Minutes of the Meeting of St Boswells Parish Community Council

held on Tuesday, 25 March 2025 at 7:15 pm in the Lesser Village Hall.

1 Welcome by Chair
Craig Emond welcomed all to the meeting.

2 Attendees and Apologies:
Apologies were received from: Mike Barrie, Sandy Scott, Scott Hamilton.

Attendees: Sylvia Grundy, James Knox, Anne Stormont, Craig Emond (in the Chair), Chris Cameron, Wilma Burns, Charles Strang, John Bathgate, and Mark Douglas.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting *held on Wednesday, 29 February 2025 in the Church Hall.*
These were approved as an accurate record of the meeting, on the proposal of Sylvia Grundy, seconded by James Knox.

4 Matters arising from those Minutes not subsequently on the Agenda:
a insurances:
James Knox confirmed that we now have public liability insurance for the Community Council as owners of part of the Village Green. Any new event held on the Village Green would however require a written risk assessment to be submitted to the Community Council.

b Christmas lights extension:
James Knox confirmed that the Vets had agreed in principle to the extension of the Christmas lights over the area of their ownership: this would be worked up as part of a grant application to the Area Partnership in due course.

c Path Clearance and Hedge-cutting:
Mike Barrie had given apologies as he had been struck down by a bug.

d Simple and Straightforward Planning Support Document:
Chris had prepared maps which were now online on the special Community Council Drive. Gordon, who was part of the Hawick place planning team, was keen to meet with us. It was thought that the initial phase would be one of place planning, and then Investment plans would follow.

Anne reported on the Place Planning webinars which she had attended with the Secretary. She was to share the presentations online. She shared the background of place planning as it had been explained through the webinars. Charles suggested that a five person working group might be established picking up from previous activities. This might involve Anne Stormont, Wilma Burns, Chris Cameron, Mark Douglas, and Charles Strang. This was agreed.

To help kickstart the Place Planning exercise, Craig suggested that we all might come up with six or so ideas of projects which might be incorporated into the eventual Place Plan. John Bathgate felt that this working group might wish to have a look at the Place Plan for Smailholm, which was for a smaller more rural settlement: the Place Plans so far had tended to focus on Burghs. This was agreed.

e Facebook page admin:
Anne Stormont was now a moderator, but was still unable to carry out actions on the website, and Wilma agreed that she would make this happen as soon as possible.

f Church Survey:
Sylvia Grundy tabled the results of the church survey undertaken in Newtown St Boswells and agreed that these should be circulated. She also mentioned that Newtown churchgoers were converting abstemious Lent pledges into cash donations shown on a fundraising thermometer.

g Village Clubs and Societies:
All agreed to forward to the Secretary names and contact details of village clubs and societies within their purview.

h A Big Idea:
All agreed to contribute six ideas, big or small, as indicated above.

i Gipsy Fair
The Secretary reported that Greg Aitken, gypsy traveller officer of SBC, would be back from holiday on Monday 31st. No meeting had been able to be scheduled as yet. He would speak to Greg and if necessary Sergeant Alison Grainger to make the necessary arrangements.

5 Car Boot Sales:
Craig agreed to sort this out with Mike Barrie once he was restored to health. It was known that Mike had spoken to some of the frontagers on the Green. Sylvia Grundy requested that she might book 4 May and August 10 for car boot sales by Melrose Rotary.

6 Village Litter Pick:
It was thought that this could be carried out over the weekend of the 11th 12th and 13th. The Secretary agreed to take this forward.

7 Treasurer's Report:
Wilma reported that the Community Council currently held some £7189.36. There had been little movement since the previous meeting. The matter of Community Council signatories had still not been resolved.

At this point, Mark Douglas left the meeting.

8 Councillor's Report

a John Bathgate gave a report of current matters before SBC: these included

- a visit to Center Parcs in Northern Ireland, and what appeared to be a positive view taken by SBC of Center Parcs' local community engagement thus far.
- The railway extension feasibility study which had now been agreed to proceed by all parties, at a total cost of some £20 million.
- A public meeting and considerable discussion about the Jedburgh pool and its future. A business plan was being prepared.
- A report on Live Borders and its future was due on 31 March.
- A number of council properties were also to be the subject of a report.
- Instead of lesser funding being allocated to each Area Partnership, a Borders-wide neighbourhood support fund was being put together and would be run by Borders Community Action.
- VE Day celebrations would take place in Kelso on the 80th anniversary in May33.

b Current Consultations:
No current consultations had been advised.

c Draft Community Council Scheme
The Secretary was still examining the draft community council scheme: he was unsure as to whether he would be in a position to prepare a draft response.

d Planning Applications:
An application had been made for a property in Weirgate Bank involving PV panels, a polytunnel, and an oil storage tank. This was not thought to be controversial, but the Secretary agreed to forward a link to the planning application so that members could comment if they so wished.

e Bottle Banks:
Councillor Bathgate had had a response from waste services (Dominic Hodgkiss) which seemed to confirm that the bottle banks could be moved elsewhere, but it did not seem at all clear as to the benefits and disbenefits of any new location. It would be necessary to speak further to Waste Services.

f Rugby Pitch Dog Fouling and Disposable Vape Litter:
A number of community councillors had walked over the pitch and had not noticed any particular problem in either case, but it was clearly troublesome. Given that the pitch was for recreation, the view was put forward that it was clearly inappropriate for dog walking, and Councillor Bathgate agreed to take this up with the SBC dog warden to ensure that appropriate signs were positioned. As far as disposable Vapes were concerned, it was recognised that the Vapes were on sale locally however much we might like them to be banned. It seemed that they would in time be banned in any event, and until that time they would have to be considered as other items of unnecessary litter.

g Battery Storage Farms Planning Policy:
Although there seems to be no immediate proposal within our parish, there had been considerable concern expressed within the Community Council that the Borders appeared to be easy picking by developers intending to establish

battery storage farms. This was thought to be particularly unacceptable where good quality agricultural land was to be taken up and the Battery farms themselves, with some associated fire risks, were being positioned in the vicinity of settlements. Councillor Bathgate reassured the Community Council that the SBC Planning policy was now such that there would be no further Battery farms accepted within Scottish Borders. He agreed to circulate a note prepared by Leitholm Community Council.

9 Reports of Sub-groups.

a Place Planning:
This had already been discussed above. It was thought that the Subgroup might meet in person to discuss how place planning would be taken forward within the Parish.

b Green St Boswells:
A plan of the Green showing the Council's mowing regime has been circulated. This would be reviewed at the end of the year.

10 Police Reports:
The Secretary apologised for failing to circulate these and agreed to do this as soon as possible.

11 Any Other Competent Business:
The death of Roy Lawrie, someone long identified with the village, a past Chairman of the Community Council, and over the years a very regular attender at and contributor to meetings of the Community Council, was recorded. It was agreed following a request from Sylvia Grundy that Wilma, on behalf of the Community Council, should send flowers to Christine Lawrie, as well as all considering how Roy's passing might be marked in some more permanent way. This might be as part of the six potential projects mentioned above.

12 Date of Next Meeting:
This was agreed to be on 29 April, in the Church Hall, subject to successful booking by the Secretary.

13 Dates and Locations of Subsequent Meetings in the remainder of 2025:
It has not been possible to carry out a survey of Community Council members at this point, so the Secretary suggested that he should table a draft list at the next meeting so that, if at all possible, meeting dates for the remainder of 2025 could be agreed.

The meeting ended at approximately 9:20 pm.

Charles Strang
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