

**Galashiels Community Council**

**Wednesday February 1st, 2023**

**Focus Centre**

**6.30pm**

**MINUTES**

**In Attendance**

Judith Cleghorn, Tracey Alder, Rick Kenney, Richard Romeril, Jane Mele, Jim Johnson, John Birnie, Bill White., Shelagh King, Marion Romeril

Cllr McKinnon

Cllr Sinclair

Michael Thomson - Border Telegraph

Ally McGilvray – Radio Borders

3 Members of Public

**1.Welcome and Apologies**.

Judith welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies–, Cllr Jardine, Flora Collingwood- Norris, Alexa Seagrave

***2.* Minutes Approval.**

An accurate Minute of the Meeting December 7th was Approved by Marion and Seconded by Shelagh

**3. Matters Arising N/A**

**4.Police Update**

**5. Chairs Report**

**Christmas Lights**

Meeting took place on 18th January to look at ideas for this year.

* £15,000 is required to get lights up and running
* Reindeers were vandalised causing approx. £1000 of damage.
* 20m of lights on strings x 10 required £670 + vat, transformers also required so its suggested that these go back on the low roof at Volunteer Hall, there is a power supply available there.
* Library lights have also passed their sell by date.
* Suggest we put in a high application for funding to see just how much we can get
* Meeting early March with Blachere.
* Welcome to Gala sign has been taken down by Field and Lawn, we should get them to return it as it will be positioned elsewhere in town in 2023.

Member of the public suggested trying to make an impact on Bank St.

Judith voiced that there is a possible £5000 available from BRCP, also possible funding from Trans - Pennine and Cross Country Trains.

**Borders General Hospital**

Incident over Christmas whereby a lady doing a bank staff shift left in tears as the ward was in a desperate state. 34 patients, 2 nurses and 1 auxiliary. It was at crisis level. Patients laying in their own faecal soiled sheets and patients who were on the ward for 6 months to a year just waiting on a bed in a residential/nursing home.

A letter was sent to Judith by Cllr Jardine explaining the Council involvement. Letter can be seen by contacting the Chair.

A brief discussion followed: about NHS and care support and what we the people can do.

Recruitment and the lack of interest in filling positions seems to be the biggest issue.

**Hotel for Galashiels**

Judith read out an email from Cllr Sinclair that she sent to Judith following a conversation with John Curry from SBC. See below.. Community Councillors were appalled at the lack of information that Cllr Jardine was able to give at the last meeting about the town centre development.

I just wanted to update you that I’ve spoken to John Curry this morning to raise this. He told me he has had a face-to-face meeting with the consortium of developers in the past couple of weeks and they are still very keen to work with the council to bring a hotel to Galashiels. He said the relationship is still positive and that SBC is providing a lot of ongoing support to make a hotel development in Galashiels happen. So it is not the case that the developers have pulled out of the town. In fact, while I’ve been writing this reply I’ve heard back from Mr Curry that he’s spoken to the developers this morning who confirmed they’ve not cut ties with Gala at all.

Bill White said this was twaddle, he was in communication with developers back in 2021 when we all got to hear about plans for a 53 bedroom hotel, 60 bed care home, etc by Edinburgh-based Futurity Ventures . Bill added *bosses at the firm received a call from the local authority at the end of the year informing them they had missed out – in favour of a “social housing” bid.*

*“The second week of December they get a phone call saying they had been pipped at the post,” said Mr White, adding that the company was told there would be no opportunity for a re-bid. “The offer that came in was for social housing.*

*“It was not going to cost Scottish Borders Council (SBC) a penny.*

*“If that [site] was for housing it would have been sold years ago, it was for an economic development.”*

*Mr White, a former councillor, added: “There was no financial risk to SBC. So, what we’re left with is no hotel, no nursing home, no economic benefit. Where is this new hotel going?*

Bill later said a freedom of information application request would be going in to see who actually stopped this development.

**Roundabouts**

Judith read out an email regarding the roundabouts at Tesco and Asda. Judith would like any ideas for these roundabouts which will be easy to keep looking neat and tidy and not costing too much. It was suggested to go for the same idea as the roundabouts in Hawick and look at the cost for slate chips.

**C77**

A discussion was held following Judith reading out an email from Cllr Jardine. Judith said however much we discuss this road, it still won’t bring us any decisions or positive responses. We need to get someone from SBC to come to speak to us.

**6. Treasurers Update**

As report

**7. Secretary’s update**

Next meeting, we have a representative from Pride Scottish Borders coming to speak. The first Borders Pride event will be held in Galashiels in September. This speaker will now visit the CC in April

**8. Vice Chairs update – Planning and Licensing**

Rick went through the planning applications. A bit of a discussion came about when Tracey questioned the yarn area of a new mural. The yarn was very modern in conjunction with the rest of the mural and asked if this could not be changed to cones of yarn as still used in the mills as they were years ago? A member of the public said that he was part of the team looking at the design and he understood where Tracey was coming from and would see if he could get it changed.

**9. SBC Councillors Comments and questions**

**Cllr MacKinnon**

Still looking at the playpark at Rosebank Place, Cllr Mackinnon will update Judith on this further, during the week.

**Cllr Sinclair**

Mostly in report but steps /pathways at Langlee have now been sorted.

Scrutiny Committee are looking for Community Councils to have an input.

**Cllr Steel**

As report

**10. AOB**

**CC**

**Public**

**Date of next meeting – March 1st 2023 6.30pm at Focus Centre**