

**Minutes of the Meeting of Kelso Community Council held in the Town Hall, Kelso on Tuesday 10 September 2019, at 7.00pm**



**PRESENT:** Councillors James Boulton, Peter Cooper, Betty Hodges, Colin McGrath, Harry Tomczyk and Dean Weatherston (Chair) and Scottish Borders Councillor Simon Mountford, Euan Robson and Tom Weatherston.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Shirley Redgrave (Secretary), Tina Newton (Visit Kelso), Kathryn Wyllie (Southern Reporter), David Robinson (Development Manager Eildon Housing) and Architects David Burgher and Britt Veirup, Sandy Devers and member of the public Peter Weatherston.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors John Bassett, Ian Brown, Gavin Horsburgh, Jim McCombie, Kerry Yule and Police Scotland.

- *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.*
- *All correspondence to be circulated via the Secretary.*

**Welcome**

The Provost welcomed everyone back after the summer recess to the September meeting.

**Police Matters**

Police Scotland had tendered apologies and the summer 2019 Police Scotland Reports had previously been circulated. There were no questions.

**Presentation by Eildon Housing on the redevelopment of the old Kelso High School site**

David Robinson (Development Manager, Eildon Housing) and Architects David Burgher and Britt Veirup from Aitken Turnbull attended to give an update on the proposed plans for the redevelopment of the old Kelso High School site.

David Robinson introduced the Architects who distributed plans to highlight the Concept Design : Conservation Strategy retaining a B listed building, Development Design : Site Plan, Ground floor plan, First floor plan, Elevations, Street Elevations and Visualisations. Britt advised the current application was for planning consent to demolish the teaching block, games hall, music block and dining hall and partial

demolition of the existing listed building and change of use to form 34 extra care flats with associated communal areas and erection of 47 dwellings and associated infrastructure. Britt advised listed building consent would be submitted on 25 October and detailed planning application on the 24 December. It was anticipated work would start in January 2020 and Phase 1 would take two years to redevelop the listed school building for the 34 extra care flats. It was noted this development was a joint initiative between Eildon Housing for the 34 extra care flats and Michael Ballantyne for the 47 dwellings on site.

The Provost and Community Councillors welcomed the development of the extra care flats which would enable people to live in their own homes.

SBC Councillor Mountford asked for confirmation that the War Memorial would be transferred to the new high school and David Robinson advised it was his understanding this would happen. SBC Councillor Mountford requested this happened before this year's Remembrance Day and David advised the War Memorial was part of the fabric of the listed building.

Councillor Tomczyk asked whether people from Kelso would be given priority for the extra care flats and David advised allocation would be based on Eildon Housing Allocation Policy and anyone could apply for an extra care flat with the additional criteria that they were over 60.

SBC Councillor Weatherston welcomed this exciting project and saw it as an opportunity to free up some of the 3 and 4 bedroom houses in Kelso which could be offered to families.

Councillor McGrath welcomed this development as he saw it as going towards addressing his proposed Retirement Village concept.

Councillor Tomczyk commented he was aware there were issues with the roof on the listed building and he was advised the roof would be completely replaced.

Councillor Tomczyk commented he fully supported the social housing aspect of the development but raised concerns regarding parking. However, he raised serious concerns that the existing site provides off road parking for people attending both St Mary's Church, Kelso Bowling Club, Kelso Orchard Tennis Club, Kelso Rugby Club and sporting events at Poynder Park. He also pointed out that Nos1-6 of the proposed private houses had direct access to Bowmont Street which would make the parking problem worse. Without that there will be many cars parked on Bowmont Street. This is an area which is already a bottle neck and has heavy on-street parking. It is after all the main route into the town centre from the north and needs improvement rather than being made worse. There is also outline planning permission for Wallace's to be developed as housing, which would further exacerbate the problem as it is also currently used for parking out of operational hours..

The Provost asked that the any memorial trees currently sited in the grounds be moved and SBC Councillor Weatherston advised this was being dealt with.

The Provost commented that there were various pieces of artwork from the former school that couldn't be accommodated in the new High School and they had been returned to the original artists. Given some of these pieces were specially made for the corridors and stairwells of the school he suggested nearer the time Eildon Housing could enquire about these pieces to see if they could go back up.

The Provost advised the Community Council needed to address the planning application later in their meeting and in view of concerns raised suggested Councillors provided comments to the Secretary in order for a reply to be submitted.

David Robinson thanked the Community Council for the opportunity to outline their plans and advised he would welcome any additional comments and feedback via the Secretary. He also advised Eildon would be setting up a Community Action scheme and would welcome involvement from the Community Council.

The Provost thanked David and the Architects for attending the meeting.

### **Update on Kelso City USA Twinning**

Sandy Devers asked to attend the meeting as he wished to renew links with Kelso USA and asked the Community Council what role they wished to play. Sandy advised he was planning to visit the Kelso USA Highland Games in 2020. The Provost commented he was very happy to support this initiative and had met with a lady Rotarian from Kelso USA earlier in the year who was visiting Scotland and he had arranged for her to meet with the local Rotary Club.

The Secretary advised she had received a letter from Ms La Donna Page, Kelso Sister Cities Exchange Kelso Washington City Council who had written to cement bonds between the two communities. The letter dated 10 April 2019 didn't arrived until the end of July 2019. Kelso USA planned to send a delegation to Kelso UK in 2020 and wanted to hold a formal signing ceremony. The Secretary was asked to acknowledged the letter and ask when they proposed to visit. It was suggested the group could be invited to attend Kelso Civic Week and a Civic Ceremony would be organised.

SBC Councillor Mountford commented this proposed visit could be an excellent publicity opportunity and suggested Visit Kelso were involved.

### **Visit Kelso**

Tina Newton advised it had been a busy summer which had culminated in the lead up to the Tour of Britain on Sunday 8 September, with Kelso staging the start and finish with the entire route being hosted within the Scottish Borders. Tina advised the Tour of Britain had been an extremely successful event for the town and Visit Kelso had worked hard with Live Borders and partners to ensure its success by promoting it with leaflets, banners, maps and a digital takeover of the web pages. Tina advised traders had been encouraged to open on the day and it appeared those that opened had done better this year.

Councillor Boulton offered his congratulations to Visit Kelso for all their efforts in staging the Tour of Britain which had been an outstanding event for the town of Kelso.

Councillor Tomczyk offered his congratulations and advised the TV coverage of Kelso had been brilliant and thanked SBC for their support. The Provost concurred and said the aerial shots of Kelso looked amazing and said he would be writing to the organisers on behalf of the Community Council to thank them for staging the event in Kelso and asking them to come back in the future. The Provost would also write to the officers at SBC to thank them for all their assistance. SBC Councillor Weatherston thanked Visit Kelso for their sterling work and the traders who had made everyone welcome.

Tina advised Kelso had been shortlisted for the Great British High Street Rising award which celebrates up and coming local communities who are on their way to transforming for the future. All shortlisted high streets will be visited by the Great British Judges who will assess them against their original entry. This accounts for 80% of the overall score with the final 20% being determined by public voting on the website. Tina advised the Judges had visited Kelso the previous day and urged everyone to log on and cast a vote for Kelso. Tina advised winners would be announced on 7 October.

Tina advised Visit Kelso's next major project would be Christmas and she would report back to the Community Council.

The Provost thanked Tina for attending the meeting.

### **Notice of Motion**

Provost Weatherston proposed and Councillor Colin McGrath seconded the nominations of Paul Roberts from 173 Roxburgh Street, Kelso TD5 7DU to be co-opted to the current vacancy on the Kelso Community Council. It was confirmed Paul Roberts appeared on the Electoral Register for Kelso and had signed the Acceptance of Nomination.

Councillor James Boulton raised the issue that Paul Roberts had been invited to fill a vacancy which had not been widely advertised and he was concerned that there may be other members of the public who wished to stand. Therefore the Community Council could not agree to co-opt Paul Roberts onto the Council at this stage and the Secretary was asked to seek advice.

Post meeting the Secretary took advice and have been told she had followed the correct procedure to co-opt a person on by putting it on the agenda, having a proposer and seconder and ensuring the person is on the electoral role. It was noted a member who is co-opted will have full voting rights after three meetings and once co-opted they would serve the remaining two years until the next election. However, if the Community Council wished to fully advertise the vacancy then we would need to go through the whole bye election procedure for the one vacancy.

This information was shared with the Community Councillors and the majority agreed that Paul should be co-opted onto the Council with immediate effect.

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2019**

The minutes held on Tuesday 11 June 2019 were approved. They were proposed by Councillor Harry Tomczyk and seconded by Councillor James Boulton.

### **Matters arising**

#### **Decommissioning Play Parks**

Councillor Tomczyk asked for an update. SBC Councillor Weatherston advised the consultation on the future investment in public play facilities and proposals for removal of obsolete play areas closed on 18 August and currently a review of the feedback was being undertaken and no play park would be decommissioned until the investment in the new play parks had been completed.

SBC Councillor Mountford advised £5million would be invested across the Borders over the next ten years and this would come out of the capital investment programme. SBC Councillor Robson advised he had raised concerns at the full council meeting on 29 August and had asked for an explanation on how SBC calculated savings by closing the smaller playparks. He had been advised SBC was investing significant sums in enhancing play facilities and no net saving is planned from the programme which is designed to be revenue neutral. The overall revenue budget for the upkeep of parks across the Borders is contained within the budget for neighbourhood services and no savings are projected.

The Provost asked SBC Councillors the date they had been given access to the report and SBC Councillor Weatherston advised they had received the report at the same time the papers for the Area Partnership had been published.

Councillor Tomczyk asked whether there were plans for the provision of playparks for the elderly. The Provost commented Aly Hay was in discussions with SBC to provide facilities for the elderly.

Councillor Cooper asked what SBC's plans were around destination playparks and SBC Councillor Robson advised sites had been identified and he would come back with more information. He went on to advise decommissioned obsolete playparks could be used for informal play and have the potential to help the Council address other issues such as its obligation to identify places for community food growing.

#### **Kelso Recycling Centre**

SBC Councillor Robson advised there were no plans to alter the Monday closed day at the Kelso recycling centre.

#### **Borders Railway**

The Secretary advised she had written to Transport Scotland regarding the possibility of extending the Borders Railway from Tweedbank via Kelso onto Berwick upon Tweed and copies had been sent to John Lamont MP and Rachel Hamilton MSP. Copies of the responses had been circulated during the summer recess and Councillor Tomczyk had asked how Kelso Community Council and Northumberland County Council could be involved in the consideration of the proposed St Boswells to Berwick link. SBC Councillor Robson advised he was awaiting developments and the Community Council should continue to make representations.

#### **Kelso in Bloom**

Councillor Hodges advised Kelso in Bloom and its volunteers have been extremely busy during the summer and highlighted the following –

Engagement with the Duke of Edinburgh pupils has started and they will be involved in litter picks around the school and town, cleaning of street signs and furniture and assisting with gardening at the hospital and library.

Councillor Hodges and the Secretary had attended the U3A monthly meeting to give an update and to ask whether the U3A would be prepared to adopt say the bed outside the Police station.

Kelso had been judged for the Floral Gateway competition and winners will be announced on 24 September.

The Rotary club had planted crocuses at the Jedburgh entrance

Bulbs would be planted at the Community Memorial Garden

Informal links had been established with Alnwick in Bloom who had visited the town and invited Councillor Hodges and the Secretary back to them.

The last community litter pick would be held on the 29 September

A bag pack would be organised at Sainsbury's towards the end of the year.

The volunteer base had increased.

Councillor Hodges advised she and the Secretary had worked hard to secure sponsorship going forward. Mayfield Garden Centre had agreed to sponsor the planting of the tubs immediately in front of the Town Hall, the Cross Keys would sponsor the two planters outside the hotel and A. Hume and Douglas Home would sponsor the bench planters outside their premises.

Councillor Hodges advised with SBC withdrawing services this would create additional work and it was agreed a new committee would be set up to take this work forward. A post would be put on the KCC and KIB Facebook pages

The Provost advised, he along with Councillor Hodges and the Secretary had met with officers from Neighbourhood services to discuss plans for the War Memorial Garden. The future is still uncertain. SBC Councillor Robson advised he was in discussions with British Legion who were concerned about the plans to remove the raised beds. Councillor Hodges advised there was a health and safety issues working on the raised beds and that was one of the reasons she wished them to be removed.

The Provost, Councillor Hodges and other Community Councillors expressed concerns about the uncertainty of floral provision and grass cutting. SBC Councillor Mountford advised no decision had been made regarding the grass cutting at the Cobby and Mayfield.

### Public Toilets

The Provost advised he continued to receive numerous complaints regarding the persistent vandalism of the public toilets in Kelso and asked whether they could be locked and secured every night. The Provost commented he believed the repair costs to deal with the vandalism would be more than it would cost SBC to close them at night.

SBC Councillor Mountford advised the provision of public toilets was not a statutory obligations and there was an ongoing review of their provision which he would report back on.

#### VE Day 75 – 8 May 2020

The Provost advised he was working with various groups including the Kelso Laddies Association, British Legion and Churches Together to make preparations for Kelso to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of VE Day on Friday 8 May 2020 and would be meeting with them later in the week to draw up a programme of events.

#### Questions from the Public

There were no questions from the public.

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

The Secretary read out a summary of correspondence received over the summer recess and tabled the following –

- Letter from SBC Dog Education Officer whose aim is to promote responsible dog ownership and safety around dogs. It was agreed the officer should be invited to a future meeting.
- Letter from Kelso Medical Group Practice to advise closure of Yetholm branch surgery closure.
- Letter from SBC regarding Local Community Path Grants. It was agreed this should be shared on Facebook to offer to all groups.
- Letter from Kelso Washington City Council, this item had been addressed earlier in the agenda.
- Annual grant has been approved
- The Bridge Newsletter
- Friends of Kelso Library need support to advertise their events and suggested this was done through KCC FB
- John Lamont MP is holding a Community Engagement meeting on Friday 13 September at 4.00pm at St Boswells.

The Secretary highlighted the consultation on Scottish Borders Area Partnership and Community Fund Review 2019 which closes on the 26 September 2019. The Provost and Secretary will be meeting on 20 September to complete the questionnaire and all Councillors are welcome to join them to put forward a Community Council reply. The Secretary advised it was important a response was sent in as it was proposed that the existing grant funding for Community Councils, Local Festivals and Federation of Village Halls become part of the new Community Fund in 2020. Kelso Community Council did not want to have to bid for its annual grant funding going forward as it was felt this was unfair and SBC Councillor Weatherston concurred with this comment.

It was noted in order to ensure that the review is completely impartial Scottish Borders Council has commissioned the Scottish Community Development Centre to undertake the consultation work on their behalf. The survey will complement focus groups and the results of the review and recommendations will be reported to the

meeting of the SBC on 19 December 2019. The Secretary advised Councillors could complete the questionnaire as individuals.

### **Provost's Report**

The Provost advised he had previously circulated his diary of events. He commented he had had an extremely busy and enjoyable summer representing the Council at various activities including Civic Week, Borders Union Showground, Tour of Britain and had recently attending an event at the Republic of Poland Edinburgh Consul General. He advised he had given a talk to the local Cub Scouts and helped organise a litter pick for them. The Provost advised that he and SBC Councillor Robson would be meeting a group of Girl Guides immediately prior to the Community Council to give a talk on the work of the Community Council and Scottish Borders Council. The group will stay for the first half hour of our meeting.

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

Councillor McGrath advised the SBCCN had met on the 14 August and the first meeting of the Community Council Scheme Review working group is due to take place on 19 September. The Community Council members representing the Cheviot area are Matthew Ladds and Stuart Turnbull. It was noted these meetings will be held in public and any Councillor could attend to listen to the debate.

Councillor McGrath reminded members the Area Partnership Review survey closes on the 26 September and it was important members commented on the proposed changes to way community councils are funded.

Councillor McGrath advised the Locality Working Group would meet on the 30 September.

### **Any Other Business**

The Provost raised the issue of drug misuse and advised he had been forced to contact Police Scotland due to several incidents in the town. Firstly due to alleged staff shortages and no pharmacist at Lloyds Chemist it had been forced to close. As a result drug users got very aggressive and started rattling the chemist doors desperate to get their medication. On the morning of a community litter pick two men clearly under the influence of drugs were deliberately walking in front of cars before approaching and intimidating people in the Square. The Provost commented it was disappointing a FOI request had to be made to get statistics on drug events.

Opening of Shedden Park – The Provost asked if there was a completion date and was advised SBC were working towards the end of September. An opening ceremony would be organised.

Councillor Bolton asked whether measures were being put in place to install a dropped kerb on the bypass leading from the Sprouston to Kelso path. SBC Councillor Mountford confirmed this would be happening in the near future.

### **Scottish Borders Council Report**

#### **Cheviot Area Partnership**



The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 25 September at 6.30pm at Kelso High School. All Councillors and members of the public were welcome.

#### Parking /Traffic management

There was no update.

#### Consideration of Licenses

It was noted during the summer recess there was one application for Variation of Premises Licence in respect of 1905 Crawford Street Kelso. The Secretary advised this had been circulated and approved

#### Consideration of Plans

The Council considered the following plans during the summer recess which were approved–

Installation of awning, Shop 43 The Square, Kelso TD5 7HL - 19/00917/LBC

External alterations to reverse the existing door and window configuration, Abbotsford Lodge, Abbotsford Grove, Kelso TD5 7BN - 19/00936/LBC

Replacement windows – 19 -3 The Square, Kelso TD5 7HH - 19/00971/FUL

19/00930/FUL | Erection of industrial building, formation of crop sprayer wash down area and associated car parking, boundary fence and landscaping | Plots 11 - 14 Pinnaclehill Industrial Estate Kelso Scottish Borders The Community Council looked at this application and considered all of the planning Policies relevant to the area of the proposal and were happy to support the plans as long as they are fully compliant with SEPA regulations.

19/01104/FUL External re-decoration Shop 18 The Square Kelso Scottish Borders TD5 7HH and 19/01095/LBC External re-decoration and installation of new signage Shop 18 The Square Kelso Scottish Borders TD5 7HH

19/01141/FUL alterations to dwellinghouse and new surface to rear access yard, Westbank Terrace House, Chalkheugh, Kelso. There were no objections.

19/01244/FUL change of use of main school building and alterations to form 34 extra care flats with associated communal areas and erection of 47 dwellinghouses and associated infrastructure. The Secretary was asked to recirculate the planning proposal and seek comments.

Post meeting comments were collated and a letter of support was submitted with concerns regarding the provision of parking as outlined above.

The next Community Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 8 October 2019.