

# Peebles & District Community Council

## Chairman's Report

December 2023

### 1.0 Tweeddale Area Partnership

The last meeting was on 31 October.

Next meeting 06/02/23

### 2.0 Street Pastors

Still thought to be work in progress.

### 3.0 Royal Burgh of Peebles – Possible Anniversary Project

Nothing further on this topic currently.

### 4.0 Flood risk

The writer attended two meetings on flooding, one in Peebles with councillor Tatler and Paul Spence and others. The second meeting hosted by Colin Kerr in Walkerburn. This is very positive and documentation has been circulated.

### 5.0 Meetings Attended this Month.

12/11/23	I should have been laying the wreath at the Remembrance Day service but was ill and I thank Graham Mackie for standing in at short notice.
14/11/23	Presentation to U3A on NHS issues NHS drop in at the Drill Hall Resilience meeting
15/11/23	Leithenwater wind farm
20/11/23	DDL Healthcare
21/11/23	Community Hospitals Steering Group
23/11/23	Councillor Begg
24/11/23	CIT Management meeting (IT Failure)
28/11/23	Member of Public (Ex NHS) CIT Beneficiaries meeting Flooding meeting in Walkerburn
29/11/23	PCT Meeting on Place Planning
03/12/23	Eastgate AGM
04/12/23	NHS senior managers meeting
05/12/23	Community Hospitals Steering Group
06/12/23	NHS Borders CEO meeting
07/12/23	Pre-meeting meeting

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### 6.0 Scottish Borders Community Council Network (SBCCN).

A meeting was held in SBC HQ on Thursday afternoon, November 9<sup>th</sup>. The writer attended.

The writer gained agreement that a strong SBCCN was important and that this was not possible without strong community councils. He then went on to say that this was not possible if the community councils are not funded properly. The email below was sent to all six of our elected Tweeddale Councillors and no replies were received.

Further, the meeting sought to task the community councillors present to come up with a proposal that SBC would then consider. The Writer said:

“No, you have heard what we have had to say. You have the responses from those community councils who completed the questionnaires. It is not for us to produce proposals for you to consider. It is for you to produce proposals for us to consider”!

#### Email sent to councillors 19/11/23.

Now we all understand that times are hard for all public services across both national and local issues. However, the debate on CC funding last week was generally without a great deal of substance, although I do note your interjection Marshall and thank you for it [Note1]. The facts so far as PCC is concerned are:

- We get £1365 per annum fixed in 2009
- If we had kept pace with inflation, then this would be circa £2082 or an additional £700
- This 10% award will take us to £1,500 and will not change for three years
- By which time it will be worth £1.287 or thereabouts and around £800 less in real terms than the original award and £78 less than we get now. That is laughable, it doesn't even protect our present pathetic position. Can you honestly say that this is either fair or sensible?

I do despair at some of the thinking that went into this study. It was said that the team looked at what CCs spend now and on what and that this is being protected. No one seems to have considered that CCs cut their cloth according to present cash flow. We were not asked what we cannot do and what we need to do. Nor has our present position been maintained. Why has path maintenance gone up by 50%? That is no use to us, although we did do it in the past. What we need is a serviced web site and we have no way of funding it.

One councillor stated, “It is important that a message is sent that community councils are really valued”. Is that so? It sure doesn't look that way. Another councillor said that councils don't get an inflationary rise and that maybe true, but in 2009 it appears that the budget was £269M and I think it is now closer to £350M, a rise of 27%. A real time cut, but still no comparison to what we in PCC are expected to absorb.

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## **Chairman's Report**

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Last week at the meeting to consider the way ahead for the SBCCN, I said, and who can argue, that a strong SBCCN requires strong community councils. SBC, aided and abetted by its councillors is paying lip service to community councils at a time when the Scottish Government want us to do more. We are hard pressed to do what we do now.

Scotland has the worst local democratic deficit in Europe and no wonder.

Note 1: Councillor Marshall Douglas highlighted the fact that the original award was fixed in 2009 and had not increased and suggested a modest increase in rise from 10% to 15%. Councillor Pirone moved that they all accepted the 10% rise and that an increase was not required. That last motion was carried.

Peter Maudsley  
Chair  
Peebles and District Community Council