

MINUTE OF MELROSE & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

7.30 PM, WEDNESDAY 18 MAY 2022, THE ORMISTON INSTITUTE UPPER LOUNGE

1. Attendance and Apologies

Present: Jane Bell (CC)	Also present: Cllr David Parker (SBC)
Mary Douglas (CC)	Cllr Jenny Linehan (SBC)
Simon Harris (CC)	Cllr John Paton Day (SBC)
Bruce Jackson (CC)	
Michael Sherlock (CC)	Apologies: Willie Kerr (CC)
Douglas Stewart (CC)	Bruce Wilson (CC)
Linda Wilkes (CC)	Lorna Paterson (CC)
Martin Baird (CC)	

2. **Declaration of interests:** No interests of relevance were noted.

3. Minutes of meeting of Wednesday 20 April

The minutes were approved without modification.

4. Matters arising from meeting of Wednesday 20 April 2022

It was noted that the website was now up and running.

5. Additional items and order of business

No additional items were noted.

6. The Lowood Planning application

Members of the community council had all studied the planning application papers at length, and a number of deep concerns were shared. Council members shared the view that they found it difficult to understand, from the available papers, the roles and positions of the different parties involved, the relevance of different elements of planning and development legislation, and the position of the specific application presented to the overall much wider Lowood development. Councillor David Parker advised that the overall development had been subject to a wide number of assessments and reports.

Members of the community council concluded that, being all new to the council, they had insufficient knowledge or understanding of the wider development, and of the processes of approval that would be involved, to draw a competent view on the specific application presented. It was agreed that the officers involved at Scottish Borders council would be asked to attend a meeting to provide clarity as to the intentions of the project, and the process of making progress.

7. Planning issues: Specific applications

Alternative names that had been suggested for a new residential street in Newstead were discussed. It was decided that the views of the local residents would be paramount and should be solicited. It was agreed that this would be done and agreement made by e-mail in the subsequent weeks. Two smaller applications, one in Darnick and one in Gattonside, were also discussed and responses agreed.

8. The Melrose Library opening hours

The level of activity within the library, was discussed. Members considered the library to be one of the communities greatest and most prominent assets. Concern was expressed that the level of activity at the library was insufficient, being lower

than in other libraries, and especially being much lower than before the Covid outbreak, when the library was very busy.

It was agreed the two half-day openings per week was insufficient, at a time when the need for community activity such as the library could offer has grown so much. The Vice Chair of the council agreed to ask Live Borders for an update on their plans for the library and ask if someone could address the issue at a Community Council meeting. It would also communicate with the school, to be reminded of the presence of the asset for young people.

9. Melrose festival / Jubilee

A report had been given by Lorna Paterson, who is on the Festival Committee. It was clear that a lot was going on around the Jubilee period, by a number of different local groups and organizations.

10. Contribution for the Melrosian and Festival Queen

The Community Council agreed to make gifts marking the occasion, at a total cost of £100.

11. Greener Gateway Awards

Members of the Community Council had received details of these awards, that follows others in which Melrose had done well historically. Melrose and district is highly active in the activities being awarded, but these awards are awarded from a bureaucratic, form-filling exercise that would require someone with passion for and expertise in that to undertake. Members would forward on details of the awards to groups who may be interested in pursuing them.

12. Melrose Tidy up

This is an activity that used to take place after the Rugby 7s, and before the festivals, so that the town could look at its best. With the Rugby 7s being muted this year, there was relatively little to tidy up, but members concluded that it would be a good idea to reconstitute these. The chair would find out from Val Miller all that would be involved.

13. Consideration of crime reports & policing

An appointment of a community officer is underway but not yet concluded. No comment were received on the reports.

14. Any other competent business.

Concern was expressed about the state of and arrangements for maintaining and erecting the Christmas Lights. It was agreed to raise this in the Autumn.

The book sale that had recently not taken place was discussed, and it was agreed that it was a focus of community activity that raised useful funds and should be considered in future years.

Concern was raised about the rainwater drains in the high street, and potholes outside St Mary's.

15. Questions from the floor. There were no questions from the floor.

16. Time date and location of next Community Council meeting.

Wednesday 15th June at 7.30pm in the Ormiston Institute.