



**Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District**

**Minutes of the 287th Monthly Meeting of the Community Council held
on Thursday 9th September 2021 via Zoom.**

In attendance: L.Turnbull, S.Rae, L.Hayworth, G.Mackie, P.Maudsley, G.Ramsay, A.Mackenzie, J.Shearer, Cllr Tatler, Cllr Small, C.Forsyth, O.Olesheva.

Members of the public: A.Vickery, Rosemary Hamilton, Gillian Limb

Fred Olsen Renewables: J.Aitken, Senior Project Manager of Scawd Law Windfarm

Eddlestone Community Council: James Taylor

SCAWD LAW WINDFARM: Presentation by J.Aitken (Note: this is a summary. The full presentation is available by emailing secretary@ccrbpeebles.co.uk)

Fred Olsen Renewables (FOR) was formed about 20 years ago. Their first windfarm is in Dumfries and Galloway. They now have 8 windfarms in Scotland. They have their own planners, construction team, and consent team.

Scawd Law Windfarm will be located 4km north of Walkerburn. FOR submitted their scoping report for 12 turbines in 2020. Since then they have liaised with the local communities within a 10km radius of the windfarm. Ms Aitken said the feedback from the virtual consultations had been very helpful. As a result the number of turbines has been reduced by two to ten, and a different access point is being considered. Consultation with communities will continue and Ms Aitken would like each of the Community Councils involved to nominate two members to join a Community Liaison Group. This group will also be a forum for discussion about the financial benefits and how they might be distributed.

The community benefit will be £5,000 per megawatt which will raise £300,000 per annum (£1.5 million over the life of the windfarm). The company is keen to support communities to find legacy projects. They will sign up to a Memorandum of Understanding which will hold them to the commitment to create walking and cycling trails on the site, and to ring fence some of the community benefit to operate and maintain those trails. The Community Liaison Manager is Kirsty Leiper.

L.Turnbull explained that Community Councillor M.Bruce will represent PCC on the Community Liaison Group. L.Turnbull is concerned about the size of the wind turbines, the visibility of them and the possible impact on tourism to the Borders. Ms Aitken agreed that they are tall: 180m. It is the belief at FOR that when the turbines are built in 5 or 6 years' time, smaller turbines – 145m high – will no longer be being constructed. The wind turbines are purchased from Europe who are ahead of the UK with windfarm development, and where 240m high turbines are being built. Various studies suggest that turbines do not have an impact on tourism in Scotland. There is a great deal that windfarm developers can do to benefit tourism. Examples include the creation of wildlife corridors, and the

financial benefit can be used for the re-opening of public toilets. Of course some people like to see and visit windfarms.

Ms Aitken said the Planning Application will be submitted to SBC later this year but FOR do not expect to receive planning permission until November 2022. They may have to go to appeal which would take another year, then require a year to do the land deals, and then wait for the grid connection.

L.Hayworth asked if the Feed In Tariff in Scotland was altered in the future would that affect the Community Benefit? Ms Aitken responded that any changes should not have an impact on the Community Benefit of £5,000 per megawatt. G.Mackie asked how much electricity will actually be generated and Ms Aitken said she would find out and let him know. *(In a subsequent email Ms Aitken confirmed that the electricity generated by Scawd Windfarm will power 45,744 homes per annum.)* L.Turnbull thanked her for her presentation.

CLOICH WINDFARM: James Taylor of Eddleston Community Council spoke about the proposed Cloich Windfarm. The original planning application in 2012 by Partnership for Renewables, a wholly owned government body, was for 16 turbines, 130m high. After a raft of objections, including by SBC, it went to a Public Enquiry in 2015. SBC succeeded in having the height reduced to 115m on the grounds of unwanted visual impact. Ministers consented in 2016 to the amended application with 27 conditions including the protection of private water supplies. The usual consent period of 3 years was extended to 5 years which expired in 2021. EDF, a French owned multi-national company specialising in nuclear power, purchased the consent (one of a package of consents purchased by them in the UK) and applied for and received an extension to that 5 year period under emergency Covid legislation. The new consent expires in May 2022. However none of the 27 conditions have been met. EDF have amended the application to 12 turbines each 149.5m high. These will be visible from Peebles, Edinburgh, Fife, and parts of southern Scotland. The deadline for objections is 30th September though SBC have until 8th November unless they seek an extension. Mr Taylor lives at Stewarton, on the edge of the proposed windfarm. It is scenic landscape area crossed by a historic drove road and the Yetholm to Cape Wrath pathway. He is concerned about the security of his water supply and that of the 4 neighbouring properties, as well as the 1,000 head of sheep and cattle on the surrounding farmland. The water is sourced from land owned by Forestry and Land Scotland (F & LS) which is wholly owned by the Scottish Government. Mr Taylor will meet with F & LS to find out what measures will be taken before, during and after the construction of the windfarm, to protect that water supply which has been in place for 4 centuries. Apparently EDF have already assured F & LS that there will be no risk to the water supply. However Mr Taylor said that EDF will use mitigation rather than protection, and that mitigation includes the supply of bottled water or the use of bowsers. There are many other properties in the area whose water supply is also at risk, none of which are acknowledged in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). A great deal of investigation needs to be done pre-consent. However owners of properties in the area are concerned, too, that the investigations might themselves interrupt or damage the water supply. The Southern Uplands faultline lies right across the Cloich Windfarm site. There have been minor earthquakes at Penicuik and Leadburn during the past 6 weeks but such risks have not been mentioned in the EIA.

The proposed pathways between the turbines do not meet the recommended width. The assessment of noise generated by the turbines is now 10 years out of date and should be recalculated, and the turbines should be no more than 150m high to protect the amenity, wildlife and visual impact. However the biggest concern is that the water supply may be damaged by forestry and construction work, and that the mitigation plans are not adequate. EDF have completely failed to understand the fragile rural infrastructure and the impact this may have on residents, livestock and the environment. They propose pouring thousands of tons of concrete into a fragile water bearing environment.

The Chairman thanked Mr Taylor for his presentation. He said that Peebles Community Councillors were recently asked for their opinion about the proposed windfarm but responses were based primarily on the visual impact. Mr Taylor has raised very important concerns that the Impact Assessment Report is not accurate. The subject will be discussed under Planning at this meeting and hopefully a consensus can be reached. Mr Taylor finished by expressing frustration that various organisations such as SEPA, Nature Scotland and F &LS, have discussions amongst themselves but fail to engage with local residents who know the area best.

Open Forum: Rosemary Hamilton, Gillian Limb and Andrew Vickery were attending the meeting due to concerns about the appointment system at Haylodge Health Centre. The Chairman explained the subject would be discussed under Matters Arising.

Apologies: A.Snoddy, M.Bruce, S.Watson, Cllr Bell, Cllr Anderson, Cllr Haslam.

Approval of the Minutes of the last meeting: proposed by P.Maudsley, seconded by A.Mackenzie.

Matters arising:

Appointment System at Haylodge Health Centre. L.Turnbull said we have written on several occasions to the Health Centre to ask the Practice Manager (PM) for someone to come along to speak at one of our meetings. On each occasion the PM declined. We pointed out that one of our roles is to speak with public bodies on behalf of the community. She replied that she was retiring. Mr Turnbull proposes that we will give the new PM a few weeks to settle in before inviting them to come along and speak with us. Community Councillors agreed. Andrew Vickery said that concerns about Haylodge Health Centre include communication and administration problems as well as the appointment system. He has written on his own behalf to the Chief Executive of NHS Borders who has replied that there will be changes in the administration of the appointment system across the Borders. Mr Vickery has suggested to him that it would be helpful if all registered patients received letters notifying them of the new procedure before they have need to contact the Health Centre for an appointment.

Children's Cemetery. The proposed design of the memorial has been circulated round Community Councillors. While he likes the design Mr Turnbull is concerned about the height. It may dwarf the Children's Cemetery and may not even get planning permission (it is in a Conservation Area). G.Mackie and O.Olesheva shared his concerns. A.Mackenzie explained that the two cherry trees which the proposed memorial will replace are taller. It was decided that Mr Mackenzie would investigate if it would be possible to produce an image where the proposal could be seen in relation to the surrounding environment. After that the matter can go to full consultation with the people of Peebles. Mr Mackenzie added that the group who have instigated this project have made contact with Lorna McCullough of the Bridge Volunteer Centre who has been most helpful in advising on how to obtain charitable status as well as fundraising.

Testing of headstones in Peebles Cemetery. P.Maudsley asked Cllr Tatler for reassurance that the testing of headstones in the newer part of the cemetery would follow Scottish Government guidelines. Cllr Tatler responded that it would, and that the testing would be carried out as sensitively as possible. Once the date next year is known there will be a meeting of relatives involved to talk through the process. They will also have the opportunity to employ a recognised monumental stonemason to test the stability of their own relative's headstone. SBC will be using their own staff this time rather than outside contractors. The older headstones will not be tested again until 2024.

Weedkilling. The Chairman asked if any of the Community Councillors could suggest an area of the town which could be used for trialling a 'no chemical weedkilling' project. There were no

suggestions. Cllr Tatler said there would be a discussion about the use of glyphosphate at the Sustainability and Development Committee meeting on 17th September.

Minute Secretary. Please email the Secretary with any suggestions for a new Minute Secretary.

Police Report: circulated. L.Turnbull reported that M.Bruce was unable to meet with Sergeant Granger this month due to their respective holiday commitments. Mr Bruce had submitted a Freedom of Information request to Lothian and Borders Police regarding the length of time taken to respond to 101 calls in this area but was told that the information would be too time consuming to provide. Mr Turnbull commented that concerns about 101 response times are making headlines in the national press at present. We will keep monitoring the situation.

Anti-social behaviour: M.Bruce, S.Hamilton and youth leader Dave Hodson have met with the Rector of Peebles High School and had a useful conversation. They will return to the school and hope to work with some of the young people to find out what they think would help to resolve anti-social behaviour. Cllr Tatler reported that Lori Lee who runs Clubsport Tweeddale, which operates under the auspices of Live Borders, is keen to develop evening activities, for example midnight football. Local sports clubs are keen to be involved. Cllr Tatler has put Ms Lee in touch with M.Bruce, S.Hamilton and D.Hodson. Cllr Tatler also reported that the Community Action Team are receiving far fewer calls about anti-social behaviour than previously.

Chairman's Report:

Peebles Library and Museum. Ewan Jackson, CEO of Live Borders, recently met with the Community Council online. He explained that some employees of Live Borders had been helping other agencies during the pandemic, and some were furloughed. Library opening hours would be increased in September and again in October. He said that Live Borders is financially sound, and that the future of Peebles Library and Museum is secure.

Peebles in Bloom 2021. The Chairman said the project went very well and congratulated all nominees and trophy winners. The results have been published online and in the Peeblesshire News. Certificates have been hand delivered, and we are waiting for the trophies to be engraved, after which they will be passed to the winners. The project has received very positive feedback.

Enduro World Series Tweed Valley Event. L.Turnbull had a telephone conversation with Paul McGreal of EWS. The event, based in Innerleithen, will take place on the weekend of 30th September and will involve 1,000 cyclists and possibly 5,000 spectators. The impact on Peebles will be minimal, although there may be some increase in accommodation bookings and trade. There might, too, be some increase in the numbers using the multi-use path between Peebles and Innerleithen.

Use of Tweed Green. Tweed Green is a Common Good Asset. L.Turnbull has written to Cllr Tatler, who is the Chairman of the Trustees of the Common Good Fund, to ask what the financial arrangements are when various cycling events are held on Tweedgreen. He knows that the operators of the shows in Victoria Park have to pay a rent, as do food vendors operating from, for example, Kingsmeadows car park. Cllr Tatler responded that he is still awaiting information from SBC Officers. He pointed out that a lot of activities take place on Common Good land including the Highland Games, the Park Run, and some Beltane events. L.Turnbull said that these are that these are local, non profit making events, and not commercial concerns.

Cllr Tatler doubted that cycling events made much money as they rely heavily on the involvement of volunteers. Cllr Small said that Peebles businesses gain financially from such events, but Mr Turnbull

said those businesses he had spoken to said that this was not the case. Indeed no-one had asked them so he wondered on how any benefit to the local economy was calculated? Further discussion will take place once the SBC Officers' response is known.

Chambers Institution Trust: Back in July L.Turnbull told the Community Council that he had written to SBC about a report that was being prepared for Councillors regarding the future structure of the Trust. He has not received a response. Meanwhile Peebles Civic Society asked to see the legal advice given to the Council and the Trustees regarding the structure of the Trust. When that was refused they submitted a Freedom of Information Request and it, too, was turned down. They appealed and have now received a copy of that legal advice with the caveat that they must not share the contents with anyone. P.Maudsley finds himself in the strange position of being both a member of PCC and the Civic Society so he has read the legal advice but cannot share it with us. What he can say, however, is that the legal advice supports our concerns about the structure of the Trust. He suggests that a moratorium is put on any developments until PCC has sight of the legal advice and an opportunity to discuss it. He has studied the documentation which is in the public domain and one fact he has noted is that back in 2014 when the Trust comprised SBC Councillors *and* members of the community the length of meetings totalled 400 minutes. Over the period 2015 to 2019 (5 years) meetings totalled just 440 minutes.

L.Turnbull pointed out that Peebles Civic Society is not a statutory body but that PCC is. And yet the Civic Society have been given information which they are not to share with PCC. He reiterated P.Maudsley's request that the forthcoming report is put on hold until we have seen and responded to the legal advice on which it will be based. Mr Turnbull had hoped that Cllr Chapman, Chair of the CIT, would have been at tonight's meeting to provide us with some information. Cllr Tatler and Cllr Small confirmed that they have not had sight of the legal advice.

SBC Councillor Reports:

L.Turnbull thanked Cllr Tatler for so often taking on board so many of the local issues raised at our meetings.

Cllr Tatler. There is £65,000 in the Parking Fees Fund. He proposes 2 projects: the first is to improve pavements which have been identified in a report by Tweeddale Access Panel, such as installing dropped kerbs and improving surfaces; the second is to improve the path along the south bank of the Tweed (east of Fotheringham footbridge), particularly along the edges where the ground slopes down on either side quite drastically.

The Parking Sub Committee will meet on 15th September to discuss off-street parking in Peebles. The Tweeddale Area Partnership meeting was on 24th August where there was further discussion about Place Planning. The next TAP meeting will be on 2nd November. The Build Back Better Borders Recovery Fund is still open for applications. It recently supported Peebles Rugby Festival.

Cllr Small. Some trees need to be cut back at Damdale because they are overshadowing homes and the falling leaves create a slip hazard. The pavement at Dovecot will be repaired.

Treasurer's Report: circulated. The Peebles in Bloom presentation was held online this year. G.Mackie explained that while we saved the cost of hiring the Burgh Hall, we had to pay for an IT specialist to manage the meeting. He still awaits the bill for engraving the trophies. Without an 'in person' event we were unable to hold our raffle which covers some of the expenses. L.Turnbull thanked P.Maudsley for creating a wooden plinth for one of the trophies, a rose bowl, which until now had to be expensively hand-engraved. Now small machine engraved plaques can be fixed onto the plinth.

Planning Report.

Cloich Windfarm. P.Maudsley said that prior to this evening's presentation by James Taylor, 6 Community Councillors had informed him that they were supportive of the proposed windfarm, and 3 had said they objected. There was much discussion about the content of the presentation, the effect on the water course of the area, and the visibility of the turbines from a great distance. It was concluded that because the majority remained in favour that Mr Maudsley would respond to SBC, not objecting to the plans but expressing our concerns about the visual impact of the turbines, and the inadequacy of the Environmental Impact Assessment.

Traffic and speeding issues. Residents approach us with concerns about speeding but the only recourse we have is to talk to other agencies. SBC Traffic have been doing some assessments recently: when there was a 30mph speed limit on Innerleithen Road and Kingsmeadows Road the average speed was 30.2 to 30.5mph. Now that there is a 20mph limit on those roads the average speed, while well over 20mph, is below 30mph. The only people who can enforce speed limits are Police Officers and Mr Maudsley suggests a few spot checks with radar guns might be effective.

Scottish Borders Community Council Network are holding their AGM at the end of the month. Mr Maudsley is our representative but unfortunately cannot attend.

SBC Planning are still in discussions with the developer at Castle Venlaw.

A planning application has just come in to construct a dwelling house on a site southwest of 1 Whitehaugh Cottage on Glen Road. Mr Maudsley has not had a chance to look at it yet. It can be viewed on the SBC Planning portal.

S.Rae said that people have moved into part of Castle Venlaw. Mr Maudsley expressed surprise as several planning issues remain unresolved.

Peebles Community Trust: report circulated.

Any Other Business

Peebles Community Council Election 2021. The Secretary has sent out nomination forms to all those Community Councillors who wish to remain on the Council. Completed forms must be returned by 21st September.

Ambulance service. S.Rae told the meeting about a friend whose back 'went' and he could no longer feel his lower limbs. His wife phoned 111 and was advised to ring 999 instead. She did this but was informed that an ambulance would not be sent because the situation was not life threatening, a Covid issue or a mental health issue. The patient had 3 seizures over a 6 hour period (the episode had begun at 4am) so his parents came, got him into their car, and drove him to Borders General Hospital where he had a 4th seizure. S.Rae has heard of other similar alarming stories. P.Maudsley pointed out that the patient should have been moved on a spinal board and not travelled by car. He spoke of two instances in which he was involved: one where it took an hour for an ambulance to attend a stroke victim, and one where a fire engine instead of an ambulance was sent to assist an elderly lady who had lost the power of her legs. L.Turnbull concluded by saying it is clear that there are some very serious issues in the ambulance service. Everyone agreed that he should ask the Secretary to write to the Scottish Ambulance Service asking for a representative to come and speak to us.

Leadburn junction The Secretary has written to Philippa Gilhooley to request that she asks her counterpart at Midlothian Council to repaint the road markings at Leadburn. Although the junction is the responsibility of Midlothian Council it is used a lot by commuters travelling from Peebles to Edinburgh.

G.Ramsay spoke about a van which is parked in Springhill Road at lunchtime and which is frequented by High School pupils. It makes the junction very difficult for drivers to use safely. Cllr Tatler agreed and will take up the issue with SBC Licensing Department.

O.Olesheva recently encountered a cyclist travelling in the wrong direction along a cycle lane on Kingsmeadows Road and wondered if arrows could be painted in the lanes showing the correct direction of travel. Cllr Tatler said he would ask SBC Officers but doubted they would do so for such an odd occurrence.

J.Shearer said the 20mph road markings on March Street have faded and asked for them to be repainted. Cllr Tatler will pass on her request.

S.Rae showed the Community Council an image of the proposed memorial for the Children's Cemetery against the existing hedge and trees in that part of Peebles Cemetery. Everyone agreed it dissipated previous concerns about its size.

Cllr Tatler reported that the Food Foundation have been awarded a substantial grant from SCVO's Adapt and Thrive Fund and are now able to resume their worthwhile activities.

L.Turnbull said he has heard that SBC want all Community Council meetings to continue online at present.

The next meeting will be held at 7pm on Thursday 14th October 2021 by Zoom