



Present: Cath McGill (CM) – Chair, Neil Whyte (NW) – Minutes, Faye Skelton (FS), Jason Rutter (JR), Seonaid Barker (SB), Mary Davidson (MD), Hazel Thomson (HT), Cllr Catherine Johnstone (CJ), Janice Brown (JB)

In Attendance: Alistair Taylor, Robbie Laid, Fiona Dickson, Ellen Scott

Apologies: Trevor Taylor (TT), Gillian Cousins (GC), Cllr Jim Muirhead (JM), Cllr Kieran Munro (KM), Dawn Barclay, PC Pendreich, PC McGuff

1 Chairman’s Welcome & Apologies

CM opened the meeting and welcomed all those in attendance. Apologies noted as above.

2 Actions & Matters Arising from previous meeting and Adoption of Minutes

ID	Description	Who	Status	Update
2020-09-2	Provide update on progress of MTRaP discussions on welcome signs	CM	Open	No progress: carry forward.
2020-09-3	Provide update on progress Places for Everyone funding in relation to welcome signs	JM	Open	Sustrans delay. Next update due February. Full update below.
2020-09-10	Check with Corra Foundation if the Resilience Grant could be used for other purposes	NW	Open	Email sent, awaiting feedback.
2020-10-09	Email GDCC inbox with suggestions of worthy volunteers to receive awards	All	Open	Nothing received: carry forward.
2020-11-01	Feedback ideas for Covid memorial garden/planters	MD, HT, Ellen, Dawn	Open	Ongoing action, looking to complete by Spring. Full update below.
2020-11-02	War memorial repairs paid for	FS	Open	Robbie Laird looking to arrange repair; cost to be picked up by GDCC. Full update below.
2020-11-03	Send Bill, Doug and Kelly information on how they can get involved with GDCC.	NW	Closed	
2020-11-04	Also add these forms and details to our website	NW	Closed	communitycouncilgorebridge.weebly.com/about-us.html
2020-11-05	Invite Fire Liaison to future meeting to discuss changes in smoke alarm regulations	NW	Closed	Lynne attending February meeting.
2020-11-06	Contact JM with concerns on Hunter Square footpath in winter / wet weather	Dawn	Closed	
2020-11-07	Provide feedback on Hunter Square footpath issues	JM	Closed	Stone is considered fit for purpose. See full update below for next steps.
2020-11-08	Add Birkenhead Fun Day to next agenda	NW	Closed	
2020-11-09	Forward Police Report when it arrives	NW	Closed	
2020-11-10	Forward feasibility study for lights at junction of Stobhill and Barleyknowe Roads	JM	Closed	Update provided over email; forwarded to Community Councillors.
2020-11-10	Be ready to discuss what GDCC are doing well, and what we can do better, at the January meeting	All	Open	Carry to next meeting.

2020-09-3 (Places for Everyone): JM provided an update from Derek Oliver. He held a meeting with the Director of Sustrans in December and is due to again meet with her next month a progress update. The projects that we have proposed are being looked at favourably but funding the Spaces for People programme has had an impact on the funding for Places for Everyone programme, which Sustrans had not expected. Informed that Sustrans require to ascertain how much funding is being returned to them due to Councils not taking forward certain projects in Spaces for People, which will then provide the funding pot for Places for Everyone. They do seem positive over our proposals but suspect we will not know for sure until later next month if we are receiving the funding.

2020-11-01 (Covid Memorial Planters): It was re-iterated that the total amount donated – around £740 – is allocated here. Discussion around an additional £300 remaining biodiversity fund from GCDT that was allocated to the station planters project concluded that this money should still be allocated here, as there is new bark and retention planks that it is needed for. Of the planters at Emily Court, two will be moved to the Gorebridge Hive, others to the Beacon and the remaining left at Emily Court. It was acknowledged that a ‘good number’ should be left at Emily Court. The group will work on plans and report back at a future meeting.

2020-11-02 (War memorial repairs): Robbie Laird will look at required work on the war memorials, arrange repairs and ensure the bill is passed on the GDCC. Separately, SB will look at finding out more about ongoing funding that may be available to support repairs and maintenance of the memorials.

ID	Description	Who?	Next Update
2021-01-01	Arrange repairs to war memorial; pass bill to GDCC	Robbie Laird	16-Feb-21
2021-01-02	Research available ongoing funding for war memorial repairs	SB	16-Feb-21

2020-11-07 (Hunter Square paving): JM forwarded an update from Derek Oliver, essentially stating that the product itself is the same as used elsewhere in Midlothian (Dalkeith, Penicuik) and throughout the UK. May be microclimate issues with Gorebridge. Only aware of problems during first winter – not aware of a continual problem regardless of time of year and weather. May be roughed up, but likely expensive and also likely to affect integrity. We agreed to try to collate more information on known incidents on the paving stones, to try and get a fuller picture of the issues to pass on to Derek. The issue comes up each winter at the Community Council meetings, so there is a disconnect somewhere.

ID	Description	Who?	Next Update
2021-01-03	Arrange Facebook post & email to try and gather information on slippage incidents on Hunter Square, reporting to the GDCC mailbox	NW	16-Feb-21
2021-01-04	Community Councillors to also gather information from local contacts on incidents, and forward to the GDCC mailbox	All	16-Feb-21

Minutes of the previous meeting accepted as correct. FS proposed, Ellen seconded.

3 Guest Speaker: Vogrie Hall

Fiona Dickson & Alistair Taylor, representing St. David's Brass, thanked GDCC for the invite to the meeting and were delighted to report progress. The highlight is that at the end of December, the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) was submitted to Midlothian Council, marking the culmination of two years of work! The proposal has three objectives – establish hall as expressive arts centre in Midlothian, renovate and refurbish to modern standard, and preserve for future generations.

Why a creative arts centre? We don't have one! Vogrie Hall is two halls – the small hall is planned for band rehearsal and teaching programmes, while the larger hall will be available for community use. A recording facility included as part of the application, and that will also be made available to other groups, choir etc. Main hall has a stage and is perfect for music and drama; the floor-space for dancing, community cinema, craft fairs etc. Might also look in future to add retractable seating for concert venue in future. If the CAT goes through, Vogrie Hall will become the first permanent home for band in 40 years.

There is a lot to do in the renovations – the building has been somewhat overlooked. Many groups have come and gone over the years, while the band has had lease for the last 8-9 years. In the plan, outside changes include universal access ramp, existing roof leak to be fixed, roof to be re-tiled, guttering etc, roughcasting refresh, stripping out old sash windows and replace with double-glazing. Internal changes are new toilets (including accessible toilet), main hall to receive new ceiling & part of wall (to rectify leak issues) and a complete redecoration (walls, doors) throughout. The heating system to be stripped out and replaced as it is not fit for purpose, and while the wiring & lighting works it too needs to be replaced to bring up to modern standards.

However, it has recently been discovered that the roof has a serious problem. The existing roof leak has never been fixed by Midlothian Council in eight years. In September, the band was told to vacate building due to structural issues with roof caused by the ongoing leak. A full survey is to be undertaken to ascertain whether the building can even be saved. The CAT Application does not cover this newly-discovered issue. Depending on what the survey says, there will be another (likely significant) cost to be included. No response from Midlothian council in 10 weeks now. While appreciating that regular Council work is slowed down by Covid response, it is distressing that it is likely the structural issues will not be getting better the longer it is left.

CM, on behalf of GDCC, stated that Gorebridge is badly in need of this type of facility, and asked if developer contributions could be used? CJ said probably not – it's more for expanding existing infrastructure than renovations. CJ offered to escalate the response in Council, while noting that the council is back down to critical services only.

ID	Description	Who?	Next Update
2021-01-05	Escalate structural issue report with Council for Vogrie Hall	CJ	16-Feb-21
2021-01-06	Put Alistair, Fiona and CJ in contact with each other	NW	16-Feb-21

Alistair stated that St David's Brass have a maintenance-style contract with Council. The leak was there from day 1, so it is not the responsibility of the band to fix and the Council have tried 3-4 times to correct the issue (thereby accepting responsibility). To put costs in perspective, the ramp is expected to cost £35k, roof replacement (not the new structural issues) is £50k – all currently funded via a significant donation. Not sure what the Council is looking for as purchase price, but additional funding is difficult to get currently since the building needs to be owned by the band first.

GDCC expressed concern over the time taken resolve these issues, and fear yet another community building is in danger of being lost due to negligence. A proposal to go to Scottish Government to quicken the resolution was rejected this time round, in favour of CJ escalating the issue locally first.

CM thanked Alistair and Fiona for their time: they both left the meeting at this point. CM also briefly left the meeting.

4 Update on Ongoing Issues

4.1 Engagement with Hunterfield Gothenburg Tavern Trust

NW reported that minutes still lie with him for a final tidy-up, and they will be published very soon.

It was welcomed that AIT had awarded £3000 to Friends of Stobhill towards provision of an outdoor classroom space. There was a brief discussion on whether AIT was quorate, or whether new Trustees had been appointed. NW felt that we should be pleased that money is still being dispersed into the community, that he was unaware of any new Trustees having been appointed, and to the best of his knowledge the Trust was quorate.

ID	Description	Who?	Next Update
2021-01-07	Publish November meeting minutes between GDCC & AIT/HGTT	NW	16-Feb-21

5 New Issues Raised by Community

5.1 Council vehicle parking

NW reported that a resident had provided photos of badly-parked council vehicle at The Crescent. This may have been a one-off, but Community Councillors were asked to keep an eye out for additional examples across the community.

5.2 Bulk provision of grit

CM re-joined the meeting at this point.

NW asked if we could be proactive in identifying local areas for bulk delivery of grit for residents to use. Similar arrangements are in place in a number of other towns in the county. Further details to be forwarded.

ID	Description	Who?	Next Update
2021-01-08	Send round details of grit arrangements to GDCC members to get a volunteer	NW	16-Feb-21

As an aside, CM mentioned that if any activity is voluntary arranged by members of GDCC (e.g. a gritting patrol), we are covered under our own insurance policy.

5.3 Birkenhead Fun Day

This item will be carried forward to the next meeting.

6 Major Planning Applications

6.1 14 houses at Robertson Bank: 20/00899/DPP

GDCC have no objections to the houses themselves – indeed, it is good to see brownfield land being regenerated rather than more green spaces being used up. CM, NW and SB are all local to this proposed development, and suggested we raise a few concerns in response to the application: ensure safe access is maintained down the access path (on-foot, as the route is very popular with hikers and dog-walkers); that consideration is made of the potential for congestion at the proposed junction onto Lady Brae with a car looking to exit the new access road and one simultaneously looking to enter (given there is only width for one car) and that pedestrian access to/from the railway station is not made any worse than it currently is. Perhaps a set of lights/pedestrian crossing could be considered?

ID	Description	Who?	Next Update
2021-01-09	Respond to 20/00899/DPP highlighting concerns with access & railway	NW	16-Feb-21

There was a brief discussion on proposals around Lady Brae in general, with a suggestion it could be made one-way to help with the narrowing from Vogrie Road to the St Margaret's Chapel/Station pedestrian entrance.

6.2 Update on Redheugh West: 20/00898/SCR

NW updated that this land is progressing through the planning stages, with this request to ascertain whether a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required as part of the forthcoming Detailed Planning Permission (DPP) application. No action at this time.

7 Police Report

None received.

CM reported that Brian McGuff is on Council Liaison duties and James Pendreich has left the Force. Our contact should remain with the generic address.

8 Community Council Reports

8.1 Chair

CM raised noticeboards – we need to make sure we're making more of an effort here. JB happy to stuff noticeboards given appropriate materials.

ID	Description	Who?	Next Update
2021-01-10	Provide print-out of minutes for noticeboards on an ongoing basis	NW	16-Feb-21
2021-01-11	Populate noticeboards on an ongoing basis	JB	16-Feb-21

CM also raised upcoming Community Planning Days – Community Councillors should look out for these coming and look to attend if possible as they are valuable.

8.2 Secretary

NW said his update was mostly covered elsewhere in the meeting, so nothing specific to add.

8.3 Treasurer

FS reported a fair bit of activity. We have income from Christmas cards, crosses & wreaths. Trouble with access to account due to out-of-date details which is being worked through. Funds stand at £1694.21 in main (with ~£760 due to Pentland Plants for station planting), £1750.83 in miner memorial, £253 in war memorial refurbishment and £1232.67 in Awards. Total balance is currently £3179.88.

FS is looking to make the bank account two-to-approve, meaning it will require two GDCC members to sign-off on expenditure. This requires a change to the constitution, which will be handled at the next AGM.

ID	Description	Who?	Next Update
2021-01-12	Work on required change to GDCC Constitution to allow two-to-approve on bank a/c	NW	19-Oct-21

8.4 Federation

CM mentioned that we can have two GDCC members join the meetings. Can we have a rolling attendance of different GDCC members? CM has to attend each month as she is vice-chair, but would welcome company. There was a request from HT to ensure that the Federation minutes are made available to all GDCC members.

ID	Description	Who?	Next Update
2021-01-13	Forward Federation minutes to GDCC members on an ongoing basis	NW	16-Feb-21

CM gave an update. Bonnyrigg CC and Poltonhall CC to merge. Newtongrange CC forming a Development Trust, and establishing two Community Councillors onto Trust board. A brief discussion was held on whether that would work for Gorebridge, though it was accepted that (for now, and by accident) we already have HT and CM in that role. Moorfoot CC is quorate now – but could always use more people, so let them know. Mayfield CC concerned about planning for north Mayfield. Dalkeith CC report that the TSB branch is closing. Eskbank & Newbattle CC trying to get more engagement. It was noted that the Crawlees closure is not happening, and that there is still concern over the communication of that proposal.

Airport noise boards – is anyone on GDCC have an interest in this? Federation is also looking to create a website – what should it contain? Feedback to CM.

9 Project Updates

9.1 Station Adopters

CM reported that 10 new barrels had been made available, and all had been snapped up quickly.

10 Councillor Reports

10.1 Councillor Johnstone

CJ reported that she has recently returned back to work. Newbattle Community High School going to be hub for Covid testing, where people will self-swab. Should be ready in around 2 weeks. Mass vaccination centre for Midlothian was going to be Queen Margaret University, but after protestation that this is difficult to access, we're also getting one at Gorebridge Leisure Centre. Will run between 8-10 hours a day, hoping to see 500 people per day. Ministry of Defence involved in clearing equipment and repurposing building suitable for this use. 15 February is a tentative start date, and the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine to be used. Currently, it's the Community Hospital at Hardengreen and seven GP surgeries doing priority groups.

Midlothian currently at 101 per 10,000 people infection rate. No evidence of new strains detected. Straiton remains a particular focus area for Police patrols looking to enforce rules on out-of-area travel.

HT asked where the boundary between Gorebridge & Middleton and Gorebridge North on the dashboard. CJ not sure.

10.2 Councillor Muirhead

JM sent apologies for the meeting, but did provide a full update over email. With timing running short on the meeting, NW will forward the various updates to GDCC members.

ID	Description	Who?	Next Update
2021-01-14	Forward JM update to GDCC members	NW	16-Feb-21

10.3 Councillor Munro

Not present – apologies received.

11 AOB

11.1 ScotRail Walking Access

Discussion on how to we progress the pedestrian entrance from Main Street, which has fallen through the cracks from various failed projects. CM asked if we could get more interaction with the Borders Rail Community Partnership (BRCP) to help here.

ID	Description	Who?	Next Update
2021-01-15	Make contact with Anne Maher at BRCP to explore cooperation opportunities	Ellen S	16-Feb-21
2021-01-16	Send on background information to the pedestrian entrance at Main Street	HT	16-Feb-21

11.2 Resilience

People who need help need to phone the Council as the first pass. This information has already been circulated online, but should we include in Noticeboards? Some concern raised from GDCC members that online-only is excluding a reasonable part of our community. Ellen volunteered to do a poster for the Library notice board.

ID	Description	Who?	Next Update
2021-01-17	Covid support poster to be created for noticeboards	Ellen S	16-Feb-21

CM closed the meeting at 9.20pm. The next meeting will be 16 February 2021.

List of Abbreviations

CAT	Community Asset Transfer
GADEG	Gorebridge and District Environmental Group
GCC	Gorebridge Community Cares
GCDT	Gorebridge Community Development Trust
GDCC	Gorebridge & District Community Council
HGTT	Hunterfield Gothenburg Tavern Trust
MLDP	Midlothian Local Development Plan
MTRaP	Midlothian Traffic Roads and Paths