Minutes of the Meeting of Kelso Community Council held on Tuesday 8 September 2026 at 7pm in Kelso Town Hall

PRESENT: Councillors James Boulton (Acting Chairperson), Susan McKay, Dean Weatherston, Paul Roberts, Jenna Borthwick and June Regulski

APOLOGIES: Provost Gavin Horsburgh, Councillors Toni Oliver, Gail Watson, Harry Tomczyk, James McCombie; Scottish Borders Councillor Tom Weatherston

IN ATTENDANCE: Scottish Borders Councillors Simon Mountford and Euan Robson; Y Oliver (Secretary/Treasurer); PC Paul Owenson; Members of the Public.

- *Please note questions to either the Scottish Borders Councillors or Kelso Community Councillors need to be submitted in writing to the Secretary seven days prior to meeting.*
- *Councillors to make a declaration of interest prior to discussion.*
- *All correspondence to be circulated via the Secretary.*
- *All Councillors and attendees to act in a courteous manner and direct questions through the Chairperson.*

1. Welcome

Vice-Chairman Councillor James Boulton welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted as above.

Prior to the commencement of business, James had the sad task of asking everyone to take a moment to remember Mrs Shirley Redgrave, a Community Councillor since 2014 and past Secretary/Treasurer, who recently passed away peacefully at the Margaret Kerr Unit, Borders General Hospital. Shirley was an enthusiastic member of the Community Council and a founding member of Kelso in Bloom with Betty Hodges. She was also the main organiser of the Scottish Borders Walking Festival when it was hosted in Kelso.

Shirley's funeral will take place on Friday 9 October 2026. A private cremation will be held at Melrose Crematorium followed by a public celebration of her life in St Andrews Church, Kelso. After the church service a wake will be held in Kelso Town Hall – exact timings to be advised in due course.

James advised members that, in Shirley's memory, one of the recently-acquired new benches will be placed in Bridgend Park, Kelso with an engraved plaque, paid for by Kelso Community Council.

2. Police Matters

(1) Councillor Paul Roberts asked PC Owenson if he knew anything about the vehicle which had been parked on Roxburgh Street, opposite the Church, for some considerable time and was obstructing traffic? PC Owenson advised that Police Scotland was aware of this vehicle and a Warning Notice had been placed on it. He would keep an eye on the situation.

(2) Councillor Dean Weatherson asked if there was any update on the theft of the Bullring from The Square over the weekend in August or if it had been reported by anyone. PC Owenson wasn't aware of a report being made and undertook to check this out.

(3) Councillor Dean Weatherston expressed concern at the fact that it seemed to be that Police Scotland's and other emergency services response to mental health incidents was quite significant in personnel numbers and as a result others requiring emergency services were being told that nobody was available for them. He referenced an issue in Hawick the previous week where 7 emergency vehicles were in attendance to a mental health callout but the following week when two Kelso pensioners in separate situations required an ambulance they were advised none were available and required family members to take them to the BGH. PC Owenson said it all depended on how the issue was categorised when it was called in to 999.

(4) Councillor June Regulski reported that the caravanette, which she had previously raised concerns about, was now parked at Berrymoss Court causing an obstruction to other traffic. PC Owenson undertook to investigate this and report back to the Community Council.

(5) A member of the public reported to PC Owenson that, despite Grovehill in Kelso having yellow lines, several residents were simply ignoring them. PC Owenson said there should be no parking between 8am and 6pm.

(6) Another member of the public advised that there seemed to be an unusually large number of Disabled Parking Spaces in Grovehill making it difficult for other residents to park their vehicles. PC Owenson said that, unfortunately, this was not a police issue and it seemed as if enforcement of Blue Badges was not taking place.

(7) Councillor Paul Roberts advised the meeting that there had been an incident on 7 September 2026, whereby an arctic lorry going to Floors Castle had become stuck at the bottom of Roxburgh Street. This was obviously due to a parked vehicle stopping the lorry from getting right round the bottom of the street. Scottish Borders Councillor Euan Robson said the vehicles were usually parked illegally and it was an ongoing problem.

(8) Following an enquiry from a member of the public, PC Owenson advised that Kelso Police Station is open Monday-Friday during office hours.

(9) Mr John MacDonald, a member of the public, advised the meeting that, following a Fireworks Display on 15 July 2026, when the weather had been exceptionally warm and there had been little rain, he had phoned the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in Edinburgh to ask if they were aware that the display was taking place? They advised they were not aware and provided Mr MacDonald with the telephone number for the Kelso Fire Brigade. They told Mr MacDonald that a Risk Assessment had been carried out and contingency plans were in hand for any eventuality. Mr MacDonald asked who had the authority to cancel such a display given the extremely high temperatures the area was experiencing when it was to take place? He was advised that this Fireworks Display took place every year during Kelso Civic Week and it was ultimately the Kelso Laddies Association who was responsible for the event. It would certainly not have gone ahead if the Executive Committee and/or the Fire Service deemed it to be a risk to land, property or the public.

(10) PC Owenson reported that he was hoping to be out and about with his speed camera in the very near future.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest at this time.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 9 June 2026

The Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday 9 June 2026 had been circulated and were approved.

Proposer: Councillor Dean Weatherson
Seconder: Councillor Paul Roberts

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of 9 June 2026.

6. Questions from the Public

(1) Scottish Borders Councillors were asked what the situation was with regard to lighting in Shedden Park, now that it was getting dark earlier in the evening. SBC Councillor Euan Robson advised there had been a serious issue with young people pulling out live cables, however, the matter was now in hand.

(2) A member of the public advised that there seemed to be an unusually large number of Disabled Parking Spaces in Grovehill, which were being misused by what appeared to be able-bodied people. She said it was difficult to understand how some people met the criteria for acquiring a Blue Badge. Scottish Borders Councillor Simon Mountford said that, unfortunately, the Council did not have the resources to check up on Blue Badge holders.

(3) Mr T Abbott, member of the public, asked what the current status was with regard to the old Baptist Church in Bowmont Street? He said he had noticed there was a cherry-picker at the building earlier in the day and wondered if something was going to be done at last? SBC Councillor E Robson advised that SBC had been chasing the owners for a very long time but they were refusing to co-operate. A legal process must be gone through and he hoped the matter would be resolved soon.

(4) Mr Christopher Johnstone, representing Kelso Pharmacy, advised members that he had applied for a new pharmacy to be opened in Kelso. He was currently looking for premises and he asked for everyone's views on the matter. He had looked at a few properties (Bank of Scotland, Cancer Research Shop in Bridge Street) but was hoping to obtain permission from Poundstretchers to sub-let premises at their property in Bowmont Street, Kelso. He had inspected the site and felt that it was more than adequate to have the pharmacy, a consulting room, dispensing space, as well as being ideal for car parking. Councillor Paul Roberts commented on the many problems that the two existing pharmacies in Kelso had recently experienced and told Mr Johnstone another pharmacy would be welcomed with open arms.

Mr Johnstone explained there would be a joint consultation process between himself and the National Health Service. He hoped that this would take place sooner rather than later and advised that the Community Council would be kept up-to-date with any developments. Indeed, he was hoping to have a member of the Community Council on the consultation panel. Following an enquiry as to his previous experience, he told the meeting that he already had two pharmacies in West Lothian and employed 40 staff. He was hoping that, eventually, the Kelso Pharmacy would have a staff of 20 people.

(5) SBC Councillor Euan Robson was thanked by a member of the public present at the meeting for the action taken with regard to the grass-cutting at The Cobby.

(6) Councillor James Boulton asked what the current situation was with regard to the trees at Mayfield? SBC Councillor Euan Robson said the problem there was that part of Mayfield is owned by Klondyke (owners of the Garden Centre) but no-one knows exactly who the other part belongs to. He advised, however, that the Council would take responsibility for the trees.

(7) SBC Councillor Simon Mountford advised the meeting that, following the recent debris falling from Kelso Town Hall, the building had been made safe to the public and they could rest assured that any work needing done would be done.

7. Kelso In Bloom

Councillor Boulton commented that the flower beds have been lovely over the Summer and he thanked the volunteers who maintain these areas and to the hard-working Kelso In Bloom Committee. The litter picks have been well-attended and have made that extra difference to the town. Thursday 24 September is the last litter pick for the year – they will commence again in March 2027.

Councillor Dean Weatherston had raised a query regarding the maintenance of the Memorial Garden at Old Rosebank Cemetery. He was advised this is maintained by Kelso In Bloom and the hedge is maintained by SBC with the surface getting a spray of weedkiller a couple of times a year. Dean advised members that, unfortunately, some of the names on the Memorial Wall were quite faded.

Members were informed there had been an issue with watering of late due to the fact that, although there is a town bowser, there was no-one to tow it. The Provost applied to, and successfully secured, £20,000 from the National Lottery Community Fund to purchase a Can-AM Utility Vehicle and watering system. This has been procured from George Marshall Tractors in St Boswells. Well done Gavin!

8. <u>Questions from Community Councillors</u>:

(1) Provision of permanent benches in Kelso Square (requested by Councillor Toni Oliver)

Members were advised that, during Kelso Civic Week, benches were placed in The Square for the public's use and enjoyment. This idea had previously been suggested by Councillor Toni Oliver and the benches proved to be a great success. Toni had suggested that benches could be obtained from Steven Jack, Kelso Showground, at a cost to the Community Council. However, Mark Hay, Queen's Head Hotel, had very generously offered to purchase the benches following a post on social media. The Provost is currently in touch with Mark regarding this matter.

(2) Councillor June Regulski had received a complaint from a member of the public with regard to the dangerous state of the footpath between Berrymoss Court and Sydenham Court.

(3) Councillor Regulski had also received a complaint about the state of one of the lights on the Ash Path – it had been broken and there was glass and debris lying on the ground.

SBC Councillor Euan Robson agreed to take both these matters up with the relevant Departments.

9. <u>Secretary/Treasurer's Report</u>

(i) <u>Events/Correspondence</u>

Correspondence, consultations, planning, traffic regulations etc. had been circulated and a summary was attached to the Minute.

(ii) <u>Up-to-Date Account Balances</u>

Kelso In Bloom	£8,271.14
Special Interest-Bearing Account	2,874.50

Memorial Account 1,195.74

10. Consultations

(i) Local Development Plan – Residents invited to help shape the future of the Scottish Borders

James asked members to note that the deadline for completion of this Consultation was 30 September 2026. The Provost had asked that everyone completes the survey individually but, if there were any matters that Community Councillors specifically wish the Community Council to raise, then please e-mail him with their requests.

11. Scottish Borders Councillor's Report

SBC Councillor Euan Robson advised that the report on the Review of non-financial support to Community Councils had recently been issued. It suggested that Community Councils be provided with various types of support, e.g. keeping financial records; taking Minutes of meetings, etc. The report on financial support would be issued in due course. He said that the Community Council Networking Group would be reintroduced. SBC Councillor Simon Mountford said he expected more responsibility to be devolved to Community Councils.

12. Consideration of Licensing applications

Councillor Dean Weatherston advised that his employers, Hogarth Mills Ltd, had received a letter from Scottish Borders Council with regard to a Licensing Application from Red Rocks Nightclub. Hogarth Mills Ltd had received notice as a neighbouring proprietor. It was noted that Kelso Community Council had not been advised of this application but the Secretary undertook to send a copy to Community Council members for their comments. It was noted the deadline for responses was 22 September 2026.

13. Consideration of Plans

(i) 26/01191/FUL – D M Wallace and Sons, Bowmont Street, Kelso – **No objections**

(ii) 26/01163/FUL – Gymnasium, Spylaw Road, Kelso – **No objections but Recommendation to a Trial Period has been suggested to SBC**

(iii) 26/01185/FUL and 26/01186/LBC – Bellachroy, Maxwell Lane, Kelso – **No objections**

14. Any Other Current Business

Members were advised that the Provost had received an e-mail from Jill Lothian, Rector, Kelso High School asking if it would be possible for some young people to attend a Community Council meeting to obtain an insight into what goes on and what role they may have to play. Gavin replied to Ms Lothian, saying that this would be welcomed and suggesting that they come along to the October meeting.

James asked Community Council members to “Save the Date” of the Remembrance Day Parade, which would be held on Sunday 8 November 2026. Further details would follow in due course.

15. <u>Date of Next Meeting</u>

The next meeting of Kelso Community Council will take place on Tuesday 13 October 2026 at 7pm.