

Peebles & District Community Council

Chairman's Report - November 2024

1.0 Peebles Town Action Plan (Place Planning)

The plan has been copied to all members and the time for comment expires on 20 November. To the best of our ability we, PCC represent the interests of the people of Peebles, usually based on the "greatest good for the greatest number". These inter-relating plans are one of the most important issues that PCC and PCT have been involved with. They represent, again, to the best of Crick Carleton's ability and his supporting team, the aspirations and perceived needs of our town. The plans cannot satisfy everyone, that would be an impossibility, they will not be perfect, they are produced mainly by volunteers in their spare time. However, they are our best shot at it. It is my expectation that all members will have read this document. It is too important to leave it for others. Comments should be sent to Crick before the deadline.

2.0 December Meeting

It has been suggested that following next month's meeting, we adjourn to a nearby hostelry for a Christmas drink. Good idea, the first round is on me!

3.0 NHS – Community Hospitals Review

There is no feedback on the ownership of the Children's Cemetery by borders NHS.

There is only a promise of an update on the Community Hospital parking and minor injuries of a response by the year's end.

The first meeting of the new Community Hospitals' group was 13 November. However, it has been cancelled. To be fair, the brief precis of the more complex explanation noted below is accepted – at least for now.

There are pilots, initiatives, and tests taking place across the system, each with the potential to influence the approach. This includes the development of a new Clinical Strategy. BGH want to ensure all this can be fully integrated into the thinking.

4.0 Untidy Grass Cutting

We have been asked if we can support a complaint about the above as follows.

I am a resident of Kingsway, Peebles. Through the course of 2024 I have made multiple complaints to Eildon Housing Association about the mess left by a firm they contact to cut the grass in the common areas of Kingsway. Although they have undertaken to talk to the contractors the problem persists. The pavements are left covered in grass cuttings every time the grass is cut, with no attempt to sweep up. I therefore must spend a considerable amount of time clearing up. I understand there have similar complaints from residents on other parts of Peebles.

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The two photographs, show the problem from the resident's perspective. Do any members have a view on this?



5.0 Haylodge Park Proposals

There was an online meeting which provided some valuable and valid feedback. Unfortunately, some proposed attendees, including the person tasked with answering the questions, were confused and either didn't attend or attended late. However, it was agreed that an onsite meeting would be beneficial. Items highlighted (and elsewhere) included the following:

- There are superb views at the top and the proposed tree planting may harm the view.
- There are beautiful daffodil banks, and the proposed tree planting will damage them
- The proposals apparently now take account of the sledging hill, but will they also allow the Easter Egg rolling?
- Trees at the bottom of the sledging hill would create a collision hazard for sledgers.
- The highland games are concerned about a possible reduction in the parking spaces available in the present area.
- One member of the public doesn't see the need for any change at all.
- Another, considered that we live in a country area and wildlife doesn't need all this effort

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Your chair without bias notes the following from his perspective.

- The Victorians planted trees for future generations, and we don't do half enough.
- He agrees with the first five bullets as having validity
- Nature needs corridors in which to move from area to area. Evidence suggest that all nature needs some help at present.
- The stand taken by PCC in this respect, as in any other, should be the "greatest good for the greatest number".

Questions arising from some of the debate:

- Who generated these ideas? What is the background?
- Some of the proposals depend on volunteers. Who will volunteer and how will it be guaranteed that the support continues?
- What is a true consensus?

These bullets are designed to give a basis for thought and debate going forward. The onsite meeting will be at Haylodge Park, meeting at the public conveniences at 15:00 on Monday 18 November.

6.0 Tweeddale Area Partnership

The next meeting is 04 February 2025.

The last meeting on 29 October had a presentation on the "Creating Hope Awards" which was promoting mental health and the reduction of suicides. There was an update on the proposed Mountain bike Innovation Centre in Innerleithen. An update by Crick Carleton on Place Making and consideration on the latest applications for funding, of which there was one. This was not approved, as all the information requested of the applicant had not been made available. It is important that any body making an application should complete the application forms properly and respond to any requests for further information.

The writer is fully supportive of the work of the funding committee.

7.0 Campervans

The pot has been stirred, but where do we go from here? When something proves difficult, the easiest option is always to do nothing. We know there is an issue. How can it be resolved? If we await SBC, it could be years. We at least need to keep it live.

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8.0 Baptist Church Hall – Cleland Site

No new information.

9.0 Windfarms

To set the scene for discussion.

Michael Marshall has recently done a considerable amount of valuable work on the windfarm issues. Your chair is completely supportive of Michael's position that we should not be rushed into signing any document with any windfarm that ties us to their first offer. It is unlikely to be their final position. Further, PCC is an organisation set up under statute to represent the community. As such PCC must seek the best possible deal and not necessarily the first on offer.

Your chair considers that PCC does not have the resources to manage large amounts of money on an ongoing basis. Nevertheless, PCC has an important role to play in setting up fair community benefit and ownership structures across our community whilst avoiding potential conflicts of interest. We are actively working towards a solution.

Two links are provided below. These are purely for information and are not a recommended way ahead.

<https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.heraldscotland.com%2Fnews%2F24448129.local-groups-taking-control-wind-fcommunity-benefit%2F&data=05%7C02%7C%7C21877825693243e48e1608dd019e587e%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C638668501771605786%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiwlLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMlslkF0ljoiTWFpbCIsIlIdUljoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=QROCswt2q5Df5z3oGFF4eju3pg5NylqQLKLgab8BSXk%3D&reserved=0>

<https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.camptbeltowncommunitycouncil.uk%2Fwindfarm-trusts%2F&data=05%7C02%7C%7Cae617f14497c4a110a6f08dd019eca30%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C638668503676159484%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiwlLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMlslkF0ljoiTWFpbCIsIlIdUljoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=8Q%2B3MW%2FCpyXph%2FhR50kkG2sBuZ66dONXaRELO9G4Utc%3D&reserved=0>

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10.0 Meetings Attended This Month

10.10.24	PCC Meeting
24.10.24	Councillor Thomson and the Police on Teams
29.10.24	Tweeddale area Partnership
30.10.24	Dave Hodson of Tweeddale Youth Action
05.11.24	Common Good special meeting on Haylodge Park on Teams Councillor Tatler on the three Salmon
07.11.24	PCC Pre-meeting meeting
10.11.24	Act of Remembrance at the Cenotaph.

11.0 Working party on non-financial support to community councils

No change – Are SBC are still working on it?

12.0 Peebles Youth

As all members know, the article published in Peebles Life generated some feedback. Interestingly, this took three distinct forms. 90% of the feedback from members was supportive of the article, as was all verbal feedback received from the community. Three sources of written feedback expressed concern. All these echoed similar views that all the good being done was not highlighted. Two, demonstrated a real level of concern amongst some teachers at the High School. However, with only 500 – 600 words to play with, to expand the article was impossible. The following was an exchange with Dave Hodson of TYA. Since then, your Chair has met with Dave and seen the great work he is doing both in Peebles and Innerleithen. Dave will meet with us at our December meeting. P.S. His Pizzas are great! You are also aware of another exchange with a member of the public and this also has had a positive outcome. It may be possible to write another article in due course to provide a more balanced view.

Hi David

I'm glad that you could identify with many of the points I made in the article, and I have no doubt about the excellent work being carried out by TYA. I'm not a journalist. The dozen or so articles that I have written for Peebles Life are all connected with the work of the community council. In this respect the work was linked closely with Peebles Youth Voice and Oor Space Youthy, both groups making their own valuable contribution in their different areas of focus.

I'm not an expert, in fact my knowledge in this respect is severely limited. However, it is clear that children of all ages need support of different kinds and that not one organisation is likely to be able to provide everything that is needed. Support from central and local government is inadequate and getting worse and volunteers are thin on the ground. The community council tried to provide help to the two groups mentioned and unfortunately it hasn't been enough to stop one closing down. One we were originally instrumental in providing assistance with their startup and the other approached us for support.

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During my time with PCC , I'm not aware of TYA being linked to us although there is no reason why it can't be. We would welcome one of your team to join us and in so doing act as the link between us and youth issues. A presentation to our team on TYA would not be wasted either. Key people on or linked to our team have recently stepped back and no one has come forward to replace them which offers an opportunity to you.

Dave got back including as follows:

Thanks for getting back to me and what you say makes sense. It's been a long time since I last gave an overview of TYA activity at a PCC meeting, and I would welcome an opportunity to tell you a little about the work we are doing and the impact it is having on young people's lives.

NOTE: Peebles Youth voice has been saved, so far as is understood at this time.

13.0 Live Borders

No change

14.0 Meeting with Sargeant Laing and Councillor Thomson

This was online and included representatives from several Tweeddale CCs. Our new sergeant had only been in post for two days. The important points to note are that we have a promise that Police will follow up anything that hard evidence has been provided for. Although this does come with a caveat that resources are stretched. The importance of our monthly report was discussed and understood.

One CC is looking at a gadget that may be useful.

A problem that we have, is that when SBC measure road speeds they use the two tapes that we often see. They obtain all sorts of data, but it can be dated and in the example of South Parks, we are quoted only average speeds and not maximums. As an example, cars turning off the road into driveways or side roads reduce average speeds markedly. SBC and the police don't work closely together. This gadget apparently costs £200 and analyses traffic in all respects. It is not a camera. However. Sargeant Laing noted if we can prove a road has a real problem at a specific time of day, that would allow them to send resource to that spot. The CC who has one, may be prepared to lend/rent it out.

Peter Maudsley
Chair
Peebles and District Community Council