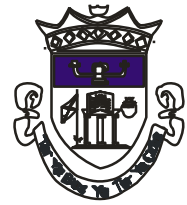

Hawick Community Council



MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

held on Monday 13th March 2023 within the Assembly Hall, Hawick High School

Present	Marion Short (Chair)	Cameron Knox (Vice-Chair)
	Jim Adams (Treasurer)	Margaret Hogg (Secretary)
	John Campbell	Braden George
	Wilson George	Kevin Marsh
	Duncan Taylor	Euan Welsh
	French Wight	

Attending:	Councillor Ramage	Councillor Richards
	Councillor Smart	Emily Gibson, HHS
	Jessica Scott, HHS	

There were 6 members of the public in attendance.

- 1. Chair's Opening Remarks** – The Chair welcomed everyone to the March meeting. She congratulated Hawick RFC on their winning the Tennent's Mens Rugby Premiership the previous Saturday. It had been a nail-biting finish and to have won in the last few minutes, with only 13 men, she said had led to an amazing atmosphere, with high drama and tension. She expressed a "Muckle weel din" to all associated with the Club in whatever shape or form, and gave specific mention to all the players, and coaches Matty Douglas, Graham Hogg and Lewis Bertram, as well as John Hogg, Director of Rugby, Ian Landels, President and Gary Muir, Manager, to name a few. They all had to be very proud of what had been achieved, and what they had done for the town resulting in an overwhelming feel-good factor. Bill McLaren, the voice of rugby she stated, would have been so proud.

Thanks were given to all those who had turned out at Mansfield on the Friday and Saturday to clear snow and remove covers to allow the game to proceed. Community spirit was once again to the fore, which the people of Hawick were very good at.

On the matter of turbines and road structures, she had queried with contractors where plants uprooted at the Morrisons roundabout would be going, to be advised these were dead and would be being dumped. SBC would therefore be approached for new ones, as these plants were in fact merely dormant for winter.

On the traffic disruption, she had requested that traffic lights on the two major junctions – A698 from Weensland Road and the A7 coming along Mart Street, be given more time to allow more traffic through, as opposed to the minor junctions at Bourtree Place and coming from Morrisons. This would help better traffic flow.

She had been advised that following on from works on the Morrisons roundabout that the Dovemount roundabout would be next. She had concerns regarding the level of improvement

works already done to that roundabout fairly recently by Bear Scotland and had written to them in regard to that. Assurances had been received that any works would see that roundabout being restored exactly to its former pre-works state, including electric wiring inserted for HCC's Christmas tree. She hoped that SBC would intervene to ensure that this would also be the case with regard to the Morrisons roundabout.

From the Hawick Paper, the Chair had noted that Wrights Hardware were relocating to the M & Co premises on the High Street later in the year, and whilst that left an empty property in the Sandbed, it nevertheless maximised the occupancy of shops on our High Street. She wished Wrights all the best in their larger premises.

Finally, she thanked Euan Welsh for the post on Facebook on behalf of HCC wishing Hawick RFC all the best for Saturday's game, for which she had received thanks from their President.

The Chair advised the meeting would be recorded by HCC and by Euan Welsh on behalf of the Hawick Paper for minuting 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 please make it known at the start of the discussion.
3. **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of HCC Members Keith Irving and John Wilkinson and Councillors Cox, McAteer and Marshall.
4. **Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of 13th February 2023** – The previously circulated Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting, subject to Item 11(c) meeting date and time for the next Hawick Common Good Meeting being changed to read 21st March 2023 at 5pm. The Minutes were Proposed for adoption by John Campbell and Seconded by Wilson George.
5. **Matters arising**
 - Town Hall Lift – Councillor Smart advised on raising this question at a recent SBC Meeting, she had received a response from Councillor Mountford stating there had been a delay in getting parts but that these were now in hand and works were planned to commence in April. She stated she would be monitoring that position. Councillor Ramage advised she understood there were also some structural works required as well to the lift.
 - CARS Legacy Project – The Vice-Chair reported he had received an update from Sarah Altrick, Project Officer, proposing a general gutter clean and a condition survey on properties along the High Street. This would be an annual event, with monies coming from the Scheme itself, and led by HCC. Initial thoughts were that the project would be implemented on a Sunday when the street was quieter and with less traffic. Works would be done with the use of a cherry-picker. The project would be tendered to local contractors and there would be contact with local owners (albeit previous contact had not elicited much response) for their interest. Questions to be answered included whether the full length of the High Street would be targeted or only the worst properties however, it was the view of the Project Officer that both sides, full length, would be targeted. It was proposed the project commence in Summer 2023, and subject to the real extent of the works involved, it would be hoped to complete that project within a 3–4-week timescale. This would be a real positive to have these works completed. HCC would lead on the project but at no cost to them, nor to businesses or owners along the High Street. All costs would be borne by CARS.

A public member who had a High Street business stated this was indeed positive but he queried why businesses required to pay 60% and households only 40% for property maintenance. Councillors would investigate why this was the case.

Derelict Buildings – Councillor Ramage confirmed that visits had been carried out in the past by SBC Officers, which included the N Peal Building highlighted at the February meeting. It had been discussed about boarding up of these derelict buildings, however, whilst that work had been carried out, it was a case that youngsters continually found their way back into these buildings. It was a constant issue.

It was queried what would happen if there were a serious incident, however, that had been taken into account at on-site discussions.

Wind Farms – Muirhall Energy – Teviot Wind Farm Community Benefits – The Vice-Chair confirmed that HCC's agreement had been provided in principle to set up a Company Limited by Guarantee to administer these benefits. Commitments from some of the other Community Councils involved were still awaited.

- 6. Police Scotland Reports – February 2023** – The Chair confirmed that reports had been circulated to HCC members. The numbers of missing persons were of concern to her, and the level of resources involved with these.

The Vice-Chair stated that only 22 parking tickets had been issued during February which was, he considered, an insignificant number. He had witnessed himself the previous Saturday inconsiderate parking on our High Street - 5 cars illegally parked at the Horse, 1 car closing off Walters Wynd, and 1 car parked across the pedestrian crossing at the Town Hall. These instances of illegal parking would only continue until something was done about it. He wished these to be reported back to the CAT team by Councillors. Councillor Ramage confirmed she would raise these concerns at Councillors' next meeting with Sergeant Granger.

The Vice-Chair then commented on the positive story of 3 firearms being taken out of circulation along with £18k of cash, and luxury goods in excess of £50k as proceeds from criminal activities. He conceded on that side of things, the police were working extremely hard despite being under resourced, but at times this was to the detriment of more minor, yet important, issues such as illegal parking etc.

- 7. Hawick High School Update** – Jessica Scott introduced herself as part of the Senior Pupils Team although she had not as yet attended a HCC meeting. Jessica advised of a Burns Supper having been held, the first since COVID, which had involved a huge amount of work, not only involving those within the school but also from within the community itself for entertainment. This had been a great success. She hoped that the Burns Supper would continue as an annual event going forward.

Emily Gibson reported that the previous week they had held their Annual Careers Fair at the school, with attendees including Police Scotland, NHS, Volunteering centres etc. This year, the school had also come second in the Borders, for Covid destinations, which had been a great achievement and showed that having Careers Fairs, as well as their Free Enterprise classes where they sold teas and coffees for monies for their charity, were so important. In addition, they had achieved the highest number in 5 years of pupils progressing onto University. A new Behaviour Policy had been prepared and was out to parent consultation, with a view to implementation after Easter.

Ms Porteous, Head Teacher had now retired and Mrs Lisa Scott was Acting Head until such time as a new Head was appointed.

Pupils had been engaged in Prelims before going off on Study Leave at the end of April for exams.

Duncan Taylor asked Jessica about a Young Chef's Competition she had been involved in. Jessica advised that she had won the Hawick High School competition and had achieved runner-up in the Borders-wide schools' competition. She had then gone on to compete in the Scottish Schools finals in Perth, and whilst she had not been placed, she had really enjoyed the experience and working in industrial-sized kitchens and had learned a lot from the opportunity.

The Chair thanked the pupils for their attendance and wished them well with their exams. HCC would she said welcome trialling any of Jessica's traybakes should she wish to bring along to any future meetings.

- 8. Treasurer's Report – February 2023** – The Treasurer reported an opening balance of £17,679.16. Ring-fenced monies had reduced to c.£4,745 (which at one time had been as high as £12-13k), and during the month an invoice had been paid amounting to £1,252 for improvement works at Williestruther Loch. In the month, £1,000 had also been transferred from HCC1 account to the Christmas Event Account, and c.£1,300 remained ringfenced from the Foundation Scotland account for purchase of more Christmas lights. The closing balance of all accounts had consequently reduced to £14,072.26.

The Treasurer's Report was approved by Members.

9. Public Forum & Town Issues:

- (a) Dates for Diaries – The Chair advised of two diary dates for noting – HCC's King's Coronation Event would be held on Sunday, 7th May in the Evergreen Hall from 2pm-4pm. It was hoped to have some local entertainment provided, as well as a light buffet and soft drinks. All 4 main local supermarkets had agreed to donations of tea, coffee, diluting juice etc which was much appreciated.

HCC would be applying to SBC for funding, which was limited to £500. Posters would be prepared for publicising the event and there would also be information on HCC's Facebook page and hopefully the Hawick Paper would agree to publicise as well nearer the time.

The second date to diarise was HCC's Town Clean-up Day which would be held on Sunday, 30th April with volunteers to meet at 10am within the Common Haugh where litter-pickers and black bags would be available, along with areas to be targeted. The clean-up would be for 2 hours, finishing at 12 noon.

Litter continued to be a real issue within the town and she referred to an area around Dovemount that she herself had targeted recently. Shrubbery in that area had only been cut back and litter tidied some two months previously, yet two full black bags had been picked up by her.

The Chair went on to advise that Suzanne Rennie, who had co-ordinated a clean-up around the Slitrig area, had advised that there had been 10 volunteers and 20+ bags of litter had been uplifted. However, more concerningly, it had turned out that more dog

poo bags had been filled and uplifted than actual rubbish. Her group had put up posters on lampposts in the area to remind dog owners to pick up after their dogs. Hopefully, this would have some affect.

That group planned to coincide their next tidy on the same date as that planned by HCC for their Town clean up.

It was noted that an article had been in the Hawick Paper the previous week on the topic of dog poo and it was considered that this matter was now way out of hand, and something needed to be done. The riverside path between Weensland was often particularly bad, however not so much at the present time, with it being closed due to Flood Protection works ongoing. It was a worry though as a result of the riverside closure, that the lovely new pathway in Duke Street would suffer and soon be spoiled. SBC needed to target this issue as a matter of urgency and not leave this to volunteers.

The Chair asked for Councillors' thoughts on how this could best be progressed. Councillor Ramage suggested that Environmental Health might be best to engage for advice and went on to advise that Burnfoot Community Council had been working really hard on resolving issues in their area. Small boxes had been placed on grassed areas in front of Burnfoot Community School, as a means for people to obtain poo bags from for use. It was too early to determine whether this would work or not. The boxes were being painted by the children, as a means for them to 'buy-in' to the initiative and encourage others. Laminated Posters had been put up throughout Burnfoot to encourage better behaviour of dog owners to clear up after their dogs. They were really trying their best to highlight the issue to everyone.

The Chair stated this had been raised previously regarding dog fouling within Wilton Lodge Park. The Chair would be emailing Councillors, whom she requested in turn to again raise this at SBC as a matter of great urgency. A previous project by HCC whereby bags were placed in metal tins, was also unsuccessful as these were set on fire. Councillor Ramage advised that empty plastic bottles full of poo bags had also been suggested, and these would be tied onto garden fences for easy access as well. People were forgetting the health hazards particularly to children coming into contact with dog's dirt, and potential for blindness. Another issue highlighted, was filled poo bags being thrown up into trees.

It appeared that the CAT team were not monitoring, nor SBC and that clean-ups were being left to volunteers on an ad-hoc basis which was not satisfactory nor a sustainable solution.

- (b) A Way Forward for Hawick Meeting - (Place-making Programme) – The Vice-Chair advised of a meeting held on 1st March, where 200 like-minded people had attended a meeting in the Town Hall, to discuss the future of Hawick going forward. It was one of the most positive meetings he had ever attended, to try to promote Hawick as best possible. There were 204+ groups in the town, represented in a prepared pyramid diagram. These groups were split into 12 categorised sub-groups with a view to setting up a Town Board/Town Team to represent each of these 12 sub-groups. HCC and BCC were at the table already with members of Future Hawick. The speaker Diarmaid Lawlor, Scottish Futures Trust, had asked those attending to approve the set-up of a Town Board/Team, which had been unanimously agreed by a show of hands. A further meeting would be held next month for interested parties – the Place Plan would be by Hawick folk, for Hawick folk and for the future of the town.

It was noted that a Councillor from Selkirk had been in attendance at that last meeting and had undertaken to replicate within their area.

Gordon Muir, one of the group of 4 people who had started on the planning process group, emphasised that it was for anyone in Hawick who wished to have a role to get involved. Councillor Ramage congratulated Gordon for his diagram previously referred to by the Vice-Chair. A fellow Councillor from Eyemouth she said had also commented to her on Hawick's progress with place-making and so there was good feedback on what was happening in Hawick and how its people were going about this.

- (c) Waste Management – Ian Campbell, a local businessman in the town advised he had recently received his contract for uplift of waste. It stated he was permitted 52 collections per annum of general waste (250 litre bin) at a cost of £277.89. He was entitled to the exact same number of collections for 6 orange bags of recycling, yet the cost for that was £477. He queried the much higher cost for recycling and highlighted that he would be better off not recycling and depositing everything into general waste. He considered he was being punished for disposing of his waste correctly. Councillors Smart and Ramage undertook to take the matter up with SBC.

Mr Campbell did state that costs had decreased this year, however, could not fathom the difference between costs for uplift of general and recycling waste. He went on to state that some businesses in the town were now using Biffa whilst his preference was to continue to use SBC, who employed local people, however, would welcome explanation on this discrepancy.

- (d) Wilton Lodge Museum – Broken Slabs & Signage at The Avenue – French Wight queried what was happening with these slabs. Councillor Ramage advised she would chase up on this once again with SBC. It had been stated by SBC previously that these would be replaced with similar slabs from an area in Galashiels where these had been lifted. French also advised that replacements were required at the Bandstand as well.

French then asked about signage previously requested at the Museum end to prevent cars driving down The Avenue to exit the park. Councillor Ramage advised she would chase up on this again too.

- (e) Trees at the Dunk – Kevin requested an update regarding two trees he had reported previously at the Dunk, one of which was now in the river. With the banking erosion, the other would soon follow. Councillor Ramage undertook to seek response from SBC.
- (f) Empty shops - The Vice-Chair reiterated it was good to see Wrights moving to larger premises on the High Street. He added to that news stating that a planning application had been received by HCC for a café at the former More Solicitors shop, which was good, and that Marsh & Riddell would also be opening new office premises in April in an empty shop in the Howegate. The Vice-Chair & Kevin Marsh declared an interest in the latter.
- (g) Bottle Bank at B&M premises – The Treasurer reported fly tipping at these bottle banks. He had witnessed the previous Saturday, a microwave and lots of broken glass, and lots of clothing lying around, probably as a result of the clothing bank container being full. It seemed to take ages before this ever got cleaned up. Councillor Smart advised that she had periodically reported on this issue. It appeared to be that the small car park area there belonged to B&M whilst the bottle/clothing bank were SBC's responsibility. Once the Flood Protection works were completed, it had been agreed that the bottle banks would be removed from that area which might help. Councillor Smart advised she had emphasised to SBC previously that this was an environmental health issue, but there were concerns as this area was surrounded by trees, it might attract further fly tipping, with

more space becoming available when the bottle banks were removed. Councillor Ramage advised that the same issue prevailed at the bottle banks across from the Community School in Burnfoot.

- (h) Locked Gate at Walled Gardens - French stated he had noted on Facebook someone alleging that the gate at the walled gardens had been locked. Duncan Taylor thought that the gate was locked whilst works were ongoing for the new greenhouse. The Chair stated someone else had said it may be that it was locked at certain times of the day. Councillor Ramage undertook to have this clarified.
- (i) Opening of Commercial Road – Ian Campbell asked if and when Commercial Road would be fully opened, as he had witnessed six timber lorries on the High Street that day. Duncan Taylor recalled from the last Flood Protection Update that the signage would not change to divert larger vehicles along Commercial Road until such time as works were fully completed there, albeit he thought that should have been about now. Satellite Navigations would also need to be changed.

The Chair then introduced Marion Hughes, the replacement for Yvonne Gilfillan at McLaughlin & Harvey. It had been noted Marion had written down this query for response.

The Treasurer also advised that a couple of the branders in Commercial Road were also loose and needed attention.

10. Reports from Sub-Committees

- (a) **A7 Action Group** – Marjorie McCreadie reported that Calling Papers had now been forwarded to the HCC's Gmail account. The Secretary advised that she had sent these to John Wilkinson. Jock Campbell queried whether he had been included in that email, and the Secretary undertook to check.
- (b) **CCTV** – Kevin Marsh confirmed a meeting had been held with Stuart Ward who had provided a checklist of items for the sub-group to consider at its next meeting on Wednesday, 15th March 2023.
- (c) **Hawick Common Good Fund** – The next Common Good Meeting would be online on 21st March at 5pm.
- (d) **Hawick in Bloom** – The Secretary reported all businesses and shops on the High Street had been lettered regarding hanging baskets and seeking their financial support for these to be reinstated. It had been a slow process in obtaining responses but to date she had received 29 in favour, 8 definite No's, and had 20 shops to revisit for a fourth and final time.

Costs were being sought for supply of hanging baskets, matting and chains for hanging these. It was still unclear as to whether stress-testing would be required by SBC of the brackets proposed to hold the filled hanging baskets, and what any costs for that might be. She reported having attended a Borders-wide meeting of Bloom Groups and had enquired of those other groups whether they had required to have stress testing carried out by SBC. It had been learned that other than Selkirk who had also had this raised with their Bloom Group, none of the other Bloom Groups had been subject to SBC stress testing.

Councillor Ramage queried how this had come about. The Chair advised in relation to the Christmas lights, stress testing came into force as a result of lights falling in Duns a few years back. As Councillor Ramage had been asked to query why SBC insisted on stress testing for lights across the High Street when this appeared not to be the case for

Langholm, she had also been asked to question the necessity for any stress-testing for hanging baskets if they were then reintroduced onto the High Street. The Chair queried whether Hawick was perhaps being discriminated against, as it appeared no other towns were being subjected to stress testing for their hanging baskets on an annual basis. Public Liability Insurance was however in place, but HCC had concerns in adding hanging baskets as another of its activities, would only serve to increase their already extortionate insurance premiums further.

Councillor Ramage considered it would be best to have a face-to-face meeting with SBC Officials, and the Chair wondered if that might be with Alex Young. Councillor Ramage would continue to pursue the outcome of SBC's discussions with Dumfries & Galloway Council and the differences between Langholm being permitted to have lights across their High Street.

John Campbell raised the issue of watering of hanging baskets, and the purchase of a bowser, however the Secretary advised that watering and feeding of hanging baskets would need to be done under contract. There were not sufficient volunteers able to carry out those tasks on a weekly basis. It was hoped that perhaps window cleaners who cleaned windows on the High Street and who had bowsers might respond positively to being contracted for this purpose.

- (e) **Wind Farms** – The Vice-Chair advised he had been in touch with EnergieKontor and the Pines Burns test run would be on 28th April and the delivery period for turbines would be from mid-May to August – which coincided unfortunately with Common Riding activities during May & June. There would be two deliveries per week, subject to police resources and police escort availability, so that would be subject to change. The preferred route, agreed by the Scottish Government, would be from Edinburgh down the A68 to St Boswells, where there would be an overnight stop, then across to Selkirk down the A7, through Hawick – Dovemount, Mart Street, Weensland, Bonchester road, Earlside, Copshaw road and on to Pines Burns.

Braden George asked what was going to happen with all the uprooting of fields, and insertion of new roads etc once these deliveries had been exhausted. Would all of these works be reinstated. Councillor Richards advised this type of intrusion on existing surfaces was prevalent all over the Borders, and he did not consider it likely there would be any reinstatement.

Ian Campbell advised that heightening of the road near Kirkton had left a resident's driveway much lower than the road itself and that resident had queried how she was going to be able to access and exit her driveway. She had been glibly advised they would require to rectify that situation, but it appeared works were being carried out in a very ad-hoc and erratic way.

The Vice-Chair then advised that, most importantly, discussions were ongoing regarding the Community Benefit Fund and he along with Southdean, Hobkirk and Newcastleton had requested a meeting to determine the monies which would be made available to areas such as Hawick, inconvenienced by that Wind Farm.

11. Updates from Community Partners

- (a) **Future Hawick (FH)** - Duncan Taylor advised that the remit of FH was to improve the quality of life for people in the town, and as part of that remit FH were launching a new initiative with the aim of helping small businesses and organisations to improve their

online presence. Successful applicants would need to be operating in the town and already have a limited online presence that could be improved by support from a Digital Development Officer paid for by Future Hawick. Application forms were on FH Facebook page and Online Hawick. Funds were limited, however would allow for c.10 businesses to be supported over the coming months. Should the initiative prove successful, further funding would be sought to increase the support available. Colin Hope, the person leading for FH on this initiative, had stated that new businesses had many hurdles to overcome and they were happy to be able to offer such support. As part of its remit, FH would continue to do its best to help businesses and community groups to develop, to try and improve the economic situation in Hawick.

Also associated with economic benefits for the town, and aimed at locals as well as visitors, FH's Discover Hawick Town App was now available to download on Google Play and Apple. They sought feedback from users on any issues found with the App. Many businesses were using the App and FH were looking to encourage more businesses to join. In the future, it may be able to offer businesses more prominence/higher profile on the App, for a small fee, to enable some of the costs of the App to be recouped. Duncan was happy to accept any issues found and to pass these on to the Administrator, Graeme Webb.

The Vice-Chair enquired if FH would be reintroducing shop front grants. Duncan advised whilst it had been under discussion, it was not thought that monies would be available for such grants at the present time. There were monies within their Digital Fund but he did not consider these could be transferred elsewhere. He went on to ask the Vice-Chair if he knew whether the CARS Project covered shop fronts and was advised that shop fronts within the conservation area which ran from just beyond the Horse to the other end of the town and ILF Imaging shop, and down by the river were included. It was considered therefore that grants could be sought by many of those shops/businesses through that avenue.

- (b) **Foundation Scotland (FS)** – The Chair advised she still awaited information on the award of Community Benefit for 2023 (Langhope Rig), and also awaited further documents to conclude on the Distribution Plan for 2022/23. FS had already stated that once all information was to hand, they did not anticipate any problem with HCC's projects being approved.
- (c) **SBCCN** – It was noted from Wilson George, Chair of SBCCN that the next meeting of the group would be held on Wednesday, 22nd March 2023 on zoom.

12. Planning Issues – There were no major planning issues to report.

13. Correspondence – The Chair advised on an ongoing saga for HCC regarding the excessive insurance premiums now being charged. It had been repeatedly reported to SBC that for them to take back two-thirds of their awarded grant for insurance (stated as £1,005) was not sustainable. SBC had at last removed the need for HCC to pay for cover of Resilience equipment at £75 reducing the premium for 2022/23 to £930. HCC continued to debate via SBC the costs of cover for their main Christmas event and were seeking clarification on event numbers permitted and whether the figure stated of 500 was at one time or over the whole period of the event, before finalising the renewal form for insurance cover for 2023/24.

The situation of exorbitant insurance costs not only affected HCC and would form part of discussions at the next SBCCN meeting covering all CCs in the Borders.

The Chair went on to advise that she had been made aware that insurance for the Hawick Men's Shed had risen to £1,399 from the previous year's amount of c.£384. That organisation had also corresponded with SBC but that was another indication that community groups and not only HCC, were suffering from these insurance premium increases.

The Chair requested Councillors to enquire if perhaps SBC were catching up with Community Councils and other community groups and increasing insurances to offset against other shortfalls. In all, increasing insurance premiums would mean less community activities, which should not be allowed to happen. Councillor Ramage undertook to raise this matter with SBC.

Duncan Taylor asked who was responsible for insurance for the Men's Shed and Wilson George advised that as their building was leased, that fell to SBC, and was based on the value of the building. Duncan then enquired if the Council received that money or if that was just passed onto the insurers. The response was that was unclear and whether there were any additional costs added for Edinburgh City Council's administration of SBC's insurances. Wilson advised he had been in communication with Rachael Hamilton MSP and a response from her was awaited.

The Chair agreed to provide a copy of the letter from the Men's Shed to Councillors to also take forward with SBC officers, in addition to HCC's concerns.

Kevin Marsh advised he was involved with Craikhope Outdoor Centre, where various outdoor activities were participated in, such as caving, climbing, walking, shooting. They had a £2.5m turnover at that Centre, and they recently renewed their insurance for just over £1k. That covered all their equipment (with a value of c.£180k) and all risks insurance. They could take over 100 children at any one time outside on high-risk activities, and yet HCC ran a Christmas Market and a few other events with significantly less risks and were being asked to pay an almost equivalent amount. That did not seem fair in his opinion.

The Chair stated that assistance with these insurance costs had been asked for, and in correspondence it had been noted that the Support Grants for CCs had not been increased for 14 years (2009). It would be good if Councillors could also help progress on a review of Support Grant levels.

John Campbell enquired why SBC did not have a blanket policy to cover all CCs within the Borders. Councillor Ramage advised this had been her thoughts too. The Secretary had also noted that there was no mention of insurance premiums being the responsibility of individual Community Councils within the Scheme for Community Councils, currently under review.

- 14. AOCB –** Regarding the King's Coronation funding, John Campbell enquired where it stated that commemorative coins could not be purchased. He was advised that had been specifically outlined in SBC's funding criteria. The Chair had enquired if it were possible to obtain more funding than £500 should other CC's not make use of their funds of up to £500, however SBC had responded to say that would not be possible. Criteria really meant that only street parties could be held, and the Chair considered it would have been better if SBC had stated that, rather than state what funding could not be used for, which really only meant a street party would meet their criteria. She had also raised why funding had not been pro-rata per head of population but again the response was that this was not to be the case.

A member of the public raised that SBC's funding allocation had been £50k initially between the 69 Borders CCs, but at £500 that amounted to only £34.5k. Councillor Smart stated it had been agreed in SBC/Councillors' discussions that the money would come from the Council's Covid Recovery Fund and restricted to that amount.

Duncan Taylor enquired if there would be any restriction to having HCC's event indoors, and the Chair advised she would check with SBC on that.

Bailleul Twinning – The Treasurer advised he had attended the recent Carnival (Mardi gras) in February in Bailleul, and he wished to advise that progress was being made for interested townsfolk to attend the 50th anniversary of Hawick's Twinning with Bailleul in October (Friday, 6th October to 13th October) in Bailleul. Costs gained may be prohibitive - for 30 people these were coming in at £30,000. If more people attended, costs may be able to be reduced. Funding was being sought to help with costs, and he was in correspondence with John Lamont and Rachael Hamilton regarding that. The Provost was keen that the trip proceed. Alternative travel costs were also being sought. Anyone interested in that October trip could let Jim know. He envisaged it would be a great trip. It was suggested that once further details were known e.g., regarding costs etc, a post could be made on HCC's Facebook page to encourage people to attend.

- 15. Date of next meeting** - The next HCC meeting would be held on Monday, 10th April 2023 at 6.30pm within the Lesser Town Hall, Hawick.