

Galashiels Community Council Minutes of Meeting

Chair	Jim Johnston	Minute Taker	Erin Forster
Date & Time	6:30 pm on Wednesday 6 th May 2026 at Burgh Chambers, Galashiels		
Meeting Schedule	First Wednesday of every month at 6:30 pm		

	Topic/Key Discussion/Agreement	Action																								
1.	PRESENT Jim Johnston (Vice Chair) (JJ), Erin Forster (Secretary) (EF), Richard Romeril (Treasurer) (RR), Marion Romeril (MR), Shelagh King (SK), Sandy Walker (SW), Brian Edgar (BE), Shelagh Johnston (SJ), Lisa Anderson (LA), Cllr Euan Jardine (EJ), Cllr Fay Sinclair (FS) and 10 members of the public (MoP). APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies were received from Angela Crow (Chair) (AC), Cllr Neil Mackinnon (NM) and Cllr Hannah Steel (HS).																									
2.	DECLARATION of INTERESTS No conflicts of interests were noted.																									
3.	APPROVAL OF MINUTES The minutes were proposed by BE and seconded by SW.																									
4.	<table><tr><th>Owner</th><th>Action</th><th>Status</th><th>Notes / Update</th></tr><tr><td>Erin Forster (Secretary)</td><td>Invite the Galashiels community police officer to attend future meetings.</td><td>Open</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Jim Johnston (Vice Chair)</td><td>Submit GCC observations to the Planning and Development Standards Manager by 02 June 2026.</td><td>Open</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Fay Sinclair (SBC Councillor)</td><td>Report fly tipping at Church Square flats to SBC.</td><td>Open</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Euan Jardine (SBC Councillor)</td><td>To confirm SBC is aware of the poor lighting at the interchange and loose paving stones at the Tapestry.</td><td>Open</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Euan Jardine (SBC Councillor)</td><td>Invite the SBC Antisocial Behaviour Unit to present at an upcoming CGG meeting.</td><td>Open</td><td></td></tr></table>	Owner	Action	Status	Notes / Update	Erin Forster (Secretary)	Invite the Galashiels community police officer to attend future meetings.	Open		Jim Johnston (Vice Chair)	Submit GCC observations to the Planning and Development Standards Manager by 02 June 2026.	Open		Fay Sinclair (SBC Councillor)	Report fly tipping at Church Square flats to SBC.	Open		Euan Jardine (SBC Councillor)	To confirm SBC is aware of the poor lighting at the interchange and loose paving stones at the Tapestry.	Open		Euan Jardine (SBC Councillor)	Invite the SBC Antisocial Behaviour Unit to present at an upcoming CGG meeting.	Open		
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	Angela Crow (Chair)	Email updated constitution and Equalities Statement to members.	Open	To be proposed for adoption at next GCC meeting.	
	Angela Crow (Chair) and Jim Johnston (Vice Chair)	Understand the status of the outstanding 2025 Christmas Lights invoice.	Open	See Chair's report for update. JJ's understanding is the electricity bill is now £0, but the GCC is waiting for it to be confirmed in writing.	
	Lisa Anderson (Vice Treasurer)	Explore gift options for previous long serving Community Council members.	Open	The local business suggested to purchase the gifts from is closed while the owner is on holiday.	
	Erin Forster (Secretary)	Create Community Council Facebook page and website.	Open	Community Council Facebook page has been created, but the website is still a work in progress.	
	Erin Forster (Secretary)	Contact public library to agree process for making Community Council minutes available.	Closed	Process is agreed with the public library.	
	Erin Forster (Secretary)	Contact Scottish Borders Council to book Burgh Chambers for future Community Council meetings.	Closed	The booking of Burgh Chambers has been made for the next year.	
	Fay Sinclair (Councillor)	Speak to Public Health Department regarding restaurant skip usage.	Closed	FS did not proceed with speaking with the Public Health Department, because the restaurant's bins were only put out on collection day.	
	Erin Forster (Secretary)	Request road closure reports.	Closed	EF is now receiving the road closure reports.	
	Richard Romeril (Treasurer)	Confirmed required number of bank account signatories.	Closed	New signatories have been added to the bank account and old signatories have been removed.	
	Jim Johnston (Vice Chair)	Request access to the Scottish Borders Council E-planning system.	Closed	JJ has access to E-planning system.	
5.	CHRISTMAS LIGHTS Whether BID For Galashiels will take responsibility for the Christmas lights was discussed. Responsibility still sits with the Galashiels Community Council (GCC) until BID for Galashiels confirms their agreement in writing. The GCC noted that if BID for Galashiels does not accept responsibility, there will be an issue, as the GCC does not have the funds or skill set/capacity to manage the Christmas lights.				
6.	POLICE REPORT - No police report available by the time of the meeting. - Action raised to invite the Galashiels community police officer to attend future meetings and present the report.				EF

7.	CHAIR REPORT - AC was unavailable to attend the meeting, but provided a report which was read out by EF: <u>Governance</u> - Updated template Constitution, draft Equalities, draft Privacy Notice and draft Complaints Procedure sent to all community councillors for them to review and discuss adopting at this meeting. - Liaising with SBC to clarify the position of GCC holding monies on behalf of, and providing insurance for, Gala in Bloom volunteers and Friends of Gala Policies. Ongoing discussions with representatives from Gala in Bloom and Friends of Gala Policies about potential solutions. Awaiting insurance certificate from SBC. <u>GCC Assets</u> - Meeting held with previous GCC Chair and community councillor. Confirmed assets owned by GCC are the <i>flower planters</i> (Floral Gala) and a <i>water bowser</i> (stored at Old Gala House). These need to be insured. Flower planters will be dealt with this financial year by the previous GCC Chair and community councillor. Need to plan now for next and future years – either to manage planters or arrange disposal. Raised with BID for Galashiels – they will discuss at their June meeting. <i>Christmas lights</i> are now the responsibility of BID for Galashiels – awaiting written confirmation. Issue of outstanding electricity bill for Christmas 2024 (December 24/January 25) reviewed with previous GCC Chair and community councillor. Initial bill was for £3970.86. This was challenged by previous community councillor by phone. Latest invoice showed an outstanding balance of £70.04. This is to be discussed with Npower when BID for Galashiels confirm in writing they are responsible for energy consumption of Christmas Lights. <u>Public Realm Issues</u> - Reported incidents of four people tripping over <i>poor paving</i> at Douglas Bridge, and after Cllr Sinclair spoke with the roads department at SBC, the paving was repaired. - Discussed <i>litter</i> on the steep banking along Huddersfield Street with Cllr Mackinnon, this area has been tidied up. <u>Policing Issues</u> - Reported to local officers nuisance driving / noisy exhausts. Local police are aware, have issued several tickets and continue to monitor. Time, date, location and vehicle details (including registration number) helpful for future reports. Also reported <i>vehicles waiting in the bus stop</i> on Island Street at junction with Hall Street (likely customers of the takeaway restaurant). Police will review. <u>Town of Culture</u> - Working group continuing to meet until decision (late Spring). Discussions now about the town planning for Tour de France in July 2027.	
8.	VICE CHAIR REPORT - JJ asked for feedback on the planning application for the former St Peter's school, Abbotsford Road, Galashiels change of use from offices to four flats and one house. - GCC members raised concerns about access to the property, because it sits at a roundabout junction and where car parking for the flats and house will be, given it is currently at the back of the building, where an extension is to be built.	

	• JJ to send GCC observations to the Planning and Development Standards Manager by 02 June 2026.	JJ
9.	SECRETARY REPORT • EF stated the matters arising actions covered her report items. • EF put-up copies of the meeting agenda in Tesco, Asda and the Focus Centre. Langlee Community Centre was closed at the weekend when she visited, but there were contact details on the door, which she will use to ask about the best way to get the agenda put up in the centre. • Three GCC members attended online training provided by the Democratic Governance Community Councils about cultivating a healthy culture around conflict. • The parish organiser of the Corpus Christi Procession from Our Lady and St Andrews Church contacted the GCC to request feedback on the plan to hold the procession on 07 June 2026 from 15:00 to 16:00 with approximately 200 people participating. Roads will not be closed, but the police are being informed so they can decide if they want to be in attendance.	
10.	TREASURER REPORT • As has been the norm recently, it was another quiet month accounts wise. Income was a £50 donation for Gala in Bloom. There were also another two donations for Gala in Bloom, but they will appear in May's accounts. The only expenditure in April was to reimburse a member of Gala in Bloom for £164.41 of expenses. Again this will appear in the May accounts as a cheque, as at this time, it has not cleared the bank account. • AC, EF and LA names have been added to the list of signatories for the GCC bank account and removed signatories who are no longer members of the community council. • Money held under the 'Residual Gala' header in the ledger has been transferred to the GCC general fund in the ledger as was agreed at last month's meeting. Last financial year's ledger and associated paperwork are still with the accountant for audit.	
11.	COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS UPDATES • Town Team: ○ Next Meeting is Wednesday, 10 June 2026 June. ○ Borderlands Update – Scottish Borders Council (SBC) Economic Development Team are working with project leads to draft the project level business cases. They are also currently working to identify project development funding to allow each project to progress with applications made to the Community Led Local Development Fund. It was noted at the last meeting that further updates on Government funding may be tied into decisions which will come after the election in May 2026. ○ Projects progressing: ▪ Mac Arts Redevelopment ▪ Hike & Bike Expansion ▪ Multi-use Trails ▪ Channel Street - with SBHA ○ Active travel is being worked on with SBC following the recent Active Travel Strategy Review and report. Work is focusing on the black path and wayfinding. ○ The Town Team have engaged with the Informatics/Architecture Design Scotland/Edinburgh University Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Community Workshops by invitation from SBC along with Hawick Town Team to explore local data banks, AI visualisations of spaces to interpret projects and more. These workshops were set up to collectively think about how AI and data might play a role in Galashiels' Place Plan and priority projects and for the future of the Scottish Borders.	

	○ Each Town Team meeting brings a guest in to talk about their project/relevant work and in April Kerry Jones from Little Art Hub (LAH) spoke about the exciting Culture Collective project, which has been funded by Creative Scotland (£102k). The funding is broad and offers an opportunity for LAH to grow its membership and engage with the community. • Energise Galashiels Trust: ○ Feasibility for the Cornmill Fountain is almost complete with the conservation architect, CSY Architects, providing a comprehensive report on stone repairs, stone cleaning and structural condition checks, which overall are in good condition. Next steps have been identified and costed for a Quality Surveyor, Structural Engineer and RIBA Stage 2.0 (concept design) and 3.0 (spatial co-ordination). There is a need now to fundraise to complete the next steps. ○ SBC are developing in house proposals for a pump track, which will be shared with the Town Team and the wider public for consultation. Including a multi-use games areas (MUGA) and paddle courts as part of the project are also being considered. Fundraising is required to complete the next steps with Sports Scotland being approached. FS stated she would contact the Design Team Leader at SBC and work on getting support for the project from other Galashiels SBC councillors, as it's been discussed at certain committees, but hasn't been heard by the full council. ○ Gala Park Pavilion refurbishment and feasibility is on hold. ○ With pay parking funding frozen, despite some local councillors' best efforts, it impacts on the feasibility work progressing for three Local Place Plan projects. ○ EGT have established a peer led Scottish Borders Town Group collective, with team members from town teams, local community councils. Its particular focus is on on destination planning and feeding into the South of Scotland Destination Alliance work with Centre Parcs. ○ First community meeting at old Gala House tomorrow evening, Thursday 07 May 2026 at 6pm. To explore a new heritage network and community involvement in its future. This comes at an important time for Old Gala House, because as part of the Live Borders Joint Transformation Change Programme agreed by the SBC on 20 November 2025, the building has been identified for potential community asset transfer within the next three years.	
12.	COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS REPORTS • There is a Tour de France drop-in session planned for businesses and the community on 19 May 2026 at Galashiels Academy. Logistic and road closure planning is required as a Braw Lads event is happening the day after Tour de France. The Braw Lads Committee is aware and is engaged. • The road assessment team is looking at a plan for Wood Street, Galashiels. The street is too narrow for two cars passing, but drivers are not stopping or reducing their speed. Speed strips are in place to collect data. • The Galashiels Free Church, which was meeting at the Focus Community Centre, has purchased 48 High Street (Trinity Church). • There are issues with dog mess around the Netherdale area of town. There are no dog wardens, so installing more bins, handing out bags and discouraging cark parking for the purpose of dog walking was discussed. FS is leading a competition for children to design anti-dog mess posters that will be printed on metal signs and installed at the rugby club back pitches. • Hawick currently holds successful park run events and FS is speaking to Abbotsford House about the possibility of hosting similar events in six to seven months' time.	

	- The toilet block in the High Street car park behind Iceland has been sold and is being turned into a laundrette. - A disused mattress, rubbish and dog mess bags have been left at the Church Square flats, which is not a welcome sight for Braw Lads events visitors. FS will make a report to SBC and arrange a pick-up. She also reminded everyone that members of the public can report fly tipping on the SBC website.	FS
13.	QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC - Members of the Friends of Gala Policies and Gala in Bloom stated their concern about public liability insurance being withdrawn by SBC and no longer covered by the GCC. Friends of Gala Policies thought the insurance was up to date. They asked if they were to join the GCC as a sub-group, would Friends of Gala Policies then be covered by the insurance policy. They also questioned whether the group is already a sub-group of the GCC, because GCC receives their funds into its bank account. They feel no volunteer should be out of pocket. - The Gala Waterways Group broke away from the GCC approximately five years ago, because they required specialist insurance to cover their use of chainsaws. - EJ offered to speak to the person in SBC that the chair, AC, spoke to about insurance coverage if a name is provided. - RR stated the previous GCC didn't have a secretary and he's unaware of any insurance certificates. - A member of the Gala Waterways Group reported they had a successful litter pick event in April.	
14.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS - GCC member highlighted anti-social behaviour at the Currie Road car park from car noise that's disturbing the residents in the flat across the way. It was suggested the residents should report incidents to police on 101. - GCC members also reported loose and broken paving stones at the steps of the Tapestry and Douglas Bridge across to the Galashiels Transport Interchange. Poor lighting at the back of the Interchange on Stirling Street was also raised. EJ stated he had raised the lighting issue with SBC, but he will double check. - EJ will invite the SBC Antisocial Behaviour Unit to present at an upcoming CGG meeting.	EJ EJ
15.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING Meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of every month at 6:30 pm at Burgh Chambers, Galashiels. Wednesday, 03 June 2026.	