Draft Minutes of the Meeting of St Boswells Parish Community Council

held on Wednesday 26 February 2025 at 7.15pm in the Church Hall

1 Welcome by Chair

Craig Emond welcomed everybody to the meeting.

2 Attendees and Apologies

Present: Craig Emond, Anne Stormont, Wilma Burns, Mike Barrie, James Knox, Charles Strang, Sylvia Grundy.

Apologies were received from: Chris Cameron and John Bathgate.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting *held on Wednesday 29 January 2025 in the Lesser Village Hall*

Anne Stormont confirmed that it was possible to co-opt Annette Patterson and Angela Farnish, members of the sub-group Green St Boswells, to attend the Community Council in that role. Anne had clarified this by examining the Community Council Constitution. She had agreed at the previous meeting to serve as the Community Council's point of contact, and in particular to take interest in the Community Woodland project. Subject to such an amendment to the minutes, they were approved following a proposal by Mike Barrie, seconded by James Knox.

4 Matters Arising from those Minutes not subsequently on the Agenda

a Christmas Lights

It was agreed that James Knox would approach the Vets to discuss the possible extension of the Christmas lighting from the original section of the Avenue along the Vets field towards the village hall, ideally on both sides of the road. Craig Emond reported that it had been too wet to complete work on the Christmas tree socket.

It was agreed to pay for a license to run raffles in 2025 for this and possibly other purposes. The raffle licence could be used by any village group under the aegis of the Community Council. Craig Emond agreed to speak to Roddy Martin (SBC) with the intention of sharing updated figures for the expanded lighting scheme so that a new bid for grant could be made in the new financial year from April. It was agreed to position slabs and a bench over the Christmas tree slot. The additional cost of this would also be added to the Area Partnership Grant application.

b Insurances

i Greg Campbell, SBC insurance official, considered that Village Fair activity cover was already provided under the Community Councils Scheme Insurance. This provided cover for events involving up to 500 people. There was to be a Village Week meeting on 15 March. James and Craig were asked to attend. It was thought that the Community Council would provide cover insurance cover for relevant Village Week events which would operate under the umbrella of the Community Council. Wilma expressed a measure of doubt about such an arrangement but was uncertain as to exactly why.

ii It was agreed to proceed as soon as possible with public liability insurance at a cost of around £320 per annum, to be paid from the Community Council's maintenance account. Craig Emond confirmed his understanding of the extent of cover for

all village Community Council activities. This public liability cover would therefore be set in place.

c Path clearance and hedge-cutting

Mike Barrie indicated that it was still uncertain as to who was responsible for what in terms of footpath maintenance within the village. The improved map which Craig Emond would circulate should help to clarify matters. There should then be a meeting between Fiona Cameron (SBC), Denise (SBC), Susan Gray (SBC), and the Community Council represented by Mike Barrie and Craig Emond: hopefully at that meeting it will be possible to agree the relevant footpath maintenance responsibilities of Council, Community Council, and property owners.

d Simple and straightforward planning support document – ideas and progress

Chris Cameron had already agreed to invite a representative of the Hawick Place Planning group to St Boswells to talk about their experience. Anne is typing up notes from the series of Place Planning Webinars which she and the Secretary had been attending. It was agreed to circulate the relevant Place Planning circular, the Scottish Borders Council template place planning document, and the links to the workshop presentations, once these were circulated to participants.

e FaceBook page admin

Wilma had still to share admin duties for the Facebook page with Anne, as previously agreed.

f Car boot sales

Mike Barrie and Craig Emond had collated an information file on all aspects of car boot sales, along with plans. The intention was (apart from other aspects) to log all car registration numbers. Those who took responsibility for any car boot sales would henceforth be operating on a “two strikes and you're out” basis in terms of the satisfactory running of the car boot sale in line with the new Community Council documentation. Sylvia Grundy passed across two copies of paperwork from the previous car boot sale organiser’s regime, and this was to be reviewed by Craig and Mike to produce a final authoritative version which would be circulated and then signed off at the next meeting. Copies would be circulated to householder on the Green frontage so that they would be aware of what was expected from those running Car Boot sales. Dates for Car Boot sales for 2025 would also be circulated. It was suggested that a 15% return from admission charges would be a more reasonable donation to be requested by the Community Council from Car Boot organisers. This was agreed.

5 Treasurer’s Report

Wilma Burns as Treasurer spoke to her previously circulated paper, which was noted. It was agreed to spend past moneys derived from the Gipsy Fair on a Christmas tree bench. It was noted that the Community Council was only able to carry forward approximately £1386 of uncommitted reserves.

6 Scottish Borders Council

Unfortunately there was no councillor present to report on SBC business.

a Councillors’ Report

There was no report.

b Current Consultations

i SBC Budget

This had been agreed with a 10% uplift in rates to be levied.

ii Community Council Scheme

The Community Council Scheme draft proposals had been previously circulated. The Secretary agreed, if he had time, to draft a set of comments in response to this consultation. If he managed to do this, they would be circulated to be discussed at the March meeting, which would still be in time for relaying to SBC as a response.

c Springfield Terrace, school drop-off and potential one-way system

The Secretary had confirmed in writing that the Community Council was not in favour of any trial one-way system, which was unlikely to help the situation. It was noted that subsequent to correspondence, a police presence had been observed at the Springfield Terrace drop-off point, and this was thought to be both encouraging and necessary under the circumstances. It certainly for a time might improve behaviour.

d Additional speed sign on A68 southbound

It was noted that an additional dynamic 30mph speed sign had appeared on the A68 southbound just before the entrance to the village. This was felt to have made for a speed reduction heading towards the set limit, but some regret was expressed that the original experimental limit of 20mph had not been adhered to by SBC and the trunk road authority, thought to be Transport Scotland. It was suggested that the Community Council's initial proposal for a dynamic speed sign to be located at the Primary School Junction might once more be put forward for consideration by SBC.

e Battery Storage Farms Planning Policy

There was continued discussion about battery storage farms and it was hoped that Councillor Bathgate would respond by the next meeting.

7 Reports of Sub-groups

a Place Planning

Place Planning had already been discussed as above.

b Green St Boswells

Green St Boswells had also been discussed as a Matter Arising from the previous minutes. Concerns were still being expressed about the danger to cyclists and walkers on the road and footpath to Newtown St Boswells. There was discussion of the grass cutting regime on the Green, and the Community Council was unsure what the various experimental approaches had been intended to achieve, and indeed which if any it was being suggested should be followed over the 2025 season. It was hoped that through Anne, Green St Boswells and Fiona Cameron from the Council might attend the next meeting to share their thinking.

8 Police Reports

These were noted.

9 Any Other Competent Business

a Mike Barrie reported that the Six Nations Fundraiser held in the Buccleuch Arms on the day of the Calcutta Cup match had raised £3400 for the three village clubs involved: Mike was congratulated for the success of this endeavour.

b Sylvia reported that the church in Newtown St Boswells had carried out a survey of occupants of new houses, asking what sort of facilities they would be looking for from their new community. She wondered if this had relevance for St Boswells, and agreed to obtain and share these results if they were available.

c Wilma mentioned that Gavin Tweddle had offered to help with liaison and donation collection relative to the Gipsy Fair, and James Knox volunteered to take this on with him. Craig Emond indicated that he believed a dedicated meeting should be held about the Fair in the spring. Wilma agreed. It was thought that villagers and others should know what was happening for 2025, and be able to discuss in advance arrangements for 2026. This was particularly important not only for frontagers and others, but for village businesses too. It was agreed that such a meeting be held with the relevant bodies. It was also agreed to co-opt Gavin Tweddle insofar as he would carry out the collection of donations from gipsy travellers on behalf of the Community Council.

d The Chairman said that following the success of the Christmas lights, he felt the Community Council should take on an annual project of some nature, and he encouraged those present to consider what might constitute some worthy scheme.

e He reminded the meeting that Councillor Bathgate was still to respond on the question of possible relocation of the bottle banks, which were currently prominently located and frequently unattractive, with broken glass and black sacks visual evidence of inadequate recycling care.

f In the spirit of working together, he hoped that there would be a sharing of information and perhaps greater cooperation in the application for grants by the Community Council and other village organisations. There would be clear benefits in multi-organisational support, which would show, to grant bodies, a wider community commitment at the very least. Members agreed to send contact details of all known clubs and societies to the Secretary.

g Charles Strang had been in discussion with Alastair Minnis about the updating of the Community Council pages on the Village Hall website. It was agreed that members would look at these pages and make constructive suggestions to the Secretary as to how they can be both updated and potentially improved in content. It was agreed that “pen pictures” and possibly photos of Community Council members should be part of this updating.

h Declaring an interest as a frontager on the West Croft, Charles Strang raise the matter of the ownership of the lane and area of woodland behind the West Croft. It was his understanding based on material collected by the late Gus Sinclair that the lane and woodland fell within the ownership and responsibility of the West Croft Trust. He understood that an approach had been made to the Community Council at one time to possibly even take over responsibility for this land, but at that point the West Croft Trust in the form of the Minister, the only potentially identifiable representative of the Trust, could not be persuaded to acknowledge any responsibility. He believed that this woodland was an important visual and biodiversity feature which might under other circumstances be an area to be added to the village’s Community Woodland. He hoped that clarification of ownership of this and other parts of the Green might be undertaken through the process of Place Planning referred to above.

10 Date of Next Meeting

This was agreed to be on Tuesday 25 March in the Lesser Village Hall.

11 Dates and Locations of Subsequent Meetings for remainder of 2025

a James Knox agreed to circulate a “survey monkey” survey to members so that dates for all of the 2025 meetings could be agreed.

b It was hoped that the meeting to discuss St Boswell's gipsy fair might take place on 1 April, at a venue to be agreed.

Craig Emond closed the meeting, thanking those present for their attendance and hoping that the other 2025 meetings might finish rather earlier.

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