



Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

**Minutes of the 286th Meeting of the Community Council
held on Thursday 12th August 2021 at 7.00pm via Zoom.**

Present: L.Turnbull, S.Rae, A.Snoddy, P.Maudsley, J.Shearer, E.Rae, J.Crawley, G.Ramsay, A.Mackenzie, M.Bruce, S.Hamilton, L.Hayworth, J.Mitchell, O.Olesheva, S.Montgomery, Cllr Bell, Cllr Haslam, Cllr Tatler.

In attendance: H.Scott (Peeblesshire News), Alex Wilson

Apologies for absence: G.Mackie, C.Forsyth, Cllr Anderson, and Cllr Small

Minutes of the previous meeting: There were two amendments:

The A703 is the road between Peebles and Edinburgh via Eddleston

Regarding the pesticides meeting which Councillor Haslam and Councillor Anderson attended, Craig Blackie was in attendance but not representing the charity (Pesticide Action Network). He was representing SBC.

With these 2 amendments noted, approval of the Minutes was proposed by G.Ramsay and seconded by M. Bruce

Matters arising:

- Borders Buses – a later service has now been introduced
- Children's Cemetery – the project continues to make progress but unfortunately due to the holiday period the dimensions of the proposed memorial are not yet available.

Police Report: Circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman had a couple of queries: firstly concerning the reported assaults. Were they random attacks or perhaps they were domestic assaults? He also wanted to know the time lapse between incidents being reported and the Police response. M.Bruce had discussed both issues during his monthly conversation with Sergeant Granger. Domestic assaults are not included in the statistics so the perpetrators and victims cannot be identified. Regarding the time taken for a Police Officer to reach the scene of an incident: when an Officer arrives they press a button on their radio which lets the Control Centre know they have arrived and are dealing with the matter. It would probably require a Freedom of Information Request to get more detailed information but he suspects that the figures will not be available at 'postcode level' and we might just be able to obtain the average for the whole of Scotland. However he is prepared to raise the FOI Request and the Chairman asked him to do so.

M.Bruce went on to say that 9 times out of 10 the people involved in an assault know each other and that often alcohol is involved. There are not many assaults reported in Peebles. However there was the very serious incident of a stabbing in Cademuir Drive recently. He clarified that contrary to local gossip the first Police Officers who attended the scene were locally based and not from Haddington. He reassured the Chairman that despite people's fear the number of random assaults is in fact currently very low.

There followed a discussion about the recent difficulty incurred by a local shop owner when trying to report 2 thefts from her shop via the 101 call number. Sergeant Granger told M.Bruce that it would have been perfectly appropriate to call 999 in such circumstance. If someone simply wants a Crime Number for insurance purposes then they can use the 'Contact us' section of the Police Scotland website.

Anti-social behaviour: M.Bruce, S.Hamilton and youth leader D.Hodson have been out and about again in the evenings hoping to engage with young people. (Sometimes, despite their best efforts, they may not come across any youngsters.) They feel that they need to engage with Peebles High School and may, in time, have a conversation with the feeder Primary Schools as well. M.Bruce has emailed the Head Teacher at Peebles High School to request an urgent meeting to discuss how to resolve the issue of anti-social behaviour. M.Bruce's suggestion is that a discussion document is placed on each pupil's school Ipad inviting pupils to suggest their own solutions to the problem. It would be helpful if 2 or 3 young people then came to a Community Council meeting to tell us what their suggestions are. S.Hamilton supported M.Bruce's report.

Chairman L.Turnbull raised the matter of the recent vandalism in the Peebles Community CAN garden, as well as incidents of youngsters throwing items at passing cars in that area. Furthermore the Community Council has received reports of children and adults urinating near the new swing park. He wondered if there was anything SBC (who lease the land to Peebles CAN) could do by way of CCTV or better lighting? Cllr Tatler will see if signs can be displayed around the play park advising that public toilets are located in Kingsmeadows car park. He said that security of the garden is the responsibility of Peebles CAN. Hopefully more engagement with young people will dissuade them from bad behaviour. Cllr Haslam emphasised what a tiny proportion of young people misbehave. Cllr Tatler will have a conversation with the staff and volunteers at Peebles CAN about improving security.

The Chairman asked about the monthly meetings between Police Scotland and the SBC Councillors. Cllr Tatler explained that these meetings cover issues affecting the whole of Tweeddale

Chairman's Report:

Haylodge Health Centre – We have received emails of concern from members of the public about the appointment system at Haylodge Health Centre. We invited the Practice Manager to come along to one of our meetings but she responded by copying us into a response sent to a local resident. L.Turnbull said that the main points she makes in that letter are that the e-consult document does not replace telephone requests for an appointment; a patient can still ask for a named doctor; the patient can ask for an appointment that same day – the request would be appropriately triaged; the receptionists are an integral part of the team and

in order to direct the patient to the correct person (e.g. GP, physiotherapist, nurse practitioner) have to ask what the problem is. These changes do not affect just Peebles but have been introduced all over Scotland. L.Turnbull concluded by saying that if the Community Councillors are content with these explanations then there is no further need to request that someone from the Health Centre comes to speak with us. Several Community Councillors spoke of their own personal difficulties in accessing appointments so it was agreed the Secretary would write again to the Practice Manager asking for a representative to attend one of our meetings.

Live Borders – We have arranged for Ewan Jackson, CEO of Live Borders, to meet with us online at 7pm on Tuesday 17th August. We have received concerns from local residents about the slow re-opening of facilities managed by Live Borders, and limited access. The Chairman would like as many Community Councillors as possible to join that meeting.

Chambers Institution Trust – L. Turnbull asked Councillors about the progress of the officer report being prepared in relation to the CIT. Cllr Haslam said there was a Council meeting on 18th August when the subject of community representation on the Board of Trustees would be discussed. L.Turnbull said the topic is not listed on the agenda for that meeting. Cllr Haslam said he would have to ask the Chairman of the Board, Cllr Chapman (*who was absent from this meeting*) about that. L.Turnbull asked if the 6 Trustees have had any involvement in the preparation of the report? Cllr Haslam explained that the report would be written by SBC Officers for submission to the SBC Councillors. L.Turnbull asked if the Trustees had seen the detailed letter and report outlining deficiencies in the management of the Trust which was submitted by PCC some weeks ago, hopefully to assist with the compilation of the officer report. Cllr Haslam said that they had not seen it but it would have been considered within the Report.

SBC Councillor Reports

Cllr Bell: The online consultation about the new Peebles High School incurred some technical difficulties and will be rescheduled. He would encourage everyone to take part.

Cllr Haslam: Covid 19: Despite Scotland moving to 'Beyond Level 0' there is no change to the cleaning regime in public buildings, which has implications for the speed with which such places can re-open. The South of Scotland Enterprise Agency is consulting on its economic strategy. Peebles played a big role in this. Former Community Councillor Crick Carleton was a member of the Steering Group. The strategy can be found on the South of Scotland Enterprise Agency website as well as the SBC website.

Cllr Tatler: The path from Violet bank to the Cuddy will not be adopted by SBC.

The Parking Fees Pot for Peebles contains £65,000 (it has built up over a number of years; it is made up of parking fees and fines less the cost of operating the car parks). Applications for grants to make environmental or infrastructure improvements can be submitted. L.Turnbull asked if there was a limit to the amount applied for and Cllr Tatler said he was not aware of any.

Cllr Tatler, Cllr Bell, Cllr Haslam, and SBC Officers met with some local residents at the foot of Edderston Road to discuss road safety issues. As a result the sightline is to be

improved by the cutting back of some vegetation, with possibly new signage, and possibly a safer crossing.

Gravestone testing. Testing the stability of stones in the newer part of Peebles Cemetery will commence next year. SBC will try to notify relatives of the deceased where possible, and a notice of the works will be posted in the cemetery 28 days beforehand. Officers will notify SBC Councillors when the work is due to commence, who in turn will let Peebles Community Council know.

Next year SBC are going to have a trial where they opt not to use weedkiller in any public green spaces. They are also keen to identify a built environment area to use for the trial. They would like PCC to suggest a small area – they themselves thought perhaps The Old Town? L.Turnbull asked what was meant by ‘no weedkilling’? Did it mean ‘no glyphosate’? Cllr Haslam said there are a number of alternatives to consider. A foam machine is being used in Balerno, Edinburgh, and SBC Officers are going to have a look at it. Some areas will be left untreated. Other areas may be managed by local residents. She said that some residents are keen to let weeds grow while others want them removed, and it is necessary to find a compromise. The charity Pesticide Action Network have a 3 year plan to move Councils away from the use of pesticides. She said it might be helpful to have someone from PAN speak with us at a later date. S.Rae said local residents do not have the resources to manage weedkilling. Cllr Haslam said some people would want to remove the weeds by hand rather than use a spray-on weedkiller.

Cllr Tatler reminded the meeting that the next Tweeddale Area Partnership meeting will be on 24th August.

The Build Back a Better Borders Fund is still open and welcomes applications.

Cllr Haslam congratulated Peebles Rugby on the Festival of Rugby event which took place the previous weekend. That event was supported by the Build Back a Better Borders Fund.

Treasurer’s Report: circulated prior to the meeting. There were no questions.

Planning Report: circulated prior to the meeting.

Cloich Windfarm. P.Maudsley has received a big box of plans, photographs and drawings from the applicants. Although there are fewer turbines than first planned, these ones are substantially higher and will be seen from Edinburgh and the coast. He recommends that PCC object to the planning application. We have been granted an extension to the end of September to submit our comments to the Planning Department. P.Maudsley invite CCs to make an appointment with him to view the plans.

Road safety. A local resident, concerned about the speeding in March Street, had started parking on the rise opposite the exit from Dovecot Road onto March Street in an attempt to slow traffic down. Other residents complained that it made exiting from the junction quite dangerous. After an amicable exchange of emails with P.Maudsley this practice seems to have stopped.

Ballantyne Place. The developer has informed the residents that the matter is in the hands of his solicitor.

Castle Venlaw. The pattern continues where the developer takes action then applies for retrospective Planning Permission.

Excavated soil and gravel below Castle Venlaw. The retrospective application has been refused. SBC's Archaeology Officer is appalled at the damage done to the historical terracing. Sadly more damage will be incurred when the soil and gravel is removed.

Park Hotel holiday pods. PCC have objected.

L.Turnbull thanked P.Maudsley for his report. He also thanked those who respond to requests for views and comments and would encourage everyone to do so in future.

J.Mitchell asked why PCC had objected to the pods? P.Maudsley responded that the roof tops as well as a fence would be higher than the pavement, and block out the view to the hills in the south. Peebles Civic Society have submitted their objection, and also the site is in a conservation area.

Peebles Community Trust Report: circulated prior to the meeting. L.Turnbull thanked M.Bruce for his very detailed and useful report.

Any Other Business

AGM: L.Turnbull urged everyone who is required to re-apply to submit their nomination forms as soon as possible. The closing date is 21st September. E.Rae indicated she does not want to stand again.

Peebles in Bloom: A.Snoddy gave an update and urged everyone to attend the online Presentation Evening at 7pm on Thursday 19th August. L.Turnbull said that PCC had received a very nice letter from one of the garden owners expressing their delight at being nominated for an award, so it confirms how important recognition is to some garden owners. A.Snoddy added that the Secret Gardens were being photographed by a drone operated by local resident Graham Walkingshaw and that the photos she had seen so far were stunning.

Overflowing litter bins: Despite the addition of a new bin on Tweed Green the bins are still often overflowing at the end of the day. J.Shearer recently circulated photos she had taken of the mess around them. Pizza boxes, for instance, are too big to fit in some bins. The bins are emptied every morning but that doesn't address the mess seen in the evenings. After a lively discussion Cllr Tatler said he would ask SBC for an additional bin, and whether any other bins could be moved from quieter areas to Tweed Green. J.Mitchell said she found SBC very quick to replace any bins she has reported as missing or vandalised.

Legal expertise: P.Maudsley said how useful it would be if PCC had a member or someone available to offer legal expertise. L.Turnbull asked Hilary Scott from the Peeblesshire News if she could write an article saying that PCC Elections are coming up and we invite applications, in particular people with such experience to apply to join the Community Council, and she agreed.

Ambulances: P.Maudsley spoke about a recent situation where a fire engine responded to a call for an ambulance. The medical situation continued and an ambulance did turn up, but it was several hours later. He said the shortage of available ambulances seems to be a countrywide issue. L.Turnbull suggested we wait to see if an article in the Peeblesshire News prompts a response from readers about similar instances in which case we can send a letter to the Scottish Ambulance Service expressing our concerns.

Minute Secretary: L.Turnbull asked Community Councillors to consider becoming the new Minute Secretary, or if they could suggest somebody.

'Round the Table'

S.Rae asked when the white lines on the west side of the newly resurfaced stretch of Edinburgh Road would be painted? Cllr Tatler will find out and report back to the Secretary.

A.Mackenzie asked if there was any scope for relatives to have the stability of a gravestone checked themselves, and not have SBC test it, and what documentation would be needed to prove that it was safe? Cllr Tatler will find out. Cllr Tatler pointed out that this time SBC will be using 'in house 'staff to do the testing and not outside contractors.

A.Mackenzie spoke about the forthcoming World Enduro Series at Innerleithen (30th September to 3rd October). He has heard that there are quite a few objections being raised including the proximity of stalls to Innerleithen Cemetery. Cllr Bell has had discussions with the organisers of Enduro and concerns seem to be being resolved. He is sure the Peebles economy will benefit. Cllr Tatler sits on the Community Liaison Group and said he had given contact details of neighbouring Community Councils to the organisers so we may well get some communication from them. Cllr Haslam said there will also be an online meeting on 23rd August.

J.Shearer asked if the Covid-related warning signs on the footbridges (which indicate that one should not cross if someone is already walking towards you) were still relevant? Cllr Haslam said officials would look at them this week as part of their post-Covid review. She would welcome any views on the matter.

J.Crawley said vegetation is already beginning to grow on the pile of rubble on Venlaw. How likely is it that the pile will be removed and what will be the penalty for illegal dumping?

P.Maudsley doubts that there will be any sanctions. There will have to be a removal plan but he reiterated that more damage to the terracing will be incurred by the removal.

L.Turnbull said it is up to SBC Enforcement Officers to pursue.

The next meeting will take place online at 7pm on 9th September 2021. After that it is hoped to reconvene in the Burgh Chamber.