

**Minutes of the Meeting of Kelso Community Council held  
in the Town Hall, Kelso on Tuesday 8 May, at 7.15pm**



**PRESENT:** Councillors John Bassett, Peter Cooper, Betty Hodges, James McCombie, Colin McGrath, Harry Tomczyk, Dean Weatherston (Chair) and Kerry Yule and Scottish Borders Councillors Simon Mountford, Euan Robson (part) and Tom Weatherston.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Shirley Redgrave (Secretary), Suzanne Howgego (Police Scotland), Jill Lothian (Kelso High School – part), Kirsty Smyth (Southern Reporter) and members of the public Dennis Fortune, Jane Harrison, Rhona Hastie, Verity Mutch, Richard Sloan and Alastair Summerhill (Chairman Kelso Mens Shed).

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors James Boulton, Ian Brown and Gavin Horsburgh

- *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 Councillors and members of the public to the meeting.

**Police Matters**

Suzanne Howgego (Police Scotland) advised Police Scotland were not aware of any drug issue at the High School and asked Councillor McGrath to go over why he had reported there was an issue at the last Community Council meeting so Police Scotland could get a better understanding of the situation which had caused extreme concern to staff, pupils, parents and members of the public. Councillor McGrath advised he had been contacted confidentially by several members of the public to raise concerns about the possible use of drugs at the High School. Councillor McGrath advised he had been contacted as a Community Councillor that is why he reported it at the meeting. Since the last meeting Councillor McGrath had met with Jill Lothian, Head teacher.

Suzanne Howgego re-emphasised Police Scotland were not aware of a drug issue and if one came to their attention they had a very robust protocol in place to deal with the allegation and urged the public to contact the police with any concerns and if they felt they could not contact Police Scotland they could contact Crime Stoppers.

SBC Councillor Mountford commented the reported alleged drug issue at Kelso High School had caused considerable concern at the High School, the community and amongst officers at Scottish Borders Council and asked Councillors to be very careful not to use the Community Council public meetings to make unsubstantiated comments in future.

Jane Harrison member of the public and parent of child at the school commented she was extremely upset by the comments which had caused a great deal of distress and endorsed Councillor Mountford's comments that the public meeting should not be used as a forum to raise unsubstantiated comments.

Jill Lothian head teacher of Kelso High School commented she was personally very upset by the comments as she worked extremely hard for the school, its pupils and the community and she was not aware of any issue with drugs and if any allegations had been made direct to her these would have been taken seriously and fully investigated and followed up straight away. Jill Lothian commented she was aware there was a very small number of pupils, 2.7%, who were involved in anti-social behaviour and this should not be a reflection on the rest of the school pupils.

Rhona Hastie, member of the public asked Councillor McGrath whether he had advised the people contacting him with the allegations to contact the Police and he confirmed he had. Rhona Hastie asked the public not to be frightened to contact the local Police with any issues. SBC Councillor T Weatherston commented members of the public often raised concerns with SBC Councillors which were passed on in confidence.

Suzanne Howgego advised the monthly report had been circulated and there had been a spate of shop lifting events. Suzanne advised she was actively following lines of enquiry with one male and she advised she regularly spoke to shop keepers to educate them on security measures.

Suzanne Howgego advised there appeared to be a peak of anti-social behaviour issues with youths but she advised this was down to an identified very small group and Police Scotland were actively pursuing and visiting the individuals at home to speak to their parents.

Councillor T Weatherston asked for an update on the shop lifting incidents at Sainsbury's and Suzanne advised to her knowledge local people were not involved and this appeared to be a professional gang from outside the area. Councillor Yule commented she had spoken to Police Scotland after witnessing shoplifting at Sainsbury's but there didn't appear to be any follow up. Suzanne

Howgego advised all calls were directed to a contact centre and prioritised and Police would appear if there were resources available in the area. Suzanne also advised she was working with management at Sainsbury's and staff should contact their management if they were witnessing a shoplifting event and not to tackle the individuals.

Suzanne Howgego advised Police Scotland were concerned about the whereabouts of a missing person last seen in the Kelso area at the weekend and would send the Secretary details for circulation and reporting on Facebook.

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

Alan Livingstone had tendered his apologies and it was noted the AGM would be held on Wednesday 9 May at 5.30 in the Town Hall

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2018**

The minutes held on Tuesday 10 April 2018 were approved. They were proposed by Councillor Harry Tomczyk and seconded by Councillor Betty Hodges.

### **Matters arising**

#### **Resilience Group**

Dennis Fortune advised he had been appointed Deputy Co-ordinator of the group and they were currently compiling a list of volunteers and meeting with SBC to progress matters. SBC Councillors Weatherston and Mountford commented they were delighted this new group had been established.

Post meeting – the Secretary was asked to contact 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 Secretary has written to the insurers and is awaiting their feedback.

#### **Memorial Garden**

Councillor T Weatherston advised progress was being made and work would commence as soon as the paperwork to hand over the maintenance of the garden to the Community Council had been finalised and signed off. The Community Council would be responsible for carrying out the maintenance of the area surrounding the memorial wall and Robertson's Memorials would be responsible for dealing with the maintenance of the wall including dealing with plaques and Councillor T Weatherston undertook to obtain a letter of understanding from Robertson's.

#### **Borders Railway**

As agreed at the last meeting Councillor Robson had drafted a letter to be 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. The Secretary will send this letter once comments have been received from Councillor Boulton.

Councillor Mountford advised Transport for Scotland had recently published a consultation document encouraging local people and businesses to provide their views to Transport Scotland, following the publication of its draft report for the Borders Transport Corridors Study. The report and the consultation responses will be considered as part of the national Strategic Transport Projects Review. Councillor Mountford advised the Scottish Government is committed to examining the case for an extension to the Borders Railway and improvements to the A1, A7 and A68 and urged Councillors to complete the consultation. Councillor Tomczyk pointed out the reopening of the Charlesfield to Berwick railway line was one of the options and urged councillors to complete the consultation response as he had done.

### Kelso in Bloom

Councillor Hodges advised the group were extremely busy and gave the following summary of activities:

- Coldstream entrance - the new mirror bed had been cut out and dug over. Compost had been purchased delivered and spread. Plants have been purchased and planted.
- Jedburgh Entrance – bed had been widened, site prepared and replanted with wildflower seeds. Next year the bed will be widened further.
- 2019 Calendar – progress being made and this would be based on flora and fauna around Kelso, currently working with the Kelso Camera club.
- Publicity – Kelso Life featured an article to raise awareness and requesting volunteers. To date no one has volunteered but three monetary donations have been received.
- Rose Lane – due to its prominent position it was agreed that the work at Rose Lane would need to be accelerated. The beds have been cleared of old plants and will be dug over, treated and planted up. SBHA had made a nominal donation towards the cost of planting.
- Summer Bedding for Bridgend and Coldstream Road in hand and rotas for weekly maintenance are being drawn up.
- Litter Pick Date - Sunday 27 May 2018 between 10.00 and 12.00 – please turn up in the Square and equipment will be provided.
- Charity Begins at Home had awarded £1,000 towards the cost of bedding plants. Councillor Hodges and the Secretary will attend the Awards Ceremony on the 3 June.
- Farmers Market – a cheque for £500 had been received.

Councillor Hodges advised she was alarmed to have received information on the Scotland's Floral Gateway Competition and Community Awards 2018 which included a letter regarding changes that are being implemented within Neighbourhood services. Part of the review focusses on grass cutting and bedding plant provision. The letter states there will be a change of approach to general amenity grass areas, including cemeteries and grass previously cut once every 10 working days will be cut every 20 working days. Councillor Mountford stated cutting grass every 20 working days had previously been piloted in the Borders and appeared to be working. Councillor Hodges advised long uncut grass was not a good background to the work Kelso in Bloom were currently undertaking and asked for assurances SBC would be

providing bedding plants at the Memorial Garden and Town Square. A discussion took place on the lack of grass cutting where the crocuses were located.

Post meeting – it was agreed Jason Hedley, SBC Neighbourhood Area Manager would be invited to the June meeting to explain the rationale behind the recent review.

### Cinema

Councillor Cooper advised the last film night of the season would be held on Friday 25 May with the films Duck Duck Goose and Edie. In June a meeting of the Trustees and volunteers would be held to review the first year of Kelso Community Cinema and look at future plans. Councillor Cooper advised he would report back after the meeting.

### Men's Shed

Alastair Summerhill (Chairman Kelso Men's Shed) attended the meeting to give an update. He advised negotiations with the Co-op to take over the premises in Roxburgh Street had come to a standstill and was worried that after 15 months they may be forced to look at alternative venues. Mr Summerhill asked SBC whether there were any other suitable venues within Kelso. SBC Councillor Weatherston advised the area behind Abbey Row which housed equipment for the Canoe Club could potentially be used. It was suggested the Community Council write to the Co-op to offer support for the Men's Shed and see whether a way forward could be found.

Post meeting – Mr Summerhill had advised negotiations with the Co-op had reach a sensitive and critical stage and felt that the Community Council's input might be counter-productive. However he advised that if the current situation did not conclude in their favour they would welcome the support of the Community Council.

### NHS/Social Services integration

Councillor McGrath advised staff from the Kelso Health Centre - Gail Stewart and Dena Walsh (Practice Nursing Team) had achieving an award for Improving Health at the recent 2018 Celebrating Excellence Awards and asked that the Community Council send a letter of congratulations acknowledging their hard work.

Councillor McGrath advised he had attended a meeting at which financing of the NHS/Social Services integration project had been discussed and he advised he would circulate a copy of the financial statement via the Secretary. Councillor McGrath commented one of the main purposes was to avoid duplication and work would have to be carried out differently.

### Questions from the public

There were no questions from the members of the public.

### Secretary's Report

The Secretary advised the meeting with the Housing Associations would take place in the autumn.

### **Provost Report**

The Provost reported he had attended the NHS Borders Excellence Awards and commented on how privileged he had been to hear the stories of all those nominated.

The following weekend, again at Springwood, he was invited over to open the Caravan Club Rally. It was commented on by many of their members how beautiful Kelso was and that they had enjoyed spending time looking round the shops and eating in different establishments.

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

Councillor McGrath advised the Annual General Meeting would be held on the 30 May, 7.00pm at SBC headquarters. One of the topics would be a talk on grants and other financial assistance available to Community Councils and local community groups.

Councillor McGrath advised he had heard back from Jenni Craig, Service Director Customer and Communities regarding Community Empowerment who had advised the Participation Request had been refused under delegated powers and therefore Elected Members were not aware of this. Jenni Craig had welcomed the opportunity for further engagement with Community Councils regarding the Area Partnership and had advised meetings would be organised in each locality to enable Community Councils to have the opportunity to present their views.

Councillor Tomczyk asked whether Councillor McGrath was representing and conveying the views of the Kelso Community Council at the SBCCN meetings or whether these were his own. Councillor McGrath advised Kelso Community Council had chosen not to make comments and therefore this was deemed as being in agreement with his recommendations. The Provost advised Councillor McGrath must only represent the views of the Kelso Community Council if they been discussed and agreed at a Community Council meeting and it was important all Councillors were kept in the loop.

Councillor McGrath questioned SBC for allowing officers to use delegated powers. SBC Councillor Weatherston advised every week hundreds of simple decisions were made under delegated powers and if Councillors were needed to make every single decision more Councillors would be needed. Councillor T Weatherston explained that Councillors are asked to make difficult decisions where there are objections and where large figures of money are involved.

Councillor Tomczyk mentioned a survey organised by the Scottish Community Development Centre asking for Community Councillors' views on Community Councils with a deadline date of 30 May. He had completed it and urged other Councillors to do so too. The details were circulated by the Secretary on 3 May.

### **Any Other Business**

All business had been covered.

## **Scottish Borders Council Report**

### **Cheviot Area Partnership**

Councillor Mountford advised the next meeting of the Area Partnership would take place on 6 June in Kelso. Councillor Mountford advised he would be chairing the meeting of the Community Councils in the Cheviot area to discuss the Area Partnership role in Community Empowerment.

### **Parking /Traffic management**

Councillor Robson advised at the June meeting Councillor's would have an opportunity to put forward all suggestions on parking issues. He would bring along a large scale map of Kelso for suggestions to be marked on it.

The Provost commented the new yellow paint SBC were using to mark lines appeared to be more robust.

### **Questions to SBC Councillors**

Councillor Tomczyk asked for an update on vehicles parking in the Square and Councillor T Weatherston advised officers were currently investigating how to block off the gap.

Councillor T Weatherston advised he had received feedback on the extent of the cobbles and it appeared everyone was happy with the current situation.

The Provost asked for an update on repairs to the Glebe wall and was advised SBC officers had been in touch with the Church of Scotland to remind them as owners of their responsibility to maintain their property to a safe standard.

Councillor Robson advised this year's Remembrance Sunday would be marked with a Nation's Tribute – an event to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War 1 and details would be circulated. Councillor Robson advised he had received reassurance that there would be no road works to prevent the local parade from marching up Roxburgh Street to the British Legion on Remembrance Day.

### **Consideration of Licenses**

There were no licenses for consideration.

### **Consideration of Plans**

The Council considered the following plans –

Replacement windows to top floor (retrospective) to 6 Albert Place, Kelso. The Community Council had no objections to the plans.

Alterations to dwellinghouse 134 Roxburgh Street, Kelso. The Community Council had no objections to the plans.

The next meeting of Kelso Community Council will be held in the Town Hall, Kelso on Tuesday 12 June 2018 at 7.00pm.