

Innerleithen and District Community Council
Minutes of Meeting held 7th February 2022 via Zoom

Those present: Cllr Stuart Bell, George Brown, Jim Calder (Treasurer), Jackie Couchman (Minutes Secretary), Gordon Daly (Secretary), Daniel Davis Wood, Marshall Douglas (Chairman), Cllr Shona Haslam, Cllr Robin Tatler, Andy Weir

One member of the press was present.

Two members of the public were present.

1. **Apologies:** Colin Williams

Marshall Douglas welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Public forum:**

(i) Dry stone dyke at Caerlee Hill - Kirsty Sinclair: Gordon was trying to establish who owned the land adjacent to the dyke on Caerlee Hill. Enquiries are ongoing.

(ii) Power supply issues: Clovenfords Community Council had been in touch regarding their recent outtages following storm damage and had been given contact details for SPEN (Scottish Power Energy Networks). Walkerburn had also suffered further outtages following storm damage. Cllr Stuart Bell understood that there was resilience work due to be done on small transformers, along with clearing work during Spring 2022 and was keen to get an update on planned works. The regular meetings set up with SPEN were primarily monitoring longer term upgrades, but it was deemed appropriate to maintain the momentum of this dialogue. Jackie confirmed that Allan Johnston was the main point of contact with SPEN.

ACTION: To be revisited next month if nothing further heard in the meantime.

B709 parking issues: Cllr Robin Tatler and Cllr Stuart Bell had been liaising over various aspects of this issue. The CAT (Community Action Team) had been tasked with monitoring parking (particularly, but not exclusively, in the vicinity of The Ley) with action taken as necessary to deal with illegal parking. Signage was only deemed appropriate if it were possible to link it to enforcement, and there is no point in moving bikers on from one place only to shift the problem to another.

Bike wardens have been mooted as useful for consideration in the medium term. The benefits of bike wardens are that they are speaking from a point of view of common interest with the intention of encouraging responsible behaviour and legal compliance. Issues of funding, resourcing, employment and job specification issues would also need to be addressed. Ultimately, most mountain bikers are decent people, but there are and will always be, exceptions.

The two councillors had been in conversation with other stakeholders, including FLS (Forestry Land Scotland) and South of Scotland Enterprise. The breadth of the problem lent itself to breaking it down into manageable chunks, to avoid overwhelm, considering the issue of parking for those just wanting to ride the "Golfie" trails, separately from the wider issue of parking pressures throughout Innerleithen. There may be other parking solutions to be found and Cllr Robin Tatler appealed to those present to suggest ideas as those currently involved did not have a monopoly on workable solutions. Jackie suggested that there may be some parking spaces to be created within the town were traffic flows, and existing parking restrictions, to be reviewed, along with possible pockets for parking (for example Leithen Workshops, unused car park next to St. James' Church).

Andy highlighted the lack of a natural hub, with associated facilities sought by mountain bikers pre and post ride (bike washing, showering and changing facilities) from which the riders could operate, as being problematic. He also highlighted the potential environmental impact in the absence of these facilities with, for example, self-contained bikers washing bikes in the river. The topography of the valley, which is narrow, makes this more challenging. Both councillors involved stressed that this issue has a sense of urgency and focus.

ACTION: Any ideas to address the parking issues should be addressed to Cllr Robin Tatler or Cllr Stuart Bell. The issue of parking in Innerleithen to be added to the agenda as a standing item for future meetings.

3. **SBC Dog Education Officer Rose Hogg:** deferred to a future meeting.

4. **Minutes of last meeting and approval:** the minutes were proposed by Gordon Daly, seconded by Andy Weir.

5. **Notification of items of AOCB:** several items were flagged for consideration later in the meeting.

6. **Matters arising from previous minutes:**

Morningside lighting: Cllr Robin Tatler confirmed that SBC officers are still seeking a workable solution that is self-powered and unobtrusive.

ACTION: Cllr Robin Tatler to progress.

Road to Caerlee Mast: Cllr Robin Tatler confirmed that no further progress had been made since the last meeting.

ACTION: Cllr Robin Tatler to update on progress.

Victoria Park play area: Cllr Robin Tatler confirmed that funding has been identified to address the drainage issues and that work should be done shortly. Some remedial work had been done after cars parked on the grass had got stuck and left tracks. Robin also acknowledged that the car park had drainage issues and hoped that these could be addressed within this project.

ACTION: Cllr Robin Tatler to update on progress.

Memorial bench: Gordon requested that this be carried forward.

ACTION: Gordon yet to speak to the appropriate estate managers.

7. Community flower beds: Gordon had circulated plans for the public garden at the top of Princes Street drawn up by Alex Smithson (Edible Garden). Gordon asked for confirmation that the Community Council bank account could be used for this project (similar to the treatment of project funds during the Diamond Jubilee). This was agreed. The plans circulated have been costed at around £5,000, £2,500 of which would potentially come from the Platinum Jubilee Fund. Cllr Robin Tatler suggested that there may be scope to secure some funding from the Small Schemes Fund, too. He was keen to see sustainability built into the design with, for example, perennials and wild flowers. Jackie was keen to see a direct, and enduring, link between the design and the Platinum Jubilee it sought to mark.

ACTION: Gordon to progress.

8. Swap and Share Shed: Gordon reported that CAT had caught up with three individuals responsible for previously reported anti-social behaviour. He said that a freezer had been procured to widen the scope of food provision, particularly for those who had boxes delivered. He advised that a meeting was to be set up with the manager of the Co-op to discuss future developments.

9. Scawd Law Wind Farm update: In Colin's absence Marshall advised that Fred Olen are setting up a liaison group with invited parties including Community Councils and Innerleithen Community Trust. The intention is to hold a meeting in the next couple of weeks.

10. Police report: Marshall confirmed that the January Police Report (appended) had been received in time to circulate with the agenda.

11. SBC Councillor's reports:

Cllr Shona Haslam:

Abandoned vehicles: Cllr Haslam reported that she had been dealing with two abandoned vehicles on the edges of Victoria Park. One has now been moved and the other has had the official letter attached, following the process for removal.

The sale of Caerlee Mill: has been confirmed, to the Mountain Biking Innovation Centre, after five years' work. Cllr Haslam is really pleased to see the project going forward.

Cllr Robin Tatler:

Bridge by Haughhead Stables: Cllr Tatler confirmed that he is trying to establish who is responsible for maintenance of the bridge. He had received several enquiries, raising concern over the pretty bad state of repair of the bridge. His intention is to get SBC officers to look at it and establish whether it can be repaired easily or be put into the wider bridges programme (and wait its turn).

ACTION: Cllr Robin Tatler to progress and give updates as appropriate.

Memorial Hall: The hedge behind the noticeboard has been removed and it's looking good. Neil Pringle is working on putting a line of kerbstones in to define the edge of the tarmac and prevent cars driving on the grass.

Scottish Power box at junction of Waverley Road: was redundant and has now been removed.

Area Partnership meetings: Cllr Robin Tatler confirmed a good discussion was had on youth work issues at the meeting held on 18th January 2022. He confirmed that the last Area Partnership meeting of this administration would be held on 29th March and encouraged everyone to attend.

Cllr Stuart Bell:

Student Parliament at Peebles High School: Cllr Bell confirmed that both Tweeddale East and West councillors attended the Student Parliament at Peebles High School. After a presentation on the plans for the new High School, there was a Q & A session, then the students were given the opportunity to ask questions of the councillors. Feedback was positive and the students had expressed concern and interest to learn ways in which decisions were made for and by the community on their behalf. Cllr Shona Haslam had usefully suggested they may consider joining their respective Community Councils, which was met with enthusiasm, and it was anticipated that there would be approaches made as a consequence.

Community Council meetings: Cllr Bell confirmed that SBC had issued guidelines for Community Councils to be able to resume physical meetings and he urged those present to consider this.

Tweed Valley BID (Business Improvement District): are entitled to raise funds by means of a levy and have indicated that they will be seeking funding from various sources from April 2022 to fund projects such as the path along the lade. Cllr Bell confirmed that there are employment opportunities arising as a result of this activity and there were currently two positions being advertised, that of Project Manager and Project Officer.

JOB APPLICATION DEADLINE EXTENSION! Now due by Mon 21 Feb

The Tweed Valley Tourism BID is recruiting for two part-time positions to help deliver our goal of turning the area into a world-class activity destination. We are looking for a BID Project Manager (2.5 days/week) and a BID Project Officer (1.5 days/week). See full details on our website (applications to catherine@traquair.co.uk by Mon 21 Feb).

<https://www.gotweedvalley.co.uk/join-our-team>

[#gotweedvalley](#) [#joinourteam](#) [#wearehiring](#)

Ongoing trail closures: Cllr Bell had been approached by a local business, concerned about the impact of prolonged/permanent closures of trails in spite of local offers of help to get them reopened. FLS (Forestry Land Scotland) have, understandably, had to prioritise their resources in favour of their tenants. It would appear that senior FLS management are reluctant to extend their resource to include others because of safety and control issues particularly pertaining to chainsaw use and the clearance of resultant debris. This is particularly frustrating against a backdrop of widespread storm damage putting the pool of appropriately geared contractors (on which FLS rely) in huge demand. This is at odds with local groups, such as TVTA (Tweed Valley Trails Association) skilled, able and willing to help. The wider worry is that a considerably reduced trail network would lead to a reduction in trade for local businesses, beyond those directly servicing cycling needs, such as cafes, restaurants and accommodation providers. It was felt that FLS management may not be fully aware of the impact on our wider community. A perceived, and very real, risk, is that groups and individuals take matters into their own hands and whilst well meaning, this is not a desirable state of affairs.

12. Planning Report: the following applications were circulated for comment since the last meeting:

22/00042/FUL | Change of use of public house and alterations to form Class 3 unit and Class 4 unit on ground floor, holiday let accommodation on the first and second floor and residential flat from managers flat on first floor | Tweedside Hotel 54 High Street Innerleithen Scottish Borders EH44 6HF

22/00085/FUL | Alterations to shop front (renewal of previous permission 16/01407/FUL) | Shop 56 High Street Innerleithen Scottish Borders EH44 6HF

22/00147/FUL | Erection of dwellinghouse with garage/plant room and formation of new access | Land North of Pirn View Leithen Road Innerleithen Scottish Borders:

Some concerns had been raised by members around the public access along the lade and the arrangements for entering/exiting the site just inside the speed limit area. A representative for the application had been invited to the meeting, but declined, citing documentation already submitted. Ribbon/infill development was deemed more desirable than green field and no specific objections were raised subject to the usual conditional planning process being followed and the preservation of current public access to the lade being maintained.

13. Anti-dog fouling campaign: Jackie had been caught, dogless, uplifting dog poo from the pavement, and congratulated by a neighbour. There is currently an irresponsible dog walker, using Leithen Road on a regular basis, not picking up after the dog. Disgusting though it is, Jackie urged everyone to pick up if they were able to as being preferential to leaving it for someone else to tread in. This is not a problem that is going to go away, but the refreshed network of bins had made a difference and were well used. It should be kept as a talking point and not allowed to drift.

ACTION: Each responsible dog walker and citizen to be encouraged to remove dog poo from the pavement and to keep our streets clean and clear.

14. **Correspondence:** no specific correspondence to note.

15. **Thanks and Congratulations:**

- ✓ A rather belated “Thank You” to St Ronan’s Silver Band for turning out on New Year’s Day to play on the streets for the townsfolk. Whilst indoor playing was not allowed at this time, the town are very grateful for your rousing music.
- ✓ Congratulations to responsible dog owners for keeping our pavements clear and our bins well-used.
- ✓ It is great news that the Mountain Biking Innovation Centre has moved a step closer and the sale of Caerlee Mill to the project is cause for celebration after such a long gestation. Our thanks go to all concerned who have worked long and hard behind the scenes.

15. **AOCB:**

Cowford Court: Gordon reported that there was a street light out and asked how it should be reported. There is provision for this on SBC’s website and you just need the location and number of the lamppost in question to easily and quickly report it:

https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20031/roads_and_pavements/617/report_a_faulty_street_light

Cowford Court, anti-social behaviour: Gordon reported that there had been a spate of anti-social behaviour in this same area including an outside light being broken and objects thrown at a house. Whilst the “victim” was reluctant to report it, Jackie pointed out that the police can’t put together a picture of what was happening without individual reports being made. She had been told of a similar incident in the same part of town and believed that the police had taken the appropriate action in response.

ACTION: incidents of anti-social or criminal behaviour should be reported promptly to the police to be dealt with in the appropriate manner.

No cold-calling zone: Gordon confirmed that the signage was now up, designating the area along Traquair Road and into Angle Park a “No Cold-Calling Zone”. He has yet to distribute the appropriate supporting packs to householders in this area, but this should be done during the coming month.

ACTION: Gordon to distribute “No cold-calling” packs.

Back road debris: George reported that the back road, well-used by walkers, cyclists, horseriders, Adrenalin Uplift vehicles and general motorists alike, was particularly bad at the moment for debris and litter along its length. Cllr Stuart Bell endorsed this and had taken photographs of particular potholes to be passed on to SBC officers for attention. Jackie raised concerns about the camber of the road, sloping towards the river, and the possibility of some of it falling away, given the volume of traffic over a prolonged period. She felt that it should be surveyed.

ACTION: Cllr Stuart Bell to raise these concerns with the appropriate SBC officers for their attention.

Yellow lines at the Traquair Road/A72 junction: George asked when this was likely to be done, having been agreed some time ago. Cllr Stuart Bell confirmed that some of this work had been delayed because of recent low temperatures.

ACTION: Cllr Robin Tatler to check the programme with Philippa Gilhooly.

Meeting closed at 8.27pm.

Date of next Meeting:

- ✓ Monday 7th March at 7.15pm via Zoom (the April meeting format/location would be decided at that time).

Meetings are held on the first Monday of each month, except August, starting at 7.15pm in Innerleithen’s Council Chamber unless otherwise agreed. **Currently meetings are being held via Zoom.**

Chairman.....

Date