

GOREBRIDGE & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
APPROVED MINUTES OF MEETING
15 APRIL 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), Lorraine Amedro (LA), Mary Davidson (MD)

Midlothian Councillor

Cllr Ellen Scott (ES) and Cllr Kelly Drummond

Police

PC Jason McFarlane

Visitors

R Rafferty, R McKie, M Cowie, S Gabowski, E Moffat,

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. J Frankitti, Cllr D Bowen

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Approved – J Bruce Dickie

Seconded – L Amedro

MATTERS ARISING

Cllr D Bowen: Emailed a correction to his statement on the Pupil Roll and FOI Update. To read; *“that Midlothian councillors have not been provided with the full findings of the Edge Report but had only received basic figures for pupil roll projections”*.

Cllr E Scott: Emailed a correction to her statement on her Councillors Report. To read; *“Gorebridge Community Development Trust”*.

Ian Hewitson emailed a spelling correction to correct the heading to read: *“PERSIMMONS/NEWBYRES UPDATE”*.

Action to be taken:

- All corrections made to the Approved 18th March GDCC Minutes.

MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL ISSUES

GOREBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL/PUPIL ROLL PROJECTIONS AND FOI UPDATE

Midlothian Council has confirmed that it holds pupil roll projections but refuses to release them, citing “commercial insensitivity”—despite similar data being publicly shared by Edinburgh Council. The Community Council has already met with Labour councillors to raise concerns and will request a meeting with SNP councillors next. In the absence of transparency, the issue will be escalated to the Scottish Information Commissioner.

Cllr Drummond has stated there is currently no proposed site or funding for a new school in Gorebridge. A broader issue appears to be a lack of openness around planning and school provision. The cost of transporting pupils to schools outside the village is currently around £517,000. While existing roll numbers may not yet justify a new school, Gorebridge urgently needs a clearer picture of future educational needs and how related decisions are being made.

The Community Council unanimously agreed to send a formal letter of complaint to Midlothian Council and to raise the matter at the Federation.

Action to be taken:

- The Community Council to draft and send a formal letter to Midlothian Council expressing concern over the lack of transparency regarding pupil roll projections and school planning. The letter will also request the release of projection data and clarity on future educational provision for Gorebridge. Additionally, the matter will be raised at the next Federation meeting, and a request will be made to meet with SNP councillors to further discuss the issue.

CRAWLEES ROAD

Springfield’s development plans are still active. Richard and Robert reviewed the original traffic survey, which was conducted during the Covid lockdown and is now significantly outdated. Since then, traffic in the area has increased by an estimated 400%.

Eilidh Paul, Planning Officer (Midlothian Council Planning, Sustainable Growth, and Investment Services Place Directorate), has recommended that a new, up-to-date transport survey be carried out. The Community Council agreed to write formally to Midlothian Council to request this.

In addition, correspondence procedures will be reviewed to ensure that future communications are directed to the appropriate contacts. The Council also reiterated the need for a proper distributor road to support current and future traffic demands.

Action to be taken:

- The Community Council to write to Midlothian Council, referencing Eilidh Paul’s recommendation, to formally request a new and up-to-date transport survey for Crawlees Road. Additionally, internal procedures for correspondence will be reviewed to ensure communications are directed to the correct contacts. The need for a proper distributor road will also be highlighted in future planning discussions.

MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL ISSUES (Continued)

CIRCULAR BUS ROUTE

The current Service 800, introduced as a trial replacement, is not meeting the needs of residents, particularly those who relied on the former 339 circular route for access to essential services. A petition calling for the reinstatement of the 339 service was submitted to Midlothian Council, but it was initially dismissed without proper consideration.

However, the Chief Officer for Place has since acknowledged receipt of the petition and may review the current route in response. The Community Council will continue to monitor feedback from residents using the Service 800 and will advocate for changes that better reflect community needs, including the possible reinstatement or redesign of the circular route.

Action to be taken:

- The Community Council will continue to collect and monitor feedback from residents on the performance of the Service 800. A follow-up will be made with the Chief Officer for Place regarding the petition to reinstate the 339/circular bus route. The Community Council will also explore further advocacy options to ensure that any revised service adequately meets the needs of Gorebridge residents, particularly those requiring circular access to local services.

12 April LPP Audit Update

The event held on 12 April saw a strong turnout, with positive engagement from local groups. The focus now shifts to how the Local Place Plan (LPP) can be implemented in a meaningful and coordinated way moving forward.

Community organisations have pledged to share information about their ongoing work, helping to create a fuller picture of activities and needs across Gorebridge. The Community Council has submitted a funding application to support a follow-up review meeting in one year's time. The aim is to gather all relevant input and data by the end of June to inform next steps.

Action: to be Taken:

- The Community Council will coordinate the collection of information from local groups by the end of June, with a view to compiling a comprehensive update on the LPP. Progress will be reviewed at the proposed follow-up meeting, pending the outcome of the funding application.

COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS

Cllr Drummond:

- The footpath at Gladhouse has been temporarily closed to allow for essential works.
- Local villages are actively preparing for their upcoming Galaday celebrations.

Cllr Scott:

- Improvement works along the River Gore are ongoing.
- The consultation on traffic management at Gore Avenue has concluded, with the decision made to retain the existing roundel. A majority of responses supported keeping it in place (add specific vote count here if available).
- A new storage container has been arranged for use at Birkenside and during Galaday events.
- A new fence has been installed at Arniston Rangers Park. Bollards have been temporarily removed to allow Persimmon construction vehicles access, with consideration being given to ensure the car park remains available for funeral services when required.

Actions to be Taken:

- The Community Council will continue to monitor the River Gore works and liaise with Cllr Scott regarding progress.
- The outcome of the Gore Avenue consultation will be shared via the Community Council's communications channels.
- The Community Council will follow up to ensure funeral access to the Arniston Rangers car park is maintained during construction activity.

ROAD CALMING MEASURES, BARLEYKNOWE ROAD AND SCHOOL SAFETY

Cllr Scott informed that the 20mph project is set to be implemented around 31st March and Traffic calming measures, including the installation of bollards, are currently being implemented to enhance road safety, particularly around school zones. The 20mph speed limits introduced in various areas are under active monitoring, with early signs indicating reduced vehicle speeds on Lady Brae. Further discussion on the effectiveness and future of the 20mph zones is scheduled for the next Community Council meeting.

Action to be Taken:

- The Community Council will gather local feedback on the impact of the traffic calming measures and prepare to discuss the effectiveness of the 20mph zones at the next meeting. Any concerns or suggestions from residents will be compiled and shared with Midlothian Council for consideration

POLICE REPORT

The latest Police Report was circulated to members and issues discussed with PC Jason McFarlane during the meeting. The recent Police Surgery was well attended, demonstrating strong community interest in local policing matters. The next session is scheduled for the morning of 6 May 2025.

A request was made to hold an evening surgery to accommodate those unable to attend during the day. A. Drever has agreed to follow up on this with the local police team.

Action to be Taken:

- Alice Drever will liaise with PC Jason McFarlane to explore options for scheduling an evening Police Surgery and report back at the next meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

Primary Schools:

Richard Horsburgh has received replies from Gore Glen and St. Andrews Primary Schools and is awaiting confirmation of suitable dates and times to meet with the headteachers and their respective PTAs.

Meetings with Councillors:

Gael Robertson, Alice Drever and Richard Horsburgh met with Labour councillors to discuss issues relating to schools and transport. A meeting with SNP councillors has been requested and is pending.

Letter from the Lord Lieutenant:

A letter was received marking his retirement. He expressed his thanks to Gorebridge & District Community Council for hosting a lunch in his honour.

Action to be Taken:

- Richard Horsburgh to follow up with headteachers to confirm meeting arrangements.

TREASURER'S REPORT

- There has been no change in the account balances since the last report.
- A funding application for £1,000 has been submitted to Midlothian Council to support the purchase of Gala Day banners.
- The funding will also be used to cover the cost of a new noticeboard for the library and to support the upcoming LPP audit.
- Office 365 is currently being set up, with assistance from an IT specialist to help complete the process.
- The Community Council will now operate under a **“.org.uk”** domain for its website.
- The website has been updated and members are encouraged to submit dates, updates, and news items for inclusion.
- Feedback on the website is welcomed to determine whether further improvements or redesigns are necessary.
- Members of the public seeking information about the Community Council should be directed to the website as the primary source.

Actions to be Taken:

- Members to submit content updates for the website.
- Website feedback to be gathered and reviewed to inform potential improvements.
- Secretary to ensure public enquiries are signposted to the website.

MIDLOTHIAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL FEDERATION

- RH stated that the next Federation meeting is scheduled for 16 April 2025.
- Minutes from the previous meeting have not yet been received.
- As Cllr Scott will be attending the meeting on the 16th therefore, education will be a key item on the agenda, particularly in relation to school provision and planning transparency.

Actions to be Taken:

- Secretary to follow up on receiving minutes from the previous meeting.
- RH stated that he will raise ongoing concerns about school roll projections and the need for a new secondary school in Gorebridge.

PERSIMMONS/NEWBYRES UPDATE

Ian Hewitson stated that contractor's wagons are using car park in front of Arniston Rangers football ground and that bollards have been removed to allow better access. A banks man will be stationed to control contractor vehicle access. It was also stated that the car park is also used for public parking especially for funeral teas at the Coronation restaurant.

Action to be taken:

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

GALA DAY

The Gorebridge Gala Day will take place on 20 June 2025. M. Davidson said she will confirm whether the Community Council has been allocated a table and gazebo for the event. A promotional leaflet will be designed and printed for distribution on the day. The Community Council has requested a more prominent location for its table this year to enhance visibility and better engage with the public. The Gala Day presents an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of the Community Council's work and to encourage greater community involvement. Additional funding is being sought to help purchase new publicity materials in support of these efforts.

Actions to be Taken:

- M. Davidson to confirm table/gazebo allocation.
- Design and print leaflet content.
- Treasurer to follow up on funding application for publicity materials.
- Volunteers from the Community Council to be organised to assist at the Council table during the Gala Day

AOCB

Concerns were raised regarding school buses on Barleyknowe Road, which are reportedly dropping pupils off on the wrong side of the road, posing a potential safety risk. This will be reported to the appropriate transport authority for investigation and action.

It was noted that the Community Council now has a maximum membership of 18. If attendance drops below nine members, the Council will cease to operate. Members were reminded of the importance of maintaining quorum and attendance.

The library noticeboard will remain in its current location for the time being. There is currently no further information available regarding the proposed move of the library to the leisure centre.

The leisure centre is no longer open at weekends, which has been noted as an inconvenience for the community. The Council will consider raising this with Midlothian Council.

The next meeting on the 20th May will be the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Midlothian Council has introduced a new scheme for Community Councils; however, no official communication about the changes has been received by Gorebridge & District Community Council. Until formal notification and clarification are provided, the Council will continue to operate under the existing framework. Questions were raised regarding the legal process and structure being applied under the new scheme, including the requirement for nominations to be submitted through Paul Johnston. The Council will seek written clarification on the legal basis and procedural requirements of the new system.

Actions to be Taken:

- Report school bus drop-off concerns to the transport authority.
- RH to seek formal clarification from Midlothian Council on the new Community Council scheme and legal procedures.
- Monitor membership attendance and promote continued engagement to maintain quorum.

DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday 20th May 2025, 7pm, Birkenhead Pavilion. Note that this meeting is also the AGM.