



The Royal Burgh of Selkirk and District Community Council

Chairman
Vice-chairman
Secretary
Hon. Treasurer

Bob Kerr
Dr. Lindsay Neil
David Bethune
Tom Combe

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Minute: Meeting held in the Committee Room, Victoria Halls, Selkirk on Monday 13th October, 2008

- 1) **Present:** Community Councillors Bob Kerr (chair), Dr. Lindsay Neil (vice-chair), Caroline Cruickshank, Jim Gibson, John Howie, Ian King and Murray Smail, and Scottish Borders Councillors Vicky Davidson and Kenneth Gunn.

[in attendance: 8 members of the public, 2 members of the Press, and PC Lesley Shiell]

- 2) **Apologies:** Community Councillors Jenna Agate, Tom Combe and David Bethune (secretary).
- 3) **The minutes of the meeting held on 8th September** were approved (proposed: J. Howie, seconded: I. King).
- 4) **Matters arising from the minute not otherwise included on agenda**
Scotbet sign; 2 questions were asked:
a) how and by what authority could a retiring SBC planning officer unilaterally give approval to a change of sign design without reference to the statutory consultees (particularly the Community Council) on these matters?
b) how the SBC Planning website continues to show the revised (approved) style of signing but not the 'unconsulted' style of sign which now exists on the building frontage?

In the absence of Cllr. Riddell-Carre, these questions will be held over until she next attends the CC. (The acting Secy. will attempt to find out meantime)

- 5) **Declarations of interest** – the chairman declared interest in a planning application to be discussed later.
- 6) **Lothians and Borders Police**

PC Lesley Shiell reported that reported crime levels for Aug. & Sept. followed the usual pattern within an average annual detection rate of c.60%. A significant theft of c.£30,000 worth of copper, between Jan 08 and Aug 08 from the derelict Signum factory, was discovered and remains unsolved.

Attention has been paid to the under-age drinking and general disturbance caused in the area behind the Town Hall. Not many complaints from the public had been received, possibly due to the fear of victimisation of complainers.

The advice is that the public should complain, need not identify themselves to the Police and can request that the Police do not visit their residence thus avoiding identifying the complainer. There is a technical improvement being introduced to detect camouflaged alcohol consumption and various other methods will be employed to catch miscreants.

Travelling people do constitute an episodic problem in Selkirk there being no designated site for them. (see Public Forum below). The Police will react appropriately to reports of illegal occupation but are governed by a 'non-harassment' approach.

Cllr. Gibson reported that the abandoned site at Fairfield Drive had been subject to vandalism, noisy youth gatherings and was a potential fire hazard. This was noted, but in the absence of SBC Cllr. Riddell-Carre, this will be demitted to the next CC meeting for possible action to be discussed.

PC Shiell was thanked warmly for her report, in particular because she is on holiday, and the CC recorded how much her regular Police reports were valued. PC Shiell then left the meeting.

OPEN FORUM (taken at 7.30pm, following item 6)

- (b) D. Carmichael enquired re progress of the **negotiations with Mr Beattie**; the Chairman is in discussion on this but legal requirements mean that no progress can be made until next summer at the earliest. Meantime Mr Beattie has carried out some work to facilitate the use of the area for allotments. It was stated that SBC has no obligation to provide allotments in response to public demand, merely to review the possibilities.
- (c) D. Heatlie raised three points:
- (i) (see 5 above); a lock had been broken, by presumed travellers, at the **refuse disposal site** in order to gain access; the Chairman. will attend to this.
 - (ii) Damage had occurred to the **public toilets** in the Market Place; SBC will be contacted to effect repairs.
 - (iii) The lack of **disabled access to the bus shelter** in the Market Place; it was explained (Cllr Gunn) that the bus shelter was erected in the wrong place which precluded formation of such an access without very considerable additional expense. The CC regretted such incompetence, but hoped that ultimately the error will be rectified. SBC Cllr. Gunn will attend to this.
- (d) Gordon Edgar raised the state of the **railings adjacent to the Pringle Park**; it was observed that painting is perfectly possible and SBC Cllr Davidson will investigate this.

7) Planning:

(a) Planning applications considered:

| | application | applicant | action / comments |
|----|--|----------------------------|---|
| 1. | 08/01518/OUT - 21 Heatherlie Park: demolition of existing and erection of replacement dwelling house | Al James | approved subject to the submission, in due course, of any future proposal for full planning consent including vehicular access and parking arrangements to the satisfaction of the Roads Authority |
| 2. | 08/01536/FUL - land and stable building west of Lindean Moor Farmhouse: change of use, alterations and extensions to form dwelling house | J & S Developments Ltd | approved but concern expressed re poor design, elevational treatment and need to reinforce boundary landscape/screening |
| 3. | 08/01380/FUL and 08/01019/LBC - 1A Market Place: replacement windows | William McBride | approved, provided all windows are of timber construction and not uPVC as this building forms a constituent part of Selkirk's Conservation Area. |
| 4. | 08/01529/FUL- land north and west of 4 Level Crossing Road: erection of garage for vehicle repairs | David James Beaton | approved subject to restriction upon hours of use (say) between 8am – 8pm weekdays in order to reduce potential noise disturbance to neighbouring houses and that appropriate measures are in place to deal with waste disposal (oils), pollutants etc. |
| 5. | 08/01670/FUL: land east and south of 82 Linglie Road, Selkirk: erection of 7 dwelling houses, formation of access road and associated parking area | Eildon Housing Association | agreed that site visit and further discussion required, with decision delegated to planning sub group, who will report back at next CC meeting |

(b) Other planning matters:

- i. **08/01243/OUT** :land west of Garden House, Whitmuir Farm, Selkirk: erection of 2 dwelling houses: IK reported that this application had been refused by SBC

8) Reports from SBC Councillors:

(a) Councillor Davidson:

- (i) confirmed that £10 Million of **SBC invested funds** is 'frozen in Iceland' - this could mean major budgetary alterations and consequences if no resolution is achieved;
- (ii) reported on the amendments to the **final Borders Local Plan**, passed at a recent SBC Meeting:
 - i. the reinstatement of Selkirk's inclusion in the list of towns with protected '**Prime Retail Frontage**' status, previously inexplicably deleted;
 - ii. some undefined policy alterations;
 - iii. some undefined redesignation of land for housing;
 - iv. the undefined redesignation of some industrial development areas.

- (both Cllrs expressed fears that attempts may be made to restore the deletion in (i) above by SBC Cllrs opposing Selkirk's status and this must be carefully watched for during consultation)
- (iii) reported that the cause of the leakage resulting in **damage to paintwork in the Victoria Hall** was due to a blocked overflow pipe, probably blocked for years;
 - (iv) reported that the **railings at the Victoria Halls** would be painted;
 - (v) urged the CC to consider a project under the EU '**Leader**' programme;
 - (vi) reported that the **Fleshmarket/Town Hall project** may go ahead, the final plans awaited. L. Neil suggested the re-establishment of the Fleshmarket pavement (clearly seen on 1960s photographs despite Cllr Gunn's denial that one existed) as an alternative to a disabled access.

A short debate took place where it was stated and emphatically reaffirmed that **a comprehensive plan for the town centre was needed** involving all agencies and this concept had both CC and Selkirk Regeneration Group support. Cllr Davidson had disagreed with the SBC Planning & Development officers who proposed assessing each town before deciding which merited regeneration attention next. She argued that all towns should have regeneration plans in place and each town should be developed according to their fixed plan as funds permitted. Singling out one town in preference to another was a recipe for disharmony and contention and the CC wholly endorsed Cllr Davidson's point of view. Cllr Gunn deplored that there was no town forum canvassing widespread town viewpoints for town development. He was informed that the Selkirk Regeneration Group performed this function, that its members were drawn from all other groups in the town and it had been successfully in place for 2½ years. Unfortunately it had been set up at a point in time when EU regeneration money had already been spent elsewhere than in Selkirk.

Questions:

- i) L.Neil asked if a more thorough **inspection regime for the Victoria Halls** in future would avoid expensive potential problems being overlooked. The fault was declared an invisible one (until seen).
- ii) J.Howie enquired about a possible gap hazard at the **Cannon St bridge**; this was adjudged safe and had been assessed by SBC officers.
- iii) J.Gibson expressed concern re **fencing at the foot of Etrick Terrace**; this was not adjudged a hazard but BEAR (Scotland) would have their attention drawn to it for remedy. (via A7 Action Group)
- iv) I.King had conducted an **audit on shops and business premises** in the central area of the town. The survey found almost no empty shops in Selkirk, but that business premises and prepared food outlets were affected in concert with the situation nationally.

(b) Councillor Gunn:

- (i) There was concern that the '**Transforming Children's services**' and education and social work generally are being subjected to accelerated consideration for (probably) budgetary reasons. Proposed trust formation and other measures will likely result in a diminished level of services and must be guarded against.
- (ii) The result detailed above at 8(b)(i) was achieved (16:10) through a welcome **alliance** of Cllrs from the Lib Dems, SNP, Borders Party and an Independent.
- (iii) The **broken pillars** (OF(b)) had been assessed by SBC and deemed very expensive to replace. It was suggested that a local stonemason be enlisted to help at lesser cost and Cllr Gunn will take this forward.
- (iv) The decision by the SBC Executive, who are not **Common Good Fund** trustees, to overturn some of the SBC CGF Working Group recommendations had been 'called in' by the 'Scrutiny Group' comprising SBC Cllrs. As a result, the WG findings will now be considered by all 34 Cllrs as the legal trustees of CG Funds which represents a justly open debate and a belated observance of the complex law pertaining to Common Good Fund administration.
- (v) There has been a widely acclaimed improvement in **funding arrangements for flood prevention**.
- (vi) The necessary permissions are now in place for the **repair of Murray's Cauld** but that owing to delays, this cannot now take place until after 1 June 2009.
- (vii) The almost permanent **poster at the Toll** will be removed & and the dead 'prisoner's bush' will be replaced soon in a small ceremony.

(c) **Councillor Riddell-Carre:** not present, no report received

9) Common Good Fund Operation

L. Neil reported that a copy of a letter dated March 07 had just been received, in which the Scottish Executive had reminded Directors of Finance of all Scottish LAs of their obligation to compile accurate lists of heritable and moveable **CG assets**. With the approval of the Exec C'tee of the CC, a number of questions under the FOI have been formally submitted.

10) Follow-up of matters discussed at previous meetings

- (a) A positive meeting with J Purvis MSP had taken place and another is planned in December/ January involving the '**New ways' partnership**.
- (b) J. Gibson outlined plans to tidy up the **Auld Kirkyard** using volunteers and SB Local. This got CC approval and thanks.
- (c) **Allotments**; dealt with under OF(a).
- (d) The Chairman and I. King reported on this poorly attended **CC Network conference** which included some useful topics and was useful in delineating community buy-out procedures.

[Cllr Gunn left at 2100hrs.]

- (e) Little of note happened at the **A7 Action Group** meeting, mainly discussing problems in Hawick which are the same as Selkirk's with respect to the traffic volume through the town.
- (f) The **Town Centre consultation**, held at short notice by SBC, was chaired by Ross Martin, Dir. of Policy at the Centre for Scottish Public Policy and was attended by 8 Borders town reps, 6 from Selkirk. The many points we raised were listened to and it was reassuring to realise that the Selkirk Regeneration Group and the CCs views on town centre planning are echoed throughout the country. A report will emerge in due course and an important speech by John Swinney will be delivered on 19th Nov detailing changes to CC functions.

11) Correspondence

| | Item | From | Action |
|-----|---------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| (a) | Postwatch Scotland Newsletter | Postwatch Scotland | noted |
| (b) | letter re SB Local Assistance | Craig Blackie, SBC | chairman will respond |
| (c) | response from Insp. M. Wynne | L & B P | Insp. Wynne (L&B Police) will try to improve patrol levels within manpower constraints, particularly in the Market Place / Fleshmarket area,. (See 6 above). Noted. |
| (d) | notification of ASCC conference | SBC | The chairman, (our ASCC rep.) reminded members that this is open to all CC members and takes place in Holyrood on 22 Nov 08. Lunch provided. This is an important meeting – see 10(f) above. |

12) Reports from Sub-groups

- (a) **Selkirk Hill Management Group** – noted from the October Minute that Management Group members will meet informally on site on 22 October to view present ground conditions and consider possible landscape revision as suggested by the golf club.
- (b) **Plattling Twinning Group** – nil to report, accounts not yet settled.
- (c) **Evening Study groups** – Cllr T. Combe not being present, this will be held over to the next meeting. A grant of £1000.00 from the EAC towards the costs is gratefully welcomed. A quarterly financial statement will henceforward be requested from the treasurer.

13) Reports from outside bodies – no reports

- (a) **Selkirk Regeneration Group** – agreed to hold this report until next meeting

14) Other business

- (a) Formal congratulations to Cllr Agate will be held over.
- (b) L.Neil reported that a model constitution from SBC has been received. It differs little from the existing one. A national model constitution is still in process. A minor constitutional change will be proposed at the AGM re co-opting non-voting members.

(c) I.King reported that Selkirk Rotary will plant a total of 3500 bulbs (daffodils, snowdrops and bluebells) on the A7 verge – opposite Belmont garage. This will enhance the town’s entrance and is much appreciated. I.King is also investigating the possibility of hedge planting in the same area.

**Next scheduled meeting (AGM) of the Royal Burgh of Selkirk and District Community Council:
Monday 10th November, 2008 at 7.00 p.m.** in the Committee Room, Victoria Halls, Selkirk.

Adoption of minutes:

Proposed: Secoded:

Signed: (chairman) Date: