

**Yetholm and District Community Council Meeting
Minutes of the Meeting held in Yetholm Youth Hall
Tuesday 31st January 2023**

Present: Shane Black (SAB) (Chair), Norman Burr(NB), John Palfrey(JP), Susan Stewart(SS), Paul Freeland Cook(PFC), Heather Freeland Cook(HFC), Euan Gibson(EG), Kevin Lee(KL)

Scottish Borders Councillors – Simon Mountford (SM) and Euan Robson(ER)

Apologies: Karon Philips, Sumati Bala

Members of the Public: 10 in attendance.

The meeting was recorded.

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| 1 | Apologies for Absence: As Above | |
| 2 | Secretarial Appointment – Shane Black (SAB) intimated that Susan Stewart (SS) had offered to take on role of Secretary in the coming months after the resignation of Susan Rands. The role could be undertaken by a member of the Council and an advert could be placed on noticeboards and social media to ascertain if there was any interest in this post. | |
| 3 | Minutes of previous meeting, approval, and signature – The November minutes had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. Was noted that they were an accurate record and SAB signed as approved. | |
| 4 | Matters Arising from minutes/outstanding issues - | |
| | 5.1 – Handrail at Bridge - Discussion re damaged steps leading to Haugh at both sides of bridge. Euan Robson (ER) intimated this was not a formal path and queried who had put the present steps in place. If SBC were to take responsibility for this, then a community grant could be applied for. Member of the Public (MOP) commented that the steps had definitely been put in place by SBC and they also commented on the decision to extend footpath past allotments and resurface cul-de – sac in Kirk Yetholm over replacing these steps and improving footpath. Query raised who had installed the handrail that was in situ – it was thought that this had been done by Eddie Robertson when he was on CC. Query raised as to whether any repair would be a lengthy process and Euan Robson intimated that this could be achievable if grants were to be applied for. | Ongoing All |
| | 5.2 – Legacy procedure. Shane intimated that a legacy meeting had taken place last week with all members of the subcommittee being present with exception of Sumati Bala (SB) He said that an initial plan had been discussed as to a way forward with the legacy monies. It was emphasised that this was the first step towards distributing the monies throughout the community. The plan considered all the ideas and suggestions that had been put forward and the full detail of the proposal can be found in Appendix 1 (attached) HFC. Further legacy meeting to be convened by subgroup. | Ongoing Legacy Subgroup |
| | 5.4 Warm Hub – SS gave an update on this project and said to date uptake had been minimal by the Community. It was to be hoped that numbers particularly on a Monday would increase as the gentle exercise class had moved to Youth Hall from 10 – 11am. SS also intimated that volunteers were also required to man this venture on a Monday and a Friday. Grant had been applied for by KP and games and books had been purchased to date with some of this money. | Ongoing SS |

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| | 7.1 Constitution – No update available as KP absent from meeting | KP |
| | 12.6 St Cuthbert’s Way - Further discussion took place re walk coming through village rather than present path as serious erosion continues to be a problem. In principle the route can be changed, and ER suggested that a clear proposal needed to be put in place regarding coming through village – facilities available – toilets, shop. | Ongoing ER |
| 5 | Members of the Public – Issues and/or concerns | |
| | Discussion from MOP re the path from the cemetery to the village being quite overgrown. Intimated that this work had previously been undertaken by Community Action Team. Kevin Lee (KL) said he would speak re this issue under his portfolio. | KL |
| 6 | Marquee: Custodianship and Hiring Protocol (NB) | |
| | <p>Norman Burr (NB) intimated that had been identified that there was nothing to stop us renting marquee out as per information received from SBC. However, the issue outstanding was the motion on the table identified at November meeting to sell the tent. NB went on to inform meeting of work he had done since last meeting re possibility of hiring out and how this could be achieved. The original people he had identified were no longer in a position to help and he had since been in touch with Amanda Barnes at Cherrytrees re the possibility of her hiring tent from us. NB went on to say he had been in touch with local firm (Best Intent) who could possibly be interested in hiring the marquee from us, but this was obviously dependant on how busy their business was and if they had the need for this kind of stretched tent. John Palfrey (JP) questioned the rationale behind the sale of the tent. He went on to say that that there were very few income generating ideas for the Community and the tent could be used to generate income as we move forward. He intimated that he had no objection to anyone deciding to sell it if that was what the community decided. He then went on to say that part of the remit of the Community Council is to put on entertainment for the Community. That is part and parcel of what the Community Council does. This was questioned by SAB and JP answered was in CC guidance.</p> <p>SAB asked Simon Mountford (SM) to clarify SBC position re CC hiring out marquee. SM intimated that they were neutral on this point. NB intimated that insurance we held would cover for any incident so that should not be an issue. SAB responded by saying that in guidance from SBC re-equipment of any kind being used or erected it should be done so by people who were trained in this work. Euan Gibson (EG) queried the charges that would be made to anyone who wished to hire the tent. JP said there was no value in going down this path until we had identified if selling or not. Discussion followed regarding purchase of defibrillators in comparison with purchase of tent. Discussion also followed once again re pros and cons of original tent purchase. Heather Freeland – Cook (HFC) proposed that some work was done on possible hire charges as we could not continue in this vein continually discussing pros and cons of the tent. EG agreed and said without costings and hire charges. MOP asked that if “object” was to be marketed either for sale or hire it is imperative that the correct terminology is used it is not a marquee it is a stretched tent. This was agreed as correct.</p> <p>Discussion then followed re monies that could be raised from hiring tent out and the possible benefits to the CC’s ongoing financial position. At this point Kevin Lee (KL) stated that the tent would have been a much more viable proposition for the CC if it had been a marquee that had been purchased not a stretched tent. Further discussion took place regarding finances and monies needed by CC to function. Discussion then moved to talking about Christmas tree lights and costs of various events in recent months. KL asked the Chair if he could ask the</p> | |

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| | <p>assembled members of the public if they were given the chance to vote on selling or keeping the stretched tent what would their response be. A show of hands was taken, and the majority were in favour of selling. JP reiterated that he was prepared to stand by decision taken to sell as long as community understood the implications of this choice. MOP queried whether there would be any value in discussing with Best Intent possibility of them storing for us and giving us use as and when required. NB said he could look into this but wanted to declare a conflict of interest as if final decision was to sell then he could be interested in purchasing same. So, he therefore could not be involved in any of the selling process. Agreed to identify three potential selling prices- independent quotes. Vote taken at this point of Councillors for and against sale of tent. – 6 votes for sale 2 against – either by abstention or declaration of interest.</p> <p>This discussion lasted 45 minutes</p> | Ongoing |
| 7 | <p>Community Council Constitution (KP) Due to absence of Karon Philips no update available. Meeting asked if anyone had any feedback on this process – no update from any Councillor given</p> | KP |
| 8 | <p>Christmas Trees and Lights JP updated meeting on fact that we had received two substantial trees from SBC – no one aware of why this had happened. As a result, one of the trees, we had ordered had been offered to and accepted by Morebattle and the cost of the other tree that had been ordered (£250) was being refunded to CC by the supplier. MOP queried if we could plant a tree in the village which could be used in the future for Christmas Tree lights. KL intimated that the location of any such tree could be an issue as had to be in the vicinity of the electrical supply. Discussion followed regarding type of trees that could be planted, permission required, and public opinion re planting of trees for continued use year on year. General public opinion of this year’s trees was positive as was response to lights. Fundraiser could be organised to help offset future costs. HFC requested that a letter of thanks be sent to Rob and Charlotte Playfair Hannay for their support with this venture. Request to keep this item on future agendas throughout the year.</p> | SS - letter |
| 9 | <p>Festival Week Planning Update (Fiona Thompson) Fiona reported that Festival had in excess of £4,000 in account at this time. There was still one bill outstanding for hire of horses. Planning was now well underway for this Summer. Representatives from the Plough and the Border had been invited to the February meeting. New Principals were in place for this year and SAB and FT will meet with them in the coming weeks. NB proposed that Festival should have ability to spend whatever they have in bank account plus annual grant without further reference to CC on each occasion. JP seconded this proposal.</p> | |
| 10 | <p>Portfolio Discussions</p> | |
| | <p>Housing and Planning – Shane Black</p> | |
| | <p>Only one plan has been received since last meeting – new windows for house in Montgomery Place – like for like no comments made. MOP queried the status of Plough planning application. SAB replied all relevant comments and documents were on the SBC website.</p> | |
| | <p>Finance – Norman Burr</p> | |
| | <p>Norman had circulated his reports prior to meeting to all Councillors but they are attached as follows – Appendix 2 Treasurers Report 31/1/23, Appendix 3 2022-23 accounts as at 26/1/23. Progress on SB as further signatory to cheques awaited. At present money in account is not earning interest so NB proposed that CC opened instant access savings account with Bank of Scotland and transfer</p> | |

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| | <p>£95K into it. That figure can be adjusted up or down as required and at least some interest would be being added to the account. Paul Freeland -Cook (PFC) seconded this motion. NB asked that a vote be taken as well, and all present agreed to this. NB reiterated that in his opinion the sale of the tent was foolish and short sighted and would ultimately make management of finances harder to manage. Spending at the present time is more than is coming in.</p> | |
| | <p>Village Maintenance and Utilities – Euan Gibson</p> | |
| | <p>Fibre optic cabling is being installed in the Bowmont Valley. Some road resurfacing has taken place in Kirk Yetholm – Hiilview. ER said this was requested sometime ago. HFC queried whether notice is normally given to surrounding residents that this would be happening. ER responded saying he did not think that there was a formal procedure in place for this. MOP queried when Main Street in Town Yetholm was due to be resurfaced. SM said as far as he was aware this was still due to take place incoming year.</p> <p>EG said other was ivy growing through wall in churchyard. SS intimated that the owner had spoken to her last year and that they had spoken to SBC re this issue. ER said he would pick this up with SBC. EG also queried timescale on planning applications – was identified that applicant had three years to start the work but if work not started in this time frame, then an extension has to be applied for. EG was referring to a retrospective plan and SM intimated that if he could have the detail he would look into this.</p> | |
| | <p>Education – Heather Freeland - Cook</p> | |
| | <p>No update this month as meeting with head teacher in coming month</p> | |
| | <p>Bowmont Valley – Paul Freeland - Cook</p> | |
| | <p>Potholes have been sorted. Roadside drains partially sorted. Concerns from residents as to when defibrillator for valley would be installed. Radio mast question was still an ongoing issue.</p> | |
| | <p>Resilience – Kevin Lee</p> | |
| | <p>KL reported that he had contacted someone from the Justice Services Team who will come out and do a variety of community projects. KL had heard today from Dave Berry who said he was happy to come out and discuss various potential tasks in Yetholm. Proposals that had been mentioned to date included – work at the school, Dairy Wood, Wall Roadie and the path from Waukford to the Haugh. KL happy to meet with Mr Berry and if anyone has any further possible tasks that could be considered please get in touch with him. Another issue that has been raised is the work at the Stank Bridge and do we need three sets of traffic lights? SM said that this was it was necessary to set up lights to ensure safety of workers. KL went on to speak about road at Waukford as has many potholes and is unsafe for walkers of any age. KL asked about safe walking paths which can be placed behind fences. ER commented on this and said there was a long waiting list for this kind of project, and you were required to demonstrate that there was a need for this kind of path.</p> | |
| | <p>Grants and Funding – Karon Philips</p> | |
| | <p>No report available due to absence of KP</p> | |
| | <p>Tourism – John Palfrey</p> | |
| | <p>JP intimated he would have to have a rethink about this portfolio due to earlier decisions in meeting.</p> <p>HFC left the meeting at 9pm</p> | |
| | <p>Health and Social Services – Sumati Bala</p> | |
| | <p>SS spoke to this portfolio as she had been the person dealing with this in the short</p> | |

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| | <p>term. The defibrillators are due to be installed on 17/2 at the Border and the Garage and there was no movement as yet on a defibrillator for Bowmont Valley as this required a specific type as no power was available in the phone box. Unsure whether the one from the Garage could be relocated anywhere as had been called out a couple of times over holiday period due to malfunction of unit. SS had been in contact with Kelso Heartbeat re training and they said they could deliver but appeared to be in Kelso. SS had contacted asking if they would come to villages but to date no response. JP queried the possibility of Cheviot Youth delivering training – SS to follow this up</p> | SS/SB |
| | <p>Projects, Events, Pavilion – Shane Black</p> | |
| | <p>SAB said that Pavilion group had met and had decided that they would like to take on the running and administration of Pavilion as they had been doing for the last few years. NB then spoke and his proposal to CC is attached as Appendix 4 and 5. NB said that he felt that the CC had a right to retain some involvement in the Pavilion as a large proportion of the money involved was and is public money. Lengthy discussion followed in which MOP were involved. Stated that they had been running Pavilion successfully over a number of years with no input from CC. SBC Councillors were asked by a MOP if they had any issues or problems with the Pavilion Committee and how it had functioned over the last seven years and the proposal for them to take over sole running of same. Both SM and ER said they had no issues with this proposal. Same question was asked of all the Community Councillors who expressed no issues with this proposal. SM added that the Pavilion Committee had received funds from SBC, but they had demonstrated that these funds had been used appropriately in all cases. SAB asked Councillors to vote regarding the proposal that Pavilion Committee took over sole running of unit. All voted in favour with the exception of NB who abstained from vote. SAB said would remain as public facility which it always had been. This discussion lasted 25 minutes. SAB has had a meeting with group re Dandy Dinmont event. They would like to put plaque up in village on June 4th and will run events – more information will be available in due course</p> | SAB |
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| 11 | <p>Police Report No report had been received to date</p> | |
| 12 | <p>Scottish Borders Councillor’s Update SM said that Scrutiny Committee is looking to develop its programme for review which he will forward to secretary for distribution to CC members. SM then intimated that training had been offered to Councillors and they would like to know what decision was regarding this. SAB replied by saying all had been in agreement to this and SM said Fiona Henderson (SBC) would be in touch regarding this training opportunity. SM said there would be small amount of money available from SBC for any Coronation events. ER added that there was also money available through Lord Lieutenant but closing date for this was relatively soon. Fiona Thompson intimated that the festival were already looking at holding some kind of event to celebrate the Coronation so any funding would be gratefully received.</p> | |
| 13 | <p>Additional Correspondence All had been sent out by email</p> | |
| 14 | <p>Community Council/AOB</p> | |
| | <p>NB asked that a summary of the notes that were taken at the pre meeting in November could please be circulated as to date this had not happened. Two issues</p> | |

had been discussed one was secretarial remuneration and the other was an allegation of racist language by NB. NB had been present for half of that meeting during which time he had no opportunity to say anything whatsoever. He then left the meeting with agreement of all so could be discussed without NB being present. He understood that the decision had been made to ask SBC as a neutral party to look into this and ascertain if there was a case to answer to. He believes that has happened and that SBC had responded by saying they were not getting involved and that we had to sort ourselves. NB continued saying he had not had any opportunity to say anything in in his defence. NB statement of racism defence is attached as Appendix 6. He then went on to say that after three months he expected some kind of response from the CC. PFC said to NB that he had directly asked him at the pre meeting if he had made that remark and NB was prevented from making any further comment by SB and JP. He had then left the meeting. SS intimated that what PFC had said was correct and at the point of NB leaving SB had taken over the rest of the pre meeting and as time was passing and it was 7pm the normal CC meeting was due to start. PFC asked if NB could answer now, he then read his statement which is attached. He continued by saying that as far as he was concerned any comment that this was a racist remark was defamatory to his character. NB ended this by saying if you think is racist refer to police if not draw a line under it.

Further lengthy discussion took place and SAB said original complaint was anonymous, SBC had been involved and they had put firmly back in our court to deal with and resolve. ER said SBC had no mechanism in place to deal with this. He said would be sensible if we drew a line under this issue. Use it as a lesson in what is said and that there had been no intention to cause offence. We all need to learn from this and be aware of what we are saying and how it is perceived at all Council meetings. All voted and agreed that nothing offensive had been intended by NB's remarks at November meeting.

This discussion lasted 20 minutes.

EG queried if the chestnut tree that had been removed from Town Yetholm green would be ground down as what had been left a car could reverse int.

EG also updated that Scottish Water had been in village again regarding ongoing problem with sewage running down road. ER commented that there would have to be another site meeting to look at this issue.

SAB said parking lines in Deanfield Place could they be repainted please.

SAB informed meeting that Jubilee trees had been planted but they need proper protection around them - local fencer to be approached for estimate for this wrk. Road in Grafton Bank requires work as starting to degrade quite markedly. Noted that money still ring fenced in accounts for electric charging points – this continues to be an issue that needs further investigation.

SS noted that the September and October minutes were still on website as draft this required to be resolved. NB commented that KP had notes could possibly be of help to resolve this

SS/KP

The meeting closed at 2200hrs.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 28th February 2023 at 7pm in the Youth Hall.