

**Minutes of Galashiels Community Council Meeting
Wednesday, 7 September 2022 at 6:30 pm.**

 **In attendance**
Judith Cleghorn, Rick Kenney, Marion Romeril, Richard Romeril, Jane Mele.
Councillor Neil MacKinnon, Councillor Fay Sinclair.
Mike Thomson, Border Telegraph
Three members of the public

**1. Welcome and apologies.**

Apologies had been received from Tracey Alder, Bill White, Councillor Euan Jardine.

**2. Minute approval**
The minutes of the meeting of 3 August 2022 were approved. Proposed by Richard Romeril and seconded by Jane Mele.

**3. Matters Arising**
None.

**4. Police update**
The police report had been distributed in advance of the meeting. No members of the police were in attendance. The report was noted.

**5. Subgroup updates**
Gala Walking Festival – Tracey Alder
No report

Gala Resilient Task Group – Tracey Alder
No report

Gala Christmas Lights and Events*.*
There was discussion led by JC about what, if any, level of event should be delivered this year given the current energy costs (which will be much more by Christmas) and the challenges of families being able to afford nourishing food. There may be funding of £6k available but this still needs to be approved by SoSE (South of Scotland Enterprise). There was £867 still in the CC account. JC informed the meeting of all the various costs that would need to be met to provide such an event including the costs of electricity over the period, costs of stress testing, Welcome to Gala sign etc. There was continuing discussion about the ‘moral issues’ requiring to be considered too.
The view was that whilst it would be good to provide a good level of event surrounding the Switch On, this had to be balanced with the financial situation facing many families at that time. There was a consensus that we should perhaps just have the lights being switched on, the Gala Town Band would be in attendance. People attending could switch on their mobile phone torches. JC would try and get a supply of key ring sized torches from the railway people.
JC would speak to Erin Colton. if we get the Energise Gala money, we can do this. If we don’t, we need to do a fundraiser in early 2023 to cover the finance we had spent.
It was finally agreed to leave the decision to the October CC meeting.

Gala policies Group
JM said that at a recent letter pick 15 kg of rubbish had been collected and nine volunteers had taken part.

Gala in Bloom
The group had recruited some new volunteers. The funding application for the tractor is being submitted by Bill White.
JC advised that the one fountain planter, situated outside the entrance to the Tapestry Building had been upgraded to ‘winter planting’, partly in preparation for the visit of HRH The Duchess of Rothesay, planned for Friday 9th September. This planter would remain in situ until Spring, the others would be removed when Milestone thought it suitable and will be replanted for Summer 2023.

**6. Chair’s Report**
The energy situation is getting worse. Food parcels are being allocated et cetera. A meeting was held recently with a range of organisations who can help. The Focus Centre will be opening one day per week as a warm place. This will start in late October.

**7. Treasurer’s Report**

Internet banking is now in place and working successfully. The annual grant from SBC - £1780 had been received.

**8. Secretary’s Report**
No report.

**9. Vice chairs update – planning and licensing**
New Gala Community School – the vice chair had attended the recent SBC planning committee and updated the cc on the meeting and the outcome which was that the planning application was unanimously agreed. There will be a number of conditions that the agreement would cover. RK advised the meeting that the friends of Scott Park have asked the Scottish government to call in the plans to replace the existing Gala Academy. This may well result in further delays.

6 High Street - Planning Ref. 22/01325/LBC.
There was a retrospective planning application submitted for replacement entrance door and windows at the office location at 6 High Street Galashiels on behalf of Mrs Christine Graham. These premises are part of a category C listed building but the improvements to the entrance door and windows were seen as an improvement to the frontage. This area was also close to the great tapestry of Scotland and would improve the overall area. After further discussion it was agreed that the CCG was supportive of this planning application.

**10. SBC Councillors’ Comments and Questions**
Cllr Fay Sinclair.
Councillor Sinclair had provided a report in advance of the meeting. There was discussion about the closure of many public toilets across the borders but specifically the ones in Galashiels. Lack of toilets at the Public Park was also raised. The Chair agreed to write to John Curry, Director of Assets and Infrastructure for clarification on all these issues.

Cllr Neil MacKinnon
There was discussion about the possibilities of generating energy from the gala water and Councillor MacKinnon reported that he had met with Alastair Lings to consider various possibilities in this area, however there were many issues to be overcome.

Issues have been reported at the old playpark at Rosebank Place – it is overgrown, has a dangerous fence and is in generally bad state of repair.

**11.AOB**
CC - nothing raised.
Public - nothing raised

**12. Date of next meeting - 5 October 2022 6.00pm AGM followed by CC meeting.**

***Note from Chair***

*Further to the discussion about the possibility of a Christmas Event in Galashiels this year, since the CC meeting, further discussion has been held – and the following is proposed:*

*Instead of an event on 26th November, we support the two markets – Heartland and Rotary, which will be held on 3rd December at Tapestry Square and Market Square respectively. We will apply for a road closure for Channel and Park Streets and will hold events between the two markets.*

*It is felt that this would still provide an event but would be more cost effective and hopefully would enable us to create a good Christmas atmosphere.*

*If you have any comment, criticism or ideas for entertainment, please contact me.*