

+

Hawick Community Council



MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

held on Monday 8th May 2023 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
	Kevin Marsh	French Wight
	John Wilkinson	

Attending:	Councillor Cox	Councillor McAteer
	Councillor Marshall	Councillor Ramage
	Councillor Richards	

There were 5 members of the public in attendance, along with Graham Ford, Hawick Paper.

- 1. Chair's Opening Remarks** – The Chair progressed to HCC's May meeting. She congratulated Hawick RFC for not only winning their League but also on Saturday past for winning the Scottish Cup Final. That double achievement showed the Club going from strength to strength.

She reminded everyone in attendance that the meeting was being recorded by HCC and by Graham Ford 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 Euan Welsh and Duncan Taylor, and Councillor Smart.
- 4. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of 10th April 2023** – The previously circulated Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting, Proposed for adoption by John Campbell and Seconded by Keith Irving.
- 5. Matters arising –**
Public Liability Insurance Premium – As alluded to within the AGM, the Chair confirmed that there remained concern regarding high insurance premiums for HCC, and that Councillor McAteer had given assurance previously that this matter was being addressed at SBC Executive level, with a proposal for a more co-ordinated approach. She asked if there was any further update on that position.

Councillor McAteer confirmed that the Chief Executive had been made aware of concerns of Community Councils and, in particular, for Hawick Community Council. The CEO had undertaken to review all costs associated to Community Councils, including insurance premiums. There was no commitment to enhance support grants however at least there was commitment to review all costs and insurances. This had been ongoing since February and Councillor McAteer suggested it would be appropriate for HCC to write to the CEO for his update.

Councillor Ramage referred to an email forwarded to HCC from Clare Malster confirming SBC were carrying out a review of insurances.

The Secretary expressed her concerns that HCC's Renewal Form had been submitted, along with an email to Greg Campbell explaining changes made from the previous year and requesting acknowledgement of receipt. Optional cover for our events had not been included in this year's renewal following confirmation that this was only required where attendance exceeded 500 people **at any one time**. The email had also requested a copy of the Insurance Policy and Schedule, as well as the premium amount. HCC required to ring-fence that amount, which was charged at the end of each year, but could not do so without knowledge of what that amount was. In addition, application was being prepared to hold annual Bandstand Events, which required a copy of the Public Liability cover, which to date had not been made available, and in fact despite 3 emails requesting this to Greg Campbell, not even an acknowledgement had been received.

Councillor McAteer advised that SBC had Zurich Insurance cover and he could not fathom why Community Councils insurance could not be part of that cover instead of each one having to have their own individual cover. He reiterated that unfortunately there were some Councillors who were apathetic to this issue, as their Community Councils were happy to pay, however, that was most likely to be as a result of their being much less active in their communities, unlike HCC.

Councillor Marshall agreed that HCC in being a very active Community Council should not be penalised from holding activities, based on lack of finance. He wondered if the matter of insurance had been discussed at Network meetings (Scottish Borders Community Council Network – SBCCN). It was noted that on this being raised by the Secretary at a previous SBCCN meeting, that apart from one Community Council, no others had any knowledge about Community Council insurance.

The Chair advised she had written to Jenny Wilkinson and Jenni Craig with concerns at lack of response from Greg Campbell and awaited their response.

Philip Kerr, Southdean CC confirmed they had no issues with insurance, as any events that CC held were in Southdean Hall and insurance was covered by a completely different organisation responsible for that Hall and events held there.

Dog Poo – Following on from the last HCC meeting, the Chair confirmed that HCC had been in touch with Rose Hogg, Dog Education Officer at SBC asking if she would be able to attend tonight's meeting. Due to the public holiday however, she had declined. She had advised she would also not be available for the July meeting either.

HCC did not wish to lose momentum on this matter so would continue seeking a suitable date.

Equipment for use in Lesser Town Hall – The Chair advised that there was now a projector and screen which would be permanently located at the Town Hall and available for use by HCC

at monthly meetings. There had also been a microphone made available for use, albeit that was not as yet connected to Wi-Fi. A new PA system was also allegedly up and running but as yet not tested by HCC.

Councillor McAteer advised he did not recognise that the PA system was working well, as his experience of the Common Riding Smoker held the previous Wednesday night had not found that. He had written to Ewan Jackson the following morning expressing his dissatisfaction that the PA system within the Town Hall had been a disgrace, with feedback on sound and quality simply not acceptable. That situation had been tolerated for far too long, with a useless system in place at one of the biggest and best Town Halls in the Borders. He stated it was suffice to say that he was monitoring that situation closely.

The Vice-Chair advised he had also contacted Ewan Jackson, on behalf of the Mosstroopers Club who would be holding a common riding function soon and had been given an assurance that the PA system would be up and running and fit for purpose on that night.

It was noted that the Caretaker had mentioned new microphones having been purchased, but she had not as yet been advised how to link these to available Wi-fi and was not sure when these would be available for use.

Councillor McAteer advised that private events were able to set up good PA systems to work within the Town Hall for their functions and there was no reason why that could not be replicated by SBC staff.

Have Your Say Day – The Vice-Chair confirmed that event had been a great success with c.150 people attending over the 3 x 1.5-hour sessions. Some great ideas had been brought forward, e.g., Regeneration of the High Street, ideas for more use of Wilton Lodge Park - a Climbing Wall, oversized chess games, reinstatement of the putting green – the whole idea being that we should supply these for people in Hawick rather than their having to leave Hawick for such activities. Transport and reinstatement of the railway were other common ideas coming forward.

The next stage would be to bring all the ideas together. Other sessions would focus on obtaining views from millworkers in the local mills and targeting shoppers in the local supermarkets and along the High Street.

The public vote on favoured priorities to progress would take place at the end of June, and the Hawick Paper would advertise the procedure for that voting.

Overall, it had been a very worthwhile exercise.

Weedspraying around the town – An email had been circulated to HCC members from Councillor McAteer advising that this would commence on Monday, 22nd May within the Teviot & Liddesdale areas.

Planning Applications comments on Garages to Homes – The Chair confirmed that HCC had entered their comments to SBC on these planning applications and confirmed their support to Mayfield Residents request to have an extension date for their responses, to allow all questions raised by them to be answered by SBHA.

Tree cutting at Havelock Bank area - John Campbell asked if there was any update following the last meeting on tree cutting in that area. Councillor Marshall advised he would take that matter forward to determine. One tree had received attention but he was unsure any others had been so.

6. **Police Scotland Reports – April 2023** – There were no reports submitted for the meeting. These would be circulated to members on receipt.
7. **Treasurer’s Report** – The Treasurer reported an Opening Balance of £14,075.13 and Closing Balance of £9,155.17. During the month, HCC received a £500 Grant for the King’s Coronation Event, with expenditure of £269.22 on sundries for that event, £59.10 for hire of Hawick High School for our March meeting, and a very reasonable fee of £50 paid for examination of our Annual Accounts. Further expenditure of £6771.64 was in respect of Hawick in Bloom plants for the summer, including purchase of new hanging baskets. That cost would ultimately be offset on receipt of HCC’s Foundation Scotland Grant for 2023/24. Income of £1,100 had been received to date from shopkeepers and businesses, towards hanging baskets.

Members approved the Treasurer’s Report.

8. **Public Forum & Town Issues:**

- (a) Town Clean-up: The Chair confirmed this had gone ahead on Sunday, 30th April. She thanked the Hawick Paper for highlighting the issues found. Some other issues found had also been reported directly to Councillors Cox, McAteer and Richards to help with these being resolved.
- (b) King’s Coronation Event – It was noted that the Hawick Scout Pipe Band and the Dolly Mixtures had both expressed thanks to the Chair for their invite, stating they had thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon. The Chair expressed her reciprocal thanks to those two parties for their input on the day, and to HCC members who had helped too. Particular thanks went to Pat Wight and Anne Adams for their immeasurable help in the kitchen.
- (c) Frederick Douglass Plaque at Myreslawgreen – The Vice-Chair advised that the story of Frederick Douglass was now available to research on Google Earth. The second part of that project was now well in hand, with education packs for primary schools, as well as the High School and Borders College to get the anti-racism message out, hopefully available after the summer holiday and into the new school term.
- (d) Heras fencing on Drumlanrig Bridge – Braden George advised that the wall there had been repaired however the heras fencing remained in place. Councillor McAteer advised he had been given assurance that the pointing of the wall would be completed before the Common Riding and the heras fencing then removed.
- (e) Broken slabs at Museum – The Treasurer enquired when these would be replaced as there were now around 20 slabs needing attention. Councillor Ramage advised that she had reported these previously and would again chase up with Council officials.
- (f) Campervans Overnight Parking – Marjorie McCreadie advised that Perth & Kinross Council had now banned campervans from overnight stays within their main car park in Pitlochry. A campervanner had responded online decrying that step, however, that had resulted in another campervanner giving praise to Hawick and encouraging campervanners to visit. Marjorie considered that this would encourage more campervanners to visit Hawick in the future.

Marjorie went on to raise her concerns that the circus had set up in the campervan designated space within the Common Haugh. She accepted that campervans could however park elsewhere in the Haugh but questioned why it required to be located in that space and not elsewhere in the Haugh.

Councillor Marshall advised it was his understanding that the circus would be located within the main Haugh area. He had raised concerns at the time about Flood Protection Works ongoing within the Haugh and where the tent would be anchored. He had been

given assurance it would not be within the campervan designated area. He had that day written to SBC regarding this, and raising concerns on the impact of drilling into newly laid tarmac surfaces and how that would be reinstated. Reinstatement would be watched carefully.

Councillor McAteer confirmed that as Trustees of that area (as part of Common Good land) an explanation had already been requested from SBC. Whilst there was a designated area for campervans, they could still park anywhere within the Haugh, but nevertheless it required investigation as to why Councillors were advised one thing and another thing had happened and the circus has ended up in the campervan area. It was not appropriate for metal poles to be hammered into newly laid tarmac so SBC would need to ensure proper reinstatement.

He went on to say that as Common Good Trustees, they did permit parts of the Common Haugh to be used and rented for events, but it was nevertheless disappointing that, with only 2 days' notice of the circus arriving, the wrong part of the Haugh had been used.

Braden George queried why the circus could not have gone to Wilton Lodge Park instead, with less impact. Councillor McAteer advised that as Common Good Trustees they had specifically arranged for the campervan area to be doubled in size with the objective of attracting more tourists to the town. The circus locating in that area meant that a newly tarmacked area had been impacted whereas had it located in the middle of the Haugh, that had already been earmarked for a complete resurface following completion of Flood Protection works.

Councillor Marshall agreed that alternative locations going forward would be given consideration. Councillor Ramage agreed and raised her concerns at the very short notice given to Councillors. Councillor McAteer stated it would have been very easy given that short notice to have simply refused but they had to consider the young people in the town who would favour the circus. Saying no would not have been for everyone, but it was just unfortunate about where it was ultimately located.

- (g) Tree-cutting – A member of the public queried why there appeared to be a number of trees being cut down around the area, in the name of Green Energy. It was advised that was part of clearance of areas to allow turbine transportation relative to the Pines Burn Wind Farm.

9. Reports from Sub-Committees

- (a) A7 Action Group – John Wilkinson reported ongoing resurfacing works south of Hawick. He advised however that these were taking place during the night, with diversions in place.

The Secretary advised that a response to Ian Turnbull's proposed submission on behalf of the A7 Action Group regarding Teviot Wind Farm, had been submitted by HCC in support of his response. In addition, HCC had backed Langholm being inserted on signage at junction 44 on the M6 as the first Scottish town to be reached on that route into the Borders. That backing was subject to other signage detailing Hawick remaining unaffected.

- (b) CCTV – Kevin Marsh advised a meeting with Councillors had taken place with the CCTV Sub-group the previous Tuesday. Plans circulated showed camera locations, and purposes and types of cameras to be used. Good feedback from Councillors had been received and would be taken into account.

It had been agreed at that meeting, to display plans from 6pm-6.30pm prior to the start of the next monthly HCC meeting for the other Councillors unable to attend the meeting, along with members of the public, to view and provide any additional comments.

Thereafter, a final Proposal would be put together and the CCTV system tendered before the end of June, meaning HCC would have tender responses and ideas of costs by the end of July.

Councillor Marshall asked how the viewing of CCTV plans would be marketed, and it was agreed this would be via HCC's Facebook page along with hopefully being highlighted in the Hawick Paper.

The Vice-Chair considered it important to have the public views, and for them to indicate any spots they would wish to see cameras, albeit not every area would be able to be covered, but the public may come up with valid points which should be considered. The main areas were being covered, taking account of crime profiles.

- (c) Hawick Common Good Fund – The next meeting of Hawick Common Good would be held on Tuesday, 23rd May 2023 at 5pm on Teams.
- (d) Hawick in Bloom – The Secretary reported the hanging baskets had been purchased and delivered and plants for those were due week commencing 15th May; volunteers would meet to fill the baskets; a response from Deborah McLean, SBC Officer responsible for Heritage remained awaited. She would be meeting with a Planning Officer. Councillor McAteer agreed to chase this up.

The Planters would be filled with summer plants the week after the Common Riding.

The Secretary gave thanks to Dulux for their donation of paint worth c.£200, and special mention made to Ferguson & Aitken, per Lindsay Nichol, who provided the labour to paint all the planters blue & gold. It was agreed that the planters looked much better for their repainting to match the bollards, and their generosity was much appreciated by Hawick in Bloom.

- (e) Wind Farms – The Vice-Chair advised that a second trial run had occurred the previous week in relation to Pines Burn and had resulted in a loader coming off the road at Hawthornside. In relation to the question raised earlier in the meeting, trees had indeed been cut down to allow the turbine blades to navigate through the country roads.

It was planned next to use a new delivery truck which could lift items for assembly up to 60 degrees. That truck he stated was an amazing piece of machinery, however, use of that had only been once in Britain, with the second being planned for through Hawick, Southdean, and Hawthornside to Pines Burn. It could only be hoped things would go well. Apparently a risk assessment had been shared with SBC but there was no proposal to share that with members of the respective Community Councils affected.

The Vice-Chair continued to advise that no word had been heard from David Robertson, SBC's CEO on a meeting with A E Yates, Developer on any transport plan, which was disappointing. There was also no news on community benefits awards for those communities affected by the chaos as a result of that wind farm and that also needed to be progressed.

The possibility of night time transporting of parts had been advised, but that would be subject to Police availability, and there were no definite dates or times as yet available.

Councillor Marshall agreed that communications had been almost non-existent. He had been contacted himself by the Operations Manager at Morrisons, whose store had been badly affected by disruption to the Morrisons roundabout.

The Vice-Chair hoped that lessons learned from Pines Burn would mean a smoother operation put in place if the application for Teviot Wind Farm were approved in future.

It was queried who the beneficiary would be of the electricity generated at Pines Burn, and that was stated to be the National Grid. It was also queried what the percentage benefit would be for Hawick, and the Vice-Chair confirmed that information was as yet unknown. Langhope Rig, a previous wind farm, had realised community benefit of c.£10k per annum, payable over 25 years. It was agreed that cheaper electricity for the residents of the whole areas affected would however make more sense and discussions needed to be had to progress on this.

Councillor Ramage explained that the Planning Committee had refused the Pines Burn application, which then went on to be approved by the Scottish Government. The company had then sold the Wind Farm on to someone else, who took away the community benefits, and the whole process was now a mess. Councillor Cox considered that the initial community benefit was £87m prior to the sale but that was now unknown.

French Wight advised that during the trial run, the number of emails generated was phenomenal, and he urged that Community Councils impacted had to stick together to best benefit. He also considered that any company applying for a Wind Farm should be made to produce a Traffic Management Plan at the same time.

Keith Irving asked, given the number of trees cut down, as to whether or not any Feasibility Study had been carried out on bat life, ecological survey and nesting birds at this time of the year. It was considered that had not been the case.

Philip Kerr advised, following on from French Wight's consideration that everyone should be working together, that he had spoken at the Planning Committee previously on behalf of the six Community Councils affected. He referred to the variations to the height of 4 of the turbines and wondered whether there would be a slot available for him at the next Planning Committee consideration to respond on that on behalf of the Community Councils, particularly given what had gone on with the recent traffic chaos. He stated he would also have liked for all Community Councils to be represented at any Section 36 discussions.

Councillor Marshall suggested that Councillors in attendance and on the Planning Committee take those requests forward to Planning.

10. Updates from Community Partners

- (a) Future Hawick (FH) – Derrick Tait on behalf of Future Hawick reported FH had a new Chairman, Colin Hope, and various matters were now progressing well. Three new Trustees had joined FH and he believed another two were in the pipeline.

Welcome Hosts were now to required numbers, and the new season would commence on 29th May. The new brochures were printed and would also hopefully be distributed on that same date. FH was about to embark on a programme of Digital Development, Heat & Energy Innovation for smaller businesses in the town and had received a great response on that. 10 businesses had been selected and would each receive £500 in benefits. The Discover Hawick App was developing apace, and good reviews were being received. That App was available for free download and stickers with QR codes were in many High Street shop windows to help ease download. Anyone wishing to add their business or events, should contact Graeme Webb via the contact option on the App.

With regard to the St Leonard's Park Development, that project had now been passed on to a newly formed group, under Chairmanship of Ex-Cornet John Hogg.

The Secretary on behalf of Duncan Taylor added that Live Music Hawick were in the process of finalising the acts for the six Sundays from 23rd July to 27th August. There were so far, a confirmed mix of local performers – The Scout Pipe Band, Drumlanrig Country Dancing Group and Hawick Sings – as well as Martin Stephenson, Steve Morrison and Matt McGinn as headline acts, with Miwa Nagata-Apthorp and Isaac Sutherland as supporting acts.

It was also publicised that Live Music Hawick would be holding their Festival on 18th-20th August, in conjunction with Heart of Hawick and other venues. As well as headlining acts, Western End, Joshua Burnside and The Mainstreet Blues Band, they also had the return of the Teribuskers in the High Street and a Voice-style competition and workshops for vocals and instruments. More information on that could be found on their Facebook page.

- (b) Foundation Scotland – The Chair advised that Langhope Rig funding of £10,880.02 for 2023/24 would be released shortly, and as advised earlier that funding would be used for the Bandstand Events and Hawick in Bloom.

The Treasurer raised concerns that bank statements presently appeared to be well behind in being received, and his previously being advised by the Royal Bank of Scotland that online banking was not possible for HCC. Philip Kerr advised that he may wish to check on that again, as Southdean CC had an online account, albeit not with the Royal Bank, which proved much easier to keep tabs on, rather than awaiting receipt of late statements.

- 11. Planning Issues** – The Treasurer raised concerns at the proposed one-way system planned for Bridge Street and wondered if that was associated with Flood Protection Works.

Councillor McAteer confirmed that had been part of the plans from day one, however, it needed to go through a consultation stage and a lot more detail was required. The Treasurer raised his concerns that all traffic coming from the library end would require going right along to the Horse, and added to that would be any traffic emanating from Croft Road. Councillor McAteer agreed and wondered if the one-way system might better be accommodated going in the other direction. Parking of cars either side of Bridge Street was also problematic.

Councillor Marshall suggested that a representative from Flood Protection be invited to a future HCC meeting to discuss that particular proposal. Kevin Marsh advised that HCC had provided comments on two occasions to that proposal to SBC, which had resulted in the latest change, however considered that the problems were only being removed from the Waverley Office/Library end to the Horse. They had also proposed to have Round Close/Teviot Road one way however that was a dead end, and so they had required to change that.

12. Correspondence – The Chair advised she had circulated to HCC members an email from Cath Elliot-Walker, on behalf of Hawick Common Riding Committee, seeking volunteers to help out for a couple of hours taking entry monies at the Moor Gates over the Common Riding weekend. If anyone wished to help, they were asked to contact Cath Elliot-Walker directly.

13. AOCB – None

14. Date of next meeting - The next HCC meeting would be held on Monday, 12th June 2023 within the Lesser Town Hall, Hawick. From 6.00pm-6.30pm, CCTV plans would be displayed for viewing and comments. The June meeting would then follow at 6.30pm and the guest speaker would be Roslyn Mundell, Borders Buddies.