HCC members was now in place and contact had been made with the Chair of Newcastleton CC for a visit to view their CCTV in operation. A date for this visit would be arranged now that the Common Riding was over. This would be a starting point for taking our CCTV plans forward.

**Welcome Hosts** – The Chair had noted that Welcome Hosts were now in place. Marjorie McCreadie confirmed that these were now at full strength, and that their work had started at 10am that morning. A small issue regarding visitor bus drop-off point had been ironed out, with the preference for the drop off point being at the Horse. Marjorie also confirmed that the new Visitor Office had opened at 10am that day, and thanked Stuart Beck for delivering 600 brochures for issue to visitors, John Hogg had agreed to provide some blue and yellow bunting, and Mary Beck had kindly offered also to make some tartan bunting too, to brighten the office. Businesses were encouraged to forward any brochures they had for display within the Visitor Office and there would also be a What's On board where events could be advertised.

**River Clean-up Group** – The Chair advised that disappointment had been expressed at the lack of people from Hawick participating in the recent Big River Clean-up. She considered this was due to Common Riding commitments, and that perhaps there would be more support from Hawick for the next clean-up to be held.

**Queen's Platinum Jubilee Event** -The Chair confirmed as per reporting in the Hawick Paper last week, that this had been a very successful street party, with many in attendance and feedback was that everyone had thoroughly enjoyed it.

**Christmas Event** – The Chair advised that the date for this was now arranged for Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December. All stallholders had been notified, and a sub-group meeting would be held soon to progress on new Christmas decorations and lights proposed.

**Williestruther final improvement works** – French Wight advised that an application to the T&L Partnership Fund had been submitted to cover the final improvement works required at this location. It was noted that the next meeting of the Partnership would be 21<sup>st</sup> June 2022.

**Painting of Bollards** – The Chair advised that copies of the 3 known ad-hoc surveys and results had been obtained from TD9 Radio, Hawick Chat and Hornshole Greenway.

Unfortunately, no correlation of results could be made, as questions raised within these surveys were different. This matter would be progressed by her and the Secretary to bring a

survey proposal forward for issue to the public, with a view to reaching a finalised result on having these bollards painted.

**Use of remaining Commemorative Coins from the Queens Jubilee Event** – John Campbell suggested these be provided to the first three in finals races at the Vertish Hill Sports. The Chair confirmed this was one of the ideas under consideration.

6. **Notice of Motion for Co-option to HCC** - The Chair advised that Kevin Marsh had requested to join HCC. The motion for co-option was proposed by the Chair and seconded by the Secretary. Members agreed to the co-option. The Chair then welcomed Kevin to HCC and invited him to join other members at the top table. A round of applause ensued.
7. **Police Scotland Report** – It was noted that there was no police attendance at the meeting once again. The Chair confirmed that an email had been issued to Chief Inspector/Area Commander Scottish Borders, Vincent Fisher and the local Community Sergeant, Ali Granger, and she read the response to those attending. The Chair advised that this response was in line with what Councillor McAteer had reported to the previous HCC meeting but was nevertheless disappointing. Councillor McAteer undertook to keep this to the fore at future meetings with the police.

Cameron Knox reported that there was regular police attendance at Newcastleton CC meetings, however Councillor McAteer considered that the Community Policeman there perhaps attended in his own time.

There were no reports submitted this month, thought possibly to do with Common Riding commitments.

8. **High School Senior Team Report** – No report presented as senior pupils had now left School. We could look forward to a new group presenting to HCC on High School matters from September. The pupils were looking forward to their first-ever High School Prom next week.
9. **Treasurer's Report** – The Treasurer reported an opening balance of £27,030.67. He reported little movement in the month. A further £183.50 in respect of the VAT element on Commemorative Coins for the Queens Jubilee Event had been received as well as 18 advance payments from stallholders for the Christmas Market, amounting to £450. Expenditure in total only amounted to £176.73 resulting in the larger closing balance of £27,487.44.

Members approved the Treasurer's Report.

#### 10. Public Forum & Town Issues

- (a) John Campbell raised the matter again of weeds around the town and with the additional visitors because of the Common Riding this had been noted and adversely commented on. He enquired as to the possibility of making use of the Criminal Justice Team to help sort out this ongoing problem. The Chair advised that due to their heavy schedule of work, it was unlikely that would happen any time soon. It was also noted that the matter of weeds had been raised with Councillors at the previous HCC meeting.

Councillor Marshall referred to the article in the Hawick Paper the previous week on this subject matter. He advised that the response from SBC was that they would do what they could with the resources they had available. Councillor Marshall went on to say that it appeared no lessons had been learned from previous Common Ridings and the increase in visitors to the town and it would be interesting to see how other towns

faired when their Common Ridings and festivals took place. He stated that Hawick certainly did not look at its best during our Common Riding.

SBC needed to review how Neighbourhood Services issues were tackled, and Councillors were doing everything they could to have these issues rectified.

Councillor McAteer stated that SBC had agreed to cut grass and maintain this every 20 days however it was obvious that this was not happening. The response Councillors were being given related to lack of resources and absenteeism, however it was not acceptable to have to continually ask questions about what was happening rather than being automatically updated.

The new administration at SBC had promised that they wanted to get back to basics, which meant things like cutting grass and looking after communities. It was early days, but he was keen to see that promise upheld.

Councillor Ramage advised that there appeared to be no consistency in works being carried out, with cleaning drains and guttering appearing to be stopped half-way in favour of other works.

Marjorie McCreadie had received reports of visitors complaining about the state of the Information Board at the Common Haugh, along with the weeds and dirt around this area.

Councillor Marshall asked that the Community Council also write to SBC to back-up reports being made by Councillors regarding the whole situation of weeds within the town, unkept cemeteries and so on.

French Wight suggested that the Council should return to their previous practice of spraying around the town before the weeds came. Councillor Marshall agreed and advised that SBC had changed their weed-spraying methods and chemicals used. He concurred with Councillor McAteer that hopefully the new Administration would bring change and suggested further to corresponding with SBC, consideration be given to inviting a Neighbourhood Officer to attend a future HCC meeting.

Wilson George raised an issue of queues at the Bus Stop at Iceland. Councillor Marshall stated he had witnessed this issue and would raise the matter with the Flood Protection Project Team.

Braden George raised the building works at Armstrongs and declared an interest as he was employed by one of the appointed sub-contractors. He asked when building works would commence. Councillor McAteer advised that the priority was to have the gable ends of the houses completed, then landscaping before the actual building works themselves would start. The Contract had just recently been awarded.

It was noted that the car park in Teviot Road was now completed, however some concerns were raised as to the remaining width of the road. Councillor McAteer stated that views were mixed on landscaping when consultation took place, however the majority view was to proceed with this. It was nevertheless important to have traffic flow, and this needed to be monitored.

Duncan Taylor advised he did not consider there would be an issue with traffic flow and that residents would more than likely want to have some soft landscaping and greenery to look out onto, rather than just concrete.

Duncan Taylor raised the matter of Road Closures which he posted on behalf of HCC on its website. There had been one posted recently regarding works on Weensland Road with a 2 month no parking restriction. This period was he considered, given the length of road affected, to be a long time to carry out these works and he queried how residents were communicated with, and who decided on how long contractors had to carry out works. It appeared to be the case that residents had not been communicated with in this instance and given the number of residents affected in this case, that would not have taken too long for SBC.

Councillor McAteer advised that HCC was a statutory consultee, and SBC's John Henderson notified HCC of any proposed road closures. It was also a requirement on SBC to publish any road closures in the Hawick Paper. Communication with residents should not have been a problem but he was aware of some cases where communication had failed.

French Wight raised Core Paths maintenance and the Chair confirmed that she was in touch with SBC regarding the form for requesting funding for this. Dan Wolfe was aware of this position.

Cameron Knox raised the matter of road resurfacing within the town and asked Councillors if they knew of any schedule including works for the Loan from the junction with Beaconsfield Terrace up to the Toll House. Councillor McAteer thought that SBC's Capital & Revenue report had been circulated previously showing which roads were earmarked for works this year. If not, he would recirculate this. SBC's stance was however that unless any disaster occurred on a particular road that would be the schedule adhered to for completion.

At the present time Councillors were not involved with any prioritisation into what roads were earmarked for works. They had raised this with SBC as an issue, as it was considered they could add value, based on public contact they had received highlighting where there were issues, rather than being presented with a completed plan and no knowledge of how this was compiled.

**The Queen's Garden Party** – The Chair reported that she and her husband Gordon, who headed up the Resilience Group of 100 volunteers, along with Team Leaders Anne Adams and Ellen Halliday had been recognised for their work with this Group during the pandemic. This work included shopping and telephone befriending amongst other tasks to those vulnerable within our community. They had been invited to attend the Queen's Garden Party on 29<sup>th</sup> June at the Palace of Holyrood, Edinburgh.

The Chair understood that Mary Beck had also been invited and stated it was nice that people in the community had been acknowledged for the voluntary work they had undertaken.

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

- (a) A7 Action Group – Marjorie McCreadie reported that progress with a full meeting would be made once Dumfries & Galloway Council had met on 22<sup>nd</sup> June to appoint their

representatives. It was noted that SBC had appointed Councillor Ramage to be their representative on this Group.

- (b) Christmas Event – as stated earlier under Matters arising.
- (c) Hawick Common Good – It was noted that at the last meeting, the only business was to appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair. Councillor Ramage was appointed as Chair and Councillor Cox as Vice-Chair. The next meeting would be held on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2022.
- (d) Hawick in Bloom – The Secretary reported that Hawick in Bloom had taken delivery that day of the summer plants and these would be planted shortly within the planters and at the War Memorial.
- (e) Wind Farms – French Wight reported that Teviot Wind Farm planning application had now been submitted but it was not known how long that would take to process. This was for a 40-year lifespan with 62 turbines. The height of the proposed turbines would be significant on the landscape. He advised that Philip Kerr would be organising a meeting hopefully sometime in July of the 8 CC to look at the cumulative effect of proposed wind farms in our area.

## **12. Updates from Community Partners**

- (a) Foundation Scotland – Nothing to update.
- (b) Williestruther – As addressed earlier in the meeting.
- (c) Scottish Borders Community Council Network – Wilson George advised there had been no notification of any further meeting from Heather Batsch, Secretary.

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

**14. Correspondence** – The Chair reported that two emails had been received through the HCC Gmail account and cascaded to HCC members. These related to a Consultation on Electric Vehicle Use and Charging Infrastructure and the other from a leading passenger charity Bus Users UK partnering with Scottish Borders Council, on what people need and want from their local transport network. It was important that HCC members had their say on these consultations. These had also been publicised on our Facebook page and website.

The Chair also reported that she along with the Chair of Burnfoot Community Council had been invited to a Teams Meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> June to meet the Project Team and to review the Hawick High School proposal. She would report back to the next meeting on this.

The Chair asked if anyone had any update on the fire at the High School and Duncan Taylor advised that this had been minor, and pupils would return tomorrow as planned. It was understood that an electrical fault with a solar panel had been the cause however the swift action of the fire service had resulted in minimal damage. Duncan wanted to make it known that there was no suggestion of any foul play, arson, vandalism, or anything like that.

## **15. A.O.C.B –**

- (a) Care Home at Stirches – Wilson George enquired if there was any proposed date for this yet and it was advised that Tweedbank would be first followed by Hawick.
- (b) Common Haugh Sluice – French Wight enquired, following the Showmen's Guild being in the Haugh, whether the sluice had operated well. Councillor Marshall stated he had witnessed it being well used, and there appeared to be no problems. Marjorie McCredie enquired as to whether the Common Good at their last meeting had considered how the door on the sluice would operate. She had asked SBC's Frank Scott to raise this matter at that meeting as she had heard that a key code would be put in place, and she considered this would be unworkable. Her preference would be that no door be put on.

Councillor Ramage confirmed that no decision had been taken on this yet as this needed further discussion to reach a suitable solution.

Jim Adams asked if the opening and closing of any door to the sluice could be carried out by the operator responsible for opening/closing the toilets daily. Councillor McAteer advised that the Common Good Trustees had agreed that use of the sluice would not be a free service and if it was now the view that this service should be free, then an application should be made again to the Common Good for consideration on that basis.

Marjorie also advised that she had received an email from the Campervanning Rally Community advising that they wished to return to Hawick soon, and to have a ceremony to mark the opening of the sluice at the Common Haugh. Whilst there was laughter, the point was raised by Marjorie that this event would be notified on all the different campervanning sites, and the fact that the sluice was now open would attract further visitors to the town.

Happy Birthday wishes were extended to Braden George.

Euan Welsh commended Councillor Smart, one of the new Councillors, on her attendance at both meetings since her election, and he wondered how she felt the meetings had gone. Councillor Smart responded stating she felt attending HCC meetings was part of her duties as a Councillor. She had enjoyed listening to people's comments and to hearing everyone's concerns, and what they (the Hawick Councillors) needed to do as a team to push SBC Officers into finding solutions. Overall, she was finding attending HCC meetings an enjoyable experience.

John Campbell advised of an incident where 6 bikers had been turned away from having refreshments at Beanscene, Live Borders at 2.20pm because they closed at 3pm. He considered this unacceptable.

Duncan Taylor considered that there was a wider issue, particularly in rural areas, where businesses required taking the decision, when due to lack of customers, to close early or stay open, and continue to use heat and light, or to close and perhaps disappoint only 1 or 2 customers. It was considered that premises operated by Live Borders were unlikely to be the only ones operating this way. It was thought when the cinema operated, the café remained open later.

Councillor Marshall advised that Live Borders received a Management Fee from the Council, and perhaps HCC should correspond with Ewan Jackson, CEO regarding this case being raised within this public forum and request a formal response.

Councillor McAteer added that the area around Beanscene played a historical role within the town and commended the improvement works to the former Southern Reporter Office by a new owner. This Office had been an eyesore for many years, and Live Borders should now also be pursued to upgrade their frontage which needed some attention re upgrade to painterwork.

John Campbell asked when Teviotdale Leisure Centre would be renamed after Hawick's World Champion Bowler, Julie Forrest. Councillor Marshall advised that the TLC Indoor Bowling Club were progressing this and lease arrangements. There had not been a meeting for a while, but initial thoughts were for this to happen in the latter part of this

year. Councillor Marshall would raise this with the Club at their next meeting and report back.

A member of the public asked as to what was happening regarding the proposed Caravan Park at Wilton Lodge Park which had dragged out for over 10 years. The last word heard was that this was going to be readvertised.

Councillor Marshall advised that this project nearly came to fruition 2 years ago, only for the company to withdraw at the last minute.

Councillor McAteer advised he had been dealing with SoSE and SBC to look at potential options for this. There were local partners within the town who had shown interest in helping progress this. The previous company had been requested to forward their detailed plans which would help with this process, and he assured that this matter remained on the Council's agenda.

The public member also asked about any proposals for music at the Bandstand this year. Duncan Taylor advised events would be held on Sundays, 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> August, approx. 1-3pm. Leaflets and posters would be forthcoming to advertise in due course.

- 16. Date of Next Meeting** – Due to several items requiring progress by sub-groups of HCC, it was agreed that the July meeting would be cancelled to allow this. The next meeting of HCC would accordingly be held on Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> August 2022 at 6.30pm in the Lesser Town Hall.