



Community Council of the Royal Burgh of Peebles & District

22 January 2024

Mr. David Robertson
Chief Executive Officer
Scottish Borders Council
Council Headquarters
Newtown St Boswells
Melrose
TD6 0SA

Dear David

SBC Community Council Review

We do hope that your festive break went well, and we wish you a Happy new year.

By and large our community council find the process and the current draft proposals made to be very helpful and have passed our comments to the work group as requested.

However, there are three areas of more major concern and consequently we are writing to you to highlight this and so ensure that these concerns are not lost in the process. We have itemized the major concerns below.

1. **Honoraria Payments.** This rule that members of the community council cannot receive honoraria would potentially hamstring the operation of our community council. Both our secretary and minute secretary receive honoraria which is a small recompense for the many hours of work they put in. To adhere to this rule either they would have to be removed as members of the community council or else we would have to find other non-members to take on these roles. Experience would suggest that this would be extremely difficult, and we are concerned that this could lead to the complete collapse of our CC.
2. **Controls over Expenditure.** It is implied that all expenditure should be authorised by the membership of the Community Council, but it is not clear what this means. Does this require a vote of the members at meetings? If this means the whole membership, then this is totally impractical. To ensure prompt payment of bills it is essential that the treasurer should have some discretion to make payment without running them past the whole membership. There is an existing safeguard that payments need 2 signatures. Further, accounts are reviewed at monthly meetings.

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3. **Online Banking.** Does all online expenditure have authorisation from the Community Council membership in advance of transactions? See point 2 above. This is totally impractical and removes the benefit of having online banking. Treasurers are appointed by the membership and need to have delegated authority to be able to carry out their role. It is extremely difficult to find office bearers. Tying one hand behind their back would only make this harder!

Naturally, we consider all the points we have raised with the work group to be of importance. However, given that we consider these specific points capable of doing significant damage, it seemed only sensible to appraise you of them. Particularly as our core group of officers would see item one as a resignation issue.

Yours Sincerely

Peter Maudsley
Chairman and Planning Convener