

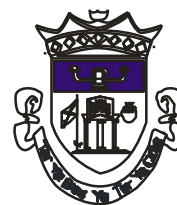
---

---

# Hawick Community Council

---

---



## MINUTES OF MEETING OF HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023 within the Lesser Town Hall, Hawick

Present	Marion Short (Chair) Jim Adams (Treasurer) Wilson George Duncan Taylor John Wilkinson	Cameron Knox (Vice-Chair) John Campbell Kevin Marsh French Wight
Attending:	Councillor Marshall Councillor Richards	Councillor Ramage

There were 4 members of the public in attendance, along with Graham Ford, Hawick Paper.

- 1. Chair's Opening Remarks** – The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and she thanked Conor Price for attending a special meeting held by HCC on 26<sup>th</sup> June to provide an update on progress with the Flood Protection works within the town. It had been a very interesting meeting, and Conor had taken away issues raised for the Contractors (which he had been unable to respond to). It had been disappointing that no-one from McLaughlin & Harvey Contractors had attended the meeting, and it may be that another meeting would be required later in the year, with a specific invite to them to attend.

She reminded everyone in attendance that the meeting was being recorded by HCC and 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 Braden George, Margaret Hogg and Euan Welsh and Councillors Cox, McAteer and Smart.
- 4. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023** – The previously circulated Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. Proposed for adoption by Jim Adams and Seconded by John Wilkinson.
- 5. Matters arising –**  
Public Liability Insurance Premiums – The Treasurer had previously advised that HCC was in receipt of notification of the Premiums for 2022/23 and 2023/24 however he reported that no actual invoices had as yet been received to allow payment.

Police Scotland Reports for May 2023 – The Chair confirmed that following notification of structure changes and in particular cuts in local policing numbers at the same time as

recruitment for many new civilian permanent posts being advertised at high cost, a query had been raised with Police Scotland. A response to that query was awaited.

Conditions on our High Street – following on from discussions as to the untidy conditions of our High Street despite HCC's efforts concentrated there for our Town Clean-up in April, members had agreed that a letter be issued to all shopkeepers and businesses on the High Street, Bourtree Place, North Bridge Street, Sandbed and Howegate requesting they take responsibility to clean and tidy their own frontages. It was appreciated that the likes of the Town Hall and empty shops would also need attention, and the Chair enquired whether SBC could support the initiative by their clearing these areas and also clearing the verges of debris resulting. Councillors Marshall and Ramage undertook to enquire on such support. Even if only some shopkeepers and businesses made efforts, that would serve to improve things. Letters would be distributed by HCC members and it was hoped that the shopkeepers and businesses would accept the letter in the spirit it was intended.

Councillor Marshall said it was right to try with that initiative and hopefully that would be met with favour. It was agreed that some shopkeepers and businesses already maintained their areas and hopefully the nationals would do likewise. Councillor Ramage concurred that it was indeed a good initiative and likewise hoped for a good response. She also advised of a cleaning machine potentially available which was currently in storage and perhaps fellow Councillors may know further on that. Also under discussion was the Unpaid Work initiative and she wondered if Criminal Justice could also be involved in that type of work.

The Chair advised the condition of the High Street was the focus of complaint from many people. The letters would be sent out and we could only await the responses. Councillor Ramage suggested Councillors could write to Recycling & Cleansing, copying in HCC, advising them of this positive step and looking for their support. The Chair agreed to forward a copy of the letter being issued to shopkeepers and businesses, on to Councillors for their information.

Jock Campbell stated that the area around the Horse Monument was full of cigarette ends, and that a Hoover would be best to tidy that area. Councillor Marshall advised that there was a Hoover purchased under the Small Schemes fund a few years ago, and he understood this to be located in the town's yard. He had asked why that appeared not to be being used and been told that was down to health and safety. He was however happy to explore that further. Overhanging vegetation/trees on Weensland Road – The Chair reported that she had written to SBC regarding this issue, as well as an overhanging tree on the main road overlooking the Weensland allotments and another at Tustain Motors. Whilst the latter works had been carried out, she had been required to write again regarding the ones on Weensland Road. People passing were having to take evasive action to get around these. SBC had stated they would require to contact the owners.

Councillor Marshall advised that the ward councillors for that area should be asked to take this forward and to arrange at least for an inspection, albeit owners did have responsibility. There should however be action taken in terms of health and safety of passers-by.

Williestruther Loch – The Chair advised she had walked around the loch to view the remaining works but had found that vegetation again had encroached onto some of the paths. She had contacted Steven Drummond and believed that issue had now been resolved with a new contractor and the paths had been trimmed.

French Wight expressed his disappointment that, despite great efforts to provide the full walkway, there now was an issue with dog poo now prevalent.

Trip to Bailleul – Jim Adams advised that, to date, the numbers were low for participation and he was being pressed for numbers from the Bailleul side to be provided by the end of the month. Lille would play one of the hosts at the forthcoming Rugby World Cup and they anticipated some spectators would want to stay in Bailleul, so needed numbers for the trip to secure accommodation. It was agreed to re-advertise the trip on HCC's Facebook page and other channels to encourage participation. The cost was £400 pp and at the present time there were 20 names. This number would realistically need to increase into the 30s to be viable.

There were no other matters arising.

6. **Police Scotland Reports – June 2023** – The Chair requested any questions on the reports. Councillor Marshall advised of a meeting he would be attending with the Community Action Team the following day and if anyone required any queries to be raised, they could contact him. The Chair requested Councillor Marshall to follow-up on the recruitment query raised with Police Scotland at a time of cuts to local policing.
7. **Treasurer's Report** – The Treasurer reported an Opening Balance of £19,716.22, and an increased Closing Balance of £21,920.22. HCC's Annual Support Grant of £1,780 had been received, along with contributions and donations totalling £424 to Hawick in Bloom for Hanging Baskets. He anticipated a reduction to the ring-fenced monies next month for Bandstand Events and suchlike.

Members approved the Treasurer's Report.

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

- (a) Bandstand Events – It was noted these would happen every Sunday starting 23<sup>rd</sup> July and throughout August. Volunteers were sought to help at those 6 events for set-up from 12 noon for a 2pm start. It was noted that a number of HCC members who would normally help would not be available for set-up nor provision of First aid on Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> August and so additional volunteers and first-aid cover would certainly be necessary on that date.

Duncan Taylor thanked the Hawick Paper – they had published some advertorials and were providing support with marketing costs and had been good enough to print photographs of the event last year. Having that local press really helped to promote the forthcoming events.

Marjorie McCreadie requested some posters to publicise in the Tourist Office window.

- (b) Slitrig Crescent Gardening Group - The Chair referred to an article in the previous week's Hawick Paper regarding Slitrig Crescent gardening group, and she herself had visited the area and had witnessed the great work of that group. She had contacted Suzanne Rennie, co-ordinator to compliment the group on their great work and had been advised that further plants had now been donated for their use. That area was now looking so much better and additional plans were in hand to improve further.
- (c) First Aid Training for HCC members – The Chair advised that donations had been received as well as funding from SBC towards the cost of First Aid training and she had now arranged for training of 3 HCC members and 3 Burnfoot CC members. Possible dates for the training were awaited from the Trainer.
- (d) Missed refuse collections – French Wight considered that there seemed to be an increase in the number of missed collections by SBC. Councillor Ramage stated the reasons she had been given by SBC were that these were as a result of an increased number of lorries breaking down, as well as more staff absences. Councillor Marshall stated he had been

advised by the Council that around 33 streets had their waste collections interrupted or cancelled. He accepted that people were rightly complaining to him about the poor service when they had paid their Council Tax. He had written to the CEO of SBC and he shared his reply which gave an apology that his ward had been affected by the missed bin collections and the CEO had hoped the briefing provided to Councillors last week had been helpful to address the waste collection concerns. Waste collection provided an excellent service across the Borders. Councillor Marshall considered however that Waste Collection services were under severe pressure at the present time. Six new vehicles had been on order for over a year, and the CEO considered that these would increase the reliability of the fleet and reduce the time when vehicles were off-road for repair. The other pressure related to staff members and SBC was currently doing a recruitment drive for employees.

Councillor Marshall considered that these explanations were all well and good, but would take some time to fix, and meantime he and the other Councillors would continue to receive complaints. Conditions in some of his wards were not acceptable, with residents reporting witnessing vermin never seen in their neighbourhoods before, and food waste collections were very intermittent. He had requested a meeting with the CEO, and that had been agreed for all Councillors, after the Summer recess to set out the challenges and actions taken by Officers to improve the situation, much of which regrettably was not of their making and beyond their control. Whilst that could be accepted, Councillor Marshall considered nevertheless that service needed to get back on track, as a vital service.

- (e) Bridge to Wilton Park Café – French Wight reported huge chunks of paint coming off the railings which needed to be sorted. Councillor Ramage undertook to progress that issue.
- (f) Fly tipping at Mansfield Garden – Kevin Marsh had reported that issue to Councillor Marshall who advised he had visited the area with SBC officers the previous week. Along with an area at Teviotdale Leisure Centre that whole area had been added to the list for attention. The fly tipping he had understood should have by now been lifted.
- (g) Wilton Lodge Playpark – Cameron Knox referred to 3 pieces of equipment at that park being broken. Councillors Marshall and Ramage confirmed repairs were in hand. Cameron went on to congratulate the café proprietor for the opening of the putting green again. Jim Adams expressed his dismay however at dog owners allowing their dogs on the area, despite signage.
- (h) Core Paths Maintenance – Cameron Knox advised that these had now all received their first cut and the pathway grant would now be applied for to cover costs. The second cut of the paths was scheduled for September.
- (i) Common Haugh Rubbish – Jim Adams stated that overflowing bins at the Haugh appeared not to have seen much improvement and agreed with earlier discussions that collection services needed to be improved soon, as this would distract campervanners and tourists to the town.

## **9. Reports from Sub-Committees**

- (a) A7 Action Group – John Wilkinson advised of a meeting held in Selkirk on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, with a good attendance of members. Tommy Deans, Bear Scotland responsible for maintenance of the A7 and Richard Perry from Transport Scotland both gave good reports.

Mr Deans reported on future roadworks to be carried out on 31<sup>st</sup> August and 1<sup>st</sup> September at the Lilliesleaf junction, north of Ashkirk. On the matter of the Dunk, he advised that residents above the Dunk had been written to and asked to control the water leaking down the banking onto the A7 from their property. Marjorie McCreadie advised that it was in fact sewage leaking from septic tanks, and once repairs had been effected by the residents, Bear Scotland would then see to the walls.

Richard Perry, Safety & Strategy Officer, reported on how road traffic accident data was compiled and gave info in particular on accidents on a section of the A7 within the Scottish Borders, which had been very interesting. He had provided a leaflet if anyone was interested in viewing that.

Jock Campbell considered that the Group would benefit from more funding and the Chair advised she would be happy to circulate HCC members for views on this. Marjorie McCreadie confirmed that donations had been provided in the past. It was asked whether it could be agreed there and then to make a donation, however the Chair considered the financial position, once all ring-fenced monies had been deducted, would need clarified first before any such donation could be considered.

- (b) CCTV – Kevin Marsh confirmed the Tender package was ready but the question remained as to whether HCC could issue a tender when effectively it was going into an elections period and abeyance. Members agreed to delay until the new membership was in place.
- (c) Hawick Common Good Fund – The next meeting would be held on Wednesday, 16th August at 10am.
- (d) Hawick in Bloom – The Secretary had issued her report to the Chair which advised that all planters had now been filled with new summer plants and the War Memorial had also now been planted. The Chair commented that Hanging baskets on the High Street were looking vibrant and thanked Hawick in Bloom for their efforts.

Unfortunately the report went on to advise that all 3 planters had been damaged on the Station Bridge with cordylines and heucheras removed. These had been left on the roadway and been trampled by cars, with some thrown over the Station Bridge onto the stones below. All plants needed to be replaced. The planter at Crosby's Chemist also had all of its plants uprooted but these had been left lying and were able to be replanted. All six planters outside the Town Hall also had their cordylines (centre pieces) uprooted too, but again these were left lying and were able to be replanted.

The Police had been advised and had agreed to check CCTV at the Library and elsewhere, and the Police would also target social media channels for any information.

It was agreed for volunteers doing that work, that damage was soul destroying. Councillors agreed that the works carried out along the High Street and brightening the town had to be commended and the quicker a better and more effective CCTV system was put in place, the better.

Councillor Ramage recalled at the Have Your Say Day, there were people there who had expressed willingness to donate plants. The Chair considered that contingencies were made for replacement plants.

- (e) Wind Farms - French Wight raised his concerns at continuing delays in transport arrangements. Cameron Knox advised that some transportation would happen during the night, however the blades section would happen approximately 2.30pm in the afternoon from Selkirk down the A7 to Hawick, along Mart Street down Weensland Road and up towards Bonchester. This would cause major upheaval to those travelling on those roads at that time. Arrangements were subject to availability of Police, and so unfortunately were subject to date changes at the last minute.

The other wind farms on the go, were one at Newcastleton, and Teviot Wind Farm near Teviothead, with connection date of around 2033 subject to planning consents.

- (f) Christmas Event – The Chair advised she had contacted all the stallholders with a very good response. The date had been fixed for Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> December. Deposits had been requested, and invoices would be issued later for the remaining dues.

Cameron Knox advised of 3 entertainers already confirmed for the day – Scout Pipe Band, Got-to-Dance and Sam Deans. He had still to obtain acceptances from the Opera, Saxhorn Band, the Dolly Mixtures, Rolling Hills, and a couple of new entertainers had also been invited.

## 10. Updates from Community Partners

- (a) Foundation Scotland – Nothing new to report.
- (b) Scottish Borders Community Councils Network (SBCCN) - The Chair had received correspondence from Clare Malster outlining the new Community Engagement Officers and Demographic Services Officers for each of the partnership areas. Sarah Culverwell, who had attended a previous HCC Meeting, had been appointed as the Engagement Officer for Teviot & Liddesdale and also for Berwickshire.

The Chair went on to ask who had been appointed the new SBCCN Chair but that was not known. Wilson George reported some members could not access the last meeting which had been held via zoom. There had been no Agenda for the meeting which had followed a question-and-answer format with Claire Cochrane and Clare Malster from SBC.

- (c) Future Hawick (FH) – Duncan Taylor reported that FH's AGM would be coming up, as well as an EGM and also a Strategy Day. They had been working closely with the Town Team to see how both groups could fit together.

He reported on a negative note, vandalism to Supporting Ukraine banner on the hill at the Morrisons roundabout, which had replaced the worn banner previously and had been redesigned. Most people considered the banner to be appropriate as it was about Hawick supporting Ukraine, however it had only lasted 2 days before being deliberately cut off and removed from the frame. They had left wording that Hawick did not support Ukraine, which he considered was not appropriate given there were Ukrainians living within the town, with one family able to view the banner from their home, which did not reflect well and would most probably be upsetting. It was unfortunate that a minority chose to vandalise the banner rather than put their views across in a letter to the Hawick News.

Councillor Ramage enquired when the banner had been vandalised and that was thought to be during night time, otherwise it was considered someone would have viewed this and posted on social media.

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

## 12. Correspondence –

Garages to Homes – Mayfield - The Chair advised that a letter had been received from SBC advising the planning application for change of use of garage blocks to homes in Bothwell Court had now been considered by the planning committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> July and following consideration of all observations received, and all representations including that from HCC, it

had been agreed that the application be refused. The Chair was sure the residents in that area would be delighted with that outcome.

Compliment from Campervanner - An email had been received via HCC's Gmail account from someone who wished to pass on their thanks to whoever was responsible for allowing motor homes to be parked overnight in the car park in Hawick. They had stayed overnight on returning to England following a visit to Scotland and were more than impressed with the facilities. They stated Hawick was a nice town and the park was lovely and they wished us every success in promoting the town. The Chair had responded to the writer and had thanked her for her kind comments and hoped through word of mouth, she would cascade her thoughts on to others to in turn attract further tourism.

Councillor Marshall advised this compliment was most welcome and asked Councillor Ramage to ensure this was relayed to Common Good members as well.

Debris from Flood Protection works entering river bed – The Chair confirmed that the Secretary had written to SBC's John Curry, as board representative for the Flood Protection works regarding this issue and a response had been received. Regarding river cleanliness being impacted by flood protection works, HCC were thanked for raising this issue and as an Employer of the Scheme, SBC fully supported the criticality of good housekeeping and ensuring work practices mitigated construction borne waste and equipment from entering the river course. McLaughlan & Harvey had removed a significant volume of debris (c.30 bags) from the river from the Lawson Bridge to Denholm since May, as well as non-flood protection scheme borne litter accounting for c.25% of the debris collected, e.g. tv's, scooters and other household rubbish. It was estimated one further day's work to remove the remaining construction debris, mostly around the Weensland area, would be required.

French stated he was happy enough with the response, agreeing it was a lot better, and he appreciated not all of the rubbish accessing the river was from construction works. There were still some construction debris but the situation had much improved.

Councillor Ramage advised that the issue had been raised by Councillors at a recent meeting with McLaughlin & Harvey and Conor Price and concurred matters had improved. It was indeed sad however to see the levels of household items also dumped in the river.

Councillor Marshall wished to state before moving on from the topic of flood protection, at that same meeting, it had been agreed that trees planted in front of the Burnfoot Community panels and blocking full view of these would be removed. This would be monitored.

The Chair continued on the vexed issue of fly tipping in general, stating she had once again witnessed fly tipping at Lovers Lane when out walking. There was no need for this, when clearly a vehicle would be required in order to dump some of those items, and surely it was as easy to access the recycling centre to dump these items free of charge there.

### **13. AOCB –**

Trees at Havelock Bank - John Campbell raised again the trees at Havelock Bank. Councillor Marshall referred to the email he had received and which had been reported at a previous HCC meeting, that SBC officers had inspected all trees and had completed all the works intended to those trees. He was happy however to revert back to SBC.

John Campbell advised it was his understanding that residents complaining of overhanging trees into their properties had been advised by SBC that they could arrange a contractor to cut back overhanging branches, however, the residents would require to pay contractor charges. Councillor Marshall encouraged that residents should write to him or directly to the Council with any continuing issues with those trees.

Former Glenmac Derelict Building, Cross Wynd – John Wilkinson advised he had been contacted by a neighbour whilst he was on holiday, advising that the building was once again on fire. Fortunately that fire had been minor and managed, but it was of real concern that children, some as young as 8 years, were still targeting that building. That was of real concern and something had to be done and soon.

Councillor Marshall stated that reinforced the need for the Local Authority to be doing much more in relation to all the derelict buildings and factories throughout the town. He constantly received complaints on the same issue at Riversdale Mills and N Peals. This was the time of year when kids targeted these empty buildings, during school holidays, and he would be happy that these concerns be forwarded in writing to the 3 ward Councillors for the area concerned. John Wilkinson advised he had since contacted Councillor McAteer regarding this, but he was concerned that on contacting the Police that night, no-one had attended. He was under the impression that on attendance of the Fire Brigade, the Police should also have been in attendance. He also understood that same night, kids had also been seen on the roof of the Town Hall.

Councillor Marshall stated he would ask the Police as to the possibility of having extra patrols around the derelict buildings and would share any email response to that request.

- 14. Date of next meeting** – The Chair advised that tonight would be the last meeting of HCC in its current form. Paperwork was awaited from SBC to commence the re-election process from 31<sup>st</sup> July. There would be posters and advertising by SBC, who would also issue the link to their website for nomination forms etc. The next meeting would hopefully be in September however that would be subject to the number of nominations received and whether a ballot was necessary. Any ballot would mean an October Meeting. The current HCC would continue to work up until 31<sup>st</sup> July but would be in abeyance after that date until elections had been concluded.

Councillor Marshall offered any help, as Returning Officer, albeit stated matters appeared to be well in hand.