

## **WALKERBURN & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

### **(Information update for residents)**

#### **What Has Been Done Over Recent Months? We have not been idle!**

The Community Council has 9 members and their details are on the noticeboards and website. Members have been in constant touch with each other to keep abreast of ongoing issues but it has been difficult to keep all residents fully informed although we managed to find funding to send a newsletter out in July to 485 homes. Once Burning Issues is back in production we will give a monthly report but in the meantime this note summarises our work over the past year.

Keep an eye out for urgent notices on the Public Hall and Post Office noticeboards, on [www.walkerburn.com](http://www.walkerburn.com) and on Facebook.

West Bold Farmland. Thank you to everyone who commented on the Forestry and Land planting plan for West Bold farmland. The plan was changed to the benefit of all local residents and we continue to monitor the Scottish Forestry website to ensure that no undesirable amendments are proposed.

Alexandra Park. SBC has now repaired the raised walkway + removed branches overhanging the walkway + repaired the hand rail above the walkway + cut the hedges in the park. We await the promised repair of the steps to the east of the walkway. Currently we are helping the daughters of the late Eric and Mae Pearce in their wish to have a memorial bench placed in Alexandra Park.

Play Park. We are still in discussion with SBS over a sign to indicate that the Play Park is for children under 8 years. The equipment in the play area is designed to be used by young children, and over-enthusiastic use by older, larger youngsters could result in damage to both equipment and users.

Wire Fence at High Cottages. Following our request to SBC they have been repairing the wire fence along High Cottages.

Roads/Verges/Pavements Lots of residents have requests or observations on roads. We follow up all complaints with SBC with some success:

- The A72 verge between Walkerburn and Innerleithen was cleaned.
- We are hopeful that a 40 mph speed limit will be imposed early in 2021 between Old Caberston and the village boundary to make it safer for residents to cross the road for the bus.
- We provided consultation and feedback to SBC Liaison on the new 20 mph speed limit.
- We have brought the concerns of residents about the 40mph signs on the back road to SBC – traffic speed has increased since the signs were put in place and the road is more dangerous as a result, particularly for walkers and cyclists. We believe the 40 mph signs may encourage people – especially visitors - to drive at this dangerous

speed. (There has already been an accident involving a stranger to the area.) SBC have listened and we hope the signs will be removed. We are also continuing to press for an extension of the 20mph restriction to beyond the entrance to Glendinning's Yard.

- We persuaded SBC to have the village's pavements inspected; as a consequence the pavements in Park Avenue will be repaired.
- We will continue to press the Traffic and Road Safety Department to paint white lines (where none exist) or repaint lines (where existing ones have faded) at corners where ill-advised car parking occurs, notably in Hall Street, Jubilee Road and Caberston Road.
- Following the severe frosts in the week beginning 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2021, WDCC members contacted Council Leader Shona Haslam and Councillor Stuart Bell to complain about the shocking state of the village's pavements and some of its roads. Gritting soon followed. Councillor Bell said that Walkerburn was not on SBC's 'priority list', but he will be working to correct this. We will continue to pursue this matter. We have also requested more grit bins to enable our residents treat icy pavements and roads. (Many bins were removed as part of a cost-cutting exercise some years ago and we have been fighting this ever since!)
- Following recent rain, snow and ice the road drainage problem near the garage at the western end of Peebles Road has become acute. There is flooding and the road surface is breaking up. East-bound drivers are swerving to avoid the hazard. Again this is an issue we have been fighting about for some time but it is getting more dangerous and we are pushing hard for a proper resolution rather than temporary measures.
- At the other end of the village there is a problem where a soakaway was added to the edge of the path to prevent oily water draining into the allotment area. Despite the efforts of an allotment holder to keep the soakaway clear of debris it is not draining properly and we are pressing roads for an investigation and solution.

Remembrance Sunday. Each year WDCC is responsible for the Remembrance Sunday arrangements. This involves considerable correspondence with SBC, Police, Lord Lieutenant, Haig Poppy Fund etc. Sadly, having followed all the procedures, the wreath laying ceremony had to be reduced to a shadow of its normal self, but we did lay all the usual wreaths and Piper Bruce Hamilton played a moving selection of traditional music. In 2021 we hope to run a normal service and host a community lunch in the Hall.

Dogs. We have been involved in trying to sort out dog problems, i.e. dealing with dangerous dogs and attempting to tackle the issue of dog mess. Regarding the latter, we have tried dog stencils to mark out problem areas and we have arranged for laminated notices about dog fouling to be placed at various locations in the village.

Scawd Law Wind Farm. There is on-going WDCC involvement in the proposed Scawd Law Wind Farm development. We will look at possible community benefits if the scheme proceeds. At present WDCC has made no

decision about whether to support or oppose this development. We await more information about what is proposed and the consequent impact on our environment. Also we wish to get a better idea of the views of residents, so we will be sending out information to all households, there is a display on the Public Hall noticeboard and we would welcome comments.

Resilience. At the start of the Covid restrictions we agreed to the temporary clearing out the Resilience Shed to make it available as a 'Sharing Shed'. We arranged for a SBC Resilience grant to enable the purchase of a new shed and the Hall's Management Committee agreed that this new 'Sharing Shed' be erected to the west of the Hall. Once this was done the Resilience Shed reverted to its former use. We have supported Food Share and the Sharing Shed, including publicising their activities in the village. With the permission of SBC Resilience we will be donating £50 to help with the cost of Food Share.

SBHA Liaison. We persuaded SBHA to demolish some old garages at the east end of Tweedholm Avenue in order to provide more car parking spaces.

Tweed Clean Up. Last spring, we liaised with the local 'Great River Tweed Clean Up' and organised a team of Walkerburn volunteers to assist. We also laid on refreshments in the Bowling Club afterwards to show our appreciation. We hope to expand this type of activity when restrictions allow.

Gas Works. After years of WDCC complaints to Scottish Gas about the safety of the gas pipe crossing the Tweed on the up-stream side of the bridge at last Scottish Gas have made improvements which they believe make the pipe completely safe. There are cut-off valves at either end of the bridge and the reinforced steel piping has been checked and re-painted. Let us know if there is ever any more gas smells in this area. Unfortunately, the bench on the site was destroyed during the work but SBC will be replacing it.

Money Matters. WDCC accounts have been audited and signed off to enable SBC to issue grants for following year. We rely on the small SBC grant to cover our expenses but we are always short of money hence the lack of a regular newsletter during the Pandemic. We have assisted other local groups to access Community Funds and we are constantly on the look out for funding streams to benefit the village and surrounding area.

Rathburn. Following the explosion and fire at the Rathburn factory in Caberston Road we were instrumental in acting as a liaison between the company and local residents. The Community Council also organised the well-attended residents' meeting in the HB Club enabling residents to express their concerns, ascertain the facts of what had happened and to discuss future developments. When the Health & Safety Executive's report on the explosion and fire is released, and when Covid restrictions permit it, WDCC will organize a meeting of all interested parties so that the report's findings and recommendations can be discussed and residents can express their opinions.

VE Day. We spent time working with SBC to arrange for funding, appropriate celebrations and the placing of two VE Day memorial benches in the village. Unfortunately, after all the work had been done and plans agreed, the Covid-19 lockdown meant that it all had to be cancelled. The Community Council will continue to bear this scheme in mind when things return to normal.

Hall Street. Our attempt to get a hand rail fitted in Hall Street was unsuccessful again because SBC decided that the pavement was too narrow. However we will continue to request a hand rail is installed from the access road to the garages up to the end of the Public Hall's east wall (where the pavement is wider).

Buses. We are still trying to get late night buses (or mini-buses) running on the A72 between Galashiels and Peebles.

Cold Calling. This year, we will solicit the views of residents as to whether Walkerburn should, like Clovenfords, become a "No Cold Calling" community. If the general opinion is yes, we will investigate the procedures to implement this.

Electricity. We need to revisit the issue raised time and again about the frequency of electricity outages in Walkerburn. Admittedly they are normally brief, but they cause considerable disruption – and we are not living in a Third World country. We are told that a new 5 year infrastructure plan will include the Tweed Valley as a priority and that the line will be renewed from outside Peebles to the Yair. We will continue to press for this to be brought forward.

#### General Liaison.

A large part of the Community Council work is making sure that Walkerburn and District is not forgotten when SBC, government or local organisations are making plans. The Community Council has been regularly involved in the Tweeddale Area Partnerships and has contributed on matters that are of concern as well as responding to numerous requests for comments on all sorts of policies.

Schools liaison is also part of the community council remit and the Community Council was actively involved in the discussions following the Peebles High School fire. Similarly, the Council is regularly represented at various SBC policy information meetings.

Peter Waller  
Chairman  
January 2021.