

Peter Maudsley  
Chairman  
Peebles & District Community Council  
By email  
[Peter-mariner@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Peter-mariner@hotmail.co.uk)

**Please ask for:** David Robertson  
**Our Ref:** DR/FC  
**Your Ref:**  
**E-Mail:** [David.Robertson@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:David.Robertson@scotborders.gov.uk)  
**Date:** 7 November 2024

Dear Peter

I refer to the October meeting of the Peebles Community Council and, in particular, to information presented to that meeting by Mr David Brunton with regard to cemeteries and listed buildings. This issue has been the subject of a long engagement between Mr Brunton and the Council which goes back many years.

Having spoken to Cllr Robin Tatler on this matter I would like to apologise, on behalf of the Council, for any distress or upset that the Council has caused in attempting to make sure that all our cemeteries are safe for the public to use. As you will be aware the Council has, for many years, been attempting to make cemeteries safe by laying flat headstones and monuments at a variety of burial sites across the Borders. We recognise that the approach taken has, in some cases, caused distress to those whose relatives are interred in these graveyards and I want to reassure you that this was never our intention.

For this reason we have completely revised our policy and approach to this matter following a trial which was adopted at Lennel Cemetery in Berwickshire. My understanding is that the approach the Council is now taking meets the expectations of communities, who understand the need for us to make cemeteries safe but also want us to do so in a way which respects the sensitivity of these sites and provides an opportunity for families who are still tending graves to address structural issues with layers themselves.

We accept that we have made mistakes, but it is important to emphasise that we have never wittingly acted in an unlawful or insensitive manner. We have sought to remedy our mistakes and, in that vein, if we have acted unreasonably and in a way which has then damaged a monument or listed building we would be willing to have a conversation with the affected family members about the possibility of remedying that damage.

The matters that Mr Brunton raised with you have been the subject of ongoing and extensive engagement with the Council and has been dealt with by the Public Services Ombudsman and latterly by the Information Commissioner. We cannot change the past but we can move forward adopting a respectful and sympathetic approach to graveyard safety, something I very much advocate and which I now believe forms a central aspect of our approach.

The Council has no wish to continue the painful dialogue with Mr Brunton and regret he has chosen to present his version of events, which we believe have now been addressed by the Information Commissioner and Scottish Borders Council's revised approach, to the Community Council.

I would very much wish to put on record, for the avoidance of any doubt, the Council's regret over this matter and close by apologising once again for any distress our actions may have inadvertently caused to anyone, including Mr Brunton.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Robertson', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

**DAVID ROBERTSON**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**