



BURNing Issues



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CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR MESSAGE

'Burning Issues' has really come of age this year.

We celebrated 21 consecutive years of newsletters in February and this is our 21st Christmas and New Year issue. Once again, we wish everyone in Walkerburn a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year, as well as the many readers who live beyond the village. Also, a big 'Thank You' to all our team who edit, produce and distribute the newsletter and send out each new edition by email and via the Walkerburn.com website.

We will be taking our usual break in January and look forward to a return in February.

ROSIE CALLAGHAN SCOUT JAMBOREE TRIP

My Time at the World Scout Jamboree in South Korea.

I applied and was later selected for the Southeast Scotland unit for the World Scout Jamboree in late 2021. Between then and July of this year, when I travelled to South Korea, I spent my time fundraising and getting to know the people I would be travelling with.

Upon arriving in South Korea, we travelled to our hotel in Seoul for our city experience. We spent just under a week exploring and seeing the city and, despite it being very hot, having an amazing time. After that, we travelled to the campsite in Saemangeum. We were scheduled to spend twelve days there. However, due to the extreme heat and harsh weather conditions our stay had to be cut short after only three days. I still had a brilliant time in those three days, meeting people from all over the world and getting to experience and learn about many different cultures.

After our abrupt exit from the campsite, we travelled back to Seoul, a different district this time. We spent the remainder of our trip there, getting to explore the city more, while also meeting other scouts and still having the Jamboree experience despite the changed circumstances.

While my Jamboree experience was different from many previous years, it was nonetheless an amazing one. Although my Jamboree journey has come to an end, the good memories and friends I have made are for life.

I am very thankful for the opportunity, and all those who have helped me by supporting me, fundraising, and giving donations. I hope that by sharing my experience, I will be able to inspire others to follow in my footsteps and have an equally wonderful time at the World Scout Jamboree.

WALKERBURN BOWLING & PETANQUE CLUB

The Bowlers are sitting out the winter months with coffee mornings at 10.00 o'clock each Tuesday and Friday.

They are already looking forward to the 2024 season and to welcoming a number of new members who will be joining the club.

Meanwhile, Petanque members have been enjoying their regular sessions every Friday at 1.00pm (depending on the weather!) in addition to the occasional 'melee' event and some challenge matches against local clubs.

On Friday 1st December the Petanque section held an open 'melee' (a competition mixing chance and skill) followed by an excellent mixed buffet held in the lovely Clubhouse settings. Sean from Selkirk won 1st prize and Carole from Edinburgh won the booby prize. There was also a lot of raffle prizes and most players left with

something – well, at least with a smile on their faces! The day was so successful we hope to hold another melee soon and, perhaps, a daytime Burns Night competition followed by a supper in the clubhouse!

The club also wants to encourage more community involvement to include local organisations, adults or children. It is open to the whole community. In case of emergencies, we are also registered and set up as a 'Warm Hub' for residents, along with the Village Hall and the HB Club. Please come along and take a look at what we have to offer and do not hesitate to ask if you would like to know more.

For more details, please contact George Thornton on 01896-870251 or e-mail geoles2@tiscali.co.uk

Thank You Walkerburn from Poppy Scotland

Walkerburn raised a total of £330.06 both in the Poppy Scotland Appeal Tins and from donations.

Many thanks to everyone who gave a donation and to the Post Office, Café, HB Club, Hall and Co-op for 'hosting' collecting cans.

Home Help With Jodie

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WALK IT WALKERBURN



No walks on 25th December and 1st January

We will resume our regular weekly walks on Monday 8th January at 10.00am.

Meet in Alexandra Park by the swings.

The Christmas walk was a great success as we joined up with Innerleithen and other village groups for a pleasant walk which took all of us to Caberston Café and an enjoyable Christmas lunch. A happy Festive Season to everyone, and we look forward to a healthy 2024!

WHAT'S ON IN THE HALL: December/January

(Anyone interested in booking the hall, please contact walkernburnpublichall@gmail.com)

Date	Event	Time
Day	Event	Time
Mondays	Mindful Yoga For more info, please tel. Sue Cotterill on 07983 167075 or email reverendsusancotterill@gmail.com	6.00pm - 9.00pm
Tuesdays (weekly)	Youth Club (except for last Tuesday every month) Now finished for Christmas – will return on 9th Jan	6.00pm - 8.00pm
Wednesdays	No Community Council Meeting in December. Next one is on 17th Jan.	7.00pm
Thursdays	Cyrenians Community Pantry and Cook Club Christmas Break 14th Dec to 11th January 2024 Citizens Advice Bureau in Ante Room 14th Dec - returns on 11th Jan.	3.30pm - 5.30pm
Sundays	ITW Church Service 17th Dec Table Tennis	2.00pm - 3.00pm 6.00pm - 9.00pm

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WALKERBURN & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of Meeting held in Walkerburn Public Hall on Wednesday 15th November 2023

Present: Mr P Waller (Chairman), Mrs L Thornton (Secretary), Ms G Jones, Ms S Sedgwick, Mr G Thornton, Mr M Wilcox, Mrs P Purves (Co-opted). Councillor Douglas, Councillor Pirone, Councillor Tatler.

Chairman's Introduction

The Chairman welcomed all present.

Apologies and Notices

Apologies: Ms M Daykin, Mrs S Horsburgh, Mr C Kerr.

Police Business

The monthly Tweeddale East Area Police Report had been distributed to members. There were no incidents reported in respect of Walkerburn.

Councillor Pirone pointed out that the 'Speed Watch' programme for the Tweeddale area is ready to be implemented and, in view of the fact that there are issues with motorists speeding through the village, hopes that at least one person from Walkerburn will volunteer to be trained for helping with this worthwhile project.

The Chairman commended the Police assistance at Remembrance Sunday and all agreed that it had been useful for residents to see and talk to the PCs afterwards at the Hall.

October Minutes

The Chairman proposed that members agree to delay accepting the draft of the October Minutes until there had been enough time to consider amendments. He said that the October meeting had been long and complex and Mr Thornton had, as always, written a thorough account but he felt that members should take more time to consider the vast amount of detail. All agreed that the final draft could be proposed and passed online before the next meeting.

Matters Arising

* 'Muckle Mouth Meg' sculpture: Secretary reported that she was continuing to push Forestry and Land Scotland regarding a possible replacement for the 'Muckle Mouth Meg' sculpture or an information board at Thornielee forest car park. She remained hopeful that a replacement would be made.

* Galashiels Road Telephone Box: Mrs Purves confirmed that no decision had been made about the removal of the Galashiels Road payphone. Members agreed that there was still a case to be made for retaining the telephone box for emergency use.

* Inconsiderate use of the multi-use path: Mr Thornton confirmed that the issue of inconsiderate use of the multi-use path by some cyclists and occasional off-road vehicles used by local businesses had been publicised by an article in 'Burning Issues' and on the Walkerburn 'Facebook' page. Members hoped this would result in more considerate behaviour, but acknowledged that there are a minority of people who will ignore these requests. Members will continue to monitor the situation.

* Potholes on the back road: Mrs Purves reported that work was still needed to repair potholes on the back road and that she will continue to raise this issue with SBC if it appears that nothing is being done about this problem.

* Parking on Pavements and Footway: An SBC consultation has been launched to establish locations where pavement/footway parking currently takes place within the region. Online at Footway Parking 2023 – Scottish Borders Council – Citizen Space. The questionnaire has been circulated and completed by Secretary.

* Funding for a Christmas tree: The Secretary reported that the Festival Committee had not yet found a Xmas Tree. She has passed on various options. The feedback she has been given suggested that this will be resolved soon.

* Cyclists Dismount' signs: Following the disappointment expressed regarding the poor quality of the first 'Cyclists Dismount' signs on the narrow pathway from the Tweed Bridge to Alexandra Park, Chairman was pleased to note that some good quality new signs have now been installed. He expressed his thanks to SBC and those responsible for getting this done so promptly.

* Water Depth Gauge: Following recent reports and suggestions by Mr Kerr, members continue to ask for a Water Depth Gauge to be erected just beyond the entrance to Glendinnings yard. The water is deceptively deep and fast flowing across this section. The Community Council will continue to pursue this matter.

* Flood barriers to protect the Primary School: Mr Kerr previously pointed out the reasons why there is a need for flood barriers to protect the Primary School. Councillor Pirone is continuing to speak with SBC about what can be done regarding both this and the previous issue.

Speed' sign on the A72 Peebles Road: Because of power supply difficulties, the sign on the A72 adjoining the entrance to High Cottages had not been working for some time. Councillor Pirone reported this to SBC and a new sign with a reliable power supply has been erected adjacent to malfunctioning sign. Members thanked both her and SBC for acting promptly to get this done.

* Alexandra Park bronze plaque: Having spoken to Iomhar Maciver at Beltane Studios and obtained a quote to clean the plaque and refurbish the surrounding railings, Mr Thornton is applying to the 'Small Schemes' Neighbourhood budget to pay for the work to be carried out early next year.

Tweed Wheels: As reported at a previous meeting, 'The Bridge' has been superseded by 'Tweed Wheels' and, as requested, Mr Thornton completed a membership renewal form for 2023-2024 on behalf of the Community Council. There is now no charge for membership.

* Alexandra Park hedge and tree issues: Members have been informed that Campbell Johnstone has contacted Mr Thornton regarding issues in Alexandra Park to say that he has spoken to the householder concerned and resolve the problem of overhanging tree branches and hedge-planting. Mr Thornton has thanked Campbell on behalf of members.

Correspondence

The correspondence list for 21st September to 18th October 2023 had been circulated to members.

Planning

Mr Thornton reported that there were two Planning Applications in the past month:

- i. A retrospective application regarding the siting of a shipping container at Alexandra Park.
- ii. An application from Forestry and Land Scotland for the formation of a forestry track at Caberston Crags - to the West of Old Caberston, Galashiels Road - to facilitate the extraction of timber.

There were no objections by members to either of these requests.

Scawd Law Wind Farm Application

Mr Wilcox reported that there has been no update from either SBC Planners or the windfarm developers. It is not expected that any more news will be forthcoming until the early part of next year. He will continue to monitor the situation closely.

Remembrance Sunday

Mrs Purves reported on the Remembrance Sunday Service and Community lunch.

Over one hundred people were present at a deeply poignant service led by Reverend Fraser Edwards, Church of Scotland minister, assisted by Reverend Canon Cedric Blakey. during which the names of all who fell were read out by Col. John Purves and Colin Kerr.

Afterwards, everyone was invited to enjoy a community lunch laid on in the Public Hall by the Community Council and Walkerburn Development Trust and to view the splendid display of photographs and military memorabilia. It was a pleasure to see so many residents and visitors in the hall.

Once again, Walkerburn is grateful to all who helped make this a fitting occasion. The clergy and the wreath layers, the Police, the stewards, the piper and bugler and accordionist, the Guides and Brownies and the ladies who helped prepare a splendid lunch all contributed to its success.

Reports by Members

a.) Ms Jones:

i. Ms Jones referred to concerns about some cyclists who are ignoring signs that ask them to dismount when using the narrow pathway from the Tweed bridge to Alexandra Park. Recently, she had seen a rider fail to dismount and continue towards the Development Trust store.

As it may be that some cyclists who are using the Development Trust facilities occasionally fail to dismount Chairman will ask the Trust to help monitor the situation. The fact that the poor quality older notices have been replaced with much better new ones may assist. Members will continue to monitor this situation puts children and mothers with pushchairs at risk daily because it is narrow and curved.

ii. She reported that the wall adjoining the parking area at the West end of High Cottages was in poor condition and appeared to have been only half built. Chairman pointed out that the wall was on private property and SBC would only intervene if was a potential danger to residents and passers-by.

b.) Ms Sedgwick:

Ms Sedgwick mentioned the worsening condition of the A72 road surface along the Peebles Road stretch. Councillors confirmed that SBC were aware of this and that it was on their re-surfacing schedule. Work will be carried out before the end of the current Financial Year.

Also, traffic control markings will be painted on the road surface after the re-surfacing has been done.

Councillors pointed out that SBC have now made a 'Road Problems Form' available on-line. As mentioned at a previous meeting, it is possible for residents to set up a personal account. This will make accessing any part of the SBC website much easier and, as in this instance about Peebles Road, any requests or complaints will be tracked and reported back. They also mentioned that another subject of frequent complaints concerns SBC waste bins. Using the SBC website in the way just mentioned will facilitate a much quicker response. It was agreed that it would be useful to publicise this more. Mr Thornton will ask 'Burning Issues' to include an article and will also attach it to the Walkerburn 'Facebook' page.

c.) Mr Waller:

Mr Waller raised three issues:

i. Chairman noted that the large lorry was still parking regularly in the car drop-off space in Alexandra Park. Having expressed his concern to the owner, the driver was being more considerate about exactly where he parks. Members agreed that it was an unfortunate situation since there was no lawful reason for refusing to allow the lorry to park there. Unfortunately, the village does not have any defined spaces for commercial vehicles to park.

ii. Chairman next reported on complaints that have been raised about cars parking along the south side of the bend where Galashiels Road approaches Caberston Road. This is potentially likely to result in a serious accident. One suggestion was for double yellow lines to be painted along this stretch. Also, in addition to complaining direct to SBC, it is important to report dangerous parking to Police, wherever it is.

Members will continue to pursue further action regarding this.

d) Mrs Thornton reported that she had received a complaint about the Resilience shed being insecure. This has been discussed with the Resilience Co-ordinator, who will make a stock-take to see if any items are missing. However, it was pointed out that the shed is not the responsibility of the Community Council, although they have a vested interest in assisting any resilience activities. It is hoped that Resilience will be able to fit a more secure locking system. A spare key could perhaps be kept securely in the Hall so that authorized persons can access it if the Resilience Co-ordinator cannot be contacted. She also reported that a resident had pointed out that the stone wall on the North side of Galashiels Road, opposite the old mill buildings and car park, was in a poor state of repair. This wall is outwith the road and public footway area and is not SBC responsibility unless it deteriorates further to the extent that becomes dangerous. It was also mentioned that it is not unusual for old walls to appear to be in poor repair but still be in a robust underlying state.

Reports by SBC Councillors.

a.) Councillor Douglas:

i. Councillor Douglas reported on the outcome of a recent meeting by SBC to discuss Community Council Funding. There have been no increases since 2014 and, although he had advocated for a minimum 15% increase, the new rate had been set at only 10%. He pointed out how much communities rely on their local council and how much they deserve as much support as possible because of the steadily increasing volume of work that continues to grow exponentially. He thanked the Community Council for the work they were doing for Walkerburn.

Concerning grants, he suggested that Community Councils should look carefully at how they have often funded other groups in the community. A commendable as this is, he suggested that, if any such requests are made, those persons should be referred to the various sources of funding that are also available. In this respect, Hannah Lacon has been able to help Walkerburn on a number of occasions.

ii. He mentioned that the SBC Budget Process had started, with an all-party Working Group being formed. The current 'Live Borders' arrangements are also being looked into. Also, he confirmed that there will be no Council Tax increase this coming year.

iii. He was pleased to note that the Pathways Group funding had been increased. SBC are hoping that local communities will do more to carry out basic repairs and maintenance work.

iv. He mentioned a successful and informative Tweeddale Area Partnership had been held in Walkerburn Village Hall on 30th October. Among the subjects discussed was an interesting talk on 'Time For Change in the NHS' in which suggestions for improvements are being widely discussed and feed-back from the public is being noted. Also, Mr Kerr gave a highly relevant and interesting talk on what was being done to deal with flooding problems along the River Tweed from Peebles to Walkerburn. This was of particular importance for the local community. A committee will meet to deal specifically with local issues and will be meeting in Walkerburn in November. A report on the outcomes will be circulated to local communities.

Councillor Douglas mentioned that the next meeting will be on Tuesday 6th February at 7.00pm. It is hoped that this will be a mixture of attendance and 'Teams' meeting.

Finally, he mentioned that any Grant Applications for consideration at this meeting should be submitted before the middle of December.

b.) Councillor Pirone

i. Councillor Pirone reported that SBC and the Police were still looking for volunteers to be trained as part of the 'Speed Watch' initiative. Although Walkerburn has problems with speeding throughout the village, there have been no volunteers to date and it is hope that this will change. This is unfortunate because the A72, Tweedholm Avenue and Caberston Road have persistent problems. Communities where there are no local volunteers are unlikely to be treated as 'high priority' for Police attention regarding speeding.

ii. Lastly, she reported that the Peebles High School inspection has now been completed and that the results are awaited.

c.) Councillor Tatler reported

i. Councillor Tatler mentioned that the Walkerburn Pump Track planning and funding arrangements had been completed and that installation work is expected to begin next Spring. There will be an SBC presentation in Walkerburn Village Hall on 24th November for residents to look to see just what will be done.

ii. He also mentioned that the Boundary Commission were examining proposed changes to local boundaries and that an enquiry will be held.

Date of Next Meeting.

17th January 2024 at 7.00pm.

Members of the Public are welcome to attend and to raise any issues they want to discuss with Councillors or the Community Council.

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DECEMBER WILDSIDE

With the first snow on the ground, wild creatures become much more visible as they search for food and fresh water.

Our native garden birds appreciate a bit of extra help and at this time of year; suet pellets and balls in specialised feeders, or pellets mixed in with seed on the bird table or on the ground. The only trouble I've found is that crows and jackdaws seem to be able to smell suet foods from far away and come and greedily gobble it up in bulk! I'm very glad we have a protective cage for ground feeding which is excellent at keeping such birds out. Anything the size of a

blackbird or less can enter and feed from the old plant pot saucer I use but jackdaws and crows are kept out. They can often figure out how to get at suet food in hanging feeders. I have to admire their intelligence but I don't like their 'bully boy tactics' and greed although I realise they are sizeable birds and will need a sizeable meal. The blackbird incidentally is busy stripping the shiny red berries off my pyracantha near the kitchen window.

If you happen to be on the back road, keep your eyes peeled for sightings of a pine marten. They have been recorded in the area, which is great news. The pine marten is comparable in size to the average domestic cat. It has a heart-shaped face, big brown eyes, slim sinuous body, rich chestnut-brown coat turning darker in summer, with an apricot-coloured bib and long tail which is bushy in the winter. It is a 'mustelid' and a member of the weasel family. In Britain, the marten's family members include the stoat, weasel, polecat, otter and badger. It is a very proficient climber so is often found in the woods and forests although, if woodland is scarce or unsuitable, the animals will occupy cliffs, crags, rocky mountainsides and occasionally the roof space of buildings. Martens, however, are very adaptable and pine martens rarely excavate their own dens. Instead, they prefer to use a range of woodland structures. As well as tree cavities, they will den in squirrel dreys, up-turned root plates and rock faces. Above ground sites are essential in areas where fox predation is likely. In the absence of natural structures, they are happy to occupy large bird boxes, purpose-built den boxes and even old buildings. In Dumfries and Galloway, there has been an extensive program of erecting 'den boxes' by the D&G pine marten group working alongside those working with red squirrels. The pine marten and red squirrel have evolved

together across Europe for millennia, in a natural predator/prey relationship. Studies in Britain and Ireland, however, have highlighted a low occurrence of red squirrel in the pine marten's diet. They are omnivorous and will however take a grey squirrel but mainly eat smaller mammals such as mice and voles which make up 40% of its diet. They are very dependent on fruiting trees and shrubs such as rowan, cherry and hazel in summer and autumn making up 30% of their diet. In Spring, they will take birds and their eggs, but as an opportunist. They predate corvids (i.e. crows, jackdaws etc) which is seen as beneficial. Predation is a natural process, key to a healthy, balanced ecosystem.

A couple of meteor showers to look for in December. The Geminids is the biggest recurrent meteor shower, this year will peak on December 13/14th. Meteors can be seen from anywhere in the sky.

The Ursids meteor shower as a minor meteor shower which peaks this year on December 21/22. It can be seen near Ursa minor or the plough in the North. Don't forget to keep your eyes peeled for Santa and his sleigh on 24th! January 2024 starts with the Quadrantids on 3rd/4th which is a medium meteor shower which should be visible just after midnight.

Have a great Christmas and New year!

EMERGENCY FLOOD ADVICE

Preparing for flooding

It is your responsibility to manage your own flood risk and protect yourself, your family, property or business. There are steps you can take now to be prepared and to help reduce the damage and disruption it can have on your home, travel and work. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has free tools and advice available to help you stay informed: Flood maps allow you to check if your region is affected by flooding.

* Three-day Scottish Flood Forecast provides the earliest available information of where and when flooding is expected across the country.

* Sign up to the SEPA Floodline and follow @SEPAFlood for flooding updates and information to receive messages when flooding is forecast in your area.

* Follow the advice from official weather or travel warnings.

Steps to help prepare

Prepare a flood plan and a family emergency flood kit with essential items so that everyone in your household is equipped if flooding happens.

* Find out how to turn off your gas, electricity and water supplies.

* Keep an easily accessible list of useful contact numbers including your insurance company and utility providers.

* Consider flood protection products for your property and ensure your insurance provides adequate cover for flood damage.

* Join or start a local community flood group. Working together to prepare your community for the impacts of flooding will help everyone to cope better.

What to do if flooding is forecast

* Charge your mobile phone

* Move vehicles out of the flood risk area

* Move important documents and valuable items to a higher place.

* Shut off gas, electricity and water supplies and fit any flood protection products to your property.

* Check on vulnerable and elderly neighbours.

What to do during a flood

* Avoid walking or driving through flood water - six inches of

fast-flowing water can knock over an adult and two feet of water can move a car

* Do avoid any form of direct contact with flood water as it could be contaminated.

* Do not use any electrical appliances.

* Do move to higher ground and wait for the emergency services. Evacuate if told to do so.

Recovery from flooding

* Find out from the emergency services if it is safe to re-enter your property.

* Don't turn on your electricity until it has been checked.

* Be aware of the health effects caused by a flood. Wear appropriate clothing and protection as flood water can be contaminated with harmful bacteria and be mindful of how the stress and traumatic feelings of loss can have an impact on your own and the mental wellbeing of others.

* Contact your insurance company. If it is safe to do so, take photographs of the damage caused to your home and valuables.

* Follow Floodline's clean-up checklist to help you and your property after a flood.

* Make sure that any vulnerable neighbours or relatives are safe and help them make arrangements for any repairs.

* If your property has been flooded and you are re-insuring, you can ask if your property is eligible for Flood Recover.

More information

* The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is Scotland's flood warning authority, providing flooding updates and advice on being prepared for flooding.

* The Scottish Flood Forum provides support to those who are affected by or are at risk from flooding.

BURNing Issues Contributors: Please remember to submit any articles, letters or other material for the February issue by the end of January. Contact Burning Issues at walkerburnnews@hotmail.com