

MINUTE OF MELROSE & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

7.30 PM, WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE 2022, THE ORMISTON INSTITUTE UPPER LOUNGE

1. Attendance and Apologies

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

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

3. Minutes of meeting of Wednesday 18 May

The minutes were approved with one modification.

4. Matters arising from meeting of Wednesday 18 May

Live borders staff would attend the Community Council meeting in August to address the issues raised at the May meeting about Melrose Library.

5. Additional items and order of business

No additional items were noted.

6. The Lowood Development

Members of Scottish Borders planning team led a highly informative presentation of what is now called “The Tweedbank Expansion”, its background, how it fitted into the Borders development plan, and how planning processes would be pursued from now on as the site becomes developed. It led to lively questioning and discussion throughout. The overheads would be passed on and will made available. It was highlighted how the project arose from the 2016 development plan, which called for more land to be made available for housing, and the overall project is authorised by the Scottish Government. An Environmental Impact Assessment is not required for the current planning application for an access road following a screening exercise. Though environmental impact assessments are not normally needed for a housing development, the need for any future EIAs will be assessed on a case by case basis when future planning applications are submitted.

Following a public exhibition in 2019, substantial supplementary guidance documents were developed to explain the type of developments that were envisaged, (to be used by developers in making their plans and applications). These were approved by Scottish borders council, in June 2021, and are available online.

https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/directory_record/56803/tweedbank_%E2%80%93_vision_for_growth_and_sustainability/category/28/approved_planning_guidance

The expansion will progress in phases, and the first, on the eastern side of the site is for the access road which is the subject of the current planning application

(22/00494/FUL) that is now out for consultation. This is needed to be done well ahead of developments so that they can progress, and also in this case to access resources from city deal funding. Discussions with the Tweedbank Community Council are scheduled in order to consider the Neighbourhood Centre in more detail.

A number of issues were raised by Community Council members during the presentation:

- the overall desirability of having such a large development between Melrose and Gala, that will make the area one urban space with visual and economic consequences for the area and for Melrose particularly
- the need for this new development to be sensitive to protecting the environment and against further climate change
- the need to develop a community in the area and not just houses
- the importance of ensuring that the plans and the supplementary guidance documents are made available in the library was emphasised
- the need to maintain open access in the estate, and appropriate use or development of Lowood house
- a problem that access to the area has already been restricted with the locking of gates and erection of barbed wire fencing.
- the desirability of maintaining the route of the Southern Upland Way and Borders Abbey Way long distance paths which run alongside the Tweed through the Lowood estate.
- inconsistency between it being a Tweedbank expansion, linked to and developed in conjunction with the Tweedbank Community Council, yet it being geographically located within the Melrose and district boundary.

7. Planning issues: Other applications to discuss

That the proposals for a new name for a new residential street in Newstead had been determined by Newstead residents was applauded. Two smaller applications, were also briefly discussed and responses agreed.

8. Accounts for 2021-22

These had been sent by email and were approved.

9. Signatories for Bank account

The resolution to change signatories of the MDCC was unanimously agreed, so the following will become signatories:

Mary Douglas	Chair
Simon Harris	Secretary
Bruce Jackson	Vice Chair
Douglas Stewart	Treasurer

10. Melrose Football Club development request

The chair of Melrose Football club had made a request via the Community Council website to address the council to discuss plans to develop its facilities in Gibson Park. As the next (august) Community Council meeting would be welcoming Live Borders to discuss the Melrose Library service, the council agreed to welcome Melrose FC to the meeting at 7.30 on Wednesday 21 September.

11. Crime reports & policing

Jenny Linehan agreed to follow-up on progress towards the appointment of a community officer. No comment were received on the reports.

14. Any other competent business.

The chair and Vice Chair would attend the Church service for the Melrose festival. It was emphasised that other Community Council members were also welcome.

There is a problem with waste collection in Newstead. Some time ago, general waste had not been collected for weeks. Now and recently, the problem is that Recycling waste was not being collected.

A concern has been expressed that the proximity of The Rose bar's chairs and tables to the cash-line machine removed privacy of those wanting to use the RBS bank facility, and causing some people not to do so. (There is a cash point at the Coop.)

The rainwater drains in the high street, remain blocked and are likely to overflow with any substantial rain.

There is a problem with unswept leaves on footways neat the BGH, which is restricting foot access.

The absence of evident celebration of the Jubilee on Melrose streets, or events on the occasion, and with no Union Flags outside the Ormiston Institute was noted. It was discussed how this was the consequence of the almost entire retirement of the former community council earlier in the year. The intention was expressed for the almost entirely new members of the Community Council to be better prepared for future national events.

The success of the website was noted, with 228 visits in May. It was confirmed that the council will not be using Facebook for publicity.

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

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

Wednesday 17 August at 7.30pm in the Ormiston Institute.