

# MINUTE OF MELROSE & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

7.30 PM, WEDNESDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2023, THE ORMISTON INSTITUTE

## 1. Attendance and Apologies

<b>Present:</b>	Martin Baird (CC)	Cllr David Parker (SBC)
	Jane Bell (CC)	Cllr John Paton Day (SBC)
	Mary Douglas (CC)	Lorna Paterson (CC)
	Simon Harris (CC)	Ian Porter (Police Scotland)
	Bruce Jackson (CC)	Michael Sherlock (CC)
	Cllr Jenny Linehan (SBC)	Douglas Stewart (CC)
	David Langworth (Melrose Paths Group)	Lynda Wilks (CC)
	Campbell Lightly-West (Earlston School)	Bruce Wilson (CC)

**Apologies:** Willie Kerr (CC)

## 2. Welcome to David Langworth Chair of Melrose Paths Group

David outlined the development of Melrose Paths Group. Initially established by SBC Access Group, it devised walks around the town and prepared a booklet, produced by SBC, now in its 4<sup>th</sup> edition and having sold 10-12 thousand copies. Supported by SBC, the main work is to promote and maintain the paths network. Promotion is through the booklet (which also promotes the long distance paths that go through) and through [www.walkmelrose.org.uk](http://www.walkmelrose.org.uk) which promotes walking in the Melrose area, rather than the town. Maintenance work is pursued by Ian Wilson and other members, such as the relocation of the Battery Dyke path (with money from SBC). The recent paths development across the Eildon Hills was one of two funded projects from Visit Scotland, which required community support and where SBC put up 20%.

There are 12 to 15 active members and the group collaborates with others, including the Abbotsford Estate, The Trimontium Trust and Old Melrose Estate. Recent years have seen a massive increase in the numbers of local people and visitors using the paths. A number of issues were considered. The main paths maintenance problems now are drainage along the paths, forestry trees, and flooding.

New projects in the area that may generate activity in Melrose include the proposed Tweedbank to Eyemouth active travel route, and the new coast to coast cycle route from Stranraer to Eyemouth. The maintenance of seats has faltered recently (they had historically been brought in for varnishing etc from time to time), and a number are now in serious disrepair. Melrose paths group would be happy to meet to see how collaboration with others might help in addressing these issues.

## 3. Scottish Borders Walking Festival

SBC had sent out an invitation to local groups and community councils to host Scottish Borders walking festivals in the years from 2024 to 2026 (it is hosted by Kelso in 2023). It had been hosted in Melrose in 2002. Discussion reflected a view that it would be great if someone wanted to take this on but there has been a perception that is an onerous task that earns little thanks or benefits.

## 4. Policing considerations

With Ian Porter present, a number of local policing issues were discussed. There have been a number of thefts of expensive equipment from farms, including Quad Bikes, and here, tracking devices had helped recovery. Kits available for painting onto mobile equipment, and perimeter alarms, all help. More pop-up policemen than initially anticipated are becoming available, and the community council's list of preferred sites has been noted. There have been a number of reports of anti-social behaviour by

youths, with one set of 12-13 year olds being a nuisance. The consequence of a recent operation to secure the safety of a child, which involved considerable police activity in Gala, Gattonside and Melrose, was discussed.

5. **Declaration of interests** No interests were recorded
6. **Minutes of the meeting of Wednesday 18 January 2023** These were approved
7. **Matters arising from meeting of Wednesday 18 January 2023**

Street lights reported were still not working. This will be chased again.

The coping stones on the cemetery wall has been followed up, but has been delayed by the retirement of the mason who would have addressed it.
8. **Electricity supply to Melrose Square.** The electricity supply to the market square costs £0.54 per day just to maintain its availability, but only two units have been used in the last 2 years. The standing charges have now risen massively, but it was thought that if the electricity supply was lost, it might be difficult to re-establish if needed at some stage in the future. It was agreed that Douglas Stewart will set out the problem to the councillors to try to find another way of funding this supply.
9. **Defibrillator maintenance.** When defibrillators are installed, this rarely considers the considerable cost of maintenance through replacement batteries, and pads. The funds that are available are typically oversubscribed. Funds are secured. The community council agreed that while defibrillator availability this is an important advance for the community, the maintenance of this equipment is not something that it can take on.
10. **Melrose and District Community Groups** A proforma form for CC members to complete the groups that they knew of had been sent out.
11. **Traffic problems and dangers in Gattonside.**

The current position of the chicane makes it difficult for drivers to see around. That this is an ongoing concern has been noted, and the location has been reviewed by specialists. Its current location enables pedestrians on the chicane to see both ways so is considered to be safest for them. Gattonside will be one of the locations for a pop-up policeman.
12. **Absence of toilets at the station.** Scotrail/Network rail own the site. Toilet provision depended on rental of the café. There is currently no interest in this.
13. **Developments above Gattonside** Planning applications would be examined.
14. **Football goals on the triangle park in Melrose.** Cllr Jenny Linehan, Cllr David Parker and the Community Council secretary had met with Melrose Football Club about this, and now locations to store these on Gibson park were being explored, which was thought to be satisfactory.
15. **Scottish Borders Scrutiny & Petitions Committee** The Community Council was made aware of the potential to submit concerns to this.
16. **Planning issues** These had all been considered by email. The Deputy Chair, who managed these for the community Council, would not be present at the next meeting but would deal with them by email before then.
18. **Any other competent business** Actions to mark the King's coronation were considered.
19. **Questions from the floor.** No issues were raised
20. **Time date and location of next Community Council meeting.** Wednesday 15 March 2023 at 7.30pm in the Ormiston Institute.