

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
TEVIOT AND LIDDESDALE AREA FORUM

MINUTE of the MEETING of the TEVIOT AND LIDDESDALE AREA FORUM held in the LESSER HALL, HAWICK on 21 January 2014 at 6.30 p.m.

Present:- Councillors G. Turnbull, (Chairman), A. Cranston, Z. Elliot, S. Marshall, R. Smith.
Community Councillors, R. Knight, C. Levell, G. Roberts, Mrs M Short.
Inspector C. Wood (Police Scotland)

Apologies:- Councillor D. Paterson.

In Attendance:- Neighbourhood Area Manager (A. Finnie), (Democratic Services Officers (J. Turnbull)).

Members of the Public:- 13 in attendance.

MINUTE

1. There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 17 December 2014.

DECISION

AGREED and signed by the Chairman.

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

2. Mr J Mallin from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service was in attendance to give a brief presentation on their Local Plan. The Plan included performance objectives, strategic assessment and a household survey. The priorities identified in the Plan included accidental dwelling fires, fire casualties and fatalities and deliberate fire setting. The Plan was in draft and responses to the consultation from the public would inform and determine changes, the consultation questionnaire was available on their website. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service would also be in attendance at Sainsbury's on 25 and 26 January, Heart of Hawick on 31 January and Morrisons on 4 February 2014. They would also attend any Community Council meetings to discuss the Plan, if required.
3. In answer to questions, Mr Mallin reported that there was a whole time and retained fire service in Hawick, given a 24/7 response. There were no recruitment problems in Hawick, however in East Berwickshire there were problems recruiting staff to the retained service. A member of the public referred to an incident where a person had fallen into the water, the Fire and Rescue Service were in attendance but there had been a delay in the rescue as a specialist team had been required to attend. Mr Mallin responded that firefighters had a dangerous job and therefore strict health and safety procedures had to be adhered to, one of which was if the firefighter did not have the appropriate equipment they must not enter into the water. In this instance the specialist team, based in Galashiels, had attended and dealt successfully with the incident. However, procedures could be adapted if the individual was in danger or in a precarious position. The Chairman thanked Mr Mallin for the presentation and encouraged responses to the Local Plan.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

HAWICK TOWN CENTRE

4. The Chairman, Councillor Turnbull, gave a slide presentation which highlighted a number of issues relating to the town centre. The slides showed problems with cigarette ends, chewing gum, litter, road markings which needed freshened up, damaged blockwork, overgrown vegetation, burst pipes and overflowing guttering. It was noted that much of the

responsibility lay with the property owners, many of which were located outwith the town. SBC's Enforcement Team had been notified of many of the issues highlighted. However, much depended on the Team having a reason to become involved e.g. vermin, water ingress; the external appearance of a building was not sufficient cause to allow the Team to issue enforcement notices. The Neighbourhood Area Manager reported that the majority of the slides depicted issues that had been dealt with or in the process of being dealt with. The Forum acknowledged that many of the issues were ongoing and a culture change was required. A number of the shops affected were owned by SBC and would be reported to the Head of Property and Facilities Manager for inspection. Concerns were also expressed at the condition of the Green Café frontage.

5. Mrs Short, Hawick Community Council reported that given the importance of the Year of Homecoming 2014, the Community Council were carrying out a spring clean campaign and would be inviting the public to assist. Hawick High School's Eco Team had already agreed to clean up the areas around the High School and would also be contacting primary schools to ask for their involvement. Local shops had also been approached and had volunteered staff to assist with the clean up around their shop frontages.
6. The discussion then focused on the Melgund Place Bridge which had been closed to traffic along with the footpath which passed underneath it. Members would be interested to know if there would be any objections from the public to closing the bridge to traffic on a permanent basis.

DECISION

AGREED to request that the Head of Property and Facilities Manager inspect SBC's rental properties and carry out any necessary repairs/upgrading.

SB LOCAL SMALL SCHEMES AND CAPITAL & REVENUE WORKS

7. There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure which sought approval for the proposed new SB local small schemes from the Area Forum. The Neighbourhood Area Manager reported that the appropriate tradesmen had been contacted to refurbish the seats at the Wellogate Cemetery. Five benches at Holm Hill had been removed for sandblasting, it was noted that there might originally have been six benches and this would be investigated.

DECISION

(a) AGREED:

- (i) Crown reduction & removal of trees behind Cheviot Road, Hawick £ 975**
- (ii) Reposition of existing bus shelter to A7 Newmill £ 2,250**

(b) NOTED

The upgrade on previously approved SB Local Small Schemes as detailed in Appendix A to the report.

POLICE SCOTLAND

8. There had been circulated a report from Police Scotland which updated the Forum on the performance, activities and issues up to 21 January 2014. Inspector Wood reported that Teviot and Liddesdale ward had recorded a 63.27% solvency rate which was good. Police Scotland had published a six month update on the local Multi Member Ward plans and these were available to download from their website. Operation Tinsel had focused on domestic abuse, road checks and anti-social behaviour. Their focus at the moment was Operation Rack which concentrated on increased break-ins, particularly in the rural area. Two further Community Officers had been appointed to the area.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

OPEN QUESTIONS

9. (a) Mrs Short reported that she had been approached by the Chairman from the 2014 Initiative Group regarding the new monument which would be positioned outside Drumlandrig's Tower. The Group had felt that the present advertising sign would detract from the monument as the two did not correlate. It was therefore requested that the Forum considered removal or relocation of the advertising sign. Councillor Smith responded that when the site for the monument had been chosen it was in the knowledge that the sign was located there. However, he had no objection to the sign being removed but only when the sign had come to the end of its useful life. The Chairman added that he had received feedback from residents that they were against the removal of the sign because of the cost involved, he estimated between £5,000 to £10,000. In answer to a question from the public, Councillor Smith responded that if removal of the sign could be covered without any costs to SBC, then such a proposal would be considered by members.

DECISION

AGREED

- (a) **To request that the Hawick and Hermitage Ward Councillors meet with Council officers from the Cultural Services Department to discuss the advertising signage; and**
- (b) **To request an update to the next meeting of the Teviot and Liddesdale Area Forum meeting on 18 February 2014 with an estimate for removal and/ or relocation of the advertising sign.**

COMMUNITY COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT

10. Mrs Short from Hawick Community Council reported that the High Street improvement project was ongoing. A positive meeting with MSPs had provided the Community Council with information for sources of funding and good ideas which they would pursue. They were presently preparing an action plan and would be inviting elected members to assist with the project. There was concern at the withdrawal of the out-of-hours doctor service at Hawick Community Hospital. The Community resilience leaflets had been distributed.
11. Mr Roberts from Denholm Community Council reported that they had replaced the Christmas tree provided by SBC and wondered if the cost could be reimbursed. The Neighbourhood Area Manager responded that Denholm was the only small community provided with a tree as a goodwill gesture and the tree had been the best that was available. Unfortunately the Community Council would not be reimbursed for the purchase of the replacement tree. The gates at Cavers Cemetery were the responsibility of the Property Services Manager who had requested estimates for their refurbishment. The white lining in the Cavers area would not be completed this financial year.
12. Mr Knight, Burnfoot Community Council reported that they were trying to improve their membership. Their lottery bid had been successful for the purchase of the old Burnfoot Roadhouse.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

13. Councillor Smith declared an interest in the following item of business in terms of Section 5 of the Councillors Code of Conduct and left the meeting during the discussion.
14. Denholm Community Council continued that they were concerned about the cumulative effect on the area of the windfarms, the impact on traffic through the village and the wear and tear on roads was a major concern and he urged members to take this into consideration when considering planning applications.
15. Mr Levell from Hobkirk Community Council added that their meeting had been taken up with discussion on wind turbines. No members of the Community Council were willing to sit on the committee to decide on the community benefit fund, an option would be for a reduction in electricity bills for residents who lived within 4 kilometres of the turbines. There was concern

at the possible closure of the bridge at Bonchester Bridge the landlady from the Horse and Hound said that if the bridge was closed her premises would close.

DECISION

(a) **NOTED** the reports.

(b) **AGREED** to request that a representative from NHS Border be invited to attend the next meeting of the Teviot and Liddesdale Area Forum to discuss changes at Hawick Community Hospital and also the withdrawal of the out of hours doctor.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

16. Agreed that the next meeting be held on 18 February 2014 at 6.30 pm.

The meeting concluded at 8.40 pm.