

**Minutes of the Meeting of Kelso Community Council held in the Town Hall, Kelso on Tuesday 12 June, at 7.00pm**



- PRESENT:** Councillors John Bassett, Ian Brown, Peter Cooper, Betty Hodges, Gavin Horsburgh, James McCombie, Colin McGrath, Harry Tomczyk, Dean Weatherston (Chair) and Kerry Yule and Scottish Borders Councillors Simon Mountford, Euan Robson and Tom Weatherston.
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Jason Hedley, SBC Neighbourhoods Area Manager and Malcolm Joyce SBC Service Director, Caroline Purcell and Nicola McIlwraith Scottish Borders Housing Association, Shirley Redgrave (Secretary), Suzanne Howgego (Police Scotland), Kirsty Smyth (Southern Reporter) and members of the public William Robson, Lewis Hamon, James Robertson, Mr and Mrs Binnie, Paul Roberts, David Wilkie (Amenity Society), Alastair Innes, Lisa and Colin Seccombe and Brian Pinn.
- APOLOGIES:** Councillors James Boulton and Alan Hall and Tina Newton (Visit Kelso)

- *Please note questions to either the Scottish Borders Councillors or Kelso Community Councillors need to be submitted in writing to the Secretary seven days prior to meeting.*
- *All Councillors to make a declaration of interest prior to discussion.*
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- *All correspondence to be circulated via the Secretary.*

**Welcome**

The Provost welcomed Councillors and members of the public to the meeting and advised an additional meeting to specifically discuss parking issues had been held immediately prior to the main meeting and the discussion was appended to these minutes.

**Police Matters**

The May Police Scotland Report had previously been circulated and PC Howgego asked for comments. Councillor Yule raised a question on an alleged assault and intimated the wrong information had been recorded. PC Howgego undertook to speak to Councillor Yule outside the meeting to clarify

**Presentation by Jason Hedley SBC Neighbourhood Area Manager to discuss the rationale behind the recent review of Neighbourhood Services**

Jason Hedley had been invited to attend the meeting to discuss the rationale behind the recent review of Neighbourhood Services. He was accompanied by Malcolm Joyce – Service Director.

Jason thanked the Council for the opportunity to outline changes to the way services are delivered to communities and to ensure environmental and financial sustainability of services with

involvement of the community. The review in 2018/19 focusses primarily on grass cutting and bedding plant provision, public toilets and dog fouling. Jason advised SBC needed to make savings of £345,000 from this review.

Jason advised some parks and open spaces will look different by increasing wildflower areas, changing cutting grass in general amenity areas, including cemeteries from 10 to 20 working days. Jason advised maintenance of key civic spaces and sports pitches will remain unchanged and maintenance of lower amenity and sloping areas is under review. Jason advised a successful trial was held in 2017 at 49 sites across the Borders and there was little feedback from communities. Regarding bedding plant provision the redesign will introduce permanent rather than seasonal displays, grass over areas and support communities who wish to undertake bedding plant maintenance as part of the "In Bloom" activities. Changes to bedding plant provision will take place in spring 2019.

The Provost commented he was disappointed how the service review had been communicated and felt there had not been a proper open consultation. The Provost advised he had received numerous upsetting and angry comments from the public regarding the poor appearance of the grass cutting in the local cemetery and the length of the grass around the floral beds at the entrance to the town. Councillor Bassett commented Kelso, like many Border towns was dependent on tourism and felt this review would leave the town looking unkempt and it undermined the hard work the volunteers of the Kelso in Bloom group were doing to enhance the entrances to the town and help upkeep the memorial garden.

Jason apologised for the way the review had been communicated and advised SBC were keen to work with the community and would listen to their concerns and he gave reassurance and commitment the town would look at its best for its forthcoming Civic festival.

Councillor Hodges advised the Kelso in Bloom group needed to have dialogue with SBC to fully understand the impact of the cuts to the provision of bedding plants at the memorial garden and in the planters at the Square. Jason advised he was happy to meet with the group separately and he would ensure they were provided with a list of proposals. Jason emphasised he and his team were willing to listen to proposals from the community.

SBC Councillor Mountford advised it was regrettable these cuts had to be made and advised SBC needed to make savings of £30m over the next five years as money received from the Scottish Government had fallen by 3%. In response to a question on how much money came from local council tax Councillor Mountford advised the Scottish Government provided 80% and 20% came from local council tax. In response to a question Councillor Mountford advised a 1% increase in council tax would generate £0.5m. SBC Councillor T Weatherston advised 82% of the total budget was allocated to education and social work and the remaining 18% was used for everything else.

Councillor McGrath advised he was disappointed SBC were making decisions without consultation and the involvement of the community. In response to this Jason advised this proposal had been published in the SBC newsletter and only 28 members of the public feed back comment.

Members questioned whether the new grass cutting equipment was suitable and asked whether it had been purchased or hired.

During a heated discussion SBC Councillor Robson asked members to direct any criticism and comments to the SBC Councillors and not the officers.

Councillor Hodges advised Kelso in Bloom had a good relationship with SBC and when she had taken on the chair of this group she had not envisaged looking after the Square. Going forward it was agreed members of Kelso in Bloom would meet with Jason and his team to work through proposals. The Provost asked that cutting the grass in the local cemetery and play parks be reviewed.

SBC Malcolm Joyce advised there was a budget pressure on the provision of public toilets which was a non-statutory service and that the income generated from charging was significantly less than budgeted. He advised a paper would be submitted to the SBC Council with proposals to preserve and protect this provision.

#### **Presentation by Scottish Borders Housing Association regarding development proposals at Tweed Court**

Caroline Purcell, Head of Asset Planning & Development, Scottish Borders Housing Association thanked the Council for the opportunity to outline development proposals at Tweed Court.

Caroline advised the Scottish Government has a target of creating 50,000 new affordable homes by 2021 and Scottish Registered Social Landlords have been tasked with delivering these new homes. She advised SBHA had delivered 59 new homes for affordable rent across the Scottish Borders and SBHA plans to build a further 65 new affordable homes in the next 3 year over 9 communities in the Scottish Borders. She advised the building of 13 new affordable homes at Tweed Court in Kelso forms part of SBHA's 3 year plan.

Caroline advised the proposal is to demolish the 2 amenity housing building along with the Abbeyfield building and build 13, 3 bedroom, 5 person family houses on the site. She further advised the proposal does not include works to the 6 properties to the front left of the site and they are mindful of the impact the development will have on these residents and consultation with them is planned.

Caroline advised a planning application will be submitted at the end of June 2018 and we expect to hear the outcome of this around October 2018. If planning approval is granted we would anticipate the build starting in February/March 2019 after demolition.

SBC Councillor Weatherston welcomed this development and advised SBC would be building a new play park across the road

#### **Chamber of Trade report / Visit Kelso**

The Provost advised at this year's AGM of the Chamber of Trade Alan Livingstone had stood down as Chair and a suitable replacement could not be found so it was decided that Chamber should no longer exist. Therefore Visit Kelso which was formed in June 2015 as the marketing arm of Kelso Chamber of Trade to promote Kelso and the surrounding area to locals and visitors took over its role.

The Provost advised the Chair of Visit Kelso is Tina Newton, who unfortunately had given apologies for tonight's meeting. Visit Kelso had held a successful meet and greet event on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> of May inviting existing members and community groups to come along and see what they could do to benefit the town. As a result Visit Kelso gained at least eight new members two new committee members

**Commented [HT1]:** I don't think that this is correct. You need to check with Dean who was at the meeting. I think that a decision was made to end the chamber and let Visit Kelso take over the role so the role of chairman of the Chamber was no longer required and hence Alan resigned. This way this is written it says that the Chamber ceased to exist because Alan Resigned which is not fair or right.

Visit Kelso have applied and been successful in securing funding from various sources to help promote the town and district, producing pop up banners, designing and printing leaflets which highlight the town's events and recently with Leader Funding have employed a marketing expert and social media guru to help give the group focus and direction.

#### **Minutes of the meeting held on 8 May 2018**

The minutes held on Tuesday 8 May 2018 were approved. They were proposed by Councillor Harry Tomczyk and seconded by Councillor Ian Brown.

#### **Matters arising**

##### Resilience Group

The Provost advised the Secretary had contacted our insurers to ask that this new group be covered under the Kelso Community Council cover. It was presumed that the new group would need to be in a similar situation to Kelso in Bloom ie. a KCC organisation which would mean they would need to report to KCC and have at least one KCC Councillor on it. The Provost advised our insurers had agreed to include this group and he would be sit on their committee.

##### Memorial Garden

Councillor T Weatherston advised all necessary paperwork had been completed and work had started on the garden. Robertson's had submitted a letter of understanding outlining their responsibility for dealing with the maintenance of the wall including dealing with plaques. Councillor Weatherston advised Forbes had commissioned work on a metal gate entrance in memory of Mr Forbes.

##### Borders Railway

Councillor Robson advised a letter had been sent to Charles Johnston, Head Officer Plans and Research, Scottish Borders Council asking that the line of the old railway from Charlesfield to Kelso and then on to the national border is safeguarded for future re-development. Councillor Robson advised he was in discussion with Northumberland County Council to progress matters to protect the line.

##### Kelso in Bloom

Councillor Hodges advised the group were extremely busy and work on Rose Lane had been completed. The Provost thanked Councillor Hodges and volunteers for all their efforts and congratulated them on the work at Rose Lane which was a vast improvement to the benefit of the town. Councillor Hodges advised more community litter picks would be organised prior to the Floral Gateway judging.

##### Cinema

Councillor Cooper advised the Trustees and volunteers of the cinema group held a meeting last night and had met their objectives for the first year of the venture and had broken even, demonstrating the venture is possible without financial support. Councillor Cooper advised the group had agreed to carry on and would be meeting over the summer to see how it could be developed. The Provost thanked Peter and the group for their work and looked forward to receiving further updates. It was agreed this item should be removed as a regular agenda item and Councillor Cooper would bring any relevant issues to future meetings.

##### Men's Shed

The Secretary advised she had submitted a letter to the Co-op to offer support for the Men's Shed and to see whether a way forward could be found. The Secretary advised the Co-op had responded positively stating a verbal agreement had been made with the Men's Shed but due to circumstances outside their control they were unable to move forward with the project as quickly as they hoped but anticipated a satisfactory outcome.

#### NHS/Social Services integration

Councillor McGrath advised he had recently attended a meeting at which commissioning of services was discussed. Councillor McGrath expressed disappointment that a Director of Finance had not been appointed. SBC Councillor Weatherston advised the post had been advertised but no suitable candidates had applied for the role.

#### Questions from the public

There were no questions from the members of the public.

#### **Secretary's Report**

The Secretary advised an invitation had been received from the Kelso Laddies Association inviting Councillors to attend the Laying of the Wreath Ceremony on Sunday 15 July and the Bussing Ceremony on Wednesday 18 July. The Secretary asked Councillors to let her know whether they would be attending.

The Secretary advised the SBC Community Council budget has been approved and one criteria for drawing down the grant was the submission of a minute whereby all Community Councillors agreed to abide by the Code of Conduct for Community Councillors. The Secretary advised she would circulate a copy of the Code of Conduct and all Councillors were asked to confirm their acceptance. Post meeting all Kelso Community Councillors agreed to abide by the Code of Conduct.

The Provost advised it was timely the Kelso Community Council reviewed its Constitution as this was last updated in 1997. This subject would be discussed at a future meeting.

#### **Provost Report**

The Provost had no report to give.

#### **Scottish Borders Council Community Network (SBCCN)**

Councillor McGrath advised the Annual General Meeting had been held on the 30 May. Councillor McGrath and Cooper had been re-elected as the Cheviot representatives. Councillor McGrath advised the AGM had been a successful meeting and one of the presentations was on grants and other financial assistance available to Community Councils and local community groups. Councillor Tomczyk asked for copies of the presentation to be circulated for information.

Councillor McGrath advised copies of a letter and supporting information regarding CCN Participation Refusal had been sent to the Scottish Minister, Kevin Stewart MSP and an acknowledgement received. The Secretary advised copies of these documents had been circulated to Community Councillors.

#### **Any Other Business**

All business had been covered.

### **Scottish Borders Council Report**

#### **Cheviot Area Partnership**

Councillor Mountford advised the Area Partnership had taken place on 6 June in Kelso. The Provost advised the new format of the meeting had been successful, a lot of issues had been discussed and now action was needed. Councillor Mountford advised discussion from these meetings would be captured and it was aimed to produce a Locality Plan.

Councillor Mountford advised he would be chairing a meeting of the Community Councils in the Cheviot area to discuss the Area Partnership role on Community Empowerment. Councillor Mountford advised a questionnaire had been sent to all Councils.

#### **Parking /Traffic management**

Councillor Robson advised a very successful meeting had been held prior to the main Council meeting and the discussion would be appended to these minutes.

Councillor Mountford advised the Community Action Police team had issued over 170 parking tickets across the Borders in the last couple of months. Councillor Mountford advised the team of six constables and a sergeant is tasked with tackling issues that matter to local communities. Councillor Mountford advised he would request a breakdown of issued parking tickets by town. Councillor Mountford asked Councillors and the public to contact him if there were any particular policing issues the Community Action Police team could tackle.

### **Questions to SBC Councillors**

Councillor Tomczyk asked for an update on parking within the Square and SBC Councillor Weatherston advised they were looking for a solution.

Councillor Tomczyk asked for an update on the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund and Councillor Mountford undertook to follow up with discussions with our MSP.

### **Consideration of Licenses**

There were no licenses for consideration.

### **Consideration of Plans**

The Council considered the following plans –

Internal and external alterations to Red Lion Hotel, Crawford Street, Kelso. The Community Council had no objections to the plans.

Formation of access ramp to Halifax Bank of Scotland, 8-9 The Square, Kelso. The Community Council in principle did not object to the plans, however there were concerns about obstructing the pavement.

The Provost wished everyone a good summer break and advised the next meeting of Kelso Community Council will be held in the Town Hall, Kelso on Tuesday 11 September 2018 at 7.00pm. The Secretary undertook to circulate any relevant matters to Councillors.

**Commented [HT2]:** I spoke to Simon at the Border Union Show and Rachel is progressing a change of criteria with SEPA.

**Commented [HT3]:** I think that there were concerns about obstructing the pavement.

## **APPENDIX**

### **Parking In Kelso - Summary of meeting**

The Provost opened the special meeting which he had previously advised would be held at 6.00 pm prior to the formal meeting of the Kelso Community Council.

Scottish Borders Councillor Euan Robson made a presentation to Community Councillors and members of the public present. He tabled an outline paper which forms part of this Minute as an attachment.

Councillor Robson explained that he is a member of Scottish Borders Council's Parking Issues Working Group which is to report to the Council in September. He emphasised that at this stage no decisions had been taken and that the Working Group was still taking evidence and would formulate its recommendations in August.

SBC Councillor Robson advised that there were five themes in his presentation.

#### **Options for parking management in the Borders**

Councillor Robson said that the Working Group had considered whether the current arrangements whereby the Police were responsible for enforcement should continue. The alternatives were decriminalisation whereby the Council would take on responsibility and a version of this where the Council would subcontract parking management to a private organisation. He said that most Councils in Scotland operate on a decriminalised basis and in answer to Councillor Tomczyk confirmed Edinburgh Council used a private contractor.

Councillor Robson believed that as Scottish Borders Council had initiated a Police Community Action Team of one sergeant and six officers part of whose remit would be parking enforcement, the Working Group would likely recommend remaining with Police enforcement at least for a while.

Councillor Robson also said that moving to decriminalisation would cost in the region of £300,000 in set up costs partly because of the considerable work on new traffic regulation orders.

Councillor Robson advised there had been 175 tickets issued thus far by the Police CAT team. Councillor Mountford, in response to a member of the public who doubted that the team had been in Kelso, said that there would soon be a town by town breakdown of where tickets had been issued to ensure proper monitoring and fulsome coverage.

#### **Waiting Times**

Waiting Times were not standard across the Borders and ranged from half an hour to two hours with differing no return periods. The Working Group was likely to recommend standard times for simplicity's sake and these would probably be one or two hours waiting time with no return within the hour and 8.30 am to 5.30 pm Monday to Saturday duration. If this was adopted there would be only a small change in Kelso as the present duration was 8.00 am to 6.00 pm. In answer to a member of the public who raised the issue of guests in hotels the Provost said that the shorter day time restriction would be advantageous to hoteliers as guests could effectively park on street from 3.30 pm to 10.30 am which generally coincided with check in and check out times.

#### **Payment for Parking**

Councillor Robson said that he detected little or no appetite to re-introduce either off street or on street parking charges. Some towns notably Galashiels had paid parking which funded the maintenance of amenity areas. Apparently 75% of income from parking in the Borders came from Galashiels. In response to a member of the public who asked whether it was worth considering raising money in Kelso in this way Councillor Robson said that the experience of paid off street parking in Kelso several years ago was that the public was very opposed, on street parking congestion became worse and the car parks made a loss at that time.

Councillor Robson agreed with a member of the public who referred to the introduction of free parking throughout Northumberland that if Kelso charged there would then be a disincentive to visit the town to the detriment of local traders.

### **New public car parks in Kelso**

Councillor Robson indicated that there were 232 off street parking spaces in the town. He asked whether there was a consensus that more off street parking would be welcome to which there was general agreement. However everyone present recognised the difficulty was that every potential site may have both advantages disadvantages. It was recognised that some drivers appeared not to want to walk any distance even from the Knowes car park into the Square. It was also agreed that lack of enforcement had allowed the problem of overstaying to become endemic. The consensus of the meeting was that traders in the town should try to park off street. As to locations for off street parking, places mentioned included the Glebe field, the foundry site at Pinnaclehill, Woodside Park, the old High School, Tweedside paddock, the showground and private land on Bowmont Street near Winchester Row. The Glebe field whilst most proximate to the Square was actually a greater walking distance to the Square than the Knowes. Also the main archaeological remains were in the area nearest to the town. The foundry site was well away from the centre but could possibly include an overnight parking for HGVs and parking for visitor buses on call for tourists to the town at a drop and pick up point in or near the Square. In the latter case this would release spaces in the Knowes. Woodside Park was well away from the Square and would attract opposition from surrounding residences. The old High School was up for sale and the other locations were on private land.

### **On street parking**

Councillor Robson table a map of the town centre and there was considerable discussion concerning a number of options to increase on street parking spaces. Amongst these included the re-creation of two spaces adjacent to the Bank of Scotland auto teller, a review of loading bays in Horsemarket and Roxburgh Street in particular, re-assessment of the taxi rank especially in the light of the alleged cabling for a charging point for electric vehicles on the rank on the north side of the Square.

Councillor Robson said that he would report views to the Working Group at its meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> July and report back to the Kelso Community Council at its September meeting. Councillor Robson advised any proposals would be subject to a public consultation

He also indicated that he had set up an online survey for all residents at

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LSZVF6Y>

and would welcome people's comments.