**Yetholm and District Community Council Meeting**

**Minutes of the Meeting held online by Zoom Call.**

**Tuesday 30th March 2021 at 7.00 pm**

**Present:** Susan Stewart (SS) (in the chair), Shane Black (SB), Graeme Wallace (GW), Angela Walker (AW), Stuart Kelly (SK), Denise Allan (DA), John Stobart (JS) (Secretary), Cllr E Robson (ER).

**Apologies:** Cllr S Mountford (SM)

**Members of the Public**: 2

**Other attendees**: Craig Blackie SBC (CB)

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|  | **Minute** | **Action** |
|  | **Apologies for Absence:** as above.  It was noted that the Community Police Officer would not be attending as the Police Force have said they do not have access to Zoom.  The Police Report is referred to below.  |  |
|  | It was noted that Mr Craig Blackie from SBC would be joining the meeting at approximately 19:30 hrs to discuss the matter of the headstones in Yetholm cemetery.  |  |
|  | **Minutes of the Previous Meetings** |  |
|  | The Chair drew the attention of the meeting to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23rd February 2021 and asked for any comments or corrections.  There were none except as noted in the matters arising set out below and, subject thereto, the minutes were approved by the meeting and signed by the Chair. |  |
|  | **Matters Arising/Outstanding** |  |
|  | With regard to minute 3.3 the Chair reported that she had had an email on the subject about the planned works but it was noted that the potholes had been temporarily filled.   |  |
|  | ER reported, while the subject of roads was being discussed, that the loose manhole cover at Venchen Farm road ends had been secured.  |  |
|  | With regard to minute 3.4 the Chair noted that it would be September at least before any formal elections to YCC could be held.  An AGM would be held in April but elections postponed until authorised by SBC.  | SS/ JS  |
|  | With regard to minute 3.6 ER said that SEPA had not responded about the activities on the site at Proctor’s Smiddy or on other matters which were not related to YCC.  ER had spoken to the Fire Brigade about the bonfire but the contents of the bonfire were a matter for SEPA.  The Fire Brigade only become involved if it were to be set alight. The matter is ongoing.  | ER  |
|  | With regard to minute 3.7 on the Halterburn Road it was reported that a “reactive ticket” had been issued on 9th February but, due to commitments, work will not be carried out this financial year.  It will be programmed in with other matters to be completed before next winter subject to assessment of responsibilities vis-à-vis the landowner.  It was noted that the wall was a retaining wall and was crumbling in a number of places.  |  |
|  | With regard to minute 7.2 it was confirmed that JS had submitted a detailed report in the state of benches.  The Chair proposed that the matter be worked on through the year.  It is noted that CB who joined the meeting later may be able to assist.  | JS  |
|  | With regard to minute 7.8 SK confirmed he had had an email from the Sir Walter Scott Society and would be sent to the History Society.  | SK  |
|  | **Members of the Public – Issues and/or Concerns** |  |
|  | A member of the public NB the resident at Maple House asked about the matter that had arisen at the last meeting.  The contents of the minute were read out as NB asked about the content.  NB read out a prepared statement about a letter he had had from SBC that did not allege any breaches.  NB suggested the YCC should have been in touch about the matter.  He asked that it be minuted that he and his wife were dissatisfied with the way the YCC had handled the matter.  ER said the letter from SBC should have given reasons for writing and raising any relevant issues.  The Chair said the matter had been raised at the meeting but not before so notice was not practicable.  JS said that the YCC had no statutory powers of action, but was a mere conduit to pass on information to SBC.  The Chair said that YCC did not have a practice of contacting the public when complaints affecting their interests were raised.  SB said lots of complaints came in from a variety of sources on a range of matters and YCC did not get involved either in discussions with the complainants and the party affected or in dispute resolution between them.   |  |
|  | The Chair confirmed the matter would be noted in the minutes.  | JS  |
|  | NB offered to forward the prepared statement he had read out earlier and subsequently did so.   |  |
|  | After receipt of the statement following the meeting, YCC noted in would be impractical to contact every person affected by the wide variety of matters that came up in its meetings as they were frequently numerous, and ranged from planning, through public health, to alleged nuisance through dog fouling and lack of maintenance creating hazards, as well as proposals that might impact property owners since the YCC was made up entirely of volunteers and had neither resources to investigate nor legal powers to make decisions.  Getting local people to be YCC members was already difficult and adding to their responsibilities would have a negative effect. Personal liabilities of YCC members would be likely to arise were YCC to exceed its quite limited statutory authority and would not be covered by insurance.  When canvassed there were no YCC members willing to assume the role of contacting all individuals capable of being affected by matters arising at the YCC meetings because of the time commitment it would entail and the risks to which it would expose them.   |  |
|  | It was reported that a large shed appeared to have been being built at The Mill House which did not appear to have been in the planning permission granted in respect thereof.  It was noted that the right of way was still accessible but there were steps to be negotiated although they did not *per se* hinder the path.  SBC was in the usual way asked to investigate the matter.  | ER  |
|  | **Police Report** |  |
|  | The Secretary reported that a police report had been received since the last meeting and had been circulated.   |  |
|  | **Festival Committee Update:** |  |
|  | The Chair confirmed that the Festival Committee was meeting monthly and trying to arrange events for June. Outside events may be considered and would be announced when appropriate within the then applicable guidelines.   | SS  |
|  | **Portfolio Presentations:** |  |
|  | **Housing and Planning - Shane Black (Vice Chair)** |  |
|  | SB reported that an application had been received for the garage in Town Yetholm for the erection of containers at the rear.  It was suggested the colour proposed may be too bright for the village locale and setting.  The Design And Heritage Officer had commented on this aspect and would be asked what colour was preferred instead.  |  |
|  | **Finance – Angela Walker** |  |
|  | AW reported that it had been quiet all year.  Income was £13,096 of which £10,000 was a grant to the pavilion.  Expenditure was £12,682 of which £10,000 was in respect of the pavilion.  The small surplus was £415 for the year and carried forward would be the cumulative sum of £5,939.  £2,000 would be earmarked for projects including an electric car charging point with signage and the work proposed to be done on remediation of the benches.   |   |
| **See 7A below** | The portfolio reports were interrupted to receive information from Mr Craig Blackie who had then joined the meeting.  This is minuted below.  |  |
|  | **Yetholm Resilient Group – Stuart Kelly** |  |
|  | SK said there was little to report and urged the public to be more cautious than they would have preferred to be.   The Chair confirmed that the resilience group was still in place.  |  |
|  | **Village Maintenance & Utilities – Vacant** |  |
|  | The Chair noted it was vacant.   |  |
|  | **Education - Susan Stewart** |  |
|  | The Chair confirmed that she had contacted ZK.   |  |
|  | **Grants- DA** |  |
|  | DA said there was nothing to report on grants.  |  |
|  | **Health & Social Services – JS** |  |
|  | JS confirmed that had taken responsibility for the defibrillators and made himself familiar with the manuals.  He had inspected both defibrillators and confirmed they appeared to be in working order and that the pads were within date.  There were spare pads and batteries.  As the batteries currently installed in both defibrillators were down to “2-bars” out of 5 bars and should therefore be replaced, JS would then have to buy new spares to carry.  The expenditure was approved.  | JS  |
|  | **Tourism – GW** |  |
|  | GW said there was little to report except that tourism would be available more widely after April 26th.GW said that participation in the litter collection plan proposed by SBC would be a good idea.  |  |
|  | **Projects, Events & Pavilion – SB** |  |
|  | In the absence of ID, SB reported that quotes were awaited for work to the roof.  The condition of the marquees would be looked into.  |  |
|  | **Chair, Website Liaison & Public Events – Susan Stewart** |  |
|  | The Chair confirmed the website had been updated.  There were no current public events.   Charles Brooker’s advert will be removed from the website.  |  |
|  | The Chair asked about the upcoming AGM.  ER responded that all relevant SBC officers were engaged in the Scottish Parliament election preparations.  The community councils should continue as they are until further notice.  | SS  |
| **7A** | **The Headstones – additional item added to the published agenda** |  |
|  | Mr Craig Blackie was invited to speak about work done at Yetholm cemetery.   |  |
|  | CB reported on the headstone safety programme.  It is a rolling programme with about 100,000 headstones being checked.  Graveyards are SBC responsibility and SBC has a duty of care for visitors and those working there.  Headstones which fail the push test are laid flat of socketed i.e. approximately one-third of the headstone is buried for stability.  Generally they are laid flat.  Advance notice is given by notice at the cemetery and to the community council on that inspection was to take place.  29 had required lying flat in Yetholm out of 350 headstones.  Re-erection is the responsibility of the lair owner and the work was required to be done by a monumental mason.  |  |
|  | SK asked if relatives were contacted in advance and CB said that was not done on an individual basis and he referred to the notice procure mentioned above.  |  |
|  | It was note that some of the headstones which had been laid flat were quite new.  Practice had become stricter since 2005.   |  |
|  | The Chair said some of the headstones had been laid in a way that seemed to have created a trip hazard.  CB would arrange an inspection as generally they were laid on the grave.  |  |
|  | JS said that grief was caused to relatives when headstones were moved and appeared to have been dealt with disrespectfully or unsympathetically.  CB said he would look into the way the work had been done.  The “broken window” effect on encouraging vandalism was noted with the loss of public amenity.  ER said there was guidance from the Scottish Government on the matter.  If newer headstones had not been erected in accordance with the applicable BS there may be recourse to the mason who had done the work.  |  |
|  | The Chair agreed to send further communications to CB on the matter.  |  |
|  | As a further matter, CB asked the meeting to note that assistance would be given on the renovation of the benches. |  |
|  | **Scottish Borders Councillors Update** |  |
|  | ER said the SBC budget had been passed and there was no increase in the Council Tax.  No specific allocation for public toilets had been made.  There was a good deal of work required on road repairs because of the severity of the preceding winter weather.  |  |
|  | **Additional Correspondence** |  |
|  | JS confirmed that all incoming appropriate correspondence had been forwarded to the relevant members for consideration.  A list had been circulated.   |  |
| 1.
 | **AOB** |  |
|  | SB raised the 20 mph limit.  ER said that pre-notice signs (3 / 2/ 1 bar(s)) altering driver to the change in speed limit were proposed on an experimental basis to assess if they had any impact on driver behaviour.  It was not a final decision.  YCC felt that the pre-notice signs would be better placed on the Morebattle Road than on the Kelso road.  |  |
|  | SB asked about the swinging gate at wall roadie from Town Yetholm to the Bowmont haugh from Grafton Road which was inaccessible by wheelchairs and prams.  Consideration would be given to the use of the pathways grant to instal a suitable gate.  |  |
|  | It was noted that street light no.9 was still hidden in bushes at Kirk Yetholm Brae.  |  |
|  | GW said the bushes approaching Lochside were encroaching onto the road once again.   |  |
|  | SS said the shop had been bought by the community in 22 March 2021 and refurbishment work was now planned.  The Post Office application was quite complex and taking time to complete.  |  |
|  | SS mentioned dog waste containers.  Using old plastic bottles specially adapted was an option was used elsewhere.  It was proposed to place two such as a test to see if there was an improvement.  |  |

The meeting closed at 20:21 hrs.

**The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 27th April 2021 at 19.30 hrs by Zoom call immediately following the AGM.**