

**WALKERBURN & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL,  
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 20<sup>th</sup> JANUARY, 2016.**

**Present:** Dr. Steve Henderson - Chairman  
Mr. George Thornton  
Mr. Peter Waller - Minutes  
Mr. Iain Weir - Secretary.

**Ex Officio:** Councillor Stuart Bell.

1. **Chairman's Introduction.** Dr. Henderson welcomed all present.

2. **Apologies & Notices.** Apologies received from Ms Amy Griffiths, Miss Mollie McIntosh MBE, Mr. Ian McVean, Mrs. Irene Ogilvie-Wilson, Councillor Graham Garvie, Councillor Gavin Logan, PC Chris Burnside and the members of Walkerburn Primary School's Pupil Council.

3. **Open Questions.**

Mrs. Thornton said that there is a pothole in the road by the bus stop opposite the mill entrance; also, a panel is loose in the bus shelter outside the Public Hall. Cllr. Bell said he will report these to the relevant SBC people.

**ACTION: Cllr. Bell.**

Mr. Colin Kerr thanked Cllr. Bell for his support during the recent floods. Mr. Kerr said that the Primary School, Rathburn Chemicals and dwellings in Caberston Road had been in serious danger of flooding and this had been prevented by the efforts of local people, rather than the actions of SBC. WDCC has received a letter written by Mr. Kerr on behalf of Caberston Road residents. Extracts of this letter follow

*It became clear quite early in the day (30<sup>th</sup> December) that the river was going to reach record levels and advice given was that the river was to peak at 13.00. This was woefully inaccurate. If it hadn't been for advice coming through from friends in Peebles and local knowledge of the river, we would never have been prepared.*

*Once it became obvious that Peebles Swimming Pool had flooded, we became very anxious and asked repeatedly for more sand bags. NONE CAME until it was too late. We feel that we were abandoned by the emergency services and authorities. When darkness fell we started taking laser levels and discovered the river was rising at 60mm every fifteen minutes.*

*The river eventually encroached on Caberston Road at 17.30 and a decision was made to build a dam in the HB car park; people were up to their knees in water, but prevailed.*

*We would like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks to all the villagers who turned up to support and help us. Without their help the river would have been half way up the wall in front of the houses.*

1. *Mr. Ballantyne from the units for issuing his own supply of bags.*
2. *Rathburn Chemicals for the use of a Luton van, forklift and two tonnes of sand.*
3. *Brendon O'Callaghan for coming down with his digger at the right moment.*
4. *Ben Bose for supplying us with laser levels.*
5. *Alan McMath for driving down from Innerleithen with sand and bags.*

Mr. Kerr made the following recommendations:

1. *Better interpretation of data and better warning to allow communities to prepare.*
2. *A bigger sand bag store on Caberston Road.*
3. *A culvert be installed over at Bold Brae to accommodate release of pressure from the bridge.*
4. *The shingle bank that has built up above the bridge be removed.*
5. *Repair of the bank above the bridge is paramount before we lose the road and substation.*
6. *A flood defence be built along the HB car park, level with the deck of the bridge.*
7. *Dredging of the Walker Burn and reinstatement of the banking damaged in the flood.*

Members welcomed Mr. Kerr's suggestions and expressed gratitude to those whose efforts on 30<sup>th</sup> December had prevented flood damage to buildings.

Mr. Bryan Sommerville expressed his thanks to those who had prevented houses from being flooded.

There was further discussion about the vulnerability of the six inch gas main which crosses the upstream side of the bridge, and the electric power cable positioned under the bridge which connects the village to the substation. Also, indignation was expressed that the playground of the Primary School was cleared of debris (polluted by sewage) by school staff and pupils, rather than appropriate SBC personnel.

- Mr. Weir will contact SEPA and SBC's Emergency Planning Department asking them to send officials to Walkerburn to assess the situation and consider possible alleviating measures. **ACTION: Mr. Weir.**
- Cllr. Bell praised the efforts of local people during the recent floods, especially of the members of the Resilient Community team. He agreed that the speed and depth of SBC's response in such emergencies needed to be reappraised. He pointed out that the positioning of the gas main and power cable was the responsibility of the utilities companies, but undertook to urge them to take appropriate action. He welcomed Mr. Kerr's seven recommendations and said he will pursue them with SBC. He also said that if Scottish Water had released water from some reservoirs it would have had exacerbated the flooding. Scottish Water deny releasing water from Tala Reservoir, and, anyway, Scottish Water claims its remit is to supply water, not control flooding - SBC councillors are challenging this. **ACTION: Cllr. Bell.**

4. **Police Business.** A Police Report covering the period 16<sup>th</sup> November-16<sup>th</sup> December 2015 was received. There were twenty-six calls to this area; no parking or speeding offences; no reports of anti-social behaviour; no reports of drug use; and three vehicle accidents, but no injury to persons.

5. **November Minutes.** Acceptance of these minutes was proposed by Mr. Waller, seconded by Mr. Thornton and passed unanimously.

6. **Correspondence.** Mr. Weir had provided a Correspondence List covering November 2015-January, 2016

- A local resident had made contact regarding a road closure sign placed on the D83/1. The resident expressed concern about access to her property during the closure hours. Details were passed on to reassure her that access to her property would be available.
- Mr. McVean sent out an e-mail to let us know that The Boardwalk has been repaired.
- Details of Tweeddale Citizen of the Year awards received and circulated to members electronically. Closing date for nominations was 31 December 2015.
- On behalf of all at Walkerburn Primary School, the Pupil Council wished WDCC members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
- A request was received regarding a planning application at Stoneyhill to erect a bio-mass boiler building, wood chip store, drying shed and associated works. Details were circulated to WDCC members and no objections were raised and support was given.
- An e-mail was received expressing concern over a planning issue in November's draft minutes as published in Burning Issues. The resident suggested that WDCC members should contact personally all residents who might be affected by planning items. Dr. Henderson replied saying that residents who are concerned about planning proposals should express their concerns to WDCC members. No further communication on the matter has been received.
- A resident requested that barrier tape be erected around the damaged areas of deep gullies in Alexandra Park. Details were forwarded to SBC, which responded quickly fulfilling the resident's request. (Mr. Weir would like to remind everyone that repair

issues etc. can be reported directly to SBC by phone, Internet and contact centres. Of course, WDCC members are available for support if required.)

- A letter was received from the residents of Caberston Road regarding the recent flooding. This letter was circulated to members.
- At the meeting of the Tweeddale Area Forum held in September it was agreed that a sub-committee comprising of Members and Community Councillors of the Tweeddale Area Forum be established at the next meeting of the Forum to look at A72 issues in more detail and liaise with stakeholders about the key problems. At the meeting of the Tweeddale Area Forum held in December it was agreed that Councillors Bell and Cockburn and Community Councillor R. Tatler (representing the Royal Burgh of Peebles and District) be members of this sub-committee. WDCC was asked if one of our community councillors would like to be a member of the sub-committee. However, it has been agreed that Walkerburn and Innerleithen Community Councils will assign one councillor to represent them and this will be Mr. Marshal Douglas of Innerleithen. In the event of Mr. Douglas being unable to attend a meeting of the sub-committee, Mr. George Thornton will deputize.
- Mr. Weir distributed a list of the dates when WDCC will meet during 2016.

7. **Matters Arising.** None.

8. **Flooding in December 2015.** See Item 3.

9. **Planning.** None.

10. **Reports by Members.**

- Mr. Thornton thanked those who had helped clean up the Bowling Club after the recent floods.
- Mr. Weir thanked Mr. Colin Kerr, Mr. Darren Kerr and the Resilient Community team for all they had done during the floods.
- Mr. Weir thanked Mr. Jim Grieve, Mr. Bob Haddow, Mr. Craig Glendinning, Mr. Ian Thomson and Mr. Ian Pennel for their help with Walkerburn's Christmas decorations.

11. **Reports by SBC Councillors.**

- Cllr. Bell said that the NO PARKING sign at the bottom of 'The Ladder' will be touched up at some time in the future.
- He said that it is not really feasible to move the 'elephant crossing signs' in Caberston Road.
- He reported that the pot hole in Galashiels Road has been repaired, though the damaged section in the bridge over the Lade still awaits attention.
- Finally, Cllr. Bell said that a reduction in funds received from the Scottish Government will place the SBC under considerable pressure during the coming financial year and that some cuts are likely, but there will be no increase in council tax.

12. **Appointment of new WDCC Secretary.**

Having moved to Innerleithen, Mr. Weir must stand down as WDCC secretary. Mrs. Lesley Thornton has agreed to take on this task and was unanimously co-opted on to the WDCC. In addition, Mr. Weir must also stand down as Walkerburn's Resilient Community Co-ordinator. Mr. Colin Kerr agreed to become the Co-ordinator and was also unanimously co-opted on to the WDCC to serve in this role.

13. **Any Other Business.** None.

14. **Date of next meeting.** 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2016.

15. **Chairman's closing remarks.** Dr. Henderson thanked those who attended this evening's meeting and expressed his gratitude for the sterling work done by those who had mitigated the impact of the recent floods.