

Peebles & District Community Council

Chairman's Report - December 2024

1.0 Peebles Town Action Plan (Place Planning)

Crick Carleton retires from the lead on the Peebles Place Plan and Town Action Plan at the end of this year and somehow moving ahead it is necessary to create a Town Team to ensure that the legacy does not stagnate. This town team should be supported by a salaried manager directed by a board made up from a wide cross section of representatives from the town. Funding for the manager is being investigated. Members may remember that the need for a town manager has been a recommendation for a couple of years.

2.0 NHS – Community Hospitals Review

There is no update from NHS Borders.

3.0 Haylodge Park Proposals

An onsite meeting was held, which unfortunately the writer could not attend. A number of conflicting communications have been noted, mainly relating to the sledging slope and certainly your Chair has not been able to take a view on whether the slope will be damaged – which would be totally unacceptable – or whether it will not be affected at all. Probably, the proposals should be re-issued with suitable amendments and accurate advice and then a consultation should be issued by the Common Good trustees.

4.0 Tweeddale Area Partnership

The next meeting is 04 February 2025.

5.0 Baptist Church Hall – Cleland Site

No new information received by PCC or PCT so far as the writer is aware. Considering that PCC is a body legally required to so far as possible represent the interests of the residents to SBC, etc.; and that the PCT is a body with a wide membership and recognition as an important part of the town planning infrastructure; one must question the foundation on which this proposal is based, if indeed there is any progress. PCC would very likely support any viable plan that resolved the current problem and provided an enhanced service to the public. However, any proposal will be very expensive and must be seen to be viable both as a build project and then be proven as a self-supporting going concern. Further, an impact assessment should be required on other facilities such as the Eastgate.

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6.0 Meetings Attended This Month

14.11.24	PCC Meeting
20.11.24	Place making meeting
04.11.24	Pre-meeting meeting
05.11.24	Meeting with Richard McDowell (Youth Coordinator @ SBC)
08.11.24	Planning Committee meeting at SBC (Kingsmeadows)

7.0 Working party on non-financial support to community councils

No change – Are SBC are still working on it?

Further, it is months since the writer attended a meeting at SBC HQ to consider how to resurrect the SBCCN (Scottish Borders Community Councils Network). It is also at least two years since discussions were originally held that suggested consideration of the East Lothian model for the Area Partnership. One also must take into consideration the year-on-year depreciation of the annual grant to community councils since 2009. One has to question the will of SBC to adequately support local democracy which requires strong community councils and effective partnerships.

8.0 Peebles Youth

A positive meeting was held with Richard McDowell of SBC who is leading on youth issues. This confirms that Peebles Youth Voice has been saved, at least for the time being. Richard is very keen to ensure that youth issues have a voice on the Town Team. A very important point noted is the extraordinary time that it takes to achieve an outcome from its inception though to completion and that younger persons' morale may suffer from this seeming inertia. In this writer's view this is completely understandable.

9.0 Tweeddale Area Flood Advisory Group

Colin Kerr requested that we assist the group by providing a formal basis for a grant application to the Tweeddale Area Partnership regional fund and provide the receiving bank should the application be approved. This grant application was formally agreed by PCC some months ago, but to another funding body. As members are aware, the previous application fell through. The grant will be used for the same purpose as was originally agreed – to purchase VHF handheld radios for resilience groups so that communications may be maintained during an emergency and in particular a flood event.

10.0 Kingsway – Untidy grass cutting

Following received

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Mr Tatler

Further update on the ground's maintenance at Kingsway. I have had a site walkaround with our ground's maintenance contractor to discuss issues with Kingsway. Although the grass cutting is finished for this year, we have discussed improvements on the clearing up after site works and hope next season, they are better equipped on this. They are now on the winter cut back of shrubs and hedges and again I am meeting on site to discuss the tougher cut back of some hedges so less works on hedges during the summer trims. I will also continually monitor the grass cutting once they start in April for an improved service.

11.0 The (3) Salmon Fountain @ the Eastgate

This clarifies the position of Floral Peebles role in maintaining the Fish Fountain: for example, they would respond if the water needed topped up, drained and refilled and if litter needs removed, and they will report faults and similar day to day working problems. They will not be responsible for things like repairs on the motor/ pump, electrical faults, and any possible damage. NOTE: This leaves the question as to whom, the latter issues are to be reported and who would then be responsible for resolution of the issue?

12.0 Tweedbridge Court – suggested names?

Caledonian Court – to reflect the railway history

Tweedbridge Court – to reflect the existing history

Tweedside Mill - to reflect the weaving history

John Campbell – to honour the man who dies recently and who was held in high regard

At the time of writing, these suggestions have been proposed but have attracted only a little feedback and support. Please consider prior to our next meeting and we can decide then.

13.0 Christmas Cheer

As a reminder – Those who are able join us are welcome to join us for a drop of Christmas cheer at a nearby hostelry after our meeting.

Peter Maudsley
Chair
Peebles and District Community Council