

Minutes of the 281st Meeting of the Community Council held on Thursday 11th March 2021 at 7.00pm via Zoom.

Present: L.Turnbull, A.Snoddy, L.Hayworth, P.Maudsley, M.Bruce, G.Mackie, I L.Marriott-Dowding, G.Ramsay, A.MacKenzie, J.Shearer, S.Watson, S.Montgomery, S. Rae, Cllr Tatler, Cllr Small, Cllr Anderson

Members of the public in attendance: Lyndal Bale, Hilary Scott (Peebleshire News) Steve Dube, Simon Ritchie

Open Forum: Simon Ritchie spoke about his Keep Peebles Clean initiative. He has noticed a lot of litter on the streets, in laybys, in hedges and in parks. He suggests a network of local volunteers who can litter pick at their own pace, in their own time and at their own risk. There would be a need to coordinate volunteers to have maximum impact. He is pleased with the response so far to his post on social media. Some equipment is required, for example, gloves, litter grabbers, hi vis jackets, and strong refuse bags. Simon has approached McDonalds for funding of approximately £200.00 to buy 10 kits. If that is unsuccessful he is happy to crowd fund. A conversation will be needed with SBC regarding how filled bags can be collected.

L.Turnbull said Simon had clearly identified a problem, and it was nice to see someone come forward. G.Ramsay has been the coordinator of the Community Council litter picks held in the past, before Covid restrictions. Cllr Tatler offered to facilitate a meeting between SBC Officer Brian Runciman (foreman at Eshiels Recycling Centre), G.Ramsay and Simon to take the project forward.

G.Ramsay confirmed the Community Council own approximately 20 litter grabbers and 30 hi vis vests which are stored at the School Brae Hub. L.Turnbull suggested that Simon could arrange to collect the equipment from the Hub, pass it onto those people interested in volunteering, and keep a record of to whom it has been distributed. L.Hayworth said on behalf of Peebles Community Trust that arrangements could be made for Simon to uplift the equipment from the School Brae Hub, and if there was any problem with getting public liability insurance then PCT would be happy to help. L.Turnbull asked PCC Treasurer G.Mackie if Peebles Community Council's insurance would cover this activity? G.Mackie explained PCC's activities are covered under the umbrella of Scottish Borders Council's insurance policy and he would need to check the wording. He assumes it provides third party cover but is uncertain if it provides any cover for those doing the litter picking. He will make some enquiries.

Cllr Tatler told Simon that volunteers at organised litter picking events have to read and sign off a health and safety statement. P.Maudsley confirmed that having a Health and Safety policy would probably be a requirement of any insurance cover.

J.Shearer asked what should be done about bigger pieces of litter, for example dumped furniture. The response was to contact SBC to uplift it.

Simon thanked the Community Councillors for all their suggestions and support for the project. L.Turnbull wished him every success.

Apologies: S.Hamilton, E. Rae, O.Olesheva, Cllr Bell, Cllr Haslam, Cllr Chapman

Minutes of previous meeting: Proposed by S.Watson, seconded by P.Maudsley

Matters arising-

Children's Cemetery: A.Mackenzie said that Emma and Lisa have had a meeting with Ruarraig of Beltane Studios to discuss their ideas. Ruarraig has been to Galashiels and looked at the SiMBA Tree there and has also come up with some suggestions. There will be a site meeting next week at the

Children's Cemetery after which they hope to have a viable proposal. A.Mackenzie will let L.Turnbull know the time and date so he can also attend if available.

Taxi Ranks: L.Turnbull said that this issue has been bubbling away for over a year. Taxi drivers were unhappy when SBC removed the taxi rank outside The Park Hotel a few weeks ago. There is no easy solution to any of this. If we remove some parking spaces, as taxi drivers would like us to do, it could damage other businesses in the town. The taxi rank outside The Park does cause an obstruction. Members of the public have approached the Community Council complaining about this, and we would like to try and resolve this as amicably as we can. G.Ramsay has had a conversation with SBC Officer P.Gilhooley, and it has been suggested that we try and achieve a compromise between taxi drivers and other users of parking spaces on the High Street. It was proposed that we give the taxi drivers one more space outside the Trespass shop and offer them two spaces outside the County Hotel. The two taxi spaces outside the Park Hotel would be removed. L.Turnbull thinks this is a reasonable compromise. G.Ramsay thinks this is a good option and he will speak to (SBC Licensing Standards Officer) Mike Wynn who can put it to the taxi drivers for their opinion. G.Mackie still feels that the idea to move the bus stop to the Eastgate car park, as suggested at the last meeting, is possibly a better, longer term solution. There have been objections in the past to this, but maybe it can be kept in the background in case a compromise cannot be reached with the taxi drivers. L.Turnbull agreed.

Social Media Policy: S.Rae hopes to have this finished shortly

Community Council Review Scheme: Cllr Tatler has been trying to persuade other Community Councils across Tweeddale to select a second person to attend these meetings. A meeting will be held before the Tweeddale Area Partnership meeting on 30th March to try to resolve the issue. Cllr Tatler has received a couple of nominations already (one from PCC and one from another Tweeddale CC). The next Review meeting will be on 18th March at 6pm. Anyone can join in to observe it and can message in with any questions. P.Maudsley said any delegate should liaise and feedback to the other Community Councils. He will try to attend the Review meeting.

Location of 20mph Electronic Signs: There has been a recent consultation about the 20mph signs and SBC suggested three locations be considered: Kingsmeadows Road, Innerleithen Road, and Neidpath Road. Community Councillors made other suggestions that were felt would be more suitable, and all were submitted to SBC. However the three original places have been chosen.

Chairman's report: Mrs Wilson, the Head Teacher at Kingsland School, has submitted her notice of retirement. She is very well known in Peebles for her commitment to the town which she has demonstrated over many years through her involvement with different organisations. Her contribution to the town, and particularly the children, has been significant. She will be missed, and we are happy to pass on our best wishes for her retirement.

Chambers Institute Trust: The Chairman of CIT Cllr Chapman was unable to attend tonight's meeting but had asked Cllr Tatler to give a brief report about the last CIT meeting. The Trustees had discussed how to progress the consultation process in terms of the wider project of the Chambers Institution. They have also agreed the consultation process regarding the improvements to the kitchen because it is important that users are consulted in the way the kitchen is designed.

Under AOB Cllr Bell had raised the issue of additional Trustees and there had been a discussion about the purpose of these trustees. They decided that there could be 2 additional lay representatives, perhaps from a user group/stakeholders group (similar to the management committee at Innerleithen Memorial Hall), and someone experienced in either historical architecture

or historical conversions. Councillors will take advice from legal officers at SBC about appointing additional Trustees.

Cllr. Anderson understands the frustration at how infrequently the Trust has met. She appreciates the need to meet more frequently and engage with the people who rent spaces within the building. They are keen to have someone with experience of curating exhibitions and bringing buildings to life. She is very keen to set up a Museum of the Written Word.

L. Turnbull thanked both Councillors but said he is disappointed in the response. He wrote to Cllr Chapman following last month's Community Council meeting setting out why it is not just important to have community representation on CIT, but essential. However he acknowledged that the Trustees have started the process of looking at the number of Trustees on the Board and the added advantages that that could bring. He said that It is important to note that the Chambers Institution Trust is more than the Burgh Hall, and the thought that two representatives from the community can adequately address our concerns is a mistake. You have to look at the wider picture and when you look at the Chambers Bequest it is made quite clear there should be community representation. This was reinforced by the legislation in 1911. The Community Council has done a lot of research into this and think there should be a minimum of 5 community representatives on the Chambers Institution Trust. It has already been mentioned about the formation of a user group, and once again the example of the Management Committee at Innerleithen Memorial Hall was cited. They have helped quite a lot to run and manage that hall and that proves the point that community representation is worthwhile. Going back to the actual Chambers Bequest and legislation, we are of the view that this is not optional. The fact that the Board want two representatives is good but there should be more. That is what the Community Council would like to see, we are perfectly willing, along with the Civic Society, to work with Trustees to develop a case asking for more community representation to put before the full council at SBC. We are conscious the current Trustees are busy councillors and perhaps that is why there has been a paucity of meetings over the years, and that is an example of how community representation could help with this. It is very clear from our research that management and oversight of the Trust could benefit from the help we are offering. We would like councillors to consider the points we have made and take them back to SBC and consider the level of community representation on the Board. We have waited for 5 years since the Page Park report to make progress. We don't see that there is any reason to rush things now until a new structure of Trustees is established and suggest we put a hold on consultation until this issue is resolved.

Cllr. Anderson acknowledged frustration at the time that has passed with no action but believes it is important to move ahead with the impetus that has recently been injected. If we don't progress that now we could lose another 6 or 9 months without activity. There are a lot more options on how to conduct a consultation in a digital way. We are going back to SBC about the structure of the Trust. We have to have regard to the people who rent the facility and secondly we want to bring the building to life. Once consultation starts other things may follow which could engage people on the future of the Trust.

P. Maudsley said the beneficiaries are the people of Peebles and surrounding area as outlined originally with the bequest and the people who rent spaces in the building are not beneficiaries. They have a stakeholder part within it but not as beneficiaries. Going back to the 1911 legislation there has to be more community representation. He understands that the consultation going on at present is looking at users of the building during the past 12/18 months but as there has hardly been any use during this period how will this be quantified? Lastly, regarding the work in the kitchen, how does that fit in with the overall vision for the building?

Cllr. Tatler clarified that the Memorial Hall in Innerleithen is a Common Good Asset which is run by Live Borders and the Management Committee oversee that it is done properly. The CIT discussion was about what additional Trustees could bring to the Board rather than simply to add to the numbers. Obviously as we go forward we may identify more roles for people. The consultation process looked back at users of the kitchen when it was open previously and we were responding to the community who had asked for the kitchen and hall to be refurbished.

P.Maudsley asked how the refurbishment of the kitchen and hall fitted in with the overall plans for the building? Cllr Tatler responded that dealing with the whole Institution will take longer; they are giving priority to what needs to be done now.

L.Turnbull stated that over the past 5 years there has been a lack of meetings by the Trust, and analysis of those meetings shows that a lot of items expected to have been covered have not. SBC were right in 2010 when they said the Chambers Institute Trust needed to be re-invigorated and they recruited lay members at that time. He does not want to hark back to what happened in 2014 but something *did* happen and the community representatives resigned en masse. A lot of progress had been made between 2010 and 2014. There were plans to get charitable status for the Trust which would have opened up other sources of funding. It is this period of stagnation that has prompted the desire for community representation. It is not about holding the Chambers Institute Trust back, but wanting to see the Burgh Hall and surrounding buildings being used well for the community of Peebles and the surrounding area.

Cllr Anderson reassured the Community Councillors that the Trustees have heard the concerns and share the frustration. They would now like to proceed with updating the vision statement and putting it out to consultation. A robust timeline needs to be put in place. They will come back with proposals.

L.Turnbull felt that plan did not meet with the issue of concern – lack of lay representation on the CIT Board. Cllr Anderson felt that if lack of progress was the issue then that is being dealt with.

M.Bruce said it appears that the difference is that the Trust say 2 additional Trustees with specific roles is their preferred route, whilst the Community Council would like there to be 5 Trustees. Perhaps the way forward would be to seek permission from the full council at SBC for up to a further 5 Trustees with 2 appointed immediately. Then if a further need for extra roles is identified further down the line those roles can be filled without a need to return to SBC.

Cllr Tatler agreed this is a sensible suggestion but reiterated that they still need to get the principle approved to appoint additional Trustees. He doesn't think they need to get a certain number of Trustees approved: it is important to appoint the right people as and when the need arises.

L.Turnbull said it is the structure over the past 5 years that has got us to this impasse, and it is the structure that has to change.

G.Mackie welcomed the decision that there could be Trustees in addition to the Councillors, and noted that a specific number can be changed in the future. He supported Cllr Anderson's plea that progress should not be stopped as the main complaint is that things have not happened quickly enough. Our SBC Councillors *are* representatives of the community and they have been elected by the democratic process. Give them credit and respect for that. Let them get on with the task, with the addition of some lay people. Cllr Anderson thanked him for his comments.

P.Maudsley asked if Cllr Anderson could copy him in any information with regards to the Vision Statement of the Chambers Institution.

Cllr Tatler confirmed that the Trustees will be seeking advice from SBC's legal officers, hope to have another CIT meeting within the next month, and will come back with a response after that. L.Turnbull asked what they would be asking for at the meeting in relation to community representation? Cllr Tatler said they will be liaising with the legal department at SBC to establish the process they need to go through to get additional Trustees.

L.Hayworth asked L.Turnbull if the research done by PCC and Peebles Civic Society into the background of the Trust could be encapsulated and passed to CIT and copied into SBC's legal department to clarify the terms of the original bequest and the subsequent legislation passed over the years?

L.Turnbull said he would do that, and would hope that this time he would receive a response from the CIT Chairman. Cllr Anderson asked that they be copied in to that letter as well.

Policing Issues: The Police Report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Little comment had been generated by it. However J.Mitchell had raised the increasing number of antisocial behaviour incidents

lately. There has been vandalism in Haylodge Park and at Venlaw, where youths destroyed the wooden handrail. M.Bruce reported that issue at the Tweeddale West email address and subsequently sent photos of the damage and received an acknowledgement. The community patrol's ability to deal with antisocial behaviour is, as always, a simple case of being in the right place at the right time. A reportee who witnessed some damage taking place didn't have the ability to report this issue and so the opportunity was lost. Police are aware that it is a group of a few individuals who have caused trouble in the past and no doubt will in the future, but the Police haven't been able to catch them in the act! Please use email or 101 or, if it is a really dangerous or an emergency situation dial 999, especially if you are a witness to a crime in action or you feel threatened by the perpetrators.

Another incident which post-dated the issuing of the Police Report was a large gathering by motorcyclists at the Innerleithen Road petrol station. M.Bruce discussed the matter with Sergeant Grainger who was already aware of the matter. It was reported in the Peeblesshire News that 2 of them were Police motorcyclists. Sgt Grainger has undertaken to establish the truth of the matter.

Police have been routinely visiting all the known tourist hotspots across the Borders, and have detected people from outwith the area, including mountain bikers at Glentress and cars at Kingsmeadows car park. M.Bruce said the Police do speak to the offenders, send them on their way, and he has no doubt that if the circumstances were appropriate they would issue fixed penalty notices.

L.Turnbull said that this afternoon he had received a report of antisocial behaviour in School Brae and police are investigating. There was also an incident at the School Brae toilets on Tuesday afternoon between 2pm-4pm in the disabled cubicle. The door had been propped open and inside the toilet there was evidence of drinking and other paraphernalia. If anyone sees any misbehaviour please report it. It is essential that police get to know about these incidents.

Cllr Tatler had met with Sgt. Grainger this week. He was extremely complimentary about how the relationship is working with the Community Council, which Cllr Tatler thought was largely down to M.Bruce.

Councillors Reports

Cllr.Tatler: The Skate Park consultation process is ongoing at the moment: please take part if you can. There have been a number of poles, both metal and wooden, popping up all over Peebles courtesy of BT Open Reach. They have appeared without any warning, and there have been a lot of complaints. No one is sure what they are intended for or what they are planning to do. Cllr Tatler has arranged a meeting with the chairman of BT Open Reach on 23 March.

The riverside path behind Haylodge Health Centre: Council engineers have come with a scheme but is quite expensive. Once it has been resolved SBC Officer Paul Franklin would like to give a presentation to PCC.

Potholes are a big concern. There were issues with 18 Class A and B roads in the area and 9 have now received attention. Between 14th February and 5th March 2,159 potholes have been dealt with. They are only temporary repairs which is not ideal but the jet patching machine will be brought into use from 15 March and SBC have hired 2 additional jet patchers as well.

Cllr Tatler would like to thank the Resilience Group in Peebles for their activities during the recent storms. The river did top, and the Resilience Group were on the lookout for the whole of the time. What the group do for the town is much appreciated.

A.Snoddy commented that she had not received any information regarding the skate park. Cllr.Tatler will send it on.

Cllr. Anderson - The council met on 25th February and agreed to freeze the council tax. There is a full budget meeting on 19 March. Cllr Tatler and a group have been working on drafting an anti poverty strategy. There was a Sustainable Development Committee meeting on 8th March at which there was a presentation by youth ambassadors, one of whom was from Peebles High School. The presentation was about the need to stop using and purchasing single use plastic bottles in schools. The design for

the Peebles High School is aiming for it to be a net zero building. There was a short consultation with parents last night and there will be a fuller consultation in the next couple of months. L.Turnbull said he has been approached by parents who want to see some progress; some youngsters who started at the High School last year probably won't get the benefit of the new building. Cllr Tatler confirmed that the project was still on schedule.

L.Hayworth wanted to confirm that 1% of the Council's budget will be ringfenced for participatory budgeting, and that decisions about that spending will be at grass roots level and not pre-allocated.

Cllr. Small - The planning application to build 22 houses behind Edinburgh Road was overwhelmingly rejected. Cllr Anderson said she had been going to speak against the proposal but the developer had appealed to the Scottish Government Reporter before the meeting so it did not arise.

Treasurer's Report: - G.Mackie had circulated the February report. It showed a surplus of £2250+. Since then S.Rae has informed the Treasurer of the purchase of a laptop and accessories totalling £640 which leaves a reduced available fund of £1,613. There is currently £1,124 in the project fund which came from the Venlaw Woods Group, and there is a condition that the money is spent on environmental projects. It has been suggested that we might consider giving some or all of the money to a new group, a bio-diversity group principally consisting of members of Peebles Golf Club who want to plant wildflowers around the golf course. They also intend involving other groups and schoolchildren in this project. After this they plan to plant wildflowers in other parts of the town though this is likely to be part a longer term project. They are currently raising funds, and are a properly constituted group. They are operating under Peebles Community Trust, using their bank facilities but insurance is covered by the Golf Club. Perhaps we could consider making a contribution from the project fund of £500, which would leave a surplus should another group come forward wanting some money. L.Turnbull asked if that project would comply with the terms under which the money was passed to the Community Council. G.Mackie will investigate the relevant paperwork. He also asked for the new group to send something in writing about their plans. S.Rae suggested we should consider donating the money once they have finished planting wildflowers at the golf club and are ready to move to a wider area.

Planning Report: The Planning Report had been circulated prior to the meeting. P.Maudsley said build outs to traffic in South Parks are now being constructed.

It is important that if anyone sees transgressions by developers that they report them to SBC.

There is now a stopping up order on footpaths through Tweedbridge Court so it will not be long until construction begins. As stated by Cllr Small and Cllr Anderson the developer who wants to build behind Edinburgh Road lodged an appeal to the Reporter just as the SBC Planning Committee met to discuss the application. Nevertheless an informal discussion went ahead and the plans were rejected. P.Maudsley has heard that the developer will carry on submitting the plans till they are passed.

There are no objections to the plan to build a house and garage on farmland close to Whitehaugh Cottage.

Castle Venlaw: SBC Planning Department are looking for a new planning application as there have been a number of changes to the original approved plans.

A.Snoddy commented that she has heard that construction of Tweedbridge Court will not commence until May.

L.Hayworth said that the Scottish Government is planning to bring in legislation to ensure that developers leave a 5 year gap between attempts to get the same planning application passed.

Community Council Network: P.Maudsley reported that the Chair of the CC Network has written a 10 page letter to the Scottish Government. The Empowerment Act was passed by over 100 MSPs 6 years

ago and yet 2/3 of that Act have not yet been enacted. L.Turnbull said that there is a Holyrood Conference coming up next week regarding community empowerment and participatory budgeting and L.Hayworth has agreed to attend the conference on our behalf. The cost will be approximately £100. Everyone was in agreement that he should attend and the Treasurer approved the expense. Cllr Anderson has done a lot of work on the subject and will have a chat with L.Hayworth before the conference.

Tweeddale Area Partnership: The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 30th March. There are quite a few applications for funding coming up for consideration including from the Men's Shed, the Tennis Club, Outside the Box who are a training organisation who want to run a project to increase community involvement for those with hearing impairment, and Go Tweed Valley. There are opportunities for anyone involved in a group to make an application to the Area Partnership to access money from the Common Good Fund.

Cllr Tatler said there will be a discussion about the Community Fund at the Council meeting on 25th March so the conclusions will be known by the time of the TAP meeting on 30th March.

Peebles Community Trust: M.Bruce stated it has been a relatively quiet month concentrating on the smooth transition from outgoing board members to 5 incoming members, and getting them fully up to speed especially with the infrastructure projects and the development of the School Brae Hub. The Board has approved a series of professional appointments, most notably a chartered surveyor who will lead the refurbishment of the Hub on behalf of the Board

AOB

Jedderfield Farm is subject to a Community Asset Transfer request by Tweedgreen. SBC Democratic Services have notified us that as of tomorrow (12th March) their application will be open for consultation, details of which are in the window of the School Brae Hub. The Community Council will be engaging with the process, but it's essential the wider community also engages and let the Common Good know what you feel about the Tweedgreen proposals.

Tweedgreen are hosting a zoom meeting on 18 March at 6pm. If you have a view of Jedderfield Farm and what should happen there, please register and attend the meeting and let them know what you think.

L.Hayworth said that under the terms of a Community Asset Transfer the lease might be longer than it would be for a commercial company, and at a lower cost than for a commercial concern. There is also the option under Community Empowerment law to purchase the asset even in this case where the asset already belongs to the Common Good. However he expects more information will come out during the consultation process.

Cllr Tatler said the consultation is a 6 month process which started in January. If it is decided there is a potential deal between the Common Good and Tweedgreen there will be a second consultation.

L.Hayworth attended the bi-monthly meeting of the Common Good Trust. There were 2 requests: one from Interest Link Borders for £2,000, and one from the Highland Games committee for funding for a store in Haylodge Park to store equipment. The first application was approved, and further information was sought about the second.

Cllr Anderson said Radio Borders Cash for Kids are looking for a site to locate a clothes recycling bank. The only one they have in the Scottish Borders is located in Galashiels. Cllr Tatler suggested Cllr Anderson talk to Tweed Togs who have just secured an area in the Auction House. L.Hayworth suggested that there may be an opportunity to site a clothes bank at Eshiels Recycling Centre.

L.Hayworth will attend a conference called Place Plans. It is a concept that local facilities (e.g. schools, doctors, social work support, shopping) should all be within a 20 minute walk. He will feed back to PCC.

J.Shearer was concerned to see some vandalism when out on a walk recently. She also saw some youths buying alcohol in the local supermarket. She was advised to raise any concerns that alcohol might be being purchased by underage drinkers with the store manager.

A.Mackenzie has been trying to find out if there is documentation about the children's cemetery. They do not want to upset anybody when the new sculpture is erected.

There is an island on the Glasgow Road near the 30 mph sign. He has never seen anyone use it. The adjacent pavement has been destroyed as lorries have been squeezing through this space. Can the island be taken away? Cllr Tatler will find out about the cemetery and Cllr Anderson will deal with the traffic island.

A.Snoddy reported that E.Rae (unable to attend this evening's meeting) had been unable to contact BT Open Reach to discuss getting prior notice of roadworks. Cllr Tatler said he would raise the matter with the chairman of Open Reach when he meets him on 23rd March.

M.Bruce has contacted SBC about the damaged handrail at Venlaw steps, and Brian Runciman of SBC has responded that they are replacing it with a more robust one.

S.Rae asked what has been happening about the Baptist Church's new building in Victoria Park? It doesn't look like it's been touched for a while. Cllr Tatler said it is being constructed as and when they have money. L.Hayworth commented that the Pastor Ian Gray will be more than happy to chat with anyone if they have any issues.

Next Meeting Thursday 8th April at 7pm by Zoom.