

Minutes of the Meeting of Kelso Community Council held in the Town Hall, Kelso on Tuesday 11 September, at 7.00pm



PRESENT: Councillors John Bassett, Ian Brown, Peter Cooper, Alan Hall, Betty Hodges, Gavin Horsburgh, Colin McGrath, Harry Tomczyk and Dean Weatherston (Chair) and Scottish Borders Councillors Simon Mountford, Euan Robson and Tom Weatherston.

IN ATTENDANCE: Shirley Redgrave (Secretary), Suzanne Howgego (Police Scotland), Louise Stewart (Visit Kelso) Kirsty Smyth (Southern Reporter), Julia Mulloy (SBHA), Nile Isephan (Eildon Housing), Gill Binnie (SBHA) and members of the public Paul Roberts and Rhona Hastie.

APOLOGIES: Councillor James McCombie and Kerry Yule

- 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

The July and August 2018 Police Scotland Reports had previously been circulated and PC Howgego asked for comments.

PC Howgego made reference to the shocking assault at Kelso Rugby Club after a video of the assault was posted on social media and advised this was an isolated incident and four teenagers had been charged in connection with the assault and assured Councillors the matter had been dealt with.

PC Howgego highlighted the Trauma Teddies scheme which had been publicised on Border News and available on Police Scotland website. This scheme involves members of the public knitting and donating small teddy bears, which are kept in

Police cars and given to small children who come into contact with the Police through traumatic or upsetting circumstances.

PC Howgego mentioned a Pensioners Advice Fair would be held on 1 November at Tait Hall between 1.00 – 4.00pm.

PC Howgego highlighted the What Matters Hubs weekly drop in sessions are being provided in Kelso every Tuesday between 1-4pm at The Planet, Abbotseat Road. These offer a drop-in session and appointments where people can meet staff such as social workers and occupational therapists and get advice about social care and health services. They also provide advice on ways people can be supported to remain independent in their own homes, such as equipment and aids, transport or help at home.

Member of the public Paul Roberts asked why Police warnings were issued for thefts rather than a sentence as this appeared to be too lenient and PC Howgego advised it was the Scottish Government who set the guidelines which they had to follow. However PC Howgego advised if someone repeated the offence within six months they would be charged.

The Provost asked what the crime rate in Kelso was compared to other Border towns and PC Howgego advised the crime rate in Kelso was relatively low. Councillor T Weatherston commented the relatively low crime rate in Kelso was an attractive bonus for people wishing to move here.

Councillor J Bassett commented the SBC Alert system provided a good source of information.

Visit Kelso

The Provost welcomed Louise Steward to the meeting. Louise advised Visit Kelso had been successful in secure funding and would be developing a map for residents and visitors. Louise advised the traders hanging baskets had been a success and the watering of these would be extended for a couple of weeks.

Louise advised Visit Kelso had entered the Great British High Street (GBHS) Awards 2018 to recognise excellence and innovation on the high streets of Great Britain. By recognising and celebrating local achievements on our high streets and supporting the communities in which we live and work @TheGBHighSt seeks to stimulate consumer interest and awareness in our town centres. Louise advised the GBHS team had recently visited Kelso and spoken to lots of local businesses and handed out toolkits.

Louise advised Visit Kelso had met with Councillor Betty Hodges (Chair of Kelso in Bloom) to discuss SBC's plans to cease planting of seasonal bedding plants from 2019. Louise advised Visit Kelso were concerned this would have a negative impact on tourism and Visit Kelso had been in contact with Scottish Borders Tourism office and were keen to work with Kelso in Bloom.

Presentation by Housing Associations

The Provost welcomed Julia Mulloy (Chief Executive SBHA), Nile Isephan (Chief Executive Eildon Housing) and Gill Binnie (SBHA Customer Services Manager) to the meeting who had been invited to give an update on the process of social housing allocation.

Julia Mulloy as background advised there were four main social housing providers in the Scottish Borders region who between them looked after 11,500 homes. Julia advised she wished to dispel myths around the allocation of housing and advised since April in Kelso SBHA had let 28 new properties of which 72% went to applicants already living in Kelso, 21% went to people living in other areas of the Scottish Borders and 7% went to people outwith the Scottish Borders.

Julia Mulloy explained how properties were let, how to register, where to look for properties and the process for making a bid for the property. She advised some applicants may have difficulty in placing a bid but staff were available to offer assistance. Gill Binnie gave background to the points based system whereby extra points would be given to a homeless person, those with a health need and where there was overcrowding. Priority would be given based on housing need and it was important to make the best use of properties.

Nile Isephan highlighted the new Eildon development in Roxburgh Street – this is an 18 home new development where £2.3m was invested. Nile advised 12 properties went to people already living in Kelso, 5 to people living in other areas of the Borders and 1 outwith the area. Nile advised Eildon looked after 250 properties in the Kelso area.

In response to a question on whether people living in Kelso would be allocated additional points, Julia advised allocation from anywhere in the country was based on housing need but personal circumstances would be taken into consideration.

Julia advised all Registered Social Landlords (Housing Associations) in Scotland are required in law to offer secure tenancies, which are tenancies for life with succession rights.

Councillor Horsburgh asked whether social housing providers reviewed their current tenants i.e. where children had left home and the property was now under occupied. He was advised the onus was on the tenant to advise the providers with any change of circumstances and if the tenant wanted to move property they would be allocated additional points for under-occupied bedrooms.

Julia advised there was a mutual exchange facility available across the Borders which tenants could access. Member of public Rhona Hastie asked whether elderly tenants were aware of the exchange facility and commented some elderly tenants had a fear they could lose their property if they applied for different housing. Both Julia and Nile advised there was an old perception that homes could be taken off tenants and more education/publicity was needed to get the message across.

In response to a question it was confirmed there was a common policy for housing for Veterans.

The Provost thanked Julia, Nile and Gill for attending the meeting and they advised they would be happy to attend a future meeting if that was needed.

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2018

The minutes held on Tuesday 12 June 2018 were approved with minor amendments. They were proposed by Councillor John Bassett and seconded by Councillor Ian Brown.

Matters arising

Resilience Group

The Provost advised little progress had been made but he had attended a meeting of this group and had been in discussion with both the Jedburgh and Hawick Community Councils to see how their Resilience groups were set up. The Provost advised he hoped to have an update at the next meeting but once established it shouldn't require a big commitment.

Memorial Garden

Councillor H Tomczyk advised the official opening / dedication of the memorial garden would take place on the 28th of September at 3.30pm. This time was set to try and avoid people needing to take time off work. All main sponsors, Churches Working Together and those involved with the project, including John King had been invited. Councillor Tomczyk wished to place on record his thanks for the work Councillor T Weatherston had undertaken to get the project complete. Councillor T Weatherston paid tribute the workmen who had undertaken the construction of the garden and advised Robertson Memorial had gone to the expense of placing a plaque on the side of the memorial to advise this was their property and only they could add material to the wall. Councillor T Weatherston reminded Councillors this was a Community Council project and they would be responsible for any maintenance going forward. The Provost thanked everyone involved with the project

Borders Railway

Councillor Robson advised the first key stage in the preparation of the new Local Development Plan is the publication of a Main Issues Report (MIR) which was currently out for consideration. The MIR will identify the key planning issues for discussion and will be the main consultation stage in the preparation of the LDP. Councillor Robson advised the Community Council should use this as an opportunity to reiterate its interest in the extension of the Borders Railway. Councillor Robson advised he would chase up discussions with Northumberland County Council to progress matters to protect the line. Councillor H Tomczyk advised that he had been in touch with our MP and suggested that Councillors and others interested in extending the railway to Berwick should write to John Lamont expressing their support.

Commented [HT1]: I am certain that I said this.

Kelso in Bloom

Councillor Hodges advised the group had been extremely busy over the summer and their remit to enhance the entrances to the town had been completed. Councillor Hodges advised a Kelso in Bloom calendar would soon be put on sale at various venues throughout the town and these funds would be used to purchase bedding plants, etc. Councillor Hodges advised she and the Secretary would be attending the results of the Floral Gateway competition on the 25 September at SBC HQ.

Councillor Hodges reminded Councillors SBC had given them and the other Border towns a reprieve for a year on the discontinuation of the provision of annual bedding plants. She advised she had met with the British Legion, Visit Kelso and other interested groups to see what solution could be found and she would be organising a meeting of all relevant bodies and volunteers in the future.

Councillor Hodges advised she and the Secretary had undertaken a reeve of other Border towns to look at their floral displays and commented all were different and some of the Border towns had the support of local traders.

A Community Litter pick will take place on Sunday 30 September between 10.00 and 12.00 – all welcome, bags, gloves and pickers will be provided.

Men's Shed

Councillor J Bassett advised after 18 months of negotiation it was anticipated the lease for the Co-op would be finally signed. He advised the lease would be for a period of 5½ years and this would enable the Kelso Men's Shed to apply for grants and funding. Councillor Bassett placed on record his thanks to Hastie Solicitors for providing legal advice and advised he anticipated the Men's Shed being up and running by Christmas.

NHS/Social Services integration

Councillor McGrath advised an Interim Director of Finance had been appointed and he was disappointed a recent meeting held on the 20 August was not quorate which would result in a delay on important decisions.

Questions from the public

There were no questions from the members of the public.

Secretary's Report

The Secretary advised she had kept Councillors up to date over the summer by using email to circulate information and planning applications.

The following correspondence was noted:

An invitation to an Exhibition and book launch of Kelso High School Memories.
An invitation of the Roxburgh and Berwickshire Citizens Advice Bureau AGM on 1 October 2018.

The Kelso Music Society 2018/19 programme

Provost Report

The Provost advised he had thoroughly enjoyed participating in the Kelso Civic Week celebrations and had recently attended an achievements event at the Kelso High School. The Provost also advised he had welcomed the opportunity of meeting members of the public for a coffee to have a chat.

Scottish Borders Council Community Network (SBCCN)

Councillor McGrath advised he had attended a meeting on the 15 August and at the Annual General meeting he had been re-elected as Chair and Councillor Cooper had been re-elected as the Cheviot representative.

Councillor McGrath advised the second round of the Locality Bid Funds would run from 2 July to 1 October 2018.

Councillor McGrath advised the recent survey into the Area Partnerships was not suitable for a collective response and the Provost advised he would raise this at the Area Forum the following evening.

Any Other Business

Councillor T Weatherston advised there had been an issue with vehicles parking in front of the Town Hall during the summer. As an interim solution SBC had agreed to trial the use of two additional flower pots in the gap. The Provost commented if cars were parked in front of the Town Hall they should be reported to the Police.

Scottish Borders Council Report

Cheviot Area Partnership

Councillor Mountford advised the next Cheviot Area Partnership would take place on the 12 September at Jedburgh Grammar School at which there would be a presentation on the Main Issues Report.

Parking /Traffic management

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

A paper had been circulated prior to the meeting which summarises comments, ideas representations and reactions to parking issues in Kelso.

201 responses had been received to the parking survey which outlined -

Options for parking management in the Borders, Waiting times, Payment for parking, New public car parks in Kelso and On street parking. Councillor Robson commented

it was interesting to note the old Foundry site had been highlighted as an area to use as a long term car park and parking for coaches.

Councillor Mountford advised the Community Action Team were regularly visiting Kelso and issuing tickets to illegally parked cars. Councillor McGrath why Special constables could not be used to help police parking.

The Provost highlighted a parking issue at Kerfield Court and asked whether part of the hedge could be removed to create safer pedestrian access. He was advised the hedge was cut once a year.

Councillor Mountford advised work would take place to resurface the Jedburgh Road in the autumn. Councillor Mountford advised he had spoken to the Roads Department to see whether the speed limit could be reduced and this would be monitored.

Councillor Mountford advised a permanent flashing speed sign would be erected on the Coldstream Road.

Questions to SBC Councillors

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

Councillor Horsburgh asked for an update on the feedback to grass cutting and was advised the situation appeared to have settled down and the biggest issue was with the grass cutting at the cemeteries.

Councillor McGrath advised signs to advertise the St Andrews summer fete had been removed. Councillor T Weatherston commented the Council would act in response to a complaint and generally it was a road safety issue – they could be deemed a distraction to drivers.

In response to a question on the sale of the old Kelso High School site Councillor Mountford advised a bid had been received which was being considered.

Consideration of Licenses

There were no licenses for consideration.

Consideration of Plans

The Council considered the following plans –

Re-development of exiting parade ring at Kelso Racecourse. The Community Council had no objections to the plans.

Installation of 12 solar panels to garage roof, Hunter View, 3 Bullet Loan, Kelso. The Community Council had no objections to the plans.

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

The next Community Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 9 October 2018.