

GOREBRIDGE & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
APPROVED MINUTES OF MEETING
18 MARCH 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) and Cllr Douglas Bowen

Visitors

A Horsburgh, R Rafferty, J Paget, J Campbell, M Cowie, J Fleming

WELCOME

Chair welcomed all to the meeting. She explained about the Code of Conduct, Constitution and Standing Orders. She informed the meeting that anyone can ask for an item to be put on the agenda by contacting Richard, the Community Council Secretary. Gael and Richard then meet to finalise the agenda. The Chair has the final say on items that are put on the agenda.

APOLOGIES:

M Webb. PC Jason McFarlane

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Approved – I Hewitson

Seconded – R Horsburgh

MATTERS ARISING

None

Action to be taken:

None

GOREBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL/PUPIL ROLL PROJECTIONS AND FOI UPDATE

Following a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to Midlothian Council, we were informed that disclosing detailed information on school roll projections would significantly prejudice the commercial interests of the local authority. As a result, the requested information has been withheld under section 33(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act, and the council has declined to comply with our request.

The Community Council submitted a review request regarding this FOI response on March 5th and is currently awaiting a reply from Midlothian Council. Additionally, individual members of the Community Council also submitted separate FOI requests and received identical responses.

It is also worth noting that Cllr Bowen stated that Midlothian councillors have not been provided with the full findings of the Edge Report but had only received basic figures for pupil projections. He expressed frustration over the lack of transparency and found it difficult to understand why the figures have not been released, especially given that other Scottish councils make their projections publicly available.

Action to be taken:

- In anticipation of Midlothian Council's forthcoming reply, GR and RH will meet to discuss the Community Council's next steps. This will include preparing to escalate the matter to the Scottish Information Commissioner.

LPP LAUNCH

The Local Place Plan (LPP) has already shown it can make a real difference, helping to get results in certain areas. Although there's no dedicated budget for the launch, we did receive £200 from Midlothian Council to help get it off the ground.

We'll be officially launching the LPP on Saturday, 12th April 2025, at The Beacon. As part of this, we want to invite all local volunteer groups to take part in a community-wide audit. This will give us a clearer picture of the work being done by the various organisations, helping to highlight any overlaps, gaps, or opportunities for better collaboration.

The LPP will be reviewed after a year, with the Community Council leading the process. All the information gathered will be pulled together and shared as part of the review, giving us a chance to see what's working and where we can improve.

Action to be taken:

- RH to book the Beacon for Saturday 12th April and send an invite out to the Meet and Share addressees.
- GR and RH to meet to discuss the strategy for the LPP Launch.

COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS

A copy of Cllr Scott and Cllr Bowen's reports were issued to members.

Cllr Scott informed the meeting that the MSP Christine Grahame has organised a meeting with Cllr Scott and Gorebridge Community Development Trust to discuss the possibility of reopening the station building.

Cllr Bowen stated the budget has been approved, though there was some disappointment regarding the 10% increase in council tax. A cross-party discussion took place before the budget was passed, and all parties agreed on the final proposal.

Cllr Bowen stated the recent citizenship ceremony was a success, bringing a variety of people and skills to Gorebridge.

Regarding Crawlees, the planned Lingerwood development of 1,000 houses is moving forward. Midlothian Council officers are now aware that the current road infrastructure is insufficient for the planned development. This site currently only has outline planning permission. It was also noted that travel distances for students attending school may be increased as a cost-saving measure. Additionally, the school is not PPI, and Midlothian Council owns the schools in the area.

Action to be taken:

- As Crawlees road is a separate agenda any actions will be agreed then.

ROAD CALMING MEASURES, BARLEYKNOWE ROAD AND SCHOOL SAFETY

Cllr Scott informed that the 20mph project is set to be implemented around 31st March and has received support from Transport Scotland, as have many of other road safety initiatives. However, Transport Scotland has made it clear that they will not support any physical speed restrictions within the new 20mph zones until Midlothian Council can demonstrate that a change in driver behaviour has occurred.

Cllr Scott also noted that once the 20mph zone is rolled out in late March, Midlothian Council will begin collecting data on average speeds from the permanent speed survey station installed on Barleyknowe Road (funded by Transport Scotland). If the data shows that excessive speeds remain, they will approach Transport Scotland again with a request for funding to implement control measures, such as speed humps or give-and-take islands.

Several the public audience asked why the Community Council were only concentrating our efforts on Bareleyknowe Road and not other traffic hot spots. They were informed that the Community Council are interested in other traffic hot spots but we are concentrating on Barleyknowe Road as a trial run before focussing on other hot spots.

Cllr Scott also highlight the following speed calming measures

Speeding - New Hunterfield

A speed monitoring loop is being installed which will monitor speed and traffic on this road.

Speeding - Powdermill Brae

I have requested Police attend for some enforcement here. After the 20mph roll out monitoring will be undertaken to find out if additional measures are required.

Action to be taken:

- Cllr. Scott will keep the Community Council informed on the effectiveness of the speed restrictions and any further road calming measures being proposed for Barleyknowe Road and to keep us informed on the other traffic calming measures.

MAIN STREET OUTSTANDING ISSUES, BOLLARDS, STREET FURNITURE, MTRaP AND GORE AVENUE ROUNDEL

Cllr Scott informed the meeting that extra bollards will be installed at each side of the Main Street to deter pavement parking.

Action to be taken:

- Cllr. Scott will monitor the progress on the installation of the bollards and report back at the next Community Council meeting in April.

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.

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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.

The Police Surgery held on the 4th of March at Gorebridge Parish Church was a success. The next surgery will be held on the 6th of May at Gorebridge Parish Church. It was asked if a surgery could be held later in the evening to allow people who work to attend. AD will discuss with PC McFarlane to discuss a later surgery time.

Action to be taken:

- AD to liaise with PC Jason McFarlane to establish if a future surgery could be held in the evening.

CORRESPONDENCE

RH informed the meeting that he emailed heads of Gore Glen and St Andrews RC Primary Schools on the 6th of March but has not had any reply. He said he will give it until 28th of March and will send a follow up email. 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 email the heads of Gore Glen and St Andrews RC Primary School on the 28th of March if no response has been received from the 6th of March email.
- For the Community Council and Primary Schools to look at initiatives to get the youth of Gorebridge to get involved in local democracy.

GR informed the meeting that Lord Lieutenant Richard Callander will be retiring on 2nd April 2025, and a lunch is being held to thank him for his support of Gorebridge groups and organisations over the years. The lunch will take place on 29th March 2024, at 12:30 pm at The Beacon, and will coincide with a community choir concert starting at 3:00 pm at the same venue. Anyone wishing to attend should inform Richard in advance so that catering arrangements can be made.

Action to be taken:

- RH to email the Meet and Share Group inviting them to the lunch and register the names who wish to attend.
- RH to inform CC with the numbers for catering.
- GR and RH to arrange a meeting to finalise the details for the lunch.

TREASURER'S REPORT

- The Miner's Bench is now in place at Gore Park. The cost of this was £1974 which came from The Miner's Memorial funds.
- We have received £500 to use for the LPP.
- 365 invoice is to be paid then it will be set up.
- A funding application is to be sent to Midlothian Council to deal with running costs. We could also get £1000 to encourage the youths of the village to become involved with the Community Council.
- The new Community Council website was agreed at the meeting as ".org".
- £517.19 was spent on Galaday/Wreaths, etc.

Balances:

Community Council £1,520.11

Miner's Memorial Nil

Awards £1,432.82 (The awards money will be used for Meet & Share catering).

Thanks were given to Juliet for her work on the bench organisation.

MIDLOTHIAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL FEDERATION

RH stated that he will be attending the Federation meeting on March 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

Cllr Scott informed the meeting that the old board was an interactive device supplied by Sustran which gave information on travel options which is now obsolete. Therefore, the board was removed, and the power supply cut off.

Action to be taken:

- RH will contact James Ledgerwood Head of Economic Development at ScotRail to discuss the possibility of them erecting a notice board and the cost implications if any. He will brief the Community Council at the April meeting.

PERSIMMONS/NEWBYRES UPDATE

Ian Hewitson expressed his thanks to the Community Council for their support regarding the recent issues in the estate.

Up until last week, things had been quieter and less disruptive, with work progressing steadily. However, a sudden increase in large wagons traveling through the estate caused significant disruption. Some drivers claimed they would dump their loads even when the site was closed, and one driver stated that parking signs did not apply to him on a building site.

Thanks to the intervention of Councillor Ellen Scott, this situation was addressed. Persimmon has now reached an agreement with Arniston Rangers football club to use their car park, helping to reduce congestion. Additionally, 10mph speed limit signs have been introduced, which seems to be improving the situation.

Action to be taken:

- For IH to keep the GDCC informed of any issues regarding Persimmons.

CIRCULAR BUS ROUTE AND PETITION

The Circular Bus (339) Route petition was raised by GR and there was a discussion as to how best to progress the issue.

Action to be taken:

- GR, RH and AD to meet and discuss the way forward in highlighting the issue.

Councillor Scott announced that a new community bus service will be launched shortly, running from Gorebridge to Penicuik via Pathhead, Dalkeith, Community Hospital, Bonnyrigg, and Loanhead. This initiative is being trailed to test its viability, and increased usage will help ensure the service remains available. The bus will operate twice daily, Monday to Friday, and Councillor Scott will provide further updates as more details become known.

Action to be taken:

- Cllr Scott to update the GDCC with full details of the new bus route once she has them.

CRAWLEES ROAD

Following the meeting on February 4th at Kirsty McNeill MP's Midlothian Constituency office with Gael Robertson, Mary Davidson, and Robert McKie in attendance. RH met with Robert McKie on March 10th to review his investigative work on traffic flow along Crawlees Road. During that meeting, RH received a detailed briefing, along with supporting paperwork and maps, to help compile a more focused and concise report.

Action to be taken:

RH will produce a concise report on the Crawlees Road traffic issues for the May Community Council meeting.

Additionally, GR highlighted the potential to engage a university student, who is focusing on environmental issues for their dissertation, to lend further expertise to this matter.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS DATE

Richard received an email from Alun Williams, Midlothian Council's Safety and Resilience officer, who is looking to establish a regular schedule for Christmas light switch-on to better plan council resources and allocate staff. The Community Council unanimously voted to hold our light switch-on on Sunday, 30th November the first Sunday of Advent and to schedule subsequent light switch-on to be held on the first Sunday of Advent.

Action to be taken:

- RH to inform Allun Williams of the Community Councils decision.

COMMUNICATIONS

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

AOCB:

MD raised a complaint from a member of the public regarding parking issues at Lady Brae Place. Some drivers are parking carelessly, blocking driveways, and causing inconvenience. RH requested the details and any accompanying photos so he could pass them on to PC McFarlane. Councillor Ellen Scott also asked to be sent the details.

DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday 15 April 2025, 7pm, Birkenside Pavilion.