

Peebles & District Community Council

Chairman's Report – December 2025

1.0 General

Tourist Signs

The Chair has no information with which to update

2.0 Air Route Consultation

Your Chair learned by accident that a consultation was to be held on Tuesday 02 December at the Golf Club, the day before. Following promulgation of this information, it appeared that few if any, including the press had been aware of it. Discussing this with the authorities hosting the event gave mixed messages. "Every household in Peebles has been mail shot". Not so far as we are aware. "Households in areas where aircraft are scheduled to be below 10,000 feet were to be copied". This may explain the discrepancy.

Contrary to some thoughts, this consultation is not connected with that in 2018.

Presently the writer personally notices contrails and a little limited aircraft noise and does not consider this a nuisance. This air activity is based on high altitude overflights which are unconnected with the present consultation and with mainly flights landing or departing at Edinburgh airport. There is very limited military air activity as well, which is again unconnected.

The proposals for Peebles are very similar to present, except that we are presently on the edge of the elongated oval for the holding pattern which stretches northwards from Peebles and the new proposal puts us on the edge of a similar holding pattern stretching southwards. Consequently, Peebles should see little additional overflights. However, presently flights are vectored at 7,000 feet and the proposal takes them higher to at least 10,000 feet. The new pattern would see some rural areas such as West Linton have increased areas of air traffic.

Take off and landing doesn't apply for Peebles assuming that I interpreted the charts shown at the event correctly. This was confirmed by the hosting team from Edinburgh airport, Air Traffic Control (NATS) and CAA (Civil Aviation Authority)

So, from our point of view there doesn't appear to be an issue.

3.0 Illegal Vapes and Tobacco

Nothing new to report. However, it appears of interest to note that in mid-November BBC reported that 920 people had been arrested across the U.K. and predominantly in England and Wales relating to offences connected to Mini-Markets and Turkish barbers, etc. Offences apparently relating to illegal vapes, illegal tobacco, illicit drugs and illegal working.

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4.0 Meetings attended since October Meeting

18.11.25	Town Team, Place Making meeting at Eastgate
20.11.25	On-line review of SBC Live Borders special meeting
25.11.25	CCTV overview on Teams by SBC (missed the first 10 mins due to PC issues)
29.11.25	Chambers Institution upgrade drop-in session – Burgh Hall
03.12.25	Pre-meeting meeting
11.12.25	PCC meeting

The writer is hoping to have a meeting with the Guildry in the near future.

5.0 Working party on non-financial support to community councils and the working party on the Community Councils Network.

Next meeting online 16.12.25, with a proposed face to face meeting at SBC in Newtown St Boswells in January.

As noted previously, the problem perceived by this writer is that time will slip away and that no effective actions will be forthcoming, at least not any time soon.

6.0 Place Making – Town Action Plan

The meeting on 18 November was a “Climate Place Session”. This was designed to see what “The Southern Uplands Partnership” could do to help support local initiatives linked to amelioration of climate change. A proposal was agreed to apply to the group for a grant to help construct a management plan for the Kingsmeadows woodland in support of a community buy out.

7.0 Live Borders

Colleagues may have read the article in December's Peebles Life. Although we have now moved on there is little that was written in the article that is outdated. What is different is that Councillor Robin Tatler proposed an amendment at SBC's special meeting to remove some of the pressure to force communities into a CAT, a Community Asset Transfer. This was important and the proposed amendment was adopted. A handful of other amendments were also forced on officers by councillors from other Border communities. We should not forget that officers had produced proposals that we would consider having had flaws in them and that it was councillors who forced the improvements on them.

A number of other points of interest arose from this SBC Live Borders special meeting. SBC themselves made no apologies to communities for the heartache caused. They accepted no responsibility for the position in which they found themselves. Despite the flaws in the Integratis report it was still held up in the meeting as the foundation on which to move ahead. Perhaps this writer would

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have more confidence had the meeting quoted each and every bullet that Integratis raised relating to management and oversight and how the past failures were being addressed. However, we are informed that the deficiencies are now resolved and only time will tell.

We were also informed that the Live Borders infrastructure (the buildings) aren't in great condition. One could argue that this too is self-inflicted due to a lack of maintenance over time. Our Local councillor, Drummond Begg asked about SBC's cuts in funding for sports and leisure and how it compared with other council areas. Our community council has highlighted the data on this on numerous occasions. However, SBC's Finance Officer in answering this direct question could only say that "My feeling is"! The officer patently didn't know or wasn't prepared to tell.

This writer has a great deal of discomfort with those councillors who could only issue plaudits and who had no criticism whatsoever for process. However, some councillors stand out for their integrity, including our Tweeddale councillors, who were the only ones to offer apologies to our communities. Highlights are below.

- **Councillor Marshall (Hawick)** – Integratis report shocking – Assumptions not evidence based.
- **Councillor Tatler (Tweeddale)** – Apologised for the past – CAT not the only option – One size does not fit all – Proposed an amendment.
- **Councillor Pirone (Tweeddale)** – Apologised – Still have a huge amount of work to do – SBC must support communities – Supported the RT's amendment.
- **Councillor Thomson (Tweeddale)** – CAT a step too far – Need to look at other options – Should be less confrontational – Supported the RT's amendment.
- **Councillor Drummond Begg (Tweeddale)** – Audit Scotland report on Sports and Leisure – Asked about disparity in cuts between SBC and other authorities – considered that there was a lack of understanding on potential health and wellbeing
- **Councillor ????? (Jedburgh)** – Previous trust got themselves into this position
- **Councillor Clare Ramage (???)** – Mismanagement of Live Borders
- **Councillor Marshall Douglas (Tweeddale)** – Hugely supportive of communities and proposed amendments
- **Councillor Sinclair (Galashiels)** - Amendment to keep Focus Centre with strong argument [PRM - Presumably this argument had been made before the issue of the report. Why had it not been accepted previously by SBC?] – Amendment passed
- **Councillor Robson (???)** – CAT big responsibility and some communities have access to funding, and some don't
- **Councillor Rowley (Duns)** - Amendment to keep Southfield with strong argument [PRM - Presumably this argument had been made before the

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- issue of the report. Why had it not been accepted previously by SBC?] – amendment passed
- **Councillor Moffat (???)** – A mess that needed to be sorted out.

Councillor Tatler said that we now need to leave the past behind and look to the future, this is undoubtedly correct and we now wish Catriona Mcallister well in her new post as CEO of Live Borders.

8.0 Beavers

Unsurprisingly, there has been a substantial amount of feedback, both positive and negative relating to the subject. For those who have responded, the following reply has been drafted by Dominic Ashmole

Thank you for contacting Peebles Community Council regarding the potential reintroduction of beavers. We sought feedback from the public following NatureScot's recent Call for interest in beaver releases to new catchments, which encourages organisations, communities and land managers who may be interested in hosting beavers to come forward.

The Community Council does not currently hold a formal position on reintroducing beavers to Peeblesshire, and our reply to NatureScot will reflect that. Our press release invited local views, and we received a wide range of direct responses, including your own. In addition, local news coverage prompted extensive discussion on the social media channels of the *Peeblesshire News* and the *Border Telegraph*. While many online contributors expressed support, it is clear from the full range of comments that there are also significant concerns and differing perspectives.

This is a complex and sometimes contested issue, involving varied values, interests and interpretations of the evidence. The community does not hold a single view, and at this stage the discussion remains hypothetical. For these reasons, the Community Council intends to maintain a neutral position unless and until a specific proposal for beaver reintroduction in Peeblesshire comes forward. We would expect any such proposal to include robust, locally relevant evidence on potential impacts—both positive and negative.

9.0 Police Report

Another month that demonstrates a low level of offences and no particular trends. We wish our emergency services a quiet time over the festive period and a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Peter Maudsley
Chair
Peebles and District Community Council