



*Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District*

Minute of the 279th Monthly Meeting of the Community Council of the Royal Burgh of Peebles and District held in the Old Burgh Chamber, Chambers Institution, Peebles, at 7pm on Thursday 14th January 2021 by Zoom

Present: L.Turnbull, C.Ramsay, G.Ramsay, S.Hamilton, M.Bruce, L.Hayworth, S.Rae, A.Snoddy, P.Maudsley, S.Montgomery, A.Mackenzie, S. Watson, J.Shearer, L.Marriott-Dowding, Cllr.Anderson, Cllr.Haslam, Cllr.Tatler, Cllr Small

Apologies: O.Olesheva, Cllr.Bell

Co-option of Anne Snoddy: Proposed by G.Ramsay, seconded by S.Rae

No members of the public were in attendance.

Minutes of previous meeting: circulated. Some minor typing errors were noted and the Minutes will be amended accordingly. Proposed by P.Maudsley and seconded by S.Watson

Matters arising-

Children's cemetery - A.Mackenzie gave an update and reported that there had been positive input from Ailsa Mackie and Emma Brown. Emma was due to join us tonight but had a prior commitment. Information has been forwarded to them regarding makers of other metal sculptures in Peebles. There should be a further update in the near future. A.Mackenzie will maintain contact and push the project forward.

Action: A.Mackenzie

Public toilets in School Brae - PCT have been in contact with SBC as reported at the last meeting. Due to matters beyond PCT's control the opening has been put back to 1st February 2021. (This will include the disabled toilet and the cubicle next to it.) After some publicity on Facebook about the charging regime proposed by PCT, plans have been revised and the charging operation will be as follows (though this may change as pilot proceeds): disabled bay will be accessed by the use of radar keys but will also have a cashless and a coin operated system. The other cubicle will just be coin operated. PCT will be able to monitor the use of all payment methods so it can establish how many people are using the toilets and also if the use of the radar keys is being abused. Initially a 6 month pilot, PCT will look at the figures to establish whether there is a realistic prospect of doing something with the town's other toilets in future.

Play Parks - Two residents groups had expressed interest in trying to save the play parks in their locale. One of the groups when contacted again accepted the loss of their play park, whereas the other group

wanted to save their playpark. This group are in touch with SBC to see how they can progress in the future. PCC had been hoping a group/groups might have come forward to save the various small parks in the town, however this has not materialised. PCC have taken this as far as possible meantime and will wait and see how things develop. If people do have concerns in future, they can come back to us. Cllr.Anderson and Cllr Tatler asked for the information on the group which is keen to save their local play park to be sent to them. L.Hayworth stated that the resident group concerned could talk to the PCT about operating under their umbrella regarding insurance, legal agreements etc.

Action: L.Turnbull to forward information to SBC Councillors

Taxi Ranks - G.Ramsay said that the 'overflow' taxi rank was moved to a position outside the County Inn on the Friday after the last PCC meeting. The following Monday P.Gilhooley of SBC faced a backlash from the taxi drivers who said they were not properly consulted and so the rank was reinstated outside Park Hotel. Mike Wynn, SBC Licensing Standards & Enforcement Officer, drafted a questionnaire to the taxi drivers which should have been emailed to them. The Chairman did reiterate that taxi drivers had been consulted in the early stages of this process and had intimated that they agreed with the proposed changes. The Chairman asked G.Ramsay to follow the matter up. The Chairman asked G.Ramsay to follow the matter up.

Action: G.Ramsay

Cloich Windfarm Community Funding - Since the last PCC meeting M.Bruce has tried to make contact with other Community Councils within the relevant area. He has only received responses from two of them: Manor and Eddleston. Both had submitted objections to the windfarm plans in the past. M. Bruce tried to emphasise to them that he was not contacting them to discuss the merits or otherwise of windfarms but to ensure we were all in a position to benefit financially should the windfarms go ahead. He will try to make contact again. We have been notified about the Scawd Law Windfarm near Walkerburn. A virtual meeting was held on Tuesday with the manager of Fred Olsen Renewables who are involved with that development. Confirmation has been received in writing that Peebles will benefit financially from this. Again it will be a 50 megawatt windfarm and the benefit fund will be based on £5,000 per megawatt per annum. Planning applications for both should be in by Easter. Cllr.Anderson pointed out that there are sensitivities around this because there have been previous campaigns against Cloich Windfarm.

Action: M.Bruce

Social Media Policy - S.Rae is in the process of working on a draft policy.

Action: S.Rae

Chairman L.Turnbull said at this point that he should have mentioned that, as previously discussed, meetings will be recorded from now on for the purposes of accuracy of the Minutes. These will not be a public record and will not be put online.

Chairman's report –

C.Ramsay is having to resign because she has moved to Edinburgh which disqualifies her from being a member of PCC. L.Turnbull thanked her for all her help and support over the past few years. A.Snoddy has agreed to be co-opted back on to PCC as the new Secretary. She will be taking over the reins in the next few weeks. She was proposed as Secretary by S.Watson and seconded by J.Shearer. Sadly H.Anderson has resigned from the Community Council. The Chairman said Harry was always cheerful and helpful and thanked him for his service.

Policing Issues - The Chairman was heartened by the standard of the recent police report received: it was more informative and with a better tone. M.Bruce had an online meeting with Sgt.Grainger a few weeks back and the nub of the discussion was that PCC still wanted to have a dialogue with the community officer on a regular basis. The system agreed was that once the report came out and Community Councillors had a chance to look at it any issues would be fed back to M.Bruce and he would contact Sgt.Grainger. The police report contains lots of statistics. Anti social behaviour is up 63% across the whole of the Borders, between 1st April 2020 and 21st December 2020, which equates to 53 additional cases over that period. There is no doubt from those high level reports and the more detailed local reports that anti social behaviour is still giving some cause for concern, but it is probably also worth saying that by and large Peebles does not have that big an issue with it. Police are keen to stress that it is not happening that often. L.Marriott-Dowding said that it is often stated in the report that when police turned up no-one was there. The simple answer is that there is always going to be a delay between reporting an issue and police managing to turn up. Sgt.Grainger was keen to point out that sometimes there will not be a response as police are tied up elsewhere. For example there was a missing vulnerable person in the Eildon Hills recently so all police resources were directed there.

There is concern about fraud and scamming, particularly against vulnerable members of the community who are not necessarily IT literate, and possibly don't have any access to the internet at all. As a community we need to look out for friends and neighbours, and if we have any concerns telephone the police on 101.

Chief Inspector Vinny Fisher is the new Area Commander for the Borders. A very informative meeting was held recently with him where they discussed all issues pertinent to the town, 101 calls, and how police might be more engaged with the community. The Chairman said we are making some progress in our relationship with the police, and going forward we feel more positive than a few months ago.

There has been a report of cannabis cultivation on Peebles High Street. Sgt.Grainger asked if we could all be vigilant: if we see lights on constantly, windows taped over or smell cannabis please call 101.

M.Bruce told Sgt.Grainger that he had heard that some youths are going out with false names and addresses already prepared. Sgt. Grainger was not surprised by this, and said the police tend to know who the youths are anyway. J.Shearer expressed concern about some anti social behaviour but unfortunately connectivity was not good at that point. The Chairman advised J.Shearer to email M.Bruce with her concerns. **Action: J.Shearer**

Councillors Reports

Cllr.Tatler - COVID 19 lockdown has had a huge impact. He is really pleased that the resilience groups have swung into action. He has had a brief meeting with Margaret Smail at the Community Assistance Hub and would like to remind anyone having any issues with shopping, collection of prescriptions etc that there is help out there. Any groups which require financial assistance due to the current circumstances should contact Cllr.Tatler.

SBC Officers have inspected the path which runs along the top of the embankment beside Kingsmeadows car park. They await costings for levelling the path and laying whinstone. They may come to PCC looking for funding from the Small Schemes Fund.

Chris Forsyth mentioned at the last meeting that a waste bin in Victoria Park was filling with water. Cllr.Tatler reported that it has been sorted.

SEPA's IT system was subject to a cyber attack over the Christmas and New Year period with the result that the river gauges for the Tweed are not currently working. However SEPA staff are out monitoring river levels regularly.

Cllr.Anderson – She has spent time dealing with issues regarding gritting and missing bin collections. There has been a shortage of mechanics to repair bin lorries. SBC staff are working flat out to make sure bins that have been missed are collected shortly.

This is the beginning of SBC's budget process. Covid has had a huge impact on the budget. Council staff have been redeployed where necessary and capital investment has been slowed down. Councillors will not know how much they are getting from the Government until 28th January. Decisions have to be made prior to that about council tax and there is lots of work being done behind the scenes.

SBC Officer P.Gilhooley is keen to get responses from residents of Peebles about the new 20mph speed limit. Please pass any comments on to Cllr.Anderson

Cllr. Small - Nothing to report apart from concerns from residents at Eshiels about the allocation of land in the Local Development Plan for an industrial site down in that area. P.Maudsley will talk about this matter under planning.

Chambers Institution Trust - the next meeting is on 27th January. The Chairman asked if there had been any discussion about appointing lay people on to the Trust. Cllr Tatler and Cllr Anderson said they were aware of the issue and would ensure it was on the agenda at the next C.I.T. meeting.

Treasurer's Report- circulated. Mr Mackie said we have not received our annual grant from SBC. As mentioned at the previous meeting the accounts have not been audited due to current Covid-19 restrictions. He has asked SBC Officer Clare Malster if SBC can pay over the grant in any case because of the exceptional circumstances but has not had a response. Cllr.Tatler will chase up the payment.

Action: Cllr Tatler

The money which came through the Community Council's bank account to support the Resilience Groups was passed on to them. S.Hamilton reported that the money had been spent but that they still have financial resources.

Purchase of IT - L.Turnbull suggested that PCC purchase its own laptop, and possibly a hard drive. Most communications are electronic now, and it does not seem right to ask the Secretary to use their own IT facility. It would be good to have all electronic records stored in one place and backed up onto a hard drive. The treasurer said that we have certainly got enough reserves, and there is a limit anyway how much can be held in our bank account (not more than one year's grant). L.Turnbull, S.Rae and A.Snoddy will form a small group to progress the matter. L.Hayworth said that Microsoft had special deals available for non profit organisations.

Action: S.Rae, L.Turnbull, A.Snoddy

At this point Cllr Haslam joined the meeting.

Planning Report

P.Maudsley said our response to Local development Plan 2 has been submitted to SBC. He had circulated a response to LDP2 from local resident Michael Marshal who had focussed on climate change issues. P.Maudsley recommends that we endorse that view. Community Council Network: there hasn't been much activity but an email had come in regarding Area Partnerships that morning. It can be covered at the next PCC meeting. There had been a couple of letters from members of the public, both concerning planning, published in the Peebleshire News which had been critical of PCC, and to an extent elected members. P.Maudsley has sent in a response which hopefully will be printed in tomorrow's paper.

Tweedbridge Court: an application to temporarily close the pathways through the site has been lodged, suggesting that construction work is due to start imminently.

Kingsmeadows House. P.Maudsley has been advised that an application notice for a major development on the site will be submitted soon. The previous application was for 7 houses. He will keep an eye on the situation to see what it proposed.

22 houses on Edinburgh Road. Additional documents have been posted by the developer which are designed to counter the arguments from SBC. However our views have not been altered by these.

Scawd Windfarm. P.Maudsley asked if any CCs had an opinion about the proposed windfarm? M.Bruce had looked at the virtual exhibition online and noted that it will be very visible from the Sware where the turbines will be seen along the skyline.

Application to build a house and access east of Dogcraig at Scotsmill: P.Maudsley has submitted our objection as agreed at the last meeting.

With regards to the LDP2 and Eshiels, the residents have put a small association together. They have commissioned a consultant to write a report on their behalf recommending the sites at Eshiels are not progressed and PCC have also taken that view.

Tweeddale Area Partnership – The Chairman said that there are a number of groups around the town that may well need help with making an application to the Community Fund. He would encourage fellow Community Councillors to speak to the organisations with which they are involved (e.g. Christmas Lights Association, the Beltane Committee, the Callants) and tell them about the Tweeddale Area Partnership, and to encourage representatives to go to these meetings. Cllr.Tatler thanked the Chairman for raising the profile of the TAP. He said that before Covid-19 restrictions the meetings were well attended, and that it is more important than ever that people come along and express their views. The next meeting is on 19th January at 7pm. Email Cllr.Tatler if you are interested in attending. The meeting can be viewed on the live feed and via this method you will also be able to comment.

Peebles Community Trust – The Chairman of Peebles Community Trust, L.Hayworth, said that with the run up to the AGM and the other work that has been happening he has not had a chance to have a chat with M.Bruce (PCC's representative on PCT) so he would cover the key points himself. Successful grant applications have been made in relation to renovating the School Brae Hub. They

include funding from the Community Climate Change Fund for insulating the roof, and funding to create an arts and crafts hub in the old snooker room. What is less encouraging news is that Sustrans, due to financial pressures, have withdrawn funding for the construction of the Eddleston Water Path meantime and South of Scotland Enterprise have followed suit. Plans for the end of the pathway at Eddleston have been completed, and the link path through Peebles (which would connect the Eddleston Water Path to the Peebles-to-Innerleithen Path) are still being considered.

Railway Heritage - The group have satisfactorily identified a high level of community support and submitted an application for funding to the Localities Bid Fund which will be considered at the TAP meeting.

The Reuse Hub has had to close due to lockdown measures, but it has been very successful and has raised £17,000 for works to improve the School Brae hub.

March Street Mill: the matter is ongoing.

Funding: PCT have been successful in applying for support funding due to the loss of income because of Covid-19 restrictions. They were recently awarded £500 a week from the Structural Support Fund which is administered by SBC on behalf of the Scottish Government. L.Hayworth would encourage all businesses with a rateable value to apply to the fund.

Consultations - L.Turnbull asked C.Ramsay if there were any consultations that need to be looked at but there is nothing at the moment. L.Hayworth suggested A.Snoddy take on the role of checking for consultations (previously done by H.Anderson who has now left) which was agreed.

AOB –

There is a new development in Glensax Road, where lock-up garages used to be. The 6 houses have been built by Scottish Borders Housing Association. We have had a request from SBC to consider names for the new street. Peebles is twinned with Hendaye in France and we have received a request previously from Peebles Twinning Committee to name a street 'Hendaye'. This street could be a suitable candidate. G.Mackie suggested Hendaye Place. SBHA have suggested Glensax Mews. L.Turnbull asked G.Mackie to speak to Simon Ritchie of the Twinning Association on behalf of PCC if they would be happy with the proposal and to report back at the next meeting. S.Montgomery thought that it would be less confusing if the street was named Glensax something (because it sits off Glensax Road) so its location would be more easily identified. L.Hayworth asked if SBHA have identified residents for that street, and whether or not their views should be sought? A.Snoddy will contact SBHA to see if they have residents earmarked for the houses and to go from there. The Chairman would like this resolved for the next meeting. **Action: G.Mackie and A.Snoddy**

Salt bins – A resident in Dukehaugh had contacted Cllr. Bell to ask for a salt bin, previously located nearby at Tweedbridge Court, to be reinstated. Cllr.Haslam stated there is a very strict criteria for where salt bins can go - on a steep slope and easily accessed for refilling - so Dukehaugh is not eligible. S.Watson said salt bins used to be all over the town so where did they go? Cllr.Haslam responded that they were taken away because of the introduction of small pavement gritting machines. S.Montgomery said that there is a salt bin in Ballantyne Place – where there is an incline – and that it is filled up regularly.

L.Hayworth has heard from members of the community that there are concerns regarding the future of Live Borders. LB deliver statutory and non statutory services in the region. L.Hayworth will raise the matter at the TAP meeting. **Action: L.Hayworth**

G.Mackie had looked up Peebles on Wikipedia. A lot of information is out of date or missing. He said we should try to improve the entry to make the town attractive to visitors. L.Hayworth suggested this may be a project for the Civic Society. P.Maudsley will put the suggestion to them. **Action: P.Maudsley**

Cllr.Anderson – There is a meeting of Peebles Charitable Trust on 20th January. The Trust exists to support older people in Peeblesshire especially in care homes and institutions. A.Snoddy pointed out that assistance can be provided in other settings too, e.g. the Trust helped with the cost of replacing chairs in Peebles Community Centre, a popular venue for the elderly. Cllr Anderson said that funding could be available to assist elderly people access Covid-19 vaccine centres.

Tweeddale Citizen of the Year Award - Cllr Anderson explained all that is required is to send in a letter nominating the person and the reasons why they should be considered for the Award. The deadline is next Friday, 22nd January.

Next Thursday there is a relaunch of the Community Council Scheme Review group. James Taylor of Eddleston CC is the representative for Tweeddale. It will look at how communities work together. Pass any suggestions to either Mr Taylor or Cllr Haslam. The paper will be posted on the council website for interest.

S.Watson thanked Caitlin for the years of service as Secretary, which was echoed by everyone. She will be greatly missed.

Next Meeting Thursday 11th February at 7pm by Zoom.