



Galashiels Community Council
Focus Centre
Wednesday November 6th, 2019
Minutes

Present

Judith Cleghorn Rick Kenney Tracey Alder Tom Ingoldsby, Drew Tulley, Eileen Frame, Gordon Richardson Liz Jardine. Marion Romeril Bill White Bill Jeffrey, Helen Calder, Jessie Harrington Lorna Hanif, Dougie Johnston

In Attendance

Cllr Scott Cllr Jardine
Paul Kelly – Southern Reporter
Ally McGilvray – Radio Borders
Leigh Mclvor and Jeremy Thomson – Forestry Scotland
8 Members of the public.

Meeting commenced 6.30pm

1. Welcome and Apologies.

Apologies Cllr Aitchison, PC James Harrison

2. Minutes Approval

An accurate Minute of the Meeting October 2nd was approved by Drew Tulley and Seconded by Marion Romeril
Judith welcomed back Dougie Johnson who had to leave the Community Council due to work commitments and now things are easier for him and he would like to resume his position. Dougie was a very proactive member previously and Judith said she had plenty for him to get involved in.

3. Matters Arising

Helen Calder asked if there were any questions following her report as she had to leave the meeting early.

4. Police Update and Questions

No Police present – Judith highlighted points from the police report but also voiced that there has been no police presence since the summer at meetings and there has been no one in attendance from the Academy . A comment was made that the police force is under great pressure now to attend meetings as they are stretched to capacity . **Judith will contact both police and the Academy**

5. Speakers – Leigh Mclvor and Jeremy Thomson – Forestry Scotland – Tree felling Meigle Hill

After a few site visits to Meigle Hill it was decided that all 40 hectares of trees need felled. Broadleaf trees will be retained and will never be felled. Transportation of logs via Clovenfords is not viable, SBC Roads dept advised lorries to come straight down Mossilee on to A72. There will ideally be 6 lorry loads transported before 8am and 2 before rush hour, possibly lunchtime.

Work to start in about 2-3 months for 20weeks.

Area will be replanted with Douglas fir, spruce and broadleaf.

QA- Its such an iconic view and a replenishable product, do they really need to come down also the junction at Hall St is bad enough at any time of day/week? Trees blow over and are unsafe for walkers and yes, it's been recognised that there may be traffic issues and something in writing to this effect would be needed from SBC should difficulties occur.

Lorries will turn right from the Hall St junction in to the direction of town. Comment made- The Hall St junction could be and should be improved. This was promised when Tesco and Asda roads were made. **Cllr Scott will take this on.**

Its hoped that SBC will keep a close eye on the Cricket club as drainage is also an issue with no trees to take in rain water off the hill. Tracey added that drainage in this area had previously been a problem a few years back and some drainage work had to be done in one of the fields and Tracey's back garden.

QA- would it not be a good idea to open up Roxburgh Street for lorries to avoid the Hall St junction? – Cllr Scott said this could mean a change in legislation which could take longer than the actual work.

Replanting will take place within 12 months.

6. Sub-groups Update

Gala in Bloom

After several meetings and a great effort by John Gray, whom we thank very much for his continuing efforts, we now have confirmation that the £12,000 for the gardens from Pay parking money is now in the Community council account. Very grateful for Councillors for this money. Various organisations have showed an interest and donated to the work needed done. Live Borders have been asked to donate towards the upkeep of gardens at Old Gala House.

Volunteers will be needed to help with watering and upkeep etc.

We have decided that we should award the work in Bank Street Gardens to Raker Ltd, and the Old Gala House gardens to Lowood Nurseries. We felt that this does not put too much pressure on a contractor if we had used only one and gives work to two local companies.

A meeting is to be arranged with both contractors soon and we shall report on these meetings at our next meeting in December.

It is hoped that the future admin within SBC will make sure that funding is available.

Gala Waterways

All is in report.

Christmas Event and Lights

Previously discussed.

7. Chairs Comments

Remembrance Sunday.

Judith advised that she would not be available on Sunday for the parade and those that are able have already taken a turn at laying the wreath. She asked for a volunteer to lay the wreath and cross this coming Sunday. Liz Jardine offered to lay the wreath and Gordon Richardson will lay the cross.

Thanks go to Cllr Jardine for getting the chimes at the memorial sorted.

Bill White was expecting the time to remain at 11.10 like last year, he and quite a few members of the public were sad to see it had gone back to the original time. Tracey said people had voiced their concern to her in Tesco. Judith wondered if the time of the parade could be extended to a rota basis.

Drinking in Public places

Judith commented that she did not think it to be a good idea – indeed it may well serve to push the drinking out into the Policies and such peripheral areas.

Comment made: We have had enough trouble trying to get a bylaw for Dog Fouling down at Netherdale as many questions were asked about how it would be policed, so this is ridiculous. Cllr Scott added that this is a pilot scheme and may well fail but it has been motioned. Cllr Jardine tried to get it rejected as the statistics were wrong and wanted them rechecked.

We are trying to make Galashiels a place to visit not the usual eye bin town.

Coopersknowe and C77 Road

Judith said she was still getting many complaints about the C77 road in general and the lack of a safe crossing over that road and the lack of a roundabout in particular.

Judith understands that there is to be a dropped kerb installed either side of the C77 to assist pedestrian and pushchair crossings, but that is not the same as a level crossing or, more importantly, a roundabout. We all feel that it is only a matter of time before an accident happens. Could this issue please be looked at?

Constant complaints, particularly from one resident about the lack of grass cutting and maintenance in our cemeteries, particularly Heatheryett.

Again, Judith would appreciate if one of our councillors could pick up this issue.

Tracey read out a letter from a member of the public who is also concerned about the speeding at Langlee Drive and also about the state of the Borders cemeteries. Tracey passed around photographs of the unkempt areas of the cemetery taken by the resident of Langlee.

Cllr Jardine will go back to see the member of the public and return the photographs.

8. Treasurers Update

Tom Ingoldsby

Expenditure £53.20 has been paid to SBC for additional insurance for Waterways equipment.

Tom stressed that if there is any information or money, cheques etc pertaining to the Community Council account can this be done as soon as possible as info is not always coming to Tom in the first instance.

Available to Community Council

£1900.28

Judith thanked Tom for his work over the last few months dealing with the incomings and outgoings for the Christmas events.

Tom asked if there was any news on the Trails as there is still money ring fenced in the CC account.

Pete Laing will be doing a report for the LRA next Tuesday and Pete will be at the next Community Council meeting in December. A speaker from Gala Policies Group will also be speaking too.

9. Secretary's Update –

Tracey advised that all of the insurance for the Christmas lights and the event is now finally in place.

Tracey handed out notebooks to all the leaders of Sub groups following a discussion with Judith. These will be for insurance purposes and are for the leaders to record the members of their groups each time they meet as a group.

10. Planning and Licensing

Rick talked through the planning applications for this month – no questions followed.

10a. Future of Abbotsford Hotel – Jessie Harrington

Community Councillor Jessie Harrington gave a PowerPoint presentation on possibilities for the future of the Abbotsford Hotel in Galashiels. Jessie had previously visited the Barholm Centre in Creetown which had been transformed by the Creetown Community initiative. Like the Abbotsford the Barholm or 'The Ponda' to the locals of Creetown after being closed down sat unused for almost a decade. Having fallen into a derelict state, it was transformed by the joint efforts of the [Creetown Initiative](#) and the National Lottery Fund.

Now, it has become home to a variety of businesses that could not have existed within the community before.

There are about 8 on the group looking to transform the Abbotsford, currently there is a warrant to demolish order on this building, the group have been referred to the Scottish Land fund as the project would need to prove sustainable. A feasibility study would cost £20,000 and a sturdy business plan needed.

Comment made – At the moment all organisations, churches, schools, community centres are all vying for business and can't see where something like this would be financially viable.

QA – How much would it cost to do? at least 1.5 million

Comment made that it is a great idea in principle but Creetown cannot be compared to Galashiels. Cllr Scott hopes that a feasibility study would find it fit for purpose but thinks higher end accommodation should be aimed for.

11. SBC Councillors Comments and questions

Cllr Jardine

Nothing else to add other than Parsonage street got swept today.

Cllr Scott

The Scottish Government were originally giving 2/3 of the total for new school, however the budget has now changed, and the council will need to fund the 2 new school schemes themselves and if they prove feasible then they will reimburse 50% back. The Government is taking away the risk from themselves and putting it on to the Local Authority.

Comment made – Back in 2004 a presentation took place about the new school; this is terrible news: we should be writing to the Scottish Government to show our disappointment. We should also get Christine Grahame to the next meeting to put her government proposals to us prior to the general election.

12. AOB

18 months ago, there was a big issue about signs being put on railings distracting drivers, what is the state of play with this? is it just Gala getting penalised? **Cllr Jardine to action**

Burgh Chambers – windows were due to be painted in 2008, these have still not been done, the windows are so bad that they will soon start to fall out . **Cllr Scott to Action**

Old Gala Club – re premises – good representation at the last meeting, there is a possible building at Easter Langlee but this needs brought up to standard to make it fit for purpose.

A comment was made that there was no press at this evenings meeting (when actually there was reporter from the Southern present)and people of Galashiels would like to know what is going on and should be coming to meetings.

The Community Council was called a secret society as no one from outside knows that it exists, and it was said that no one knows anything about what goes on. Cllr Scott said that the Community council is very pro-active, and they, the public, know when meetings are. A discussion took place about how and where minutes should be displayed. Tracey said that minutes are sent to the library every month as they are to everyone else on the email list, so they are in the public domain for anyone without a computer. Putting them in the newspaper had proved ineffective in the past. It was agreed that a noticeboard would be looked at.

Date of next meeting Focus Centre- Wednesday December 4th 6.30pm