

Peebles & District Community Council

Chairman's Report – October 2026

1.0 Police Report

The last police report was issued to us in August covering July. This is disappointing as it is only through the report that we can gauge our performance locally and identify any trends. Further, the public feedback always expresses concerns and historically we have been able to demonstrate that the levels of crime are generally lower here than the national average and usually significantly so. Without the data we are in no position to alleviate this public concern.

The bank raid last week has again generated a level of public concern. This was a sensational event. However, it isn't unique in Scotland and as unusual as it is, it does not define a trend for our town.

Present concerns voiced to the community council include:

- Traffic policing in the Borders being removed from Duns to Dalkeith. Potentially removing officers to more than 50 miles from some localities. Traffic police have specialised skills for dealing with accidents and incidents, by their visibility, reduce speeding and bad driving and are important in apprehending drug traffickers.
- Seemingly a lack of police resource across the Borders
- Correspondingly poor response times for attending incidents
- Vape shops and Turkish barbers

2.0 Meetings attended in July, August and September to date

08.09.26	Community council Chairs' meeting on teams
10.09.26	SBC meeting on community council funding at SBC HQ
	PCC meeting
01.10.26	PCC Pre-meeting meeting
02.10.26	SBC meeting on community council funding at SBC HQ
05.10.26	Scottish government webinar on possible changes to local authorities
08.10.26	PCC meeting

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

Process completed. Report being prepared by SBC for a future full council meeting. Nothing new currently.

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4.0 Working party on financial support to community councils

Two meetings on financial support were held during the past month. This work has been under way for some time and has also been linked to the possible revival of the Scottish Borders Community Council Network. On that related issue, the recommendation to the Council will be to maintain the previous funding allocation and seek to establish a new group.

The most recent meeting concluded the series. The working group comprising community councillors, SBC elected members and SBC officers agreed the proposal that will be put to the full Council for a vote. Throughout the process, your Chair argued that:

- Since the 2009 award, funding for Peebles has fallen 50% behind inflation, while the Council's overall budget has kept pace with inflation, we needed this recognised.
- Larger population centres such as Peebles face demands that are not necessarily replicated in smaller community councils, including the workloads carried by secretaries, planning conveners and Chairs. However, it was recognised that some smaller community councils are also extremely active, so a single approach cannot meet every community council's needs.

It was further emphasised that an award ignoring past failures would further reduce community council morale. The writer also highlighted that though the authority has historically expressed strong support for community councils, its actions have not always reflected that commitment. We need to see this change.

Historically, grants were allocated solely according to population and in general, smaller community councils did not spend their full grants, whilst CCs serving larger population centres did. Needs also varied: Peebles, for example, found it necessary to provide an honorarium for secretarial support, whereas some other councils did not. It was noted that the amount of the honoraria in Peebles had not increased since 2013.

The proposed new model would provide:

- a base payment for every community council
- additional per-capita funding based on population.

Following debate, the working group appears to have reached a positive settlement not only for Peebles, but for all five major population centres. However, the proposal must now be ratified by the full Council and given some previous experiences, we should not regard the outcome as certain until that vote has taken place.

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5.0 Place Making – Town Team

Our Planning Convener, Michael has sent the following email to Town Team members

For those of you who signed up to the Town Team thinking you'd like to update the local place plan for Peebles, it's time to make a start. The letter below is our invitation from SBC to prepare and submit a local place plan (LPP). The 30 Sep 2027 deadline is a year away – but this is a long process. Before we submit an update, we need to:

- Understand the existing plan and our place in it
- Work out what we think needs changing
- Agree who owns which bits of the rewrites – then make them happen
- Work out whether we need funding – and knock on doors until we get it
- Run public consultation events on the updated plan
- Go through a formal notification process (local councillors, neighbouring community councils, ...)

The best overview I've found is from [this guide](#) from Community Land Scotland (from [here](#)). So can I please ask each person/group wanting to update the LPP to:

- Prepare for and come to the next town team meeting Tue 13 Oct 2026
- With a brief (no more than 5 mins or 1 page) presentation on what they want changed and why
- Organise yourselves into a working group
 - i.e. email this group to say you're in
 - Decide whether you need your own meeting before 13 Oct
 - Count me in – I'm happy to share guidance

It probably only makes sense to change the existing plan if we intend to make substantial changes. And if we want to do that, we'll need buy-in from, PCT, the Community Council and Civic Society – in whose name the current plan is registered.

Thoughts welcome – the LPP belongs to all of us.

6.0 The Fish Fountain

Nothing new to report.

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7.0 Eastgate to Edinburgh Road roundabout road condition

Our secretary is trying to arrange an on-site meeting with SBC's Road department and if possible with Calum Kerr MSP attending in support of our concerns

8.0 Minor Injuries and First Aid at Haylodge Hospital

Another incident has been reported where an 82-year-old gentlemen had a fall with significant first aid injuries and was turned away from Haylodge and told to go to BGH. As noted by Calum Kerr MSP, [from our September minutes]

Mr Kerr advised that he had raised these concerns with the Chief Executive of NHS Borders and agreed that the current position appeared unclear and inconsistent. Whilst official guidance suggested that patients should initially contact NHS 24, members provided examples of individuals receiving different responses when presenting in person. Mr Kerr acknowledged that this inconsistency was causing frustration and uncertainty within the community.

Obviously, this is still unsatisfactory and may possibly be the result of the GP contract for those particular practices, although that would not influence the cottage hospital. We now believe that there will be an NHS funded GP drop in practice in Peebles and this may have some impact going forward.

9.0 Foundation Scotland (Windfarm Fund)

The first round of funding from the Bowbeat Community Benefit Fund has now been allocated. The beneficiaries are detailed in the attached document. And listed below:

- Eastgate Theatre – **£3,440**
- Eddleston Village Hall – **£9,049.32**
- Friends of Dovecot Court – **£5,000**
- Friends of Peebles High School – **£10,000**
- Greener Peebles Growing Together – **£30,000**
- Interest Link Borders – **£9,273**
- Music in Peebles – **£3,000**
- Nomad Beat Memory Lane Music – **£9,923.82**
- Peebles Amateur Swimming Club – **£2,340**
- Peebles Community First Responder – **£6,071**
- Peebles Community Trust East – **£10,000**
- Peebles Community Trust (on behalf of Eshiels Community Wood Management Group) – **£3,780**
- Peebles Scout Group – **£2,500**
- Peeblesshire Foodbank – **£8,000**
- Peebles Youth Theatre – **£3,600**
- Recovery Coaching Scotland – **£10,000**

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- The Dyslexic Collective – **£10,000**
 - Tweeddale Youth Action – **£8,580**
 - Tweed Valley Mountain Rescue Team – **£4,166**
- Total of £148,723 across 19 community projects.**

We are requesting Foundation Scotland provide us with the basic information relating to exactly what was applied for in the grant applications.

10.0 Community Council Microgrants (Windfarm Fund)

At the time of writing, we should have now had our bank account credited with the £5,000 allocation.

We approved and disbursed £300 to the Drill Hall in June/July

We have an application for funding from Floral Peebles. This was originally for £720 (26.07.26) and subsequently reduced to £570 (07.09.26). We have a completed form plus further emails expanding the application detail that your office bearers have found acceptable. The project from the application is

To create a show garden for Remembrance Sunday which would last for two weeks. The garden would then become an Autumn garden until Spring bulbs come into flower. The project would hopefully involve all four Peebles schools. It will be featured in three Border newspapers and hopefully ITV Borders. Where possible we are using reclaimed items and local traders. The cost of Spring bulbs and summer plants comes out of our normal flower budget. Many of the items will last for future years. All residents and many visitors will benefit from the display created.

Expanded by emails

I can confirm that Peebles High School history students are submitting material for the project. All 3 Primary schools have also confirmed that some pupils are partaking in the Nature plot that follows Tribute. A pack of Brownies are also helping with the assembly. Signage explaining the help given will be produced.

FINANCIAL RESERVES. Our reserves are in a reasonable state and would almost cover the expense of normal planting for the next 3 years. This situation arises because of the active work that goes into securing grants and sponsors. We have lost 3 major sponsors in 2026. We always have to bear in mind that most donations are made for floral displays and hence have to look elsewhere when it comes to extras.

THE £570.00 application is based on the following: Metal ties £14.00, Sticky tape £7.00, New poppies £117.00, Elmbank print £50.00, Paint £90.00. A provision of a further £300.00 for print work is included.

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It is unknown what number of poems etc. will be submitted hence it is impossible to submit an estimate. In general, a small sign costs £15.00 and we consider there could easily be 40 submissions for the 2 phases of the garden. I am happy to submit a copy invoice showing what we end up paying.

Your Chair notes that Floral Peebles were historically supported by the Peebles parking fund which is no longer available. Floral Peebles in a known quantity that does excellent work for our town, although there are cash reserves, it is easy for them to be run down and that this appears to be an excellent project involving young people from the schools and other groups. I recommend acceptance in principle and the amount to be decided by the team at the October meeting.

11.0 Changes to Car Parking

Further to our last meeting where we reported that SBC had made some changes to car parking across the Borders. Some of these changes were causing considerable anguish to many Borders residents, and consequently we wrote to the SBC CEO to highlight the impact that the changes were making. Undoubtedly others also contacted SBC with their concerns. It appears that SBC have modified their plans, and we believe that this issue is now resolved.

12.0 Public Sector Reform Proposals (Scottish Government)

On 25 September your Chair emailed PCC members regarding this important issue, attaching the email below from the Scottish Forum of Community Councils and requesting thoughts. This is not to chase the team for responses at this time, but solely a reminder as we understand the complexity of the issue and that it will take time to assimilate.

The Scottish Government has released proposals to reform local government across Scotland, available here: [Public Sector Reform Proposal](#).

The document outlines a new model for Scotland:

- **6–10 Regional Authorities**
- **120–160 Community Authorities**
- **Distinct arrangements for the Islands**

Key Takeaways:

If implemented, this restructuring effectively means existing local councils will disappear. Notably, there is no mention of the future role or status of Community Councils. With a consultation window open for the next few months, we will organise a discussion session shortly. Please feel free to reply with your initial comments and feedback in the meantime.

Your Chair is joining a webinar on Monday 05 October hosted by the Scottish Government to see what they have to say.

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13.0 Support for Peebles Football Club re the East of Scotland Football League

Councillor Begg has drafted a letter of support which your Chair has read and made a minor recommendation for an addition as below:

"The present rules appear discriminatory and as written would preclude any new clubs being affiliated in rural areas almost completely and indeed in many urban areas as well. We doubt that this was the intention when the existing rules were drafted, particularly as this would in effect damage Scottish football at every level".

Further, as this does not only affect PFC, then it is suggested that all Border councillors should consider signing the letter. Still to be determined as to whether PCC send a separate letter or we join a general letter from councillors.