

WALKERBURN AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS FROM A PUBLIC MEETING HELD IN
WALKERBURN PUBLIC HALL AT 5PM ON SATURDAY 7TH MARCH 2020

PURPOSE: To develop a plan for community celebrations for the 75th Anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day

CHAIRMAN: Mr P Waller, Chairman, Walkerburn & District Community Council

SECRETARY: Mrs P Purves, Co-opted as Project Secretary

1. The Chairman opened the meeting by thanking all in attendance and noted that he and the secretary had received a number of apologies along with several ideas which would be presented later. He explained that the Council was offering grants up to £2,500 to help communities take part in VE Day celebrations and that the Community Council intended to bid for a grant on behalf of the whole community since there were restrictions on who could apply for grants. He expressed a wish that the meeting would be quick but productive since it was important that a decision was reached and an application for a grant made in a timely manner. He asked everyone to bear in mind the aim of the grants and the two outcomes sought by the Council, which were on the sheets being passed around:

Aim. To encourage as many people as possible to get involved in the celebrations.

Outcomes.

- Communities have more opportunities to come together to celebrate VE Day
- Communities create a lasting legacy of VE Day

2. The Chairman then asked the meeting to consider the ideas already submitted noting that he also felt consideration should be given to involving the school and young people generally and had tasked the secretary to speak to the Head Teacher once the views of this meeting were clear. The ideas already received were:

a. Memorial Bench. Various place suggested including Alexandra Park, the path to Innerleithen, around the Public Hall, the War Memorial.

This idea drew general support. There were concerns expressed about future maintenance but the Chairman felt that the community had enough resources to ensure maintenance. There was general support for a wooden bench with a carved inscription on the back.

There was a lively discussion about the placing of a bench with general agreement that it should be in a place where it would be used by people of all ages, ideally facing south and not overshadowed by trees so as to reduce the requirement for maintenance. It was also agreed that it had to be on hard standing, again to cut down on maintenance. A majority felt that the Park already had sufficient benches; a

majority felt that the Innerleithen path was not appropriate since it was not central to the community and there were flood risks in future; the War Memorial site did not have space so was discounted by everyone; the Hall had no obvious place for a bench that would be useful.

The majority view was that the best place for a bench which could be widely used would be outside the HB Club on Caberston Road where the school bus picks up and sets down and various groups meet. It was agreed that the inscription should read "Erected in 2020 to commemorate Victory in Europe Day 8th May 1945". The secretary was tasked with checking costs and reporting back to the Chairman by 13th March. Mrs Henderson, representing the HB Club, said that she would check whether this would have the support of the Club and report back to the secretary no later than 13th March.

Afternote. After discussions with the Council it was decided to ask for a traditional wooden bench outside the HB Club and a recycled plastic bench for on the Innerleithen to Walkerburn pathway. Costings have been requested including installation and future Council maintenance.

b. Historical Plaques. This concept took various forms but the general idea seemed to be to install markers/descriptions on various buildings in the village noting the part they had played in the WW2 war effort. There was a general consensus that the idea had merit, especially since both the Hall and the HB Club had played an enormous part in keeping morale high throughout the war for the many Servicemen stationed in the area as well as for the local community. However, there was an acknowledgement that a great deal of research would be necessary and that costs were likely to be high. It was agreed that this general idea might be taken forward by the Community Council at a later date.

c. Sculpture in the Park. The majority view was that this was likely to be expensive and unlikely to win popular approval. There was, however, general agreement that something of an artistic nature to brighten up the village would be useful. The suggestion of something on the north-facing wall of the Public Hall was discussed at length. Mrs Pennell, representing the Hall Committee, suggested that further discussion by the Hall Committee might result in a proposal to the Community Council. As the next Hall Committee meeting is on 11th March, the Chairman agreed that this would be helpful.

d. 1945 Themed Party. A variety of suggestions had been put forward for a community party with a 1945 theme. All agreed that this idea had merit and should be pursued. After some debate, because of national events and hall bookings, it was agreed that a party/entertainment with a VE Day Theme would be held in the Hall and surroundings on Sunday 10th May from 3pm to 5pm. The Youth Club would assist with music and general help. The school could be involved in some entertainment. It was agreed that the secretary would put together some ideas, in consultation with various village clubs and the Head Teacher and produce a rough outline with costings by 13th March. Thereafter, a small committee would be formed to take the idea forward and all village clubs and organisations would be approached to take part.

e. Picnic Tables in the Park or Elsewhere. Several residents had suggested picnic tables in the village. The school already has 3 tables and apparently does not want more. The flat ground in the park is limited and tables would have to be on flat, hard standing because of grass cutting. This limits where they could be placed. After some discussion, it was agreed that on this occasion a bench would probably be better used and more popular with older residents.

3. The Chairman asked if the mood of the meeting was that the Community Council should apply for grant funding for:

- A memorial bench with inscription installed outside the HB Club.
- A VE Day themed party on 10th May in the Hall and surroundings.
- Something to mark the part played by the Public Hall in the war effort.

There was unanimous support for these proposals.

4. In summing up, the Chairman noted that time was short and asked all those who had undertaken tasks to ensure that these were completed as quickly as possible. He intended to seek Community Council endorsement of the grant application out-of-committee so that the application could be forwarded to the Council without undue delay. He noted that Covid 19 might lead to there being no party on 10th May but in that case the event would be delayed, perhaps until after VJ Day or to Remembrance Sunday. He thanked everyone for taking the time to attend the meeting and for participating fully.