



Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minutes of the 312th Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 9 November 2023 at 7pm in the Burgh Chamber, Peebles. The meeting was recorded for the purposes of Minuting and Reporting.

Present: A Snoddy (Secretary), F Richardson, G Mackie (Vice Chairman and Treasurer), G Ramsay, H Young, J Shearer, J Wilson, L Lovell-Henderson, M Bruce, P Maudsley (Chairman), S Coe, Cllr Begg, Cllr Douglas, Cllr Pirone.

In attendance: M Davey of the Peeblesshire News, PC V Carsley from Police Scotland, A McGilvray from Greatest Hits Radio, S Morrison of the Peebles Business and Retailers Association.

Members of the Public: D Brunton, S MacKay, K Mansfield.

Apologies: G Macdonald, J Crawley, S Watson, Cllr Tatler and Cllr Thomson.

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

The Community Council had accepted S Hamilton's resignation due to personal reasons. The Chairman thanked her for her valuable contribution. S Hamilton had started up the Peebles Covid Support Group.

There are currently three vacancies for Community Councillors.

The presentation from Paul Spence of Peebles Resilient Group was cancelled.

The Chairman wanted it noted that he was still pushing for more sandbags and for them to be strategically placed. Scotland had been beset by some bad storms and it could have been us. SBC have had 12 months to action this.

Open forum: D Brunton, a member of the public, had delivered a paper to the Community Council meeting for the Councillors to read. The paper was regarding the cemetery inspection programme. PCC could not endorse the document as not everyone had the chance to read the paper.

Approval of the Minutes of 12 October 2023: M Bruce proposed, and G Ramay seconded.

Matters arising from the Minutes:

Bench on Edinburgh Road: Now painted and back in use. £40 for materials has been claimed from the car parking fund, but not yet received.

40mph speed restriction south of Eddleston: This is going to be extended.

Glentress Crossing: It is agreed that this is a hazard. Most suggestions were cost prohibitive [circa £1m+]. SBC had done transport assessments at the time of planning and had sent the Chairman a copy of the detailed report. They agreed they may have to look at further measures to facilitate the crossing if new planning applications are submitted. They are going to be installing a second electronic warning sign to alert vehicles. Cyclists will need to press a button to activate it.

Chairman's report: The report had been circulated.

Tweeddale Area Partnership: The last meeting was on 31 October in the Walkerburn Village Hall. A separate report considers the forthcoming NHS "change" conversations and the Community Hospitals Medical Model Steering Group. Two applications for funding had been made. a) Linton hotspur football Club were awarded £3,671, b) Conservation without Borders applied for £7,500. However, this was rejected on the basis that the TAP fund is for Tweeddale and the project was a Borders-wide project and no applications had been made to other area partnerships. The next meeting is on 06/02/24.

Street Pastors: This has been approved and we should see the pastors in Peebles soon.

Parking: Cllr Tatler was not in attendance, but the car parks have been marked out and the responses regarding parking charges had been collated. There would be no change to charging.

Scottish Borders Community Council Network: This is fully covered in the Chairman's report however this network has mostly fallen apart. SBC wants the network of councils but appears not willing to adequately fund them.

Planning Report: The report had been circulated. There were no questions.

NHS – Community Hospitals Medical Model Steering Group and NHS Consultation: A detailed report had been circulated and the Chairman welcomed any comments. The report is a live document and will be updated as information comes in. The steering group will be going on until April with meetings every two weeks.

The Chairman pointed out that the NHS is of immense importance to most people in Scotland and the UK. Although we have no formal feedback currently, anecdotal evidence suggest that the Haylodge Community Hospital is of similar importance. The community has been asked to provide feedback at the open drop-in sessions on 14 November and the Chairman suggests that all PCC members promulgate this opportunity strongly. Regarding the steering group, because of the importance of the hospital to the residents of Tweeddale, the Chairman considers that representation is essential. The Chairman requests endorsement from the PCC and from the Peebles Civic Society, Crick Carleton (Place Making Team), Peebles Business and Retailers Association and the U3A group. Together this will be a truer representation of the community and the Chairman welcomed any comments from the community via emails to the Secretary. Cllr Begg said he would send the Chairman some useful information. Cllr Pirone said she was at the recent opening of the DDL Care Hub in Cavalry Park where there is a different way of providing care. The Chairman said he has emailed them for their comments.

ASB: There had been a report about ASB in Victoria Park and this had been passed on to the police and councillors. There are issues around stop/start funding for initiatives and SBC are looking at resolutions around this.

Remembrance Sunday: The Chairman will be laying a wreath on Remembrance Sunday on behalf of the PCC.

Police report: The report had been circulated. There were fewer issues this time, better than the previous few months. M Bruce pointed out that policing issues in Peebles are different to those in Galashiels, Hawick, or Eyemouth. He was pleased to read the acknowledgement of what is being achieved by Peebles Youth Voice. G Mackie said the police should be commended for their action leading up to Bonfire Night where they had spoken to people about the dangers of fireworks, etc. The Secretary will thank Police Scotland.

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Peebles Youth Voice: M Bruce said this was continuing its success. Young people were denied a voice before, now they are listened to and with the support of adults in the community and some funding there have been events organised. These events are what young people asked for. The recent band night with live music, for example, had been a huge success. It would be good to try and formalise the group in the future so that serious funding can be applied for along with ideas as to how to sustain the group and find a lasting solution. L Lovell-Henderson said that his peers had agreed it had been a positive experience having the opportunity to voice and express opinions and to see the result of doing so.

Cllr reports

Cllr Begg : It was disappointing to see that there had been vandalism in the public toilets. They will remain open. He has been dealing with issues raised by individual community members. He has been liaising with sub postmasters about the DVLA business being taken away from them. A petition has been sent to Downing Street and he urged the community to contact their MP with their support. He and Cllr Tatler had hosted a successful surgery at Tesco and would schedule more. The gritting lorries are out, and he asked everyone to slow down, check their vehicles and drive safely as the weather turns colder. M Bruce put out a plea to those drivers who put on their fog lights when there is no fog; it is blinding. You can be fined by the police for it. The Glentress bicycle trails are now open, so please help promote them. For those who don't cycle, there are walking trails too.

PC Carsley entered the meeting and was asked to deliver her Police Scotland update. She confirmed that things have settled down in terms of ASB. This may be due to the time of year. There had been some issues around school children in Victoria Park at lunchtimes, so they had stepped up patrols. She said that they might be noisy, but they were good kids. J Wilson said that may be, but there was still potential for things to go wrong. PC Carsley said they were good at self-regulating. It is important not to demonise the young people, but to positively engage with them. There had been exemplary behaviour around Halloween and bonfire night, and they did the town proud.

Cllr Douglas: The NHS consultation is meeting in Peebles on 14 November. The flood group have been doing lots of work. The community small schemes fund still has funds available and applications for grants should be made by mid-December for funding before April. It is not clear if this will be carried forward. You can apply through the community trust or community council, if not a constituted group. Council budget preparations are starting soon. There will be a cross-party working group. The financial situation is difficult for SBC. There is added pressure from Live Borders who is reliant on them for funding. The council tax freeze will cause some issues, and possibly cuts to the community. Helping with individual cases takes up a lot of the Councillors' time. Cllr Douglas suggested if a member of the community finds themselves with problems during an evening or at a weekend there is an out of hours number to call the social work department: 01896 752111. This is an emergency line. The Chairman asked about the statistics of those in need. Cllr Begg suggested contacting the Citizens Advice Bureau who would be able to help, or the foodbank. The biggest issue in Peebles is sofa-surfing rather than homelessness on the street. The Chairman would like to pass these stats onto C Carleton for his placemaking information. C Carlton is speaking to two consultants to help move the document forward. Cllr Douglas is also hosting surgeries in Tesco and his next one is on 10 November and will be with MSP C Graham. These will be held monthly.

Cllr Pirone: C Kerr, who leads up the flooding meetings, is going to look at the sandbags issue. The Chairman again pointed out that there has been ample opportunity to source and stock sandbags in preparation of a flood. Cllr Pirone confirmed there will be another shed provided by the Fire Station for the sandbags. There had been a failure to collect some of the recycling blue bins and the public should leave their bins out for collection the following day. J Wilson said there ought to be a way of getting that information out quickly as this is becoming a regular occurrence. Cllr Pirone said that the vehicles are getting old and at this time of year

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there are staff absent because of ill health. The SBC website does have information about leaving bins out if they are not collected. They need to get better at communicating it, however. Speedwatch, this is going ahead. PHS has had an inspection, and the results will be in before or just after Christmas.

Cllr Tatler: Cllr Tatler was not in attendance, but the Chairman covered the following points sent by email from Cllr Tatler. Victoria Park – Lighting and Shelter to be discussed at next Common Good meeting on 22nd. Cllr Tatler is going to ask that officers investigate the provision and costs of installing a composting toilet in the park near the new Play Park. Review of use of Common Good Land for Commercial Events – SBC Chief Legal Officer will provide a progress update at the next Common Good Meeting. Cllr Tatler has established that Scottish Borders Council (NOT UCI) provided the Park and Ride Facility at Haylodge Park and the Fan Village/Live Screen facility on Tweed Green during the World Championships as part of the support given to the event by the local authority. So, this was not a commercial use of our Common Good land. The Chairman said the UCI is a commercial enterprise and should pay for the use of CG Land if it pays other land owners for the use of theirs. The information is not being made available to the trustees by SBC. Cllr Pirone said a review is being made by the legal department. H Wilson pointed out that given that resources are scarce, why are SBC not charging for use of CG land? UCI had a multi-million-pound budget. She also said there is an ongoing issue with the lack of transparency with Common Good decisions. Other groups have attended the PCC meetings confirming they could not afford to have a stall on Tweed Green at an event and yet for others there is no cost. The decisions may be correct but there's no transparency, so no understanding of the rationale. The whole point of the Community Empowerment Legislation is that the community knows what is being done and why decisions are made. She hopes councillors will chase SBC to get a policy. Cllr Pirone has asked them to look at the policy and find a way forward. Chambers Institution Trust – there has been lots of progress. There has been a report by the acoustics expert who will be putting forward some simple proposals to resolve the "echo". They are also getting costs and will be considering installing curtains for the side windows. The Business Plan process is proceeding and there be a lot to consider at the next Beneficiaries Group meeting on 28th November. Peebles Town Bus – Cllr Tatler will be following up on the recommendations that were made to Borders Buses and Scottish Borders Council in the Report the Group submitted.

Treasurer's report: The report has been circulated. There are two amounts to mention, one of £40 relating to the bench and one for £200 for Peebles in Bloom. Neither of which is yet reimbursed. The Secretary said Peebles Christmas Lights Association is also waiting for a grant from the Parking Fund which had ben agreed some time ago. She will contact Cllr Tatler to find out when the payments will be made.

Chambers Institute Trust: S Coe confirmed the subgroup for the business plan meets regularly and hope to have an outline plan for the end of the year. Disappointingly, they are still waiting for the study from the architects. They are also going to assess whether curtains for the side windows would be a good idea to help with acoustics. Otherwise, there are still more repairs to be carried out.

Peebles High School: S Coe has been liaising with the Parent Council, but T Compton has confirmed there has been no substantial response received from the school or the project team for several weeks including a response regarding the important action point discussed in September. This is likely because no one has picked up matters of concern since S Renwick left. Someone has been seconded and the Parent Council has been chasing SBC re the action points and the Head Teacher for an update. S Coe wanted to make comment on Cllr Thomson's report from the last meeting. S Coe was not in attendance at that meeting. Cllr Thomson said that up to 120 musicians could be performing but that there were fewer musicians than before, and they do not anticipate a rise in numbers. S Coe does not know where her data came from, but it is not correct. S Coe has checked with the relevant people and while there was a slight reduction in the pool of musicians in lockdown, perhaps 20 or so out of 120, there is currently no let-up in demand for music groups or instrumental tuition. The number of string players are growing more than before. This is exacerbated by the feed from the

primary schools. There are a lot of instrumental players coming through. There is increasing interest. This is not the fault of the local SBC Councillors, but we cannot get away from the fact that the proposed new hall will be a significant failure in the design of the new school to meet the future needs of the students performing music in collaboration with their peers. As it is the existing hall that would still be suitable for future use is to be demolished. We should do everything we can to mitigate this before it is too late.

The Chairman agreed the new hall is going to be a lot smaller. If there had been proper consultation on the plans, maybe things would not have reached this point. The fact that SBC has made so many changes to the design following pressure from the community means that the community were right, and SBC were wrong.

Peebles Community Trust: The report had been circulated. M Bruce confirmed there had been no progress. Funding was still an issue. A lot of investment in the School Brae Hub building is required.

AOB

Floral Peebles: The Memorial Garden created by Floral Peebles held an event last weekend to open it. A lot of hard work had gone into creating it. It is a beautiful display and should be available to go and see for around a month. The PCC was represented by G Mackie, A Snoddy, G Macdonald and F Richardson.

The 20 mph wheelie bin stickers have been ordered.

No objections have been received regarding the creation of woodland at Edston farm and trees are going to be planted at Upper Kidston.

Tweeddale Citizen of Year. Information has been circulated.

Telephone box on Edinburgh Road. There have been suggestions about its possible future use made on the FaceBook page. This is not something that the Community Council has the resources nor money to deal with. There were directions given as to where to make recommendations.

Tweeddale Assessment Panel is looking for a new member. Should anyone want to volunteer it is a good organisation and it would be worthwhile.

Vehicles idling in the High Street. Cllr Begg is attending to this.

Issues surrounding apartments at Castle Venlaw. The PCC had been approached by a resident as had some of the SBC Councillors. This is not something that the PCC can take on as we do not have responsibility, resources, or expertise. It is a civil matter between developer and resident. Kathleen Mansfield, a member of the public, pointed out that Police Scotland had been at the meeting earlier and issues relating to antisocial behaviour in the adjacent woodland could have been mentioned then. It would have been helpful. The Chairman stated that K Mansfield could have raised it herself with PC Carsley. As a Community Council it would be reported second hand and it's far better that a member of the public speaks to the Police first hand.

F Richardson, A Snoddy and G Macdonald suggested that J Wilson asked about several tree branches that had come down in the recent storm up and around the Glen Road area. Residents had moved them off the roads, but nothing had happened since. Some of the trees are old. A tree survey ought to be done. Cllr Pirone said she would report back.

Community Councillors could be issued with small lapel enamel badges. This is helpful when out in the community, or at an event, should they wish to be identified as representing the PCC. The Secretary agreed to look at prices and options to see if it was viable.

M Bruce asked about the official position on the house at the foot of School Brae. It is Grade B listed. The Abandoned Properties Officer has acknowledged that she is in touch with the legal owner. Cllr Begg agreed to pick this up and get an update.

A Snoddy asked what is happening to the old sweet shop that was Mr McGillivray's? It is a Common Good asset. It has a broken window and looks unkempt.

The Chairman said that he had published several articles in Peebles Life and invited comments from the public but he has not had one response to date.

J Shearer: There is a litter issue on the new cycle path, and it is not helped by there being no bins. Cllr Pirone suggested moving a bin from another location.

The meeting ended at 2045hrs.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 14 December at 7pm in the Burgh Chamber.