



Community Council of the Royal Burgh of Peebles & District

20 January 2023

Tweeddale Councillors by email

Flooding in Peebles

This letter is probably not identifying anything particularly new as we are aware that affected residents have already contacted both elected Councillors and officers with their views, concerns, and recommendations. However, Peebles Community Council has been approached by residents and as such is naturally supportive of those affected and is happy to add our weight to the subject.

It is clear to the writer that had the rain continued for longer, flood waters would have been higher and the corresponding damage and possible danger to life would have been greater.

We do understand that Scottish Borders Council, SEPA, other agencies and Councillors are already and proactively considering what additional measures may be taken to ameliorate the situation. This writer has met with some of the affected residents and notes from this the following.



- Flood maps appear to be out of date and whilst probably accurate for the 20th century probably need to be updated to reflect the new realities.
- Obviously, water flows into the Tweed Avenue and Walkershaugh region from Tweed Green. Apparently, there is a missing flood barrier which on the last occasion was replaced by sandbags only 400mm high. This was wholly inadequate. It is believed that the barrier has been missing for a period of perhaps two years. Apparently, a protocol exists for SBC to fit this barrier when needed. Flood prevention measures should be audited in the summer of every year and defects rectified in early course. This would pay

for itself as prevention is almost certainly better than rectification after an event.



- The Walkershaugh sandbag station shown in the photograph is tiny and inadequate. The writer suggests a 10' container would be more appropriate.
- The water flow into Tweed Avenue and the adjoining area also enters from property boundaries adjoining the river and in particular Priorsford House and this should be investigated and if practical sealed.
- Under some extreme conditions there is a water flow going westward from the Gytes into the Walkershaugh area. There are old railway abutments that if squared off could form the sides of a temporary flood barrier.
- A secondary similar temporary flood barrier could be placed between the abutment and the bowling club.
- Apparently, the Drill Hall has either no flood protection or inadequate flood protection and no pumps and it was their requirements that contributed to the sandbags running out. Conflicting needs apparently caused some aggravation between residents and hall staff. The Drill Hall may also contribute to the flooding via the basement, and this should be investigated.
- Essential drains were blocked, and it is suggested that these should be placed on an annual service rota prior to the autumn.
- Concern has been raised relating to coordination of rescue and efforts. The writer understands that this will be reviewed in the light of the recent experiences.

Residents in the affected areas have noted concern that since a detailed consultation approximately 5 years ago, they have not been involved in any new public engagement or received updates. Peebles Community Council consider that involving the public where they are affected is essential to both an optimum outcome and community/local authority relations. We recommend that a new engagement occurs at the earliest opportunity and that affected residents are briefed on the latest flood protection proposals. Residents don't find the published flood risk management plan clear so far as it affects them.

The community council recognises that flood events such as that we have just endured affect many communities within the river Tweed catchment area and that this will severely stretch all the agencies involved and especially SBC. As such it would not be fair to put more pressure on officers. All we ask is that the points raised are noted and considered and that the easy, and low expense

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protections are put in place as soon as possible, and that the more expensive ones are itemized and considered for future deployment/work and that residents are involved and informed at all stages of the process.

Yours Faithfully

Peter Maudsley
Chair
Peebles and District Community Council