



Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minutes of the 311th Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 12 October 2023 at 7pm in the Burgh Chamber, Peebles. The meeting was recorded for the purposes of Minuting and Reporting.

Present: A Mackenzie, A Snoddy (Secretary), F Richardson, G MacDonald, G Mackie (Vice Chairman and Treasurer), G Ramsay, H Young, J Shearer, M Bruce, P Maudsley (Chairman), Cllr Small, Cllr Tatler, Cllr Thomson

In attendance: M Davey of the Peeblesshire News, PC V Carsley from Police Scotland

Members of the Public: M Wilson

Apologies: L Lovell-Henderson, J Crawley, J Wilson, S Coe, Cllr Begg, Cllr Douglas and Cllr Pirone

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was recorded for the purposes of minuting and reporting.

There would be no Scottish Borders National Park presentation as planned upon receiving their apologies.

Open forum: Nothing.

Approval of the Minutes of 14 September 2023, as amended below: G Mackie proposed, and M Bruce seconded.

A McGilvray is employed by Greatest Hits Radio, not Radio Borders.

At the September meeting, Councillor Julie Pirone, as an outgoing Director of the Eastgate Theatre provided an update on the latest news from that quarter. Following publication of the meeting minutes, a member of the public contacted the Chairman to raise a concern that the minutes were not wholly accurate of the events as he knew them. Councillor Pirone identifying the Eastgate Partnership as having written to the Eastgate Theatre Board. We have subsequently reviewed the recording. The Chairman read out the letter sent to him.

The member of the public also expressed a desire to address the October meeting and provided a copy of the notification from the members to the original Board of Directors. The Eastgate Partnership is not mentioned in this letter. Without going into detail, the letter commences with

“We, the members of Eastgate Theatre (Peebles) Ltd listed below, wish to express our extreme concern about the major financial and operational issues that appear to have developed at the theatre over the last six months”.

Other, than the inclusion of the term “Eastgate Partnership”, in the minuted statement, the Chairman’s understanding is that, essentially, both positions are similar.

In relation to the request to address the community council at this next meeting, the core group of officers has considered this. The request has been declined for the following reasons.

- The request was not made a by a Director of the Eastgate Theatre. If anyone was to have addressed us it should have been the Chair of the Board, or at least a Director.

- We consider that the community council is not the correct forum for either the past or present directors to debate the facts as they perceive them. The correct place is at the forthcoming AGM of the Eastgate members.

It was noted Cllr Pirone was not at the October meeting for comment.

Matters arising from minutes:

Bench on Edinburgh Road: This has been uplifted to be repainted by the Community Justice Team. Thanks to the Peebles Parking Fund for paying £40 for the materials.

Greener Peebles: F Richardson had attended the Greener Peebles 10th Anniversary celebrations and AGM in September. F Richardson encouraged everyone to take a walk with friends and family around the gardens which are always open. Greener Peebles does a lot of good work for the community and is always looking for volunteers; anyone interested should get in touch with them.

40mph restriction being extended south of Eddleston: There was a discussion around the suggestion of extending the 40mph restriction south of Eddleston and it was agreed that it would be voted on at next month's meeting. Cllr Tatler will contact P Gilhooley about the risk assessments in place. The Secretary will write to SBC to ask them, do they think it would make a difference and, if so, is it something we can do.

Crossing on Innerleithen road: The Chairman had been to the last on-site meeting. There appeared to be only one viable option, out of four, after discussion and that was to put the crossing on the east side where the pavement was wider. However, the issue here was that there were services there, which would make it cost-prohibitive. Cllr Thomson said that the revised options had now come in. There will be a meeting with the planners and Sustrans on 16 October to discuss these further. Cllr Thomson said that some members of the public have requested a crossing on the road, irrespective of the path. All views are to be considered. The PCC will step back now and leave it to the residents and the planners to agree.

Foot and Cycle Bridge at Glentress: The PCC had received an email suggesting a bridge at Glentress across the A72. It was agreed that this is a busy stretch of road and can be dangerous for crossing cyclists and pedestrians. Cllr Thomson has asked SBC however it is too expensive to put a bridge in. It was suggested that the first thing to do would be to conduct a survey to ascertain numbers. The idea of a tunnel, rather than a bridge, was also discussed. Cllr Tatler said other measures could be considered, such as signage and warning lights. It was agreed the Chairman would write to SBC.

Police report: The report had been circulated. PC V Carsley was in attendance. She had been on a period of leave from work and was still catching up. There was still attention being paid to ASB and this was steady. There had been many initiatives utilising plain clothed police and special constables. The CAT team also. Serena Moody has been working with a select group and that is going well. PC Carsley is happy to receive feedback. Cllr Tatler asked about the increasing number of car racers around town in the evenings. PC Carsley encouraged the public to report all incidents to Police Scotland, as this helps the Roads Police put together a picture. There are robust Road Traffic Laws that the Road Policing can use. G Mackie asked about the police who attended Peebles recently checking parked cars. PC Carsley again said that if the police will attend if contacted by a concerned member of the public, however it can be difficult to prove. She had no update on the specific issues raised at the previous meeting.

Peebles Youth Voice. M Bruce pointed out that the focus of the group is to give young people a voice and it is not helpful to read the negative comments that are being made online. He asked for support from the community.

Cllrs Reports:

CLlr Pirone: In Cllr Pirone's absence, she had forwarded some updates to the Chairman which he read out:

1. *I am still working with the parents on the Cardrona issue of school buses and have requested a site meeting, although this is technically Innerleithen cc issue. [The Chairman pointed out the boundary is the Tweed River]*
2. *Peebles High school, there will be study space in the new school, and you will be aware of the parent survey to inform an inspection of the school which will be due soon after the holidays.*
3. *Continuing to work on the Live Borders review and culture strategy for the borders.*
4. *Youth shelter is progressing, and we had a very successful second engagement with over 350 people in favour. 190 said no to it. The council will fund the shelter and funding is in place. It will need to be approved but the common good as it is its land.*
5. *The council has moved forward cctv for our towns and the full business case is now being worked up. This will assist police in their work.*
6. *Community speed watch, this is also progressing but I'm having an issue with those taking part and now looking at whether we could have a Tweeddale east group to move forward lessening the work on one community council. Otherwise, it will fall and I will need to give to another area of the borders. I would welcome views on this or a discussion. The Chairman said it could be discuss when Cllr Pirone was back.*
7. *Working on the Chambers Institute business plan and another meeting is planned for the end of October.*
8. *Working with the police on the impact of police numbers and cuts across the borders. There will be changes.*
9. *We had an emergency planning session with the team at the council, I have stressed the importance of communications to community councils and resilience groups as we move to the winter.*
10. *The SBC building will be lit up in support of Israel following the recent attack in the Middle East.*

CLlr Small: Cllr Small had attended a meeting re community council funding. There will a report written up and he will update at the next meeting. They are also looking at insurance too and what is and isn't covered. There will information put on the database for community councils to check.

CLlr Tatler: Cllr Tatler spoke to the consultation in Victoria Park. The result was support for the shelter and improved lighting. The issues would be discussed and decided at the next Common Good meeting in November. Cllr Tatler asked if the councillors were aware of cars driving up the Sware as there have been some reports made. As a result, consideration to erect some retractable bollards was being made. A Mackenzie pointed out that the road is used as a traffic diversion when there is flooding. The bollards may not be best placed at the top of the hill. There was a discussion around the standard of the bridge, and it was considered that it had recently been brought up to standard.

There is going to be an update regarding the Baptist church soon.

Cllr Tatler agreed that we need extra sandbags. The Chairman said we absolutely need more sandbags and does not understand why this has not been actioned. There had been high water recently and we are approaching flooding season. SBC need to resolve this now. Cllr Thomson said she has sent a link to those affected asking them to put forward their list of what is needed. The Chairman also suggested dropping the barrier at the nursing home by a couple of inches to let some of the water over, but not all. The Chairman agreed to write to Duncan Morrison, Floods Officer, to make the suggestion. Paul Spence from the Peebles Resilient Committee will be attending the next PCC meeting.

Cllr Thomson: Tweeddale West Small Schemes, this has been a bit slow, but they have a list of items which are being costed up. The issue of the wall at Rose Park is still being looked into.

The work to PHS was meant to start but has been set back by bad weather. After the inspection, a sod cutting ceremony will be scheduled. S Renwick has left SBC, but this will not have any impact on the timeline. S Coe's note stated that up to 120 musicians could be performing, however there are fewer musicians than before, and they do not anticipate a rise in numbers. The Chairman said that may be down to Covid and that the school will most likely want to build those figures up to pre-Covid numbers. M Bruce pointed out that it would be sad to hear that pupils could not learn a musical instrument because there was not enough space in the orchestra count. The Chairman said again this takes us back to how important effective consultation is, currently backed by Scottish Government.

Treasurer's Report: The report had been circulated. All the income and expenses had been received for the Peebles In Bloom presentation and the net cost after the raffle was just over £200 and the SBC councillors agreed a grant of just over £200 which covers it, for which thanks.

Planning report: The report had been circulated. S Coe is continuing to liaise with the Parent Council regarding the PHS design. Otherwise, there is not much going on and all information is available on the planning portal. The Community Council has objected to the planning application for the erection of a double garage on Kingsway.

Chairman's report: The report had been circulated.

Street Pastors: The local Peebles Churches Together had submitted a letter to the Chairman. They have met and have agreed to the introduction of street pastors in Peebles. They have liaised with Borders Street Pastors to gain a better understanding and to discuss training. Peebles Churches Together also wanted to make it clear that that the street pastors alone will not solve ADB in Peebles and that other groups and organisations should continue to work together.

Celebrating King David I's accession to the Scottish throne and Royal Burgh Status: Murray Wilson, a member of the public, was in attendance and wanted to ask the PCC about an anniversary project. He explained that it was going to be the 900th anniversary of King David I's accession in 2024 and that Peebles was granted its status of a Royal Burgh around the same time, which was circa 1124. This has been researched thoroughly by Richard Orum a professor from Stirling University. M Wilson would like to see Peebles embrace these anniversaries and celebrate next year raising the profile of Peebles as a destination for tourism and business. The Chairman said it would be hard work and require a significant amount of organising and that if a third party could take the lead and involve other organisations, the PCC would be very willing to support it. A Mackenzie pointed out that if we do not mark the anniversary of Peebles being a Royal Burgh, what was the point in being one. The Chairman suggested asking the Royal Family to sign a new charter. Cllr Thomson suggested the Peeblesshire News could invite groups to get involved.

UCI use of Common Good Land: The PCC had received a letter asking about charging the UCI for use of Common Good land. Cllr Tatler wanted to respond:

1. *If I gave the impression the issue had been discussed, then I apologise – this was not my intention.*
2. *We do not charge for the use of Common Good land with the exception of Fairs and Circuses. The issue of charging for other events on Common Good land is currently under review across the Borders.*
3. *All formal bookings are dealt with by officers under delegated powers – this is an operational matter. We do receive reports and have discussions where particular issues arise in relation to a proposed booking – most recently in regard to Fairs.*

Secretary: Anne Snoddy

c/o The Bridge Tweeddale, School Brae, High Street, PEEBLES, EH45 8AL

Tel: 07980 587139: secretary@ccrbpeebles.co.uk

www.peeblescommunity.org.uk

4. *I also receive requests (as do officers) from groups and individuals for “informal” use of Common Good land – such as open-air teaching etc. If they are raised close enough to a scheduled meeting we will discuss them on the agenda, if not we will discuss and agree via email and then subsequently report back on decisions.*
5. *The UCI event used Haylodge for a free Park and Ride facility and put on live coverage of the World Championships and other activities free of charge on Tweed Green during the week. Neither of these activities were commercial and both were clearly of benefit to the local community and visitors to the town.*
6. *I strongly disagree with the suggestion in this letter that the Common Good Sub Committee (which includes a representative from this Community Council) are not properly managing Common Good assets. We spend a great deal of time and money on developing and maintaining these assets - there are plenty of recent examples I can give, including upgrading lighting and paths for example – as the previous and present Community Council representative can no doubt confirm.*

I will ask our Nuala McKinlay (Chief Legal Officer) for an update on the status of the review and ask for it to be accelerated if possible.

Chambers Institution Trust: The report had been circulated. The acoustics expert was attending in the next few weeks. There were no questions.

Peebles Community Trust: The report had been circulated. M Bruce said that the situation was the same and that the trust was still financially challenged.

Parking Group: Cllr Tatler’s recent newsletter was helpful in explaining what decriminalisation is, referring to the difference between on street and off-street parking. There was a discussion about the arguments for and against. The majority of the Community Councillors were in favour of supporting decriminalisation and the Chairman agreed to write to SBC.

AOB:

There was no update on The Bridge office premises being vacated, so the Chairman agreed to write to SBC again.

Cllr Small had spoken to the fast-food outlet regarding discarded cigarette ends on Northgate and they had agreed to look at a solution.

M Bruce wanted to thank SBC for a good job done painting the ornamental lampposts on Tweed Bridge.

A Mackenzie had attended a recent Callants’ Council meeting. Concern had been raised regarding the roadworks on March Street and Rosetta Road where there appeared to be a lack of planning on the temporary traffic lights. Often road closures are driven by utilities companies and there is not much the police or SBC can do. Cllr Tatler confirmed it had been agreed with the utilities company that the traffic management should be manned, rather than automated, during busy times.

The meeting ended at 8.53pm.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 9 November at 7pm in the Burgh Chamber.