

# MINUTES OF MELROSE & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING 7.30PM WEDNESDAY 18 OCTOBER 2023, ORMISTON ROOMS

## 1. Welcome, Attendance, Apologies, Declarations of Interest

**Present:** Mary Douglas (Chair) (CC), Jane Bell (CC), David Parker (SBC), Mike Sherlock (CC), Bruce Wilson (CC), Simon Harris (CC), Dougal Stewart (CC)

**In Attendance:** Kay Callander (Trimontium Trust), Ian Porter (Police Scotland), Lucy Lewendon (Minutes)

**Apologies:** Willie Kerr (CC), Lorna Paterson (CC), Bruce Jackson (CC), Jenny Linehan (SBC), Martin Baird (CC)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## 2. Police Report

IP had circulated the report prior to the meeting, and welcomed any questions. He reported on an increase in youth-related issues in the Borders in general, and in Melrose it was a particular problem around the caravan site and Priors Walk. Extra police patrols, including plain clothes, had been brought in, and the police were taking proactive steps by going into schools to give talks etc.

The police were being called to deal with an increasing number of mental health issues. This was a UK-wide situation, and was likely to add pressure to the already strained Police Scotland budget. IP reported on a loss of 600 officers in the last 12 months, not to be replaced, and it was estimated that they would lose a further 600-1000 officers going forward, again not being replaced. This, together with the closure of police stations, was a cause for concern.

The meeting thanked IP for his report, and he departed the meeting.

## 3. Trimontium Update, Kay Callander

KC reported that the new building was up and running, and the Museum was continuing to grow, including plans to take the visitor experience into the landscape. This would include a 3-day visitor package, and the introduction of Virtual Reality experiences. She confirmed that the Trust was liaising with Newstead Community Council on their concerns regarding the Trimontium site structures. The Trust had 100+ volunteers interacting with the community, and were aiming to increase the focus on the Iron Age indigenous population of the area, and to utilise non-invasive, cutting-edge archaeological techniques. She confirmed that the Trust was still keen to have a mural painted on the side of the building, and SH suggested that the Trust should undertake a consultation process, e.g. with the M&DCC, prior to going to the Planning Department with the proposal, in order to expedite the application.

The Chair thanked KC for her contribution, and she departed the meeting.

#### 4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting, and Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

- Traffic calming in Gattonside: the new symbols were up, and were proving to be an improvement.
- Speeding farm vehicles: This continued to be a problem for Newstead. JB said that parking on the road corners and pavements was exacerbating the situation. MD had heard nothing back from the NFU, and would continue to press them. MB was speaking with local farmers.  
**Action: MD/MB**
- Yellow lines opposite Marmions: people were still parking there, as there was no enforcement.
- Phone boxes: MD reported that BT were willing to sell the boxes, and she was keen to see each community taking responsibility for their own box.
- Footpath between Gattonside and Lowwood Bridge: this was still overgrown with vegetation, forcing pedestrians to walk in the road. DP would follow this up with SBC.  
**Action: DP**
- Melrose Nursery: a site visit had been planned.
- School crossing: DP reported that the Council was designing a push-button crossing system, and it was agreed that it should be customised to reflect school hours and the convenience of the motorist outwith those hours.
- St Mary's road congestion: MS had consulted with some of the residents to gauge their feedback on establishing a one-way system, and concluded a 75% positive and 25% negative reaction to it. DP suggested that a proposal for creating the one-way system should be set out clearly to the Roads Department of the Council, and it was generally felt that there was a good case, as the current situation was unsustainable. The matter would then be put out for public consultation by the Council.
- Street lighting in Gattonside: still no response from SBC. MD would get an update from JPD (SBC).  
**Action: MD**
- Harmony Orchard: a community buyout of the Orchard was discussed. MS pointed out that the area was deemed 'developable land' as per the National Trust plan submitted in 2016, and therefore of higher value. DP suggested investigating government grants, and other fundraising opportunities. MD will clarify the situation about Harmony Orchard with Jenny Linehan after a representative from National Trust Scotland stated at the last meeting that the orchard would not be sold for housing. It was confirmed that the Orchard was a conservation area and therefore subject to the appropriate conditions.  
**Action: MD**
- Abbey Street Lighting: The streetlights were still not functioning, raising concerns for the longer winter evenings. JPD had reported the issue to the power company but had not yet received a response.  
**Action: JPD**

## 5. Christmas Lights

BW reported that the appropriate information had been submitted to SBC and the electric company. The lightbulbs would be checked for functionality, erected on 19 November, and illuminated on 25 November.

## 6. Phone Boxes

Covered in Matters Arising. MD would revert at the next meeting.

Action: MD

## 7. Wreath

MD undertook to order the wreath.

Action: MD

## 8. AOCB

- Mobile phone town trail: This was generally thought to be too expensive.
- A question was raised about the recent tree site visit at Collingwood, Darnick. DP reported that the visit had been very useful and that he would be writing directly to the residents affected to advise them of their options at some point over the next few weeks.
- Melrose RFC would be sending a representative to the next meeting to discuss the 2024 7s.
- Remembrance Day was on 12 November, and members would attend.

Action: DP

The meeting concluded at 8.30pm.

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 15 November in the Ormiston Rooms at 7.30pm.