

Peebles & District Community Council

Chairman's Report

November 2023

1.0 Tweeddale Area Partnership

The last meeting was on 31 October in the Walkerburn Village Hall. A separate report (attached) considers the forthcoming NHS “change” conversations and the **Community** Hospitals Medical Model Steering Group

Two applications for funding had been made.

- a) Linton hotspur football Club were awarded £3,671.
- b) Conservation without Borders applied for £7,500. However, this was rejected on the basis that the TAP fund is for Tweeddale and the project was a Borders wide project and no applications had been made to other area partnerships.

Next meeting 06/02/23

2.0 Street Pastors

Street Pastors has been approved as per letter accompanying this report.

3.0 Royal Burgh of Peebles – Possible Anniversary Project

Nothing further on this topic currently.

4.0 Parking

Following the response from the public to the consultation, there will be no changes to the present charging arrangements. Better signage is to be introduced and some of the car parks were remeasured and remarked.

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5.0 Flood risk

There was an excellent presentation at the Tweeddale Area Partnership meeting by Colin Kerr of Walkerburn on flooding issues and this writer once again raised the issue of sandbags, their numbers, and strategic locations, particularly in relation to Walkershaugh, Peebles. It was noted that we had by pure luck, missed the bullet that struck further north, further south and further east!

6.0 Meetings Attended this Month.

04/10/23	Borders Community Action meeting in the Drill Hall
05/10/23	Pre-meeting meeting
12/10/23	PCC meeting
18/10/23	Place making meeting (PCT) Meeting with Councillor Tatler Meeting re the Baptist Hall
19/10/23	Place making meeting (PCT)
26/10/23	Tweeddale Community Network
31/10/23	Tweeddale area Partnership
01/11/23	Pre-meeting meeting
04/11/23	Old Town garden of remembrance – Missed it due to personal issue.
07/11/23	Community Hospitals Steering Group
09/11/23	SBCCN meeting at SBC HQ

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7.0 Scottish Borders Community Council Network.

At this time the SBCCN is still not operational, and it should be as it can be a very substantial support to the 69 community councils in the Borders, both at local and national levels. As you are aware, this writer was a core group member of the SBCCN for Tweeddale and PCC until assuming the PCC Chair. Being a core group member was a default position as no one else wanted it. Further, the position was not democratically held as the other Tweeddale community councils had no input into the appointment. Indeed, when contacted by the writer to work together, there was little response.

A meeting is to be held in SBC HQ on Thursday afternoon, November 9th. The writer will attend. The meeting is entitled "SBCCN – The Way Forward". This meeting is designed to consider the past and try to construct a new future. Your chair strongly supports this initiative. However, it will not be easy and if it is to work, it will have to overcome the current apathy.

Examples of feedback from CCs relating to the past organisation.

Based on 38 returns from 69 CCs – Do you attend SBCCN meeting? – 16

Blue are some of the responses from your Chair. There was more feedback, but this provides a good picture of the situation.

Basically, the Chair did not report back effectively on his activities. The Chair changed to James Anderson, who would have been excellent. However, he left to become a councillor.

There is limited communication from this forum. The meeting agendas are unclear and not that helpful. There is limited sharing of idea and the agenda is set in a top down method with no input from the CCs

No real leadership and documentation, e.g., Agendas are sometimes lacking and there's no specific communications coming to CCs from that Group.

Some of the time- we do receive communications from SBCCN however these could be improved on.

There seems to be a lack of information sharing to cc's.

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As I don't attend, I don't really know, but I am kept informed throughout the minutes, etc.

We do, however, receive emails from them, which seem to duplicate those received from SBC.

Is Community Engagement part of SBCCN because Clare Malster seems to be the main point of contact between us and SBC

It is good to share and find common issues and common positive results

[A previous community council group did not rate the SBCCN and pulled out. during the last grouping, our Planning Convener attended the SBCCN core group. It was seen that the previous criticisms had some validity, but it was thought valuable to continue.](#)

Either invisible or used as a personal platform for pet projects

I think in the past, some community councillors attended SBCCN meetings, but found it wasn't particularly helpful to our challenges.

It appears to be only a talking shop of individuals who raise their own individual concerns, which are not necessarily relevant to other CCs.

Not fully inclusive or relevant to us

Only attended one meeting to date and it was not very productive.

Engagement with other community councils

For us, it feels as though it would be good to have meetings with other community councils which are like ourselves - small and serving diverse rural communities.

I think our CC would really benefit from sharing experiences with other similarly rural community councils - our community is very different from many CCs in the SBC area.

There is no opportunity to work together across the Scot Borders with other CCs

Don't attend due to lack of resources

[Our Planning Convener became CC chair and had to pull out of the SBCCN due to workload and no one took over.](#)

As our CC does not have a representative it is not possible to comment.

Having not been for several years I don't know what goes on now - gave up because of lack of time.

No clear aims

No-one really knows or understands what this group does and its purpose. No real leadership and documentation, e.g., Agendas are sometimes lacking and there's no specific communications coming to CCs from that Group.

What could be done differently?

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It would be beneficial to sub divide the SBCCN into regions, so that this information sharing could be more relevant. For this reason the quarterly Tweeddale Area Partnership meetings would be better run by the Tweeddale CCs themselves with Councillors invited to attend, as they do the individual CC meetings.

I think our CC would really benefit from sharing experiences with other similarly rural community councils - our community is very different from many CCs in the SBC area. I think in the past, some community councillors attended SBCCN meetings, but found it wasn't particularly helpful to our challenges. Would it be possible to have sub groups for similar types of CCs?

Sub forums where there is a common theme/issue

Berwickshire Community Council Forum

Berwickshire Community Council Forum has been operating separately for many years. It is independent of SBC and provides a forum for community councils to come together and discuss matters of relevance to them and the locality

Review purpose

Have better aims

Have a clear plan, structure and format which links with SBC better.

We think it should be a more consultative body on wider issues.

Meetings

I don't know, at the meeting I attended I felt that there was a group of well-established members who controlled the narrative and it felt difficult for new members to have input.

Work on proper agenda setting

It is very difficult to organise over such a wide area. like all organisations it has its ups and downs, it would be nice to see some younger members take up the opportunity to get involved.

The present format of the SBCCN cannot work properly. with 69 community councils, it is like herding cats! James Anderson correctly wanted core group members to act as an area focal point. Tweeddale mostly showed no interest.

Zoom/Teams meetings were useful, and it is a pity that they have been discontinued. Members would appreciate it if this could be in conjunction with in-person meetings.

Area Partnerships

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Suggest you strengthen the Area Partnership, give more power to the CCs within them and more money for them to allocate. The AP can then have its own member on the SBCCN core group.

Not relevant

In its current format, we don't consider it to be of any use to our CC.

Peter Maudsley

Chair

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