

Peebles & District Community Council

Chairman's Report - June 2024

1.0 Hustings

At the time of writing, the organisation of the hustings for the 2024 General Election is progressing well. The Burgh Hall has been booked for 18:30 to 21:00 on 24 June and a PA system has also been booked. The final acoustic panels are due to be installed on 17 June. The new curtains have already helped dampen the echoes. Father Tony Lappin of St. Joseph's Church has agreed to chair the event and this writer has arranged a meeting with him to finalise loose ends. All seven candidates have been contacted and six have confirmed attendance. Only the Scottish Family Party has yet to respond. Councillor Julie Pirone is liaising with Police Scotland over security. Your Chair asks for your support as members of the PCC and for the support of our elected councillors in assisting with the event on the day. The more help the better.

2.0 Peebles Town Action Plan (Place Planning)

The Peebles Placemaking initiative is progressing, and the consultants are confirming the data already collected. Their events around the town have yielded some additional feedback that will be built into the final planning.

3.0 NHS – Community Hospitals Review

The writer is still attending meetings that are generally held every two weeks and that are planned to continue through to December. Quite reasonably, the writer was required to sign a confidentiality agreement. There is little point in passing on anything that can be misconstrued and indeed due to the general election, there is a purdah to prevent politicians being selective about the information they use, whether that information promulgated is true or false.

It is important that readers of this report are aware, that this writer has not seen anything to date that causes concern over the continuance of our community hospitals going forward. The writer does not believe that they are under threat of closure.

An issue that is of concern to the writer, however, is the lack of a minor injury's unit at Haylodge. Readers may well have seen the writer's article in Peebles Life. At least one NHS Borders Director has read this article and gave assurance that the subject was important and that it would be discussed. The writer has also been assured that he would be kept up to date with any deliberations. To date, this has not happened, and the writer will continue to raise the subject.

4.0 Tweeddale Area Partnership

No activity to report

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5.0 Baptist Church Hall – Cleland Site

The following is an email sent to one of the group leaders of the Cleland Site initiative. It is self-explanatory and as indicated, our team should discuss the subject and if necessary, the team should suggest bullets to remove or to add to the debate.

Hi Susana

Malcolm's email to you was a good precis of where we are. I was invited by Robin to all the meetings on the building prior to your involvement, but strangely not the ones involving your group. Malcolm was able to give me some background which did leave a lot of questions unanswered and as he indicated I was then out of action for a few weeks as the surgeons gave me a new hip.

We all want to see a solution to this problem, especially as it has been an issue for several years. Again, as a member of the place making team, I know that the north of the town is better served than the south and as just one item that requires a solution, the play park, etc. really do need to be served by toilets. Something that the previous councillors' thought was unnecessary when we raised the subject with them some years ago.

I think Peebles Community Council (PCC) would support a scheme that met the following, but this will be discussed at our next meeting and therefore the list drafted may have items added or removed.

- Met an identified need.
- Was supported by those living in adjacent properties in particular and the wider community in general.
- Was aligned with the place making plans currently being formulated.
- That a realistic design is developed at cost that is supportable
- That a sustainable plan is developed and costed going forward over at least a five-year period.
- That an impact assessment does not show an unduly negative affect on other facilities in the town
- And most importantly, that the management group can demonstrate the skills and resilience needed to sustain such a project.

As it stands, I have no knowledge whatsoever on any of these points. Undoubtedly, it is likely to be a big project requiring considerable human and financial resource. To see the site go from its present state to another unfinished condition cannot be an option.

I do know that some of our members are concerned not to get too involved with the project as we are pretty well at capacity for a volunteer group. From a personal perspective, this is certainly true. My work takes up around three days a week. It was more but I managed to find a volunteer to cover planning. However, I don't mind providing a few days "consultancy" free gratis, if I can see that it won't be wasted and that it would help benefit the town.

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There is a workshop on 24 June that the writer has signified that he may attend. However, this is the day of the hustings and is likely to be very busy indeed.

6.0 Meetings Attended This Month

16.05.24	Flooding meeting missed it
18.05.24	Place Planning meeting
21.05.24	Beneficiaries Group meeting
28.05.24	Consultation on new trail at Go Tweed Valley
29.05.24	NHS Community Hospitals meeting Registrar to discuss hanging of the official portrait of Charles III
03.06.24	SBC Planning Committee online
05.06.24	Place Planning online meeting
06.06.24	D-day Commemoration Service Meeting with Gareth Smith, SBC on hanging the portrait of the king. Pre-meeting meeting (to set the agenda for our monthly PCC meeting).
12.06.24	Father Tony Lappin
13.06.24	PCC Meeting

7.0 Working party on non-financial support to community councils

We have requested representation on this SBC working party. Of course everything has a cost, non-financial support included. Even the meetings to consider the issue because at least some of those attending are paid by SBC!

8.0 Peebles Youth Voice – Youth Survey

The results of the survey demonstrate that a huge part (330+) of our youthful population took part in the survey. We have some great volunteers to thank for the efforts that they take to help young people. As Malcolm Bruce has said, time and again, most of the youngsters in Peebles don't cause a problem and many contribute to the wellbeing of the town in some way or other, such as our own youth member, Lennox. Others are lifeguards at the swimming pool or help in some other way. Many are involved with Scouts, Rugby, Biking, Football, and the list is almost endless. However, there are some who don't get the support that others get and some for whom, even low subs for activities may be out of reach. Some are not as outgoing as others.

The results of this survey cannot be allowed to be ignored. Sure, some like to haves, will be too expensive to contemplate, but some won't. The kids have engaged with us and need to see that this exercise has not been wasted, otherwise, like some of us with our politicians, they will lose faith.

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Question 1), - Shows that they need somewhere to go. 32 saying that they have nowhere to go is roughly 10%. That 10% needs addressing. Costa, scores highly and link that to Question 2) and it is safe, warm, friendly and has food and drink – but no activities/games!

Question 3) - Probably needs fleshed out more. What needs improved for sports? But a cinema (183) – Could this benefit both the kids and the Eastgate?

Question 4) – 30% don't attend a club where they can mix? Why not? This is a big number, and this writer suggests that we need to consider this more.

Question 5) – 75% haven't attended a film or band night at the Eastgate. Perhaps better advertising? Certainly, Question 8) gives the events a major thumbs up.

Question 10) – Are Peebles sports Facilities Affordable? 10% say no. is this the same 10% we noted in question 1)? Roughly, this same 10% runs though Q11 and 12 and 14

Strangely, to the writer, there is an underlying call for more football. Isn't this adequately covered?

Question 22) – How do we engage with the majority who answered that they would like to be involved?

Question 23) – circa 20% not feeling safe is a big number. How do we address this? Perception is reality. Is it really so bad?

The foregoing is the writer's take on these results. Of course, there is more to be gleaned from it and possibly some additional questions to ask. **Firstly, though, this is a great piece of work. I commend it to SBC and our elected councillors.**

The writer has three thoughts.

- 1) There is a lack of information reaching some of our youngsters. We have volunteer fairs to hopefully attract volunteers. Why not a “**Joiners Fair**”. This to include all the organisations that kids can join and including messaging of issues like place making. Free burgers and drinks for obvious youngsters (Indelible stamp).
- 2) It is unfair that some youngsters are excluded from activities because they cannot afford to join. Could there be a system of bursaries funded by say the Parking Fund or Common Good?
- 3) The subsidised film/band nights have been a success. We knew this anyway, but this survey confirms that. Annual funding must be found to ensure that this is not just a flash in the pan! The local authority must move

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away from knee jerk reactions and one-off problem-solving initiatives in responding to the needs of young people and produce annual funding that rolls forward year on year.

Peter Maudsley
Chair
Peebles and District Community Council