

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
TWEEDDALE AREA FORUM

MINUTE of the MEETING of the
TWEEDDALE AREA FORUM held in
the Memorial Hall, Innerleithen on 25
May 2016 at 6.40 p.m.

Present:- Councillors W. Archibald (Chairman), C. Bhatia, K. Cockburn, G. Garvie,
G. Logan.
Community Councillors L. Hayward, C. Lewin, G. Parker.

Apologies:- Councillor S Bell. Community Councillors R. Howard, R. Tatler, G. Tulloch.
Mr K. Langley, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Inspector M. Bennett,
Police Scotland.

In Attendance:- Neighbourhood Area Manager (Tweeddale) (Mr J Hedley), Design Team
Leader (Engineering) (Mr D. Johnston), SB Local Area Manager (C.
Blackie), Sergeant D. Marker (Police Scotland), Democratic Services
Officer (K. Mason).

Members of the Public:- 3.

1. MINUTE

1.1 There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 2 March 2016.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

1.2 With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute, The Chairman asked the Democratic Services Officer to liaise with Mr Bill Elliot, Regional Community Team Manager, Scottish Water regarding possible visits by the Chairmen of Community Councils in the Tweeddale Area to Talla Reservoir.

**DECISION
AGREED that the Democratic Services Officer would liaise with Mr Bill Elliot, Scottish Water to ascertain if arrangements could be made for the Chairmen of Community Councils in the Tweeddale Area to visit Talla Reservoir and report back to the next meeting.**

2. MINUTE

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of Meeting of the A72 Action Sub-Committee held on 24 March 2016.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

3. PRESENTATION – TWEED FORUM

3.1 Mr Hugh Chalmers, Collaborative Action Coordinator, Tweed Forum advised that the aim of the Forum was to promote the wise and sustainable use of the whole Tweed catchment through holistic and integrated management and planning. The Forum was currently working with land managers to bring about good ecological status through habitat restoration; wetland creation; riparian enhancements; morphological restoration; woodland planting; invasive species control etc. He referred to recent restoration projects in the Tweed catchment and gave background information in

relation to the Eddleston Water Project and natural flood management techniques. In regard to the Eddleston Water Project the core aims were to (a) investigate the potential of reducing the risk of flooding to the communities of Eddleston and Peebles by restoring natural features within the catchment; (b) improve the river habitat for wildlife and fisheries; (c) work with landowners and communities in the Eddleston valley to maximise the benefits they would gain from such work while maintaining farm business productivity/profitability. Ancillary aims, objectives and opportunities were highlighted. A summary of the practical outputs and outcomes for the Eddleston Water Project were (a) 66 hectares of riparian woodland created; (b) 16,000 metres of fencing erected; (c) 1.8km of river re-meandered; (d) 56 "flow restrictors" installed; (e) 13 leaky ponds created; (f) over 70,000 trees planted; (g) 23,000 tonnes of carbon sequestered (over 100 year period); and (h) waterbody status under WFD had gone from "Bad" status to "Moderate".

- 3.2 Discussion followed and a number of questions were answered by Mr Chalmers. A suggestion was made by Councillor Garvie that interpretation boards giving information on the River Tweed be put in place and Mr Chalmers was asked to liaise with Mr Hedley, Neighbourhood Area Manager (Tweeddale). Councillor Garvie agreed that an open invitation be issued to Tweed Forum to attend full Council to give a presentation. The Chairman thanked Mr Chalmers for his presentation.

DECISION NOTED.

4. PRESENTATION - DIRTPOT CORNER

- 4.1 Mr David Johnston, Design Team Leader (Engineering) advised that the A72 was the main east-west link between Tweeddale and the Central Borders and it carried approximately 6,400 vehicles every day. The steep slopes adjacent to Dirtpot Corner had had a history of instability and previous landslips had led to lengthy road closures and significant disruption on this main east-west link. To reduce the likelihood of landslips on the slope above the road the Council had undertaken slope stabilisation works, the most recent of which added further structural netting and was completed in January 2013. The existing road geometry at Dirtpot Corner was sub-standard. The carriageway width and road alignment was such that two larger vehicles could not pass each other if they met in the vicinity of the bend. The narrow carriageway width was exacerbated by the lack of any roadside verges as masonry walls sat immediately adjacent to the carriageway. A number of personal injury accidents had occurred at the corner, with 2 personal injury accidents occurring during 2015. However, the site was not currently classed as an Accident Cluster Site (i.e. 3 or more personal injury accidents over 3 year rolling period). The topography at Dirtpot Corner was particularly challenging and the road was located 7m above the River Tweed and sat below very steeply rising ground which had a gradient in excess of 1 in 1. A riverside masonry wall supported the road above the river and in some places retained up to 1.5m. Sections of the retaining wall were leaning and the wall was in a poor state of repair. The wall was damaged during the recent traffic accidents and the wall did not meet modern standards as a road restraint system. Previous assessment work had discounted the very large and expensive schemes involving bridges over the River Tweed. Officers and Members were keen to develop a more efficient solution with less environmental impact. Ground investigation works were undertaken in October and November 2015 to inform the design and several structural solutions had been reviewed and developed and initial costs obtained. Following a review of options widening on the hill side was discounted in preference to widening on the river side.
- 4.2 Mr Johnston explained the preferred solution involved an "innovative" hybrid structural solution to mitigate the environmental impact and to keep costs to a minimum. The

proposed solution involved stone filled baskets connected to drilled anchors into the rock slope at the lower level. The stone filled baskets would give a sympathetic/rustic finish to the lower sections of the wall and would ensure that in the event of flooding the wall would not be adversely affected. At higher levels it was proposed to utilise a reinforced earth solution. This solution involved a facing system connected to a "geogrid" – a type of polyester/plastic mesh which extended back into the area to be backfilled and which was connected to the front face of the slope. Where room permitted the design would utilise a green reinforced earth solution above flood levels. It was anticipated that the improvement works would be concluded during November/December 2018. The Chairman thanked Mr Johnston for his presentation.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

5. DOG FOULING AND LITTER

The Chairman welcomed Mr Craig Blackie, SBC's Neighbourhood Area Manager to the meeting to provide an update on how the Council was working to decrease dog fouling in the area. Mr Blackie advised that 3GS was a private company now employed by SBC for a trial period of one year to reduce dog fouling. Two wardens would be in post before the end of June. The wardens would operate on an intelligence-led basis, ie would respond to complaints of dog fouling at specific locations. A full report would be submitted to Council at the end of the trial. Mr Blackie explained how the wardens would operate and the facilities which were available to them. Problem with littering could also be dealt with by the wardens, again on an intelligence-led basis. Mr Blackie explained that a Green Dog Walker campaign was currently running in Newtown St Boswells. The project, which encouraged dog walkers to clean up where dog fouling had been left by others, had been successful so far and further information was available on the Council website. Discussion followed and a number of questions were answered by officers. The wardens' role in the trial year was to revitalise enforcement and identify the culprits. Depending on the outcome of the trial, there were other duties such as checking dogs for chipping which could be added to their remit. Mr Blackie confirmed that there was an on the spot fine of £80 for the dog owner for each offence. The costs for running the warden service would be covered by any fines and SBC and 3GS would receive an equal share of any remaining profit. The Chairman thanked Mr Blackie for attending the meeting.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

6. NEIGHBOURHOOD SMALL SCHEME WORKS/QUALITY OF LIFE

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director Neighbourhood Services on proposals to deliver projects throughout the Tweeddale area using Neighbourhood Small Schemes and Quality of Life budgets for 2016-17. Furthermore, the report sought that delegated authority to decide on Quality of life and Small Scheme proposals be granted to the Service Director Neighbourhood Services, subject to consultation with and majority approval of Tweeddale members. The following Neighbourhood schemes had been requested for the consideration of the Tweeddale members from quality of life budget: - (a) to fund alterations to the play equipment at Alexandra Park, Walkerburn and to install a new item of equipment - £8,035.00; (b) to install fencing around the SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage System) adjacent to Muscat Brae, Clovenfords - £880; and (c) to repair the millennium notice board, Clovenfords - £707. Delegated authority to propose projects and gain Members agreement to those projects was sought to ensure continuity and efficiency of delivery for proposals throughout the year. Reports on proposals would continue to be reported

to the Tweeddale Area Forum and progress updates would also continue to be given throughout the year. Councillor Logan thought that some work had already taken place to repair the millennium notice board.

**DECISION
AGREED:-**

- (a) to approve funding for the following quality of life schemes:-
 - (i) alterations to the play equipment at Alexandra Park, Walkerburn and to install a new item of equipment - £8,035.00.
 - (ii) installation of fencing around the SUDS (Sustainable, Urban Drainage System) adjacent to Muscat Brae, Clovenfords - £880.00.
 - (iii) to repair the Millennium Notice Board, Clovenfords - £707.52.
- (b) to delegate authority to the Service Director Neighbourhood Services to agree to proposals for Quality of Life or Small Schemes, subject to consultation with and majority approval by the Tweeddale members.

7. **APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODY- PEEBLES SHIRE CHARITABLE TRUST**
The Chairman advised that whilst he represented the Council on the Peeblesshire Charitable Trust, at a recent meeting Members of the Trust considered that a Member should be appointed to represent Tweeddale East so that the whole area was represented. Councillor Logan was unanimously appointed to be a Council representative on Peebles Charitable Trust.

**DECISION
AGREED that Councillor Logan be appointed as a Council Representative on Peebles Charitable Trust.**

8. **OPEN QUESTIONS**

- (a) Mr Murdoch Macdonald asked if there were plans for controlling on-street parking in Peebles High Street, Northgate and Eastgate and if so when would these be put in place. Councillor Cockburn advised that a report on the progress and findings of the Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) Working Group would be considered at the June Council meeting.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

- (b) Mr Robert Balfour asked what progress Council, Scottish Water and Sepa amount its cost council in grants etc and repairs to roads, Councillor Cockburn advised that in regards to the funding of repairs, caused by the Storm Frank flooding; flood grants and discretionary payments were available via the Council, and were currently being processed for payment to individuals, organisations and businesses that had applied; the Government funded Bellwin scheme works were continuing to repair flood damaged infrastructure across the region; and on the 19 May Council Members unanimously approved the Tweed Local Flood Risk Management Plan, which should provide Tweeddale, and other Tweed Valley communities, with a structured flood defence and mitigation plan going forward. Mr Balfour also

suggested that if from October the levels at Talla Reservoir could be lowered by a metre or two to help create a greater buffer in the event of flash flooding.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

9. COMMUNITY COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT

Community Councillor Haywood referred to the recent news about bus services provided by First Bus being lost in Town Centres and requested that Councillor Bhatia forward any information relating the Peebles Town Bus Service to The Royal Burgh of Peebles and District Community Council.

DECISION

AGREED that Councillor Bhatia would pass on any information relating to proposed cuts in the Peebles Town Centre bus service to The Royal Burgh of Peebles and District Community Council.

10. POLICE SCOTLAND

In regard to Tweeddale East and Tweeddale West, Sergeant Marker advised that the focus of Police Scotland was to reduce crime and disorder, to increase public reassurance within the community and to keep people safe. Police Scotland would continue to work closely with their partners and find effective long-term solutions to the issues raised. After talking to local residents in Tweeddale, Police Officers noted their greatest concerns were dishonesty, inconsiderate driver behaviour, bogus workers and callers, and drug dealing and misuse. In regard to dishonesty, Police Scotland had recently launched a series of information documents to keep our rural communities safe. The rural communities of Scotland were safe places in which to live and work. However, the nature of the environment and way of life meant there were some crime prevention tips particularly relevant to rural life which were worth bearing in mind. Much of the crime prevention advice outlined in other areas of 'Keep Safe' was equally relevant to urban or rural areas, but there were issues unique to rural communities such as: protecting livestock, securing farm machinery, theft from fuel tanks, securing tools and horse tack. The information could be accessed at the following link and was an excellent guide to farmers and the wider community who lived in rural areas. <http://www.scotland.police.uk/keep-safe/home-and-personal-property/rural-crime>. Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and NFU Scotland would be holding a Farm Fire Safety and Crime Prevention Event on 9 June from 1.00 p.m. until 3.30 p.m. at Haswellsykes Farm, Peebles. The event would include demonstrations of security systems, crime prevention equipment and fire safety techniques. Since 2 March 2016, there had been three incidents in the Tweeddale area involving bogus callers. These incidents occurred on 23 March in Clovenfords and Peebles and it was believed they involved the same suspect who was offering power tools for sale. A younger drivers event had taken place on 22 May 2016 at Charterhall, Duns. This was run by the Institute of Advanced Motorists in partnership with Volvo, Suzuki, Fiat, and other manufacturers of cars. The event was designed to take kids over 14, but under 17 who would not normally be able to drive cars and give them the understanding and skills to drive cars. Hopefully by educating them early, a long-term sustainable driver education and casualty reduction programme would be in place in the Borders. A number of Police Officers volunteered their time to assist on the day. From 2 March to 23 May 2016, 45 parking tickets had been issued, of which 3 were cancelled, two drivers were warned. This year Police Scotland's Public Consultation process was widening and becoming more flexible. The consultation

process was moving online to a digital format and consultation would be open all year. Everyone's views across Scotland would be taken on board at a national and local level. The link for the survey was <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/8LMB9WX>. With effect from 1 July 2016, new legislation would come into effect for air weapons. Any person who possessed, purchased, used or acquired an air weapon would be required to have a certificate to legally hold them. Because this was a new process, the public had been given time to achieve the certification and no one would commit an offence of possessing an air weapon without the relevant authority or certification up until 1 January 2017. All documentation had to be in order by that date. Police Scotland recognised that a number of these types of weapons would be lying about homes and were no longer used or required. As a result an 'amnesty' would be held and air guns could be surrendered at Galashiels Police Station between 8.00 a.m. and 10.00 p.m. from Monday 23 May until 12 June 2016. Further information on the legislation could be found on the Police Scotland website www.scotland.police.uk. Some concern was expressed about Community Police Officers being unable to attend Community Council meetings. Inspector Marker referred to the increase in the workload of Police Community Officers and said that efforts were made at all times for Police Officers to attend Community Council meetings and for update reports to be sent to Community Councils. He further advised Community Councillors could liaise at any time with Police Officers if there were any matters of concern.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

11. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

In the absence of Mr Keith Langley copies of a report on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service were tabled at the meeting from which it was noted there had been two fatalities in Peebles one related to fitting and the other out of hospital cardiac arrest. The team continued to expand its partnership working with key agencies including Police Scotland, Health, Social Care and Housing in order to focus on members of local communities at high risk from fire and achieve positive outcomes in helping to reduce overall numbers of accidental dwelling fires. A national recruitment campaign was on-going for Retained Duty System firefighters at identified stations within the Scottish Borders and West Linton Station was currently recruiting staff. After forty-four years' service Watch Manager Eric Small retired from the SFRS on 27 April 2016. Area Manager David Farries marked the event with the presentation of a commemorative BA tally and scroll. Members of the Forum wished Mr Small all the best for the future.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

The meeting concluded at 8.30 p.m.