



Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minute of the 283rd Meeting of the Community Council of the Royal Burgh of Peebles and District held on Thursday 13th May 2021 by Zoom

Present: L.Turnbull, A.Snoddy, L.Hayworth, L.Marriott-Dowding, M.Bruce, S.Montgomery, G.Mackie, S.Watson, J.Shearer, J.Mitchell, A.MacKenzie, C.Forsyth, P.Maudsley, S.Hamilton, J.Crawley, G.Ramsay Cllr Tatler, Cllr Haslam, Cllr Anderson

Members of the public: Hilary Scott (Peebleshire News), Kim Linge, Lyndal Bale, Rosemary Barley, Ellie Clarke

Open Forum: Rosemary Barley expressed concerns about anti-social behaviour within the community, and under-age drinking. She noted that 27 councils in Scotland have made it illegal for people to drink outside. Why is this not the case in the Borders? She also raised the issue of the spraying of chemicals to kill weeds in the park. She had contacted SBC and they responded that it was 'safe'. The spraying was done during wet weather and it continued to be wet for several days. The product is not safe until it is dry and could be harmful to pets and children playing. There were no warning notices. Ms Barley's third area of concern was about some properties on the High Street which have been empty for some time and which look unkempt. She wondered if anyone on the Community Council could speak to the owners regarding this? The Tatler Cafe has been up for sale for a very long time, and The Court House has boarded up windows.

L.Turnbull responded that the subjects of anti-social behaviour and the spraying of pesticides would be discussed later in the meeting. The Community Council has no authority to do anything about empty properties on the High Street, but we are here to represent the community, and we will try and address the issues raised. Cllr Haslam said that a 'Public Places Alcohol Ban' consultation was launched in March 2020. It should have concluded on 6th May 2020 but was overtaken by the Covid situation. However the consultation should come before Council in the next couple of months. The last time the issue was raised – in 2014 – some communities were in favour of the ban and some were against. The question is do we want to criminalise the majority for the actions of a few? Cllr Tatler is personally against the outdoor consumption of alcohol and is supported in that view by the Police and the Health Board.

Cllr Haslam explained that she owns the Court House and is in the process of getting the building renovated. Unfortunately Covid restrictions have delayed the work.

Cllr Anderson said she would be happy to discuss the use of pesticides with Ms Barley outwith the meeting should Ms Barley be unable to stay till the topic was discussed later.

Apologies: Cllr. Chapman, Cllr.Bell, Cllr Small, S.Rae, E. Rae.

Minutes of previous meeting: L.Turnbull noted that S.Hamilton was in attendance at last month's meeting and the Minutes had been changed accordingly. S Watson proposed, C.Forsyth seconded.

Matters arising:

Children's Cemetery:- The most recent design was circulated during the week. The memorial tree will be constructed on the paved area to avoid any sensitive areas. The plans have been forwarded to Diane Munro at SBC to get her thoughts on what is being proposed. Although not shown on the illustration the deceased names will hang on the

branches of the tree. L.Turnbull commented that the designs are stunning but he is surprised at the large size of them especially using the comparison of the human figures which are standing alongside the trees in the drawings. There are worries this large design would close up the space again. A.MacKenzie responded that a scaled version will be provided shortly. No estimate of cost has been provided yet but there is confidence that there will be funds available from various sources. M.Bruce would like to see a consultation with the families of children buried in the cemetery. A.MacKenzie responded that this idea was started by a focus group of over 20 parents who have children buried here. L.Turnbull said the right way forward is to get the scale drawing, then launch a full consultation with the families of children buried there, and also with the wider community.

Adopt a Phone Box:- J.Mitchell reported that no progress has been made. SBC have been very helpful and have contacted BT on behalf of Peebles Community Council. We await a response from BT.

Places of Interest Notice Board:- M.Bruce and A.MacKenzie are working on this project, and Ian Thorburn will do the sign writing. A.Mackenzie asked M.Bruce for a photo of the existing sign to pass on to Ian Thorburn.

Police Report: The Report has been circulated. An interview and an open letter by Sgt Rourke was published last week in the Peebleshire News and L.Turnbull stated he was disappointed with the tone of the article. It displayed a misunderstanding of the role of Community Councils. We have no power, no money and no authority. People have to understand we are all volunteers. The interview and letter contained material inaccuracies. The Chairman has decided not to respond to the article because we have to try to move on. He did have a long and very interesting conversation with the Area Commander, Chief Inspector Fisher. The police response in Peebles and elsewhere is likely to change but it will take time. He left that conversation feeling encouraged that we might find some solutions to the anti-social behaviour in the town. It is not the Community Council's responsibility to resolve the issues but we do agree there needs to be a community response to help the police sort out the problems.

M.Bruce has spoken with Sgt Granger who is keen to emphasise that statistically Peebles is getting more than its fair share of police resources. Sgt Granger also emphasised that Peebles has less anti-social behaviour than other towns. We need to ensure that every incident is reported either in person at the Police Station, or by phoning 101 or 999. We must try not to get into policing via Facebook. Often when Police respond to 101 calls about anti-social behaviour when they arrive at the scene they find there really aren't any issues - it can be simply young people sitting in a group. We need to have a positive approach and find a way of engaging with the good kids.

Regarding irresponsible driving - that is breaking the law and will be dealt with.

L.Turnbull suggested that we should form a small group to find some solutions to the anti-social behaviour. M.Bruce and S.Hamilton will look at some suggestions including the use of a bus, fire pits, a shelter. L.Turnbull said that Sgt Rourke had pointed out in his Peebleshire News article that perhaps young people could be contacted via the I pads which they have all been given by the High School.

Cllr Tatler said that he was encouraged by the positive attitude of M. Bruce. The two of them had met with Sgt Rourke – unfortunately David Hodson of Tweeddale Youth Action had not been available – to discuss various solutions. The vast majority of young people are not causing trouble, and the more activities they have, the less chance there is of anti-social behaviour plus it provides an opportunity to spot the ones who are the trouble-makers. Cllr. Anderson reported that following some issues in West Linton with anti-social behaviour two members of that Community Council and two from Lamancha Community Council have met with some young people to start a dialogue which so far seems to be resolving some of the issues.

Rosemary Barley stated that it is hard to get through to Police on 101 sometimes and a wait of 40/50 minutes can be incurred. It is understandable that policing will be diverted to areas of most need but policing numbers seem to be low on a Friday and Saturday evening in Peebles. The Chairman responded that the 101 service has been discussed many times at our meetings, and would reiterate that if it is a situation which requires immediate police action then the call should be made to 999. M.Bruce said that the police had reported that the average response time to 101 calls

last month was 2 minutes 7 seconds. Rosie Barley repeated that her experience was that she had had to wait for a long time.

Cllr. Tatler stated that people can also email 101 which has proved efficient. The Police are looking at recruiting Special Constables and will be starting a campaign on social media shortly.

A.Snoddy said that the resourcing of Police Scotland is a political decision and suggested that we send a copy of that part of our Minutes which refers to the Police Report to Christine Grahame, our local MSP, every month. G.Mackie agreed. No-one dissented and so the Chairman said that should now be done.

Chairman's report: We received a very nice email from Simon Ritchie thanking the Community Council for the support we gave him regarding his Keep Peebles Clean initiative.

Jedderfield Farm - Tweed Green had withdrawn their application for a Community Assets Transfer and are now forming a Community Interest Company. Since then the Community Council have received communications from members of the public regarding the SBC press release which says they are seeking new tenants but may consider selling the property. Those members of the public do not want the farm to be sold. No-one disagreed with the Chairman's statement that we are reflecting those views when we say to the Trustees of the Common Good Fund that we do not want the asset to be sold. Cllr. Tatler, Chairman of the Common Good Fund, was asked to note that comment. He responded that there would have to be a full consultation with the public before the asset could be sold.

Cycle Lanes and other changes - L.Turnbull submitted a response on behalf of the Community Council saying we considered the proposal was a poor idea. He contacted the relevant SBC officer last week to ask for the result of the consultation and was told that a meeting was due to be held this week with elected members. Councillors were not aware of this meeting, so we are still awaiting results of the survey.

Haylodge Path - L.Turnbull recently met Jeremy Cunningham. He is the Project Manager of the PCT Eddleston Water Path and Links Path projects (both funded by SUStrans). The work he is doing is under contract to Peebles Community Trust. The two men had a walk around the town together and J.Cunningham explained some of his ideas for changes on Tweed Green, on the High Street and along various other paths. One area that needs some resolution is the path along the north side of the Tweed between the swimming pool and Haylodge Park. He hopes to find a solution to the 'hump' there to make it easier to negotiate. L.Turnbull has put J.Cunningham in touch with Cllr Tatler and A.Mackenzie who have also been looking for solutions to this problem.

Chambers Institution Trust (CIT)

On 12 Feb L.Turnbull wrote to Cllr. Chapman in his role as Chairman of Chambers Institution Trust with regard to community representation on the Board of Trustees. On 22 March he wrote to the Chief Executive and Cllr Chapman on the same topic. He received a reply on Tuesday of this week from the Chief Executive, and yesterday he also received a response from Cllr Chapman. It was unfortunate that there wasn't time to consider the points in that letter before tonight's CC meeting. Cllr Haslam said a motion was being prepared, regarding community representation, to put before the next SBC meeting. Given that letter was only received yesterday and the SBC meeting was today, did it make it on? Cllr Haslam said it had not, as motions have to be tabled 2 weeks before the next Council meeting. The next full Council meeting will be in two week's time. L.Turnbull asked if the matter would be discussed at that meeting? Cllr Haslam said that would be up to Cllr Chapman as Chair of CIT but that it would be the intention of the 3 elected Councillors present. L.Turnbull asked if there would be any discussion with members of the Community Council before then? Cllr Haslam again said that would be up to Cllr Chapman. L.Turnbull said that Cllr Chapman referred to a 1973 Act in both his letter and his article in Peebles Life magazine. A group of people have done some research and there was further legislation in 1990 and 1994 which would suggest any reference to the 1973 legislation is spurious. There are a number of things in both responses that give cause for concern, and he has written to the Chief Executive to explain that the Community Council is compiling a detailed response with evidence regarding the fact that community representation on the Board of Trustees is essential.

P.Maudsley asked what, since SBC took over responsibility for the Trust, has been achieved? Cllr Haslam said that the letter from the Chief Executive listed all the work done. Cllr Anderson clarified that all SBC Councillors are Trustees but that the responsibility is delegated to the 6 elected Councillors for Tweeddale. She felt it was more important to move ahead with improvements than to spend time on the make-up of the Board. There will be further consultation with the public to decide what the priorities are. P.Maudsley said that this consultation simply follows on from the consultation held some years ago after a report by architects, and nothing seems to have happened. Cllr Anderson said that the implementation of the architects' report would have required a spend of £9.4 million which is why it has not happened. Cllr Tatler said meantime improvements to the hall and kitchen are being undertaken. P.Maudsley mentioned that the accuracy of a report in the Peeblesshire News that the electrics in the Burgh Hall were unsafe was confirmed in subsequent CIT Minutes. Cllr Haslam said that school children would not have been given use of the Hall (after the High School fire) if it had not passed safety assessments. P.Maudsley is compiling a report about the CIT on behalf of the Community Council and will have it ready within 2 weeks for submission to SBC prior to the discussion about the CIT at the next full Council meeting.

Councillors Reports

Cllr Tatler-

J.Cunningham of SUstrans and P.Franklin of SBC have been discussing alternative solutions to removing the 'hump' in the pathway behind Haylodge Hospital. It may involve removing some trees but there will be a full public consultation. He suggests we invite P.Franklin to our next CC meeting.

The next Tweeddale Area Partnership meeting will be on 15th June.

£80,000 of the 'Building Back a Better Borders' fund has been allocated to Tweeddale for arts & culture, sport community activities, and environmental activities. It will be for one off projects to get us restarted after the pandemic, and applications will open on 1st June. There will be a fast track programme for applications up to £1,500. For non-constituted groups the limit is £5,000, for constituted groups the limit is £15,000.

Cllr Anderson -

The Peebles High School online digital consultation will take place towards end of May.

The consultation on cycle lanes is being considered.

The next meeting of the CIT is on the 18th August. She wrote to SBC Officers to request the CIT Vision Statement that had been issued approximately 2 years ago but has not yet received it. In terms of the Area Partnership there was a discussion about democratising the way community fund applications are considered. We have had 6 meetings so far and are designing the criteria which should be taken into account when evaluating and scoring an assessment. There will be a final meeting and then the criteria will be put before the TAP meeting on 15th June.

Cllr Anderson is working with other Community Councils about responding to applications for forestry planting.

Cllr Haslam – Live Borders have confirmed that Peebles library will open in August but Cllr Haslam has asked Ian Jardine, Executive Member for Culture and Wellbeing, to write to Live Borders to see if this could be speeded up as the library is a vital resource in our community. She reminded us that whilst covid restrictions are easing, covid precautions are not.

Treasurer's Report:- A new financial year started on 1 April, and he has circulated the financial statement for that month. The environmental group to whom we gave £500, are very grateful and will give thanks in their next newsletter. The Treasurer hopes that our accounts can be audited this year with the easing of Covid restrictions. With reference to when we, as a Community Council, make our annual commitment to adhere to SBC's rules and receive our annual grant the Chairman has asked A.Snoddy to contact SBC regarding the timing of our Annual General Meeting

and whether we should hold it online. We still await a response. Cllr. Tatler thinks we should be able to hold elections, and therefore AGMs, in September.

Planning report- P.Maudsley circulated a report before the meeting. There were no questions regarding the application by Granton Homes for construction in the grounds of Kingsmeadows House. It was agreed that the Community Council is against a permanent sectioned off pavement in front of 42 High Street, particularly of the size requested, and to the signage proposed. We are awaiting a decision by the Scottish Government Reporter where the developer wants improvements by residents on a plot of land at Ballantyne Place removed.

Peebles Community Trust- M.Bruce circulated a report prior to the meeting. However there were two updates he wanted to add. The Railway Heritage sub group of Peebles Community Trust have now formally engaged a team of consultants who are going to guide them through the process of getting heritage funding, probably from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The team are extremely successful with their applications. There is also a crowdfunding campaign to help with this project. Moorbrook Textile's appeal to the Scottish Government against PCT's Right to Buy bid of the March Street Mills site has been refused. Once again PCT will have the right to buy the site at a price set by Moorbrook Textiles, or if PCT object to it, a price set by the District Valuer.

Cllr Tatler has been approached by someone regarding the roof works at the School Brae Hub, who commented about using tradesmen from outwith the area. This work did go out to local tender, but M.Bruce explained that the Apex Roofing (Newcastle) price was unbeatable. There was also a timing issue (a condition of the grant funding) that other companies could not adhere to.

AOB -

Walking bus - S.Hamilton is liaising with Aeger MacIvor about the 'walking bus' (children walking and cycling to school). She suggests that perhaps he could be invited to a future Community Council meeting to present his ideas. Volunteers are not needed yet, but he would like the Community Council to be involved in a supportive way.

20mph survey. L.Turnbull said the Community Council is fairly evenly split on whether or not it is a good/bad idea so it is extremely difficult for us to take a particular stance on the survey. He encouraged everyone to complete the survey as an individual. G.Mackie asked how the trial would be evaluated? We were informed that the point of the pilot is not to reduce accidents, but to encourage active travel which involves more cycling and more walking. The research is being done by Napier University. L. Turnbull wanted confirmation that the positioning of the 20mph signs was legal? Councillors unanimously confirmed that it was.

Chemical spraying in Haylodge Park - L.Turnbull had a discussion with Jason Hedley who said that the weedkiller is licensed and safe to use. J.Mitchell stated the weedkiller does do damage and other councils are using more environmentally friendly resources. Kim Linge declared that the main chemical in the weedkiller used is glyphosate, and the World Health Organisation has said it is carcinogenic to humans. We should be thinking of different methods to manage weeds and allow some wildflowers to grow. Cllr. Anderson stated this was discussed at the SBC Scrutiny Meeting on Monday. She is happy to pursue this matter with J.Hedley and look at other ways of managing 'weeds'. Cllr. Haslam asked if we want to kill weeds or would we prefer creative management of our parks? She would love to bring that option back to Community Councils. However the Council does receive a lot of complaints about weeds.

A.MacKenzie said it was reported on 27 April that chemicals were in Lyne water and was running like milk. The incident was reported to SEPA.

C.Forsyth asked when the swing park would be open in Victoria Park, and also asked about the unfinished church. The Chairman explained that the church is being progressed as and when they get funds. Cllr Tatler confirmed that the swing park will be open in the next couple of weeks.

L.Hayworth reported that the Scottish Government has an amount of money for play parks in Scotland and wondered if SBC were exploring whether this could be factored into the changes in play parks? Cllr Haslam stated that SBC would be due just 2% of that funding but it will be used.

J.Crawley commented that the 20mph restrictions are not being adhered to and was advised to respond to the survey.

J.Shearer spoke about the cutting down of trees near Rosetta Caravan Park. L.Turnbull responded that the trees are on private property and are not protected, therefore owner of the trees can do what they want.

S.Watson mentioned the lack of maintenance on roads, potholes that have been filled on several occasions, and asked when are the roads going to be repaired to the standard they should be? Peebles roads are not of a standard that people expect. Cllr Tatler invited S.Watson to contact him directly. Cllr Haslam said she would forward a note of the money spent on repairing roads over the past 3 years.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 10th June 2021 at 7pm