



MINUTES OF MEETING

DATE AND TIME	14th January 2025 @ 18:30
LOCATION	Knox Academy, Haddington
PRESENT	Therese Laing (Chair) Jack Worden (Vice Chair) John Hamilton (Treasurer) Morgwn Davies (Secretary, PLO) Susan Forgie (Minutes Secretary) Stuart Pe-Win Robert Moran Malcolm Vickers Erica Muirhead Betsy Fowler Falko Burkett Cameron Richie (Journalist - EL Courier) Stuart Baxter (ELC) Tom Trotter (Councillor) George McGuire (Councillor) Robert Flood (Knox Academy) Ava Marnoch (Knox Academy) Sam Palmer (Knox Academy)
APOLOGIES	Shamin Akhtar (Councillor) John McMillan Councillor) Jim Graham Mandy Harrington (VCEL) Christoph Crepaz

ITEM	TOPIC	ACTION
1.	Welcome & Apologies	
	TL welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies noted.	
2.	Minutes Of AGM (December 2024)	
	The Minutes Secretary noted that MD's first name is spelt Morgwn (no y)	

	<p>Approved Proposed by Betsy Fowler Seconded by Erica Muirhead</p>	
3.	Matters Arising	
a.	Vision	
	<p>TL proposed that the community council develop a vision for its work in 2025/2026. She acknowledged that while the council's strength lies in being solution-focused when addressing issues and problems, it should also take a more proactive approach.</p> <p>To facilitate this, a sheet and some post-it notes were circulated, and councillors were invited to write down their ideas. These would then be considered collectively to determine how best to achieve the goals and establish a realistic timescale. MV collected the post-it notes and will collate.</p> <p>JH asked whether this vision would go beyond the handbook and be more specifically focused on Haddington. TL confirmed that it would, explaining that this was about shaping what the council actively aims to achieve, rather than simply responding to issues as they arise.</p> <p>MV emphasised that any ambitions set for the council must be realistic - grounded in an understanding of its capacities and capabilities. He argued that the council's role should be to enable rather than directly deliver and that a clear balance must be struck between its representative and enabling functions. The vision, he stated, must align with the council's responsibilities.</p> <p>He further noted that the council has a duty to understand the needs of the community and should actively engage with residents through methods such as surveys and flyers. The community's priorities and aspirations should guide the council's work, and careful thought must be given to how these are met. TL agreed that responses to surveys and flyers would guide the work.</p> <p>TL suggested that councillors identify three or four key objectives, reflect on them before the next meeting, and refine them to determine the most important priorities. She asked councillors to consider their suggestions in the context of the question: "What are we responsible for?"</p>	MV

	<p>MD to send councillors a copy of “Roles and Responsibilities” She concluded by expressing her desire for the council to be a positive force within the community.</p> <p>AP: MV proposed that each councillor write a response to the question, “What is HDCC for?” He will draft an email on the topic, which MD will distribute, and all councillors are asked to provide their feedback.</p>	<p>MD</p> <p>ALL MV MD</p>
b.	Resilience Team	
	<p>TL introduced SPW as the new leader of the Resilience Team. Other members are TL, RM and FB. SPW said that 10 people from the Events Group have put their names down to help.</p> <p>All members of the community council may be called upon to help with any emergency arising.</p> <p>AP: TL to share the Resilience Plan with SPW.</p> <p>AP: ELC is running Resilience Training at the Corn Exchange on Saturday 1st March 2025. SPW to email Scott Kennedy to book RM and himself onto the course.</p>	<p>TL/SPW</p> <p>SPW</p>
c.	New Members	
	<p>As Craig Douglas has resigned as a community councillor, the community council is now seeking nominations to fill the positions in Haddington and Athelstaneford. Positions would be available until the AGM in October 2025.</p> <p>AP: The positions should be advertised in the EL Courier.</p> <p>TL explained that the posts will be available for 8/9 months and it should be used as an opportunity to involve others. JW said it would be helpful if the new members had skills/backgrounds that would be useful in subgroups.</p>	<p>Cameron Ritchie/ TL</p>
d.	ELC Rent Rises	
	<p>TL raised the proposed 7% rent increase for ELC tenants in 2025/2026, noting that this follows a 7% increase in 2024. She expressed concern for the poorest tenants, particularly pensioners who do not qualify for Pension Credit, and questioned whether the council had a role in gathering views on the impact of the increase on those most affected.</p> <p>GM remarked that asking tenants about a rent rise was like "asking turkeys to vote for Christmas" and stated that councillors could not comment on the matter as there was no draft budget. SF pointed out that the 7% figure was</p>	

	<p>already in the public domain.</p> <p>During the discussion, JW stated that the council should only get involved if tenants actively lobbied it to represent their views on the rent rise.</p> <p>TL reiterated that a 7% increase was well above inflation. TT added that issues such as vandalism, including the broken lights at Nungate Bridge and fly tipping, were partly to blame for financial pressures contributing to the rent rise.</p> <p>MD argued that rent decisions were a party-political issue and warned that the community council could risk appearing politically aligned if it became involved.</p> <p>MV stated that the rent rise should not be ignored and that any concerns received by the council should be forwarded to politicians.</p>	
e.	Banner	
	<p>JH has approached Peter Lugton to provide 3 vectorised logos and once these arrive he can move forward with the banner design. TL has contacted Carol Grandison to ask about access to a designer. The Print Unit is looking at previous banners and her photo archive for relevant ideas. It will cost £85 to print the banner with them.</p> <p>AP: A small group was set up to oversee development.</p>	JH TL EM SF
f.	Waste Management on the High Street	
	<p>The issue of businesses putting out their cardboard waste days in advance of the uplift continues and was discussed again. Councillors highlighted the dangers this poses, particularly fire. GM told the group that he had raised this with Tom Reid who has sent someone to talk to the businesses. JH and FB said the problem is continuing.</p> <p>AP: GM to contact Tom Reid again AP: FB to send photos of waste to elected members.</p>	GM FB
4.	Community Reports	
a.	Knox Academy	
	RF updated the council on activities in the school before Christmas with a particular highlight being the whole school singing the 12 days of Christmas.	

	<p>Calendar of Dates</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="352 280 1209 660"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="352 280 639 347">Date</th> <th data-bbox="639 280 979 347">Event</th> <th data-bbox="979 280 1209 347">Audience</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="352 347 639 450">15/01</td> <td data-bbox="639 347 979 450">Careers Event 6 - 8 pm</td> <td data-bbox="979 347 1209 450">S1 - S3 S4 - S6</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="352 450 639 517">30/01</td> <td data-bbox="639 450 979 517">Battle of the Bands</td> <td data-bbox="979 450 1209 517">S2</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="352 517 639 660">06/03</td> <td data-bbox="639 517 979 660">Diversity Evening</td> <td data-bbox="979 517 1209 660">AP: All councillors are invited</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Work Placements: RF raised the issue of work experience placements and how difficult they have been to secure. Pupils are looking for placements of 2 hrs per week x 6 weeks. The lack of a Haddington business group really hinders the school.</p> <p>AP: TL asked RF to message her with the information and she will share the info with the business WhatsApp group.</p> <p>BF said that she has business contacts in Letham Mains.</p> <p>RF asked CR if the school was to put an article together for the EL Courier, would it be published? Cameron Ritchie said that it would be.</p> <p>AP: RF to send copy for the article to Cameron Ritchie.</p>	Date	Event	Audience	15/01	Careers Event 6 - 8 pm	S1 - S3 S4 - S6	30/01	Battle of the Bands	S2	06/03	Diversity Evening	AP: All councillors are invited	<p>ALL</p> <p>TL/RF</p> <p>RF/C Ritchie</p>
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b.	HLAP													
	No Update. Next meeting is on 6/02/2025.													
c.	HCTRA													
	<p>SF said the group was not due to meet until 19/01. She described HCTRA's proposal to refurbish 4 of the closes in central Haddington. She stressed that HCTRA wants to work in partnership with ELC and community stakeholders.</p> <p>TL reported that SF had shared the proposals with her and she had shared them with the Town Centre Group, the History Society and Blue Badge Tourist Guide.</p> <p>AP: JH asked SF to reach out to the History Society.</p>	<p>SF</p>												

d.	CAPP	
	<p>The CAPP report had been circulated before the meeting. SB reported that there had been complaints about graffiti, including at Gowls Close. The 3 priorities for CAPP this month are ASB on the High Street Ross's Close Speeding - in general.</p> <p>BF reported that new speeding signs on Pencaitland Road work.</p> <p>TT said that local drivers are at fault for speeding. They are the ones speeding in their own communities.</p>	
e.	Youth Network	
	No new report. First meeting 27/02/2025 on Teams.	
f.	Blooming Haddington	
	<p>The group are going to be planting in the area behind the George Hotel.</p> <p>On 31/01/2025 there will be an outing to ELC's plant nursery.</p>	
5.	HDCC Subgroups	
a.	Events Group	
	<p>GM reported a good turnout at the last meeting. He said the group is now fleshing out its plans for 2025 and focussing on expanding its contact list and learning from other community organisers, especially Tranent and Wallyford.</p> <p>Once all the information has been gathered the group will split into areas of responsibility.</p> <p>They plan to liaise more with the Nungate Gala organisers and try to involve the Rugby Club more. Using local vendors and providers will be a priority.</p> <p>Festival Week will open on Sunday 25th May and end on 31st May with the Family Fun Day.</p> <p>More details will be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>GM thanks those involved with the Christmas lights switch on and installation and switch on. FB asked if the lights will</p>	

	<p>be checked and broken lights replaces. GM confirmed that they would be and that the group intended to keep fundraising towards new lights.</p> <p>BF reminded the council that the storage lock-up needs cleared up. RM assured her that the lights team were on it.</p> <p>Dates of future meetings</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>24/02</td> <td>7 pm Knox Academy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17/03</td> <td>7 pm Knox Academy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>28/04</td> <td>7 pm Knox Academy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>19/05</td> <td>7 pm Knox Academy</td> </tr> </table>	24/02	7 pm Knox Academy	17/03	7 pm Knox Academy	28/04	7 pm Knox Academy	19/05	7 pm Knox Academy	
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b.	Town Centre Group									
	<p>TL reported that the group had had a good meeting but was disappointed that no businesses had attended.</p> <p>Future dates to be booked.</p> <p>At the meetings ideas for events to boost footfall and community activity in the town centre were discussed, eg., a Summer Solstice shopping event.</p> <p>HCTRA reps had attended the last meeting and an agreement was reached to work in Partnership on the Closes project.</p> <p>The group are exploring the possibilities of grants to paint the buildings above the shops.</p> <p>They will make contact with the Ridge in Dunbar to discuss local training opportunities</p>									
6.	Licencing & Planning									
a.	East Fortune Farm: Confirmation that the appeal against the decision to refuse this application was rejected. Grounds: it would be a change of use.									
b.	Herdmanflat Development: SPW sent comments to the PLO regarding drainage, concerns about building style and concerns about tree loss.									

c.	<p>Care Home at Gateside Road: An application has been received to install play equipment, build garden walls and create seating areas at the care home. Normally the council would' comment but there is concern that they have dropped the plan for a nursery that was included in the original application. BF asked if they could do this and have they had done it before in other areas.</p>	
d.	<p>Park at Athelstaneford: An application for a recreational area, including play equipment, paths etc. MV reported that extensive consultation with the community took place before the application was submitted. The application has the support of the local community.</p>	
e.	<p>Premier shop at the High Street: FB sent MD some thoughts on the external appearance of the Premier shop. MD has not approached ELC about this yet.</p> <p>TL suggested inviting the local planning officer to a meeting to discuss the planning process and what criteria are used to make judgements on applications.</p> <p>TT pointed out that evening meetings might be difficult but perhaps a working group could attend a day meeting. This was agreed.</p> <p>AP: FB / MD + 2 people from the Town Centre Group to take this forward.</p>	FB /MD
f.	<p>28 High Street: Cameron Ritchie informed the group that an application had been made for signage for a coffee shop at 28 High Street.</p> <p>No change of use application has been submitted so far.</p>	
7.	<p>Correspondence</p>	
a.	<p>Letter re Veterans Received a letter explaining that NHS Lothian is withdrawing funding for mental health services for veterans and the correspondent questions the legal basis of this decision. MD said it was not clear what the council could do since they can't lobby the government. A discussion took place and it was agreed that: -</p> <p>AP: MD should respond sympathetically, saying that the council shares his concerns</p>	MD
b.	<p>HDCC Email Box The HDCC all @haddington is almost full and MD wondered</p>	

	<p>about deleting archived emails. SB told him that the council is required to keep all emails for 7-8 years. He suggested it would be better to ask Big Wet Fish to increase HDCC's server space.</p> <p>MD said he also wanted to get rid of the contact form which generates spam.</p> <p>AP: MD to speak to Amanda about the issue and resolve it.</p>	MD
8.	Councillors Corner	
	<p>TL suggested that this item should be further up the agenda and the ELC councillors agreed.</p> <p>a) RM complained about the state of the glass bin at Tesco. GM said he was already dealing with it.</p> <p>b) RM asked who owns the cobbled area behind Tesco. AP: RM to ask Tesco if they own the land so the glass and weeds can be cleared.</p> <p>c) FB complained about the broken lights on the Nungate Bridge. TL and FB disputed the belief that this was due to vandalism.</p> <p>d) FB brought up the overhead cables at Cross Lane and the illegal cabling on the facades. SPW added that it seems that the broadband companies have "rolling" planning permission which bypasses the rules for historic preservation areas.</p> <p>e) The junction at Sidegate/Church Street/High Street is still causing concern in the community. The crossing is unsafe for pedestrians. GN said there were no easy solutions, FB pointed out that the parking spaces in the Sidegate were at the root of the issue.</p> <p>f) CR reported that construction workers are blocking the junction at Gateside Road/ Knowsly Road. AP: GM & TT to look into this issue.</p>	<p>RM</p> <p>GM/TT</p>
9.	Treasurer's Report	
	<p>TL thanked JH for all the work he does as treasurer.</p> <p>JH reported</p> <p>Balance: £ 28,957 (which includes £356 raised in collection buckets for the Christmas lights)</p> <p>Expenditure: £31.99 Printing (Events Group/Christmas) - £18 Big Wet Fish - £13.99</p>	

10.	AOCB	
a.	Events Page Training: BF said that training will be organised to allow organisations to upload their own events to the Events page on the website.	TL
b.	Social Event: EM proposed a self-funded social night/ Pizza night. AP: EM to explore possibilities.	EM
c.	Chromebook: TL and JH proposed buying a Chromebook for the Chair to use so that all accounts, files and links would be in one place. Vote: Agreed unanimously	
12.	DONM	
	Tuesday 18th February at 6:30 pm in Knox Academy	