

**GOREBRIDGE & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
APPROVED MINUTES OF MEETING
18 FEBRUARY 2025, 7PM, BIRKENSIDE PAVILION**

IN ATTENDANCE:

Community Council Members

Chair Gael Robertson (GR), Secretary Richard Horsburgh (RH), Treasurer Juliet Bruce Dickie (JBD), Ian Hewitson (IH), Alice Drever (AD), Jac Frankitti (JF), Lorraine Amedro (LA), Mary Davidson (MD)

Midlothian Councillor

Cllr Ellen Scott (ES)

Visitors

E Scott, J Paget, S Gabowski, M Cowie, J Fleming

WELCOME

Chair welcomed all to the meeting. She welcomed the members of the public in attendance. A thanks was given to Mary Davidson and Alice Drever for tea, coffee and cake provided at the start of the meetings.

APOLOGIES:

Cllr D Bowen, R Mackie, M Webb. PC Jason McFarlane

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Approved – J Frankitti

Seconded – L Amedro

MATTERS ARISING

- Gorebridge “Welcome” signs are now in place.
- Planning Objection – The Community Council must ensure that in future it keeps a written record of all decisions made in the minutes.

Action to be taken:

RH to record the results of the vote objecting to the planning application taken at the January meeting in the February minutes.

RESIGNATION FROM THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

A resignation has been received and noted from Gary McCardle.

Action to be taken:

RH to send the notification of resignation to Paul Johnson at Midlothian Council.

GOREBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL/PUPIL ROLL PROJECTIONS UPDATE

The Freedom of Information Request (FOI) sent to Midlothian Council requesting information on School Roll Projections. Disappointedly the Community Council received the following answers to our FOI from Midlothian Council:

- Q1. Whether Midlothian Council has produced updated School Roll Projections as scheduled?
- Q1A. Yes
- Q2. When these projections are available, when and how they will be released to the Community Council?
- Q2A. The projections will not be released to Community Councils.
- Q3A. If these projections are not to be made available to Community Councils, please explain why not?
- Q3A. Midlothian Council consider that disclosing detailed information on school roll projections would prejudice substantially the commercial interests of the local authority. Therefore, the requested information is withheld under section 33(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information Act (Scotland) and we are unable to comply with your request.

The reply from Midlothian Council was discussed at great length. It was unclear why such crucial data cannot be shared, particularly when it directly impacts families making important decisions about where to live in Midlothian. The Community Council and all in attendance felt that Midlothian and especially Gorebridge deserve full transparency on school provision and future projections.

Action to be taken:

- For the Community Council members to send individual FOI requests on school roll projections to Midlothian Council.
- RH and GR will meet to write an appeal challenging the FOI response from Midlothian Council.
- RH will highlight the FOI at the Midlothian Federation of Community Councils meeting on the 19th of February.
- RH to send the FOI response from Midlothian Council to Cllr Ellen Scott.

PLANNING APPLICATION OBJECTION UPDATE

Midlothian Council has responded to the Community Council's objection regarding the planning application for a change of use at 26 Main Street Gorebridge. The application has been rejected, marking a successful outcome for the campaign. It was noted that the Local Place Plan appears to have had a significant effect on Midlothian Council's decision. The chair highlighted that, as the application was submitted by a group of lawyers, an appeal to the rejection should be expected. Additionally, the chair pointed out that the unanimous vote taken by Community Council members at the January meeting to reject the planning application was not recorded in the minutes of the January meeting and in future we must ensure to minute the results of the vote.

A vote was taken on the 21st January to object to the planning application and was unanimously passed by all members of Gorebridge Community Council.

Action to be taken:

- In anticipation of a potential appeal by the applicants regarding the rejected planning application GR and RH will meet to address any forthcoming appeal and work on an effective strategy to counter any appeal.

It was also noted that the boards have been removed and new windows installed, a positive sign that the former Aytons Butchers shop is being prepared for a new business. This will be a welcome addition to the high street, contributing to its revitalisation.

It was also note that there is maintenance work being carried out at No 58 the Main Street.

Action to be taken:

- No action to be taken for information only.

COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS

A copy of Cllr Scott and Cllr Bowen's reports were issued to members and were available for visitors to read.

Cllr Scott further information:

- The long awaited "Welcome" signs are now in place.
- Cllr Scott was asked if Gowkshill can get a "Welcome" sign? Cllr Scott said she will investigate.
- It is hoped to get lights installed at the Auld Gala park.
- Cllr Scott was informed that the "Welcome to Midlothian" sign on the A7 just passed the Butterfly Farm needs attention. Cllr Scott said she will raise the issue with the relevant department.
- Midlothian Council has confirmed funding for the removal of the boarded-up access to Gorebridge Railway Station, enhancing accessibility and improving the overall experience for station users.

ROAD CALMING MEASURES, BARLEYKNOWE ROAD AND SCHOOL SAFETY

Speeding in this area poses a significant risk, particularly to school children disembarking from the school bus. Could this location be considered for road calming measures to help reduce speeding? Cllr Scott requested to follow up with Midlothian Council

Additionally, speeding concerns have been reported on Ladybrae. As a temporary solution, mobile CCTV cameras could be deployed to monitor and deter speeding in both areas. Barleyknowe Road will be closely monitored, with feedback provided to Midlothian Council.

Action to be taken:

- Cllr. Scott will raise this issue with Midlothian Council, with the hope that they will propose suitable traffic-calming options for Barleyknowe Road

MAIN STREET OUTSTANDING ISSUES, BOLLARDS, STREET FURNITURE AND MTRaP

Bollards at Gorefry: The spacing between the bollards is too wide, allowing cars to park on the pavement. A review of the placement is needed to ensure they effectively prevent pavement parking. It was also noted that the bike racks outside the chip shop need to be repainted.

Bin Usage: Some bins on Main Street are being misused, with incorrect items being placed in them. This may be due to a lack of awareness, possibly due to language barriers. It was asked if there was a possibility of placing communal bins on Main Street. It was agreed that due to the layout of the street this option would be impartible.

Action to be taken:

- Cllr. Scott will request that an information leaflet be distributed to Main Street tenants explaining the correct use of each bin.

Gore Avenue Roundel: A consultation is underway to assess the potential conversion of the roundel into a roundabout.

Action to be taken:

- The Community Council will keep this issue on the Agenda.

POLICE REPORT

The police report was issued to members. There were paper copies available for members of the public to read. It was noted that PC Jason McFarlane will not be available to attend until April. The following issues were highlighted:

- Anti-social behaviour is a problem.

Action to be taken:

- AD to liaise with PC Jason McFarlane to organise a date and time for a police surgery.

CORRESPONDENCE

GR and RH have been in contact with the heads of Gorebridge, Stobhill Primary Schools. We have still to arrange a meeting with the head of Gore Glen and St Andrews RC Primary Schools. This is to establish better links with the schools and encourage the pupils to get involved in local democracy.

Action to be taken:

- RH to contact the heads of Gore Glen and St Andrews RC Primary School to arrange a meeting.
- For the Community Council and Primary Schools to look at initiatives to get the youth of Gorebridge to get involved in local democracy.

Miner's Memorial:

The Community Council received an email containing a list of names of mine workers who were killed or died from injuries sustained whilst working in the coal mines in Gorebridge. However, it was agreed that this might not be the best approach, as there is a risk that some names may be inadvertently omitted.

The money which was raised by the people of Gorebridge was used to purchase the miner's memorial that sits outside the Beacon, and it was agreed that the remaining funds would be used to purchase a miner's memorial bench.

The miner's bench has been purchased from the remaining funds and will be placed in Gore Park. The wording for the plaque was discussed and JBD will circulate the final wording for the plaque to be agreed on by the community Council members.

Action to be taken:

- JBD to circulate the wording for the plaque to all members of the Community Council.
- Once the wording has been agreed JBD will contact the engraver with the agreed words.

TREASURER'S REPORT

£500 grant has been received from Midlothian Council. It was agreed that £200 will be used to purchase Microsoft 365, while the remaining funds will support an event in March to promote the Gorebridge Local Place Plan (LPP).

LOCAL PLACE PLAN

GR informed the Community Council that while the Coalfield Regeneration Trust (CRT) initially assisted in preparing and publishing the LPP, it was felt that their future involvement would be limited. As a result, it was agreed to take a bottom-up approach in shaping the future direction of the LPP. GR stated that an audit should be conducted to gain a clearer understanding of the activities and services in Gorebridge, as well as the organisations delivering them.

Action to be taken:

- GR to raise the audit at the next Meet and Share meeting with the other groups and organisations.

MIDLOTHIAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL FEDERATION

RH stated that he will be attending the Federation meeting on February 19th and will share the minutes once he receives them. He also mentioned that he will raise the issue of the School Roll Projections FOI and the response received from Midlothian Council during the meeting.

Action to be taken:

- RH to raise the FOI at the Federation meeting.
- RH to circulate the minutes of the Federation meeting to the members of the Community Council once he receives them.

GOREBRIDE STATION NOTICEBOARD

ScotRail informed RH that they can provide a community notice board. However, RH noted that there is some confusion regarding the type of notice board, as well as who will be responsible for its cost and upkeep. GR mentioned that an electronic notice board was previously in place but appears to have been removed recently. Cllr Scott will make enquiries to determine who was responsible for it and whether it can be reinstated.

Action to be taken:

- Cllr Scott to make enquires with Midlothian Council.

PERSOMMONS/NEWBYES UPDATE

There has been no change. Work still starts at 7:30 am, roads remain messy, and traffic congestion continues. Midlothian Council has not addressed the original complaint, and the application to widen roads was rejected. A 10mph speed limit was agreed upon. Persimmon is in talks with Arniston Rangers and the Scouts about using their car park. The Technical Director stated that workers are being reminded to follow designated hours.

Action to be taken:

- Cllr Scott will escalate concerns to the Chief Executive as the Director of Place has yet to respond to our complaint.

339 BUS ROUTE AND PETITION

The 339 Bus Route petition was raised by GR and there was a discussion as to how best to progress the issue. The petition was scanned and sent to our ward MSP Christine Grahame for her attention but there has been no further progress on the issue.

Action to be taken:

- GR, RH and AD to look at how best to proceed with this issue.

Cllr Scott announced that a new community bus service will be launched shortly. Cllr Scott will provide an update when more details are known. It was noted that this service is a trial to test the viability of the service and the more people use the service will help to ensure it remains.

CRAWLEES ROAD

GR, MD and Robert Mackie had a meeting with members of the Midlothian Constituency office Kirsty McNeill MP staff on 4th of February to discuss the Crawlees Road and go over the evidence compiled by Robert. It was highlighted by GR and MD at Community Council meeting that Robert has gathered a lot of useful information, but it needs to be streamlined and more focussed.

Action to be taken:

- RH to meet Robert and for RH to help in producing a concise and focused presentation.

GR highlighted that we may be able to avail the expertise of a university student who is focussing on environmental issues for their dissertation.

LORD LIEUTENANT

The present Lord Lieutenant of Midlothian Richard Callander is retiring on the 2nd of April. GR has highlighted the support he has given Gorebridge over the years and it was felt that we should mark his retirement. It was agreed unanimously that we should invite him to a lunch. It was felt that as he has supported several different groups and activities that the invitation should be opened out to the other organisations.

Action to be taken:

- GR to discuss the Lord Lieutenant's retirement and gauge support for the lunch at the Meet and Share Meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS

Meet & Share – The next meeting is on Saturday 22 February 2025 at 9.30am in the Beacon.

AOCB:

There was a question raised on 20mph zone consultations? Cllr Scott stated that the consultation was completed last year and a roll-on programme of introducing the 20mph has starting with rural areas then towns.

DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday 18 March 2025, 7pm, Birkenside Pavilion.