

**Minutes of the Meeting of Kelso Community Council held in the Town Hall,
Kelso On Tuesday 13 September 2016, at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillors John Bassett (Chair), Dean Weatherston, Tamzin Thomas, Betty Hodges, John King, Colin McGrath, Alan Hall, Gavin Horsburgh, Peter Cooper and Scottish Borders Councillors Simon Mountford and Tom Weatherston.

IN ATTENDANCE: Shirley Redgrave (Secretary), Alan Livingstone (Chamber of Trade), Lucy Anderson (Kelso High School), four members of the public and Mark Entwistle (press)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Harry Tomczyk, SBC Councillor Alec Nicol, Police Scotland Suzanne Howgego

- 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 members to the meeting and offered his congratulations to Councillor Betty Hodges and the Kelso in Bloom subcommittee on their achievement at the SBC Floral Gateway Competition.

Police Matters

It was noted the August and September Police Scotland reports had previously been circulated and Councillors had no comments.

The Provost advised there was an increase in the number of police patrols over the weekend due to reports of a prowler trying to break into properties and urged members to be vigilant.

Councillor Colin McGrath advised a Job Specification for Police Scotland Special Constables had previously been circulated and commented this was an opportunity for members of the community to become involved as this was open to everyone from 17 years with no upper age limit.

The Provost reminded members our local Police were always available for comments and feedback.

Chamber of Trade report / Visit Kelso

Alan Livingstone advised the Chamber of Trade had only met once since the last Community Council Meeting. Alan advised an EGM had been arranged for 5th October to confirm the new Secretary and constitution.

Alan advised Visit Kelso were very active in trying to attract more visitors to Kelso. They had applied for funding which had been approved which is to be used to completely overhaul their website. Visit Kelso were forward planning Christmas events and hoped to be able to co-ordinate activities.

Alan advised the traders appeared to be happy with trading conditions over the summer, despite the reoccurring issue of parking. He advised it was unfortunate the large shop (previously Dorothy Perkins) in The Square was now empty. Councillor T Weatherston advised he would speak to the current owners to see what plans they had for re-letting, as he did not want a large empty shop in front of the historical Square. He further advised in Hawick empty shops had a false front which was more attractive than a window full of fly posters.

Councillor Mountford asked whether Business Rates were impacting on the viability of shops. Alan advised he was not aware there was an issue, but would speak to members and feed back to Councillor Mountford. He also advised it was his understanding that unrealistic rents were currently being charged.

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 14 June 2016 were approved. They were proposed by Councillor Dean Weatherston and seconded by Councillor John King.

Councillor Cooper asked for an update on the proposed new tourist signage and Councillor D Weatherston advised the wording had been finalised and was confident funding could be found in the next financial year.

Matters arising

a) **Memorial Wall**

It was noted there was no update, but this would be provided at the next Community Council meeting.

b) **Kelso in Bloom – Floral Gateway Competition**

The Provost and Councillor Hodges advised the Competition was set up in 2000, and Kelso won in 2009. Due to the Townscape Heritage Initiative Kelso didn't enter during that period due to the upheaval in the town centre. This year a group of volunteers set up Kelso in Bloom. They received financial donations from individuals, business, and from Charity Begins at Home as well as our own fundraising activities. Kelso Community Council, Kelso Chamber of Trade, Kelso Horticultural Society, Cheviot Area Neighbourhood Services, Kelso Allotment Society, Kelso Rotary Club and Kelso High School have all been involved, and letters of thanks have been sent to all.

At an awards ceremony on Tuesday 6th September we were delighted to receive three awards. A Welcome Award for entering after a 5 year absence. A Clean and Tidy Award which included a bin as a prize for the cleanliness of the town, and our community litter pick event. The main award was for Best Town and we received a nice piece of Selkirk Glass and Certificate.

It was agreed the certificates and Selkirk Glass Trophy should be put on display in the town and Border Blooms will be approached to do assist with this.

c) Rotary Way - signage

Councillor D Weatherston asked for an update and Councillors T Weatherston and S Mountford agreed to chase this up.

d) Men's Shed

The Provost advised a public meeting had been held at which 30 members of the public attended and expressed interest. The Provost thanked SBC officer Neil Hastie for his assistance in trying to secure premises for the Men's Shed, which to date had proved unsuccessful. He advised a steering group had been formed, the constitution prepared and sponsorship secured.

Councillor Mountford advised he would investigate whether there was any space available at the SBC Rose Lane building and report back.

e) Questions from the public

Bowmont Hall - In response to a question on the new ownership Councillor T Weatherston advised he was not in a position to provide any update at this time, but would provide details when it was in the public domain.

Trinity Church - Councillor McGrath advised he had spoken to the SBC enforcement officers as the church had been broken into and was proving a health and safety issue. It was noted the Police had been informed and SBC had done some remedial repairs to secure the property, the cost of which will be invoiced to the owners. Councillor McGrath requested this subject be kept on the agenda.

Parking in Woodmarket – a member of the public asked why it was possible for a lorry to continuously park overnight in Woodmarket when there were restrictions for lorries parking in the Knowes car park. Councillor Mountford advised it was an issue of "Highways". It was noted the lorry driver should not be blocking a drive way or running his engine. Councillor Weatherston advised he was sympathetic, but the lorry contained high value goods which were being delivered to a local shop. It was noted this was a Police issue and the Secretary was asked to contact Police Scotland to see whether the lorry driver could be more courteous towards the resident. The Provost advised the Community Council would also write to the company delivering the goods if the Police could not resolve the issue.

Correspondence

The secretary advised correspondence had been circulated to Community Councillors and a summary schedule had been compiled. In addition the following documents had been received:

- An invitation from the Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Edinburgh to attend a reception and exhibition to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the first airdrop of the Silent Unseen on Saturday 8 October 2016 at the Byre Theatre, University of St Andrews at 7.00pm
- An invitation from the Rotary Club Kelso to attend an open meeting on 27 September 2016 in the Cross Keys Hotel – guest speaker John Lamont MSP.
- A letter from SBC legal department regarding Traffic Regulation Order – Disabled Persons' Parking places.
- The Bridge – newsletter.
- Tweed Forum newsletter.

Secretary's Report

The Secretary presented a gift of a book on Carolina, USA and jams from Mr and Mrs John Kelso Morrow, visitors from South Carolina who had visited the town to research their family history and to retrace his father's visit fifty years previously. The book will be given to Kelso Library and two councillors accepted the preserves. Mr Morrow had commented they had received wonderful attention from Shawn who worked at Visit Scotland and wished for their praise to be passed on appropriately.

The Secretary advised contact had been made from Margaret Thomson, Virginia USA and she had put them in contact with Friends of Kelso Museum to help them with their research.

The Secretary advised she had met with Frank Dutch to secure regular bookings at the Town House for Council meetings. It was noted Community Council meetings and subcommittee meetings could be held free of charge, but these would need to be made through the Secretary.

Provision of new hotel in Kelso

Councillor McGrath advised he had asked for this item to be placed on the agenda as he was concerned the site of the current Kelso High School was going to be sold off to a hotel group.

The Provost as background advised the future use of the site of Kelso High School was currently being considered by SBC. There were two feasibility plans proposed – one to use the site for housing and the other as a mixed use site with potential for a hotel. The Provost stressed no decision on the future use of the site had been made. It was agreed the site needed to be utilised and not boarded up as had happened at another Border town.

Councillor McGrath advised he had background knowledge in running a hotel and the key consideration to a successful business was footfall. From his personal experience he did not feel the current activities at the Borders Union Showground warranted the introduction of a large hotel and felt local B&B providers would suffer as a consequence.

Councillor McGrath advised there was a meeting on the proposed National Park on the 17th November in Jedburgh. He also advised figures from Visit Scotland indicated the Borders area was performing poorly in attracting visitors despite the introduction of the new railway.

The Provost commented as a Community Council Kelso were opposed to being included in a National Park due the restrictions on buildings, industries etc. and this subject had been discussed at various Kelso Community Council meetings and the Council agreed they would only support such a proposal if Kelso was an island within a large exclusion zone.

It was agreed Councillor McGrath would approach the Community Council Network, which represented 67 Community Councils to see what their views were.

Members of the public representing local B&B traders thought being included in a National Park would be good for their business. They also asked whether information boards advertising their businesses with contact details could be made available as there was no information out of hours to visitors looking for accommodation.

Post meeting - Councillor J King suggested the local taxi drivers could have a list of local B&Bs and contact details available in their taxis for visitors and local B&Bs could provide a list of local taxi companies to their guests.

Post meeting – the Provost had spoken to Registrar who was happy for one of the windows to have local accommodation information and photos on display.

Removal of public pay phones

It was noted BT had undertaken a consultation to close some public payphones in the Borders. One of the criteria was it would close if there had not been at least 12 calls of any type within a 12 month period. It was noted only the payphone in Horsemarket and Inchmyre would be kept and the rest in the town decommissioned. BT were willing to sell the decommissioned phones to communities at a cost of £1.00, but it was noted the community would have to pay £500 to have the electricity cut off.

Scottish Borders Council

The Provost advised statements would be given by SBC Councillors if there was an update. The Provost reminded Councillors that if they wished to raise specific questions with SBC these should be submitted to the Secretary 7 days in advance of the meeting.

Area Forum

Councillor T Weatherston advised the next Area Forum would take place on Wednesday 14th September in Jedburgh. There was a full agenda and all were welcome.

Kelso High School and Broomlands primary

It was noted work on the new High School was progressing and work had started on Broomlands.

Following comments and messages from our Facebook Page Councillor D Weatherston raised the concern that the drop off car park and road would not be accessible during construction of the project and parents had been encouraged to walk to school. If this was not an option they were being told to park in the local area. Councillor T Weatherston commented he felt this would not be an issue, but would keep an eye on the situation and if necessary approach the Ice Rink to see whether their car park could be used.

Parking / Traffic management – Bridge Street

Councillor T Weatherston advised the yellow lines were now out of warranty. The Provost highlighted the issue of parking on Bridge Street. Councillor T Weatherston reiterated Kelso needed a long term solution for parking.

It was noted parties attending weddings at the Town House were abusing parking.

Questions to SBC Councillors

Councillor C McGrath voiced his concern that one of our local SBC Councillors had voted against the introduction of including three external non-voting members to the SBC Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Mountford suggested Councillor McGrath raise his concerns at a future Area Forum meeting which was being held on the next day. Councillor McGrath stated that his request to put an item on the agenda at the following meeting had been declined.

Consideration of Licenses

There were no applications for consideration.

Consideration of Plans

The Council considered the following plans –

- (a) Alterations and extension to existing garage Wedderburn, Abbotsford Grove, Kelso. The Council had no objections to the plans.

(b) Replacement windows Ryecroft 5 Chalkheugh Terrace, Kelso. The Council had no objections to the plans.

It was noted the following plans had been considered and approved during the summer recess –

- 50 Roxburgh Street, Kelso – internal and external alterations (HT had objections but too late for comments to SBC)
- Office 47 – 49 The Square – installation of illuminated projecting sign.
- Formation of replacement skate park – Shedden Park
- Alterations and extension to dwelling houses Greenwell, Mayfield, Kelso
- Installation of photo voltaic array to roof 7 and 8 Sutherland Gardens Kelso

The next meeting of Kelso Community Council will be held in the Town Hall, Kelso on Tuesday 11 October 2016 at 7.00pm.