

GOREBRIDGE & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
APPROVED MINUES OF MEETING
17 MARCH 2026, 6:45PM, GOREBRIDGE LEISURE CENTRE HUNTERFIELD
ROAD GOREBRIDGE EH23 4TX

IN ATTENDANCE

Community council members

Chair Gael Robertson (GR), Secretary Richard Horsburgh (RH), Ian Hewitson (IH), Alice Drever (AD), Lorraine Amedro (LA), Jac Frankitti (JF), Heather Webb-Nelson (HWN), Mary Davidson (MD)

Midlothian councillors

Councillor Ellen Scott (ES), Councillor Douglas Bowen

Visitors

M Cowie, R Rafferty, J Paget, T Taylor, H Tomson, S Gabowski, A Murry, I Edwards, R Mackie, A Thomson, A Amedro

WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting at 6:45 pm, welcomed members, and thanked them for arriving 15 minutes earlier than the usual start time. Members were reminded that the meeting would need to conclude by 8:45 pm, as we must vacate the Leisure Centre by that time.

APOLOGIES

John Campbell, M Webb, J McFarlane (Police Representative), J Bruce-Dickie

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Approved – R Horsburgh

Seconded –Ian Hewitson

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the minutes that were not already covered on the agenda.

NEWBYRES PATH – UPDATE

The Chair welcomed Ian Edwards, local resident, and ecologist, who provided an update on the Emily Pit site and adjacent path network.

Ian outlined that the former pit site has naturally regenerated into an area of significant biodiversity, supporting a wide range of plant species, including orchids, and providing valuable habitat for pollinators. The site has recently been adopted by a group of residents for light-touch maintenance and monitoring.

Concerns were raised regarding the impact of nearby development, including water runoff, flooding, silt deposition and potential pollution, which may affect the site's ecological value.

It was noted that the site may naturally develop into woodland over time, although there is potential to manage it as a meadow. No decision has been taken on future management.

The path linking the site to surrounding areas was discussed. Sections are currently narrow and in poor condition. It was highlighted that approximately 270 metres requires improvement to create a continuous off-road route, improving access to local services and the railway station.

Land ownership and funding constraints remain key challenges. Midlothian Council is exploring potential options, with further updates expected.

Members noted the potential to engage with the Eco Museum in conjunction with the National Mining Museum to support wider work on local mining heritage and landscape, and to ensure Gorebridge is better represented.

Members welcomed the update and supported further engagement to progress both environmental protection and path improvements.

Action to be taken:

- Community Council to explore with the Eco Museum and the National Mining Museum Scotland to support recognition of the Emily Pit site and wider Gorebridge landscape, and to back on potential opportunities for collaboration.

LINGERWOOD DEVELOPMENT (Safeguard ed Route)

The Chair provided an update following attendance at a joint meeting with Mayfield and Newbattle Community Councils and representatives from the developer (Barratt), including community engagement, design, and roads officers. Proposals outlined included the widening of Crawlees Road and Suttieslea Road, introduction of traffic management measures, and provision for active travel routes.

Members noted that the engagement was positive, and that the developer appeared open to feedback.

Correspondence from Mayfield Community Council was considered, raising concerns regarding the “safeguarded route”, particularly in relation to vehicular access. It was noted that some of the information referenced appeared to be out of date and related to earlier stages of the development, prior to changes in developer and revisions to proposals.

Members discussed ongoing confusion regarding the definition and purpose of the “safeguarded route”, noting that historically this referred to safeguarded land rather than a defined transport route. It was also noted that the route alignment has been amended due to engineering and ground conditions.

Concerns were raised regarding traffic impact, including junction capacity, traffic flow and the adequacy of existing data. It was noted that updated traffic surveys are currently being undertaken and that the application remains under active consideration.

It was agreed that the matter remains live and that there is a need to establish a clear timeline and supporting evidence base to ensure a shared understanding of the current position.

Action to be taken:

- GDCC Members to review the timeline and relevant documentation to clarify the current position. Item to be revisited at a future meeting.
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MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT ISSUES (MDLP2)

NEWBYRES DEVELOPMENT

There was no substantive update regarding MDLP2, with members noting that further detail is awaited as additional information becomes available.

In relation to the Newbyres development, it was reported that temporary parking restrictions had expired but are due to be reinstated. Members raised concerns that outdated notices remain displayed on lamp posts, while replacement signage has not yet been consistently installed as previously indicated by the developer. It was noted that communication on this matter had been limited, with short notice provided to residents.

Members agreed to monitor the situation at the start of the week to confirm whether updated signage has been installed. Should this not be the case, the matter will be followed up with the developer to ensure that old notices are removed and new signage is properly in place.

Several concerns were raised regarding the condition of roads within the estate. These included potholes (previously reported to Midlothian Council), deterioration around gully pots, and the emergence of a surface crack in the carriageway, likely as a result of ongoing heavy construction traffic. While currently minor, it was noted that the crack may worsen, particularly given its proximity to drainage infrastructure, potentially leading to more significant issues if not addressed. Members also highlighted that road conditions in some areas are now poor, creating difficulties for both vehicles and pedestrians.

It was agreed that Midlothian Council should be requested to carry out an inspection of the affected roads, including potholes, gully pots, and the developing surface crack, and to provide clarification on any planned maintenance or remedial works.

A further concern was raised regarding a hedge at the junction onto Castle Avenue which is obstructing sightlines for vehicles exiting the estate ARFC car park, creating a potential road safety hazard. It is understood that this area falls under the responsibility of the Birchwood Estate factors/landscaping contractor (Penders), rather than the Council. It was noted that the residents' association is no longer active, and therefore issues may require to be pursued directly with the factor.

It was agreed that the relevant factor/management company should be contacted to request that the hedge is cut back to improve visibility at the junction, with a local member to follow up via an appropriate contact.

Action to be taken:

- GDCC to monitor issues at the Newbyres development and follow up with the developer and Midlothian Council where required.

SP ENERGY NETWORK UPDATE

Richard Horsburgh reported on a recent Scottish Power Energy Networks seminar regarding future changes to electricity supply.

The current one-way system will move to a two-way network to support renewables, with increased use of battery storage and smart grid technology.

Significant infrastructure upgrades will be required, particularly in older areas, leading to roadworks and disruption. Concerns were raised that poor coordination elsewhere has impacted emergency service access, highlighting the need for effective planning with councils.

Additional infrastructure, including substations, pylons and localised battery storage, will be introduced. While newer properties may be less affected, wider network upgrades will impact most areas.

The transition is already underway and driven at a national level. It was agreed this is a developing issue and should be kept under review.

Action to be taken:

- RH to monitor developments in energy network changes and report back to the Community Council as further information becomes available.

MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL ISSUES

Dog Fouling Issues / Enforcement and Campaign:

Members discussed ongoing and increasing concerns regarding dog fouling across the area, with reference to public footpaths, play areas, and football pitches. The issue was highlighted as both an environmental nuisance and a potential health and safety risk, especially for children using outdoor recreational spaces. It was noted that a more coordinated and proactive approach may be required, combining awareness raising with enforcement activity. Members discussed the potential to develop a wider project for submission under the Community Council Small Grants scheme to help address the issue more effectively.

Action to be taken:

- Chair, Secretary and Treasurer to explore inclusion of a wider dog fouling awareness and enforcement project within the Small Grants application and liaise with Midlothian Council regarding enforcement support and potential partnership working.

MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL ISSUES (continued)

Birkenside Pavilion:

Members raised ongoing concerns regarding the status and reopening of Birkenside Pavilion, with delays noted due to outstanding building and repair works. Clarification was requested on the confirmed reopening date, with previous indications suggesting April/May, although uncertainty remains due to reported issues such as roof-related repairs and internal works.

Future booking arrangements and long-term management of the facility were also discussed. Members considered the potential introduction of a keyholder system for trusted and regular user groups, which may improve access and operational flexibility. Concerns were also raised regarding hire charges and the affordability of the facility for local community organisations, particularly smaller groups.

Action to be taken:

- Chair and Secretary to request formal clarification from Midlothian Council on (i) confirmed reopening date, (ii) future booking and access arrangements, and (iii) proposed hire charges and community use policy, including affordability considerations.

Waste and Recycling (Bins):

Members considered a range of significant concerns raised by residents regarding the introduction of the new waste and recycling collection system. Issues included confusion over revised collection schedules, the number and type of bins issued, and the overall complexity of the new arrangements.

Concerns were raised about the practical impact on households, particularly elderly and less able residents who may struggle with frequent bin movements and handling multiple containers. Limited storage space for multiple bins was also highlighted as a common issue.

Hygiene concerns were noted, particularly in relation to the disposal and storage of medical waste, nappies, and pet waste under the extended three-week general waste collection cycle. Members also raised concerns about the suitability and durability of lighter-weight bins in adverse weather conditions, with reports of bins being blown over and waste being scattered.

Communication from Midlothian Council was considered insufficient, with members noting that unclear or inconsistent messaging has contributed significantly to public confusion and frustration.

Action to be taken:

- Cllr Scott to formally raise resident concerns with Midlothian Council, focusing on communication, bin capacity and practicality, support for vulnerable residents, and operational issues arising from the implementation of the new system.

LOCAL PLACE PLAN (LPP) – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Members discussed arrangements for a public engagement event to support the development of the Local Place Plan, noting the importance of securing a suitable date to maximise community participation. An initial proposal of Saturday 11 April was considered; however, this was discounted due to its proximity to the Easter school holidays and concerns that attendance may be limited.

After reviewing the school return dates and existing commitments, members agreed to provisionally schedule the event for Saturday 2 May, recognising this as a more suitable timeframe. It was noted that this date remains subject to confirmation and venue availability.

Members also highlighted that Juliet had previously put forward ideas for the format and delivery of the event. It was agreed that her input would be valuable in shaping the engagement approach

Action to be taken:

- Chair and secretary to contact the treasurer to confirm availability, gather her input on the event format, and progress arrangements for Saturday 2 May.

COUNCILLORS UPDATES

Councillor Douglas Bowen

A written report from Cllr Bowen was received and circulated to the members. Cllr Bowen also highlighted the Tyne & Esk Local Action Group, which provides small grants and a “grant finder” tool for community groups. Local representation is currently limited, though new members are joining.

Members were encouraged to promote the funding opportunities. Information will be shared at the Meet & Share event and via GDCC channels.

Action to be taken:

- Secretary to share funding information and links with local groups.

COUNCILLORS UPDATES (continued)

Councillor Ellen Scott

A written report was submitted by Cllr Scott and noted.

Environmental funding has been secured for a larger community Christmas tree, with a new electrical socket to be installed. Funding has also been identified for heating improvements at Middleton Village Hall.

An update was provided on Main Street traffic calming and the review of 20mph zones, with measures under monitoring. Concerns were raised regarding the national speed limit in the New Hunterfield area, at Ashbank considered unsuitable due to pedestrian, equestrian and recreational use; Cllr Scott will seek clarification on options to reduce this. It was noted that while Barleyknowe Road and New Hunterfield are 30mph zones, additional measures such as speed bumps may be required. Cllr Scott will also investigate a request to lower the speed limit on Ashbank. Newbyres was noted as an area for improvement.

A positive inspection outcome for Newbattle High School and Newbyres Care Home was reported. The Beacon will be repurposed for the Enterprise Academy (Newbattle High School), supporting young people out with mainstream education, with potential for wider community and adult use.

Sure Start will vacate The Beacon, with alternative local premises being explored, including discussions with Newbattle High School.

Council policy updates included proposals for Personal Travel Budgets for school transport following ASN assessment, and ASN transition planning from age 14 to 26. Client transport will be assessed on an individual basis, alongside ongoing work relating to children with long-term needs.

The use of other local car parks was discussed, including those at Newbattle, Newbyres and the medical centre.

Action to be taken:

- Cllr Scott to liaise with Midlothian Council Roads Services to request a review of the speed limit and safety measures on New Hunterfield Road, Ashbank and report back to GDCC.

Cllr Bowen and Cllr Scott's full reports are attached to this document

ROAD CALMING MEASURES / MAIN STREET ISSUES UPDATE

The ongoing issues with congestion and unsafe parking on Main Street were discussed. Members highlighted regular instances of double parking, particularly involving buses and delivery vehicles, which create bottlenecks and increase risk to road users.

A proposal was made to introduce double yellow line “blips” (kerb markings) on key sections of Main Street. This would prohibit loading and unloading at any time, strengthening enforcement, and enabling immediate penalties for non-compliance. It was agreed this could help reduce obstruction and improve traffic flow and should be explored further with the Council.

Concerns were also raised about parking around the railway station, including misuse of the station car park and surrounding roads. Previous engagement with the British Transport Police had some limited success, but issues persist.

The use of other local car parks was discussed, including those at Newbattle and the medical centre. Members noted poor use of space, potential long-stay parking by non-users, and reports of inappropriate activity such as vehicle repairs. It was suggested that improved layout/markings and possible time restrictions could help manage demand.

Additional concerns were raised regarding parking and loading activity by local businesses, including the use of cones to reserve spaces and obstruction caused by delivery vehicles. While recognising the need to support local businesses, it was noted that current practices can create visibility and access issues.

Overall, it was agreed that enforcement is a key issue, and that clearer restrictions combined with consistent enforcement would be necessary to improve the situation. Further consideration will be given to potential

Action to be taken:

- GDCC and Ward Councillors to engage with Midlothian Council Roads Department to request assessment of Main Street for the introduction of double yellow line kerb markings (“blips”), and to review parking management at the railway station and medical centre, including consideration of improved markings, time restrictions, and enforcement measures.

GOREBRIDGE GALA DAY

Discussion took place regarding promotional materials and timing ahead of Gala Day. It was noted that leaflets are usually prepared for distribution at the event; however, this year's leaflet will include the Annual Report and details of the AGM in May, creating time constraints.

Members considered whether earlier distribution would help raise awareness and promote GDCC more widely, but it was acknowledged that this may not be feasible within current timescales. It was agreed that alternative promotional options for Gala Day should be explored.

Concern was raised that Gala Day organisers have not been attending the separate Meet and Share meetings. It was agreed that efforts should be made to re-establish contact and improve engagement in the lead-up to the event.

It was noted that funding arrangements for Gala Day are in place.

Actions to be taken:

- Secretary and Chair to contact Gala Day organisers to re-establish engagement and encourage attendance at upcoming Meet and Share meeting.
- GDCC to consider interim publicity (e.g., social media or event presence) to raise awareness of GDCC ahead of Gala Day.

POLICE REPORT AND POLICE SURGERY

Period: 1 February – 28 February 2026

A total of 127 calls were received during February. Key issues included youth-related antisocial behaviour, particularly involving off-road bikes, vandalism, and stone-throwing. There were several serious incidents involving threats, assault, and a domestic disturbance involving a weapon, with arrests and charges made. Police also executed two warrants resulting in seizures and ongoing enquiries. Several incidents remain unsolved due to lack of CCTV or witnesses.

Additional Note:

PC Jason McFarlane was unable to attend the meeting following an earlier assault and was receiving treatment at A&E. The GDCC sends best wishes for a full and speedy recovery. Alice Drever will contact him and will arrange the next Police Surgery once his condition is known.

The full Police Report for February is attached to this document.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Chair reported that both the local MSP and MP were contacted to raise concerns regarding the loss of the Sure Start service. The concern relates not only to the impact on the Beacon but also to the wider service provision it delivers. Responses were received from both representatives, indicating that alternative options are currently being explored. It was also noted that a follow-up response was received on the same day, and that a meeting has since taken place with the Sure Start team.

TREASURERS REPORT

The was presented the circulated to the members.

The current balance stands at £2,198.76, with one outstanding payment of £211 for IT costs. These costs relate to website updates and improving communications, which were highlighted as a priority. An update on progress with the new/revised website was requested.

There is also £160 allocated for a Gala Day banner, yet to be drawn upon. It was noted that sufficient funds are available to support upcoming events, including the Local Place Plan event.

Funding Opportunities:

Midlothian Council has opened applications for Community Council Small Grants. Members discussed potential projects, with a particular focus on initiatives aimed at

MIDLOTHIAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL FEDERATION

The next Federation meeting will take place on 18th March. The secretary will attend.

Action to be taken:

- Secretary to issue minutes of Federation meeting once they are received.

MIDLOTHIAN TRAFFIC ROADS & PATHS (MTRaP)

Jac Frankitti reported on a recent meeting with the Head of Sustainable Transport regarding local transport planning, particularly car parking and the development of “mobility hubs.”

It was noted that there is an aspiration to establish up to three mobility hubs across Midlothian, ideally located near train stations, with the aim of improving bus connectivity and reducing congestion by encouraging people to transfer to public transport earlier in their journeys.

A potential location at Dalkeith was discussed; however, members felt that Newtongrange may be a more suitable site. This is due to its more central location for surrounding communities such as Gorebridge and Mayfield, and the availability of council-owned land. Concerns were also raised about existing parking pressures, particularly around the college near Eskbank Station, where car parks are heavily used by commuters.

Members highlighted similar issues locally, with non-residents using car parks before travelling onward by bus or train.

There was discussion about possible sites in the Newtongrange area, including land near the mining museum, although no firm proposals have been made at this stage.

Concerns were also raised about bus routing, particularly reluctance from operators to enter certain areas (e.g., the Tesco site) due to delays. However, members noted the importance of maintaining bus access to key local amenities such as supermarkets, especially in the absence of alternative provision.

Recent changes to bus services were also mentioned, including reduced connectivity (e.g. changes to the 46 service affecting links to Dalkeith).

Overall, the discussion was noted as an early stage but useful exchange on improving integrated transport and accessibility in the area.

COMMUNICATION

Meet and share – Saturday 21st March 9.30 – 10.30 at the Beacon.

AOB

Environmental Improvements:

- New fencing at Arniston was noted and welcomed. This has been funded through environmental funding allocated to local councillors.

Vaping Concerns

- Concerns were raised regarding the number of vape shops and the disposal of vaping products, particularly lithium batteries.
- It was noted that authorities may review the number of vape retailers and consider introducing a registration scheme.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

21st April 2026 (time to be confirmed)

Please note: That, due to ongoing refurbishment works at Birkenside Pavilion, the meeting is provisionally scheduled to take place at Gorebridge Leisure Centre. However, due to uncertainty regarding the venue, both the time and location will be confirmed later prior to the meeting.