



Community Council

of the

Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

**Minutes of the 288th Monthly Meeting of the Community Council held
on Thursday 14th October 2021 by Zoom**

Note: the meeting was chaired by Vice Chairman Scott Rae

In attendance: S.Rae, G.Mackie, A.Snoddy, P.Maudsley, J.Crawley, M.Bruce, E.Rae, S.Montgomery, S.Watson, J.Shearer, A.Mackenzie, Cllr Anderson, Cllr Haslam, Cllr Tatler

Observing: H.Young

Apologies: L.Turnbull, L.Hayworth, C.Forsyth, G.Ramsay, Cllr Bell, Cllr Small

Open Forum: There were no members of the public present

Community Council: S.Rae welcomed Heather Young to the meeting. Heather will join as a full member at next month's AGM. Sophie Hamilton and Elizabeth Rae are stepping down and he thanked them for their service and commitment. There were NOT more nominations than vacancies on the Community Council therefore the Community Councillors who re-applied to continue as members can do so. M.Bruce and A.Snoddy have become full members following their previous co-option.

Minutes of the last meeting: Corrections: E.Rae *did* send in her apologies and Olga Olesheva *was* in attendance. With the corrections noted the Minutes were approved by P.Maudsley and seconded by A.Mackenzie.

Matters arising from the Minutes

- Children's cemetery – ongoing. S.Rae asked A.Mackenzie if he would like him to forward the image of the memorial which he had devised and circulated at last month's meeting which showed the scale of the proposal, and Mr Mackenzie said it would be useful to forward to Craig Blackie and Diane Munro of SBC.

Police Report: circulated. M.Bruce has had his monthly conversation with Sergeant Granger. The statistics in the report show a downward trend in reported crime. There were, however, a large number of incidents of anti-social behaviour reported. Sergeant Granger explained the figure included many calls reporting breaches of Covid restrictions at a time when the rules were very strict. He would expect that figure to steadily decrease over the next 6 to 12 months as we emerge from more onerous restrictions.

The COP26 Conference in Glasgow will have an impact on policing in the Borders.

The recent 'keying' of vehicles on the north side of Peebles was the most significant example of anti-social behaviour in Peebles for a long time. Sergeant Granger told Mr Bruce that Police

Scotland had received 9 reports of cars being damaged in the incident. Anecdotally the number was probably twice that. Mr Bruce would encourage the public to report all crimes – if Police Scotland do not receive a report then how do they know that a crime has been committed? P.Maudsley spoke about a recent incident where someone telephoned the Police 101 number and had to wait 30 minutes for the call to be answered. A follow-up call took a further 20 minutes to be answered. He wondered if perhaps people eventually just hang up? He pointed out that the statistics in the Police Report show that detection rates have decreased except for the 3 robberies which had all been solved. He noted that there have been several instances of lead being stolen from roofs.

Mr Bruce said the statistics are the best that can be extrapolated from Police Scotland's records but may not always be accurate. Mr Bruce pointed out that men in hi-vis jackets working on roofs would unfortunately not necessarily ring any alarm bells with members of the public. Cllr Tatler said the Eastgate Theatre did not know lead had been removed from their roof till there was water ingress.

Mr Bruce said the 101 response time was a Scotland wide issue, and as it is a Police resourcing matter it is a subject we might take up with Christine Grahame if she attends one of our meetings. However phoning 101 is not the only way to contact Police Scotland: reports can be made on the 'Contact Us' section of the Police Scotland website or by texting 101.

Chairman's Report: The Chairman, L.Turnbull, was unable to attend tonight's meeting but had reported to the Vice Chairman that it had been a relatively quiet month.

Chambers Institution Trust (CIT): The Chairman wrote a letter on 4th October to the 6 SBC Councillors for Tweeddale, in their role as Trustees of the Chambers Institution Trust, challenging the legal advice they have been given. Cllr Haslam said that Cllr Chapman (Chair of the Board of Trustees) had responded on 8th October to say 'we will revert on this matter once the committee report on the Trust has been considered by the Council'. A.Snoddy asked when that meeting will take place? Cllr Haslam replied that they hoped it would be October but it might be November because the Council is very busy at present.

P.Maudsley said Peebles Civic Society had received an identical reply from Cllr Chapman. The Civic Society will ask who will consider the report: the Trustees or the full council? One of the legal opinions was that CIT business should be dealt with by the Trustees separately from SBC business. Our Chairman, L.Turnbull, had asked for more information from the Page Park report (*a consultation about the future of the Chambers Institution which was carried out a few years ago*). He had received the drawings and text but wanted to know about costings. Cllr Tatler said he was unsure whether there were any costings. Mr Maudsley once again expressed surprise that the Trustees have not been made aware of legal opinions which have been issued over several of years, and furthermore that the Trustees were not more familiar with the details of the Page Park Report. Both Cllr Tatler and Cllr Haslam pointed out that the Page Park Report dated back to early 2018 and much information on many topics had come their way since then.

SBC Councillors' Reports

Cllr Tatler

Parking Fees Fund. The fund consists of parking fees and fines less the cost of managing the car parks and maintaining the equipment. The fund must be spent on projects in Peebles and will be administered in the same way as the Small Schemes Fund. Ideas may be put forward by individuals, organisations, Community Councillors, SBC Councillors and SBC Officers. The suggestions will be assessed and costed by the Neighbourhood Services Team and then passed to the 6 SBC Councillors in Tweeddale for approval. Cllr Tatler has already suggested improvements to the path on the south side of the Tweed (east of the Fotheringham Footbridge), and is waiting for costings. Bonnie Peebles and Bonnie Peebles Plus would be worthy causes to support and member John Falla may come forward with an application for funding. S.Watson asked if some of the Fund could be put towards keeping the School Brae toilets open (which have been managed lately by Peebles Community Trust but which are due to close at the end of this month)? Cllr Tatler said Mr Watson could put the suggestion forward but the cost would have to be applied for each year. He pointed out that the Parking Fees Fund will only yield about £10,000 annually. P.Maudlsey said the toilets in East Lothian are free and beautifully maintained, as they were in Fife when he visited there last year. Cllr Tatler said SBC Officers are due to report on the subject of toilets in the Borders soon. Cllr Haslam said that, according to Google, East Lothian has 8 public toilets whereas the Borders has 43. *(Later research would suggest these figures are incorrect.)* H.Young asked if the Fund was publicised and what are the criteria? Cllr Tatler responded that it has been reported in the Peeblesshire News and that the projects must relate to the environment and maintenance of the town.

Tweedbridge Court. Eildon will commence the construction of Tweedbridge Court 'at the turn of the year'. They are looking for any groups or organisations which could make use of the murals which adorn the hoarding round the building site.

Tweeddale Area Partnership. The next meeting is on Tuesday 2nd November and there will be an update about the Roads Programme.

A Community Engagement Officer has been appointed: Hannah Lacon. S.Rae asked for clarification of the Community Engagement Officer's role. Cllr Tatler said it is to help groups and organisations with support including setting up, capacity and funding. He suggested that she could be invited to the next Community Council meeting to tell us more about her role.

The 'Cyclists Dismount' sign which disappeared from Priorsford Bridge will be replaced.

Peebles CAN garden. There have been a lot of problems with antisocial behaviour in the garden. Cllr Tatler, the Police and the Community Action Team have been working with Peebles CAN on a number of measures. Cllr Tatler also wanted to feed back to Community Councillor M.Bruce, who has been working with Dave Hodson (*youth leader*) to engage with young people, that the garden is available for them to use but not abuse.

20mph signs. J.Shearer asked if the 20mph markings on the road at March Street were going to be refreshed? Cllr Tatler said he had put in the request. Ms Shearer also asked if a 20mph sign could be erected at Tweed Green, and Cllr Tatler said he would ask.

Land at Tweedbridge Court. G.Mackie spoke about the overgrown grass and weeds outwith the hoarding round the Tweedbridge Court site and wondered who was responsible? Cllr Tatler and Cllr Haslam thought it probably belonged to the developer, Eildon Housing Association, and Cllr Tatler will raise the issue with them.

Payment for the use of Tweed Green. Cllr Tatler said the subject of payment for the use of all Common Good ground is on the agenda for the next meeting of the Common Good Trust.

Cllr Anderson

Public toilets. A report on the provision of public toilet facilities throughout the Borders will be brought before the Council later this month.

Play parks. The Scottish Government have allocated a few million pounds to be spent over the next few years to enhance play areas. There will be a consultation with the communities about how that money is spent, although the first £13,000 must be spent by March 2022 and because of the short timescale has already been allocated.

Ballantyne Place. Cllr Anderson had contacted SBC Officers to ask what action could be taken against the owner of the site who had brought in a bulldozer and cleared away the landscaping put in by the tenants. Because the developer owned the site there was no illegality, and the Officers confirmed the site was safe for the public. Nevertheless it was a shocking event. It is hoped the residents of Ballantyne place and the developer can reach a mutually agreed solution. SBC had refused the developer's application to build a house on the site, the developer appealed, and the Reporter upheld SBC's decision.

Peeblesshire Charitable Trust. Both Cllr Tatler and Cllr Anderson are ex-officio members of Peeblesshire Charitable Trust. The Trust was established to help elderly and infirm residents of Peebles and Peeblesshire who are in care homes or at home. They have funds to disperse and they hope to get some coverage in the Peeblesshire News. The next meeting of the Trust, and therefore the deadline for applications, is 2nd December.

Cllr Haslam

Playparks. No playparks in Tweeddale have closed. Work is still ongoing regarding the creation of a skatepark in Peebles. The £113,000 from the Scottish Government divided between the playparks in the Borders equals just £470 per play park and so expectations have to be managed.

Consultations. There is a consultation about how SBC charge for residential care. Cllr Haslam would also encourage everyone to have a look at the consultation about Local Housing Strategy 2023 to 2028. J.Shearer asked where she could find these consultations and Cllr Haslam explained it is the 'Have Your Say' part of SBC's website.

Treasurer's Report: circulated. G.Mackie had nothing to add, and there were no questions.

Planning Report: circulated.

Cloich Windfarm: Cllr Anderson informed the Planning Convenor, P.Maudsley, that the deadline for comments on the planning application had been extended.

Scottish Borders Community Council Network (SBCCN): Mr Maudsley's suggestion that SBCCN produce a quarterly newsletter is on the agenda to be discussed at their next meeting.

The Planning Application to develop Rosetta Caravan Park (first raised in 2013!) has been withdrawn.

Kingsmeadows House. There is an ongoing threat to the woodland there and Mr Maudsley is keeping a watching brief.

Regarding Ballantyne Place Mr Maudsley said that if the developer thought it would be advantageous for his planning application to clear the site then he was probably wrong.

The application to turn the former TSB into a restaurant has been superseded: it is now a flower shop.

Land west of Venlaw Castle (where various planning applications have been knocked back) is up for sale.

A planning application has been submitted to create a wedding and funeral venue at Edderston Farm: details are available on the SBC website.

Peebles Community Trust (PCT): report already circulated. M.Bruce said work on Eddleston Water Path will commence very shortly. The success of the application for funding was, according to the South of Scotland Enterprise Board, largely down to the fact PCT is such a vibrant organisation with a large number of members.

The School Brae toilets will close on 31st October. PCT had been responsible for opening them for several months and employed cleaners who kept them in pristine condition. Unfortunately due to vandalism and the public's reluctance to pay 30p each for the use of the facility the project is no longer financially viable. Mr Bruce said it was a great shame. He confirmed with J.Crawley that payment for use of the toilets could be made by card as well as in cash.

While PCT oversees many projects the dominating concern is the School Brae Hub. It requires £30,000 per annum to run it and Mr Bruce hopes that Peebles residents will support it with its fundraising efforts. The Re-Use Hub has been a great success, raising £5,500 by selling donated items last month. It would be great if SBC could find equally suitable premises for it to operate from. Meantime it will continue to operate on the upper floor until such time when refurbishment of the building can take place and the Hub becomes a venue for community use.

Any other business

Places of Interest noticeboard. The old board is with A.Mackenzie at present. The Callants will fund the making of a new board and Ian Thorburn will do the signwriting. Mr Mackenzie hopes the project will be completed over the winter.

The 'lowering' of the path in Haylodge Park. An update had been circulated prior to the meeting saying that SUstrans would be undertaking a survey of trees at the beginning of 2022 after which alternative proposals to circumvent the obstruction will be considered.

Lighting up the Scott Brash sculpture at night. Everyone agreed it would be worth investigating the work and costs involved. If solar powered lighting was used then the main cost would be the installation. Cllr Tatler suggested that could be a project for consideration under the Parking Fees Fund. A.Snoddy will contact Bonnie Peebles in the first instance for their agreement (they commissioned and paid for the sculpture and continue to insure it).

Parking on pavements and double yellow lines. This is an ongoing concern which is a Police matter. A.Snoddy will ask the Chairman if we could invite Christine Grahame MSP to one of our Community Council meetings to discuss the resourcing of Police Scotland. P.Maudsley reported that 2 nights earlier a white van had driven right across two 'pencil' bollards in South Parks causing considerable damage to the bollards and the van.

The Great Borders River Clean Up takes place 5th to 7th November.

The Covid signs on the two footbridges have been removed.

Cllr Tatler reported that Peebles CAN, whose community garden has been the subject of repeated vandalism, has consulted with all adjoining properties and they are happy for them to install CCTV cameras.

Refuse bins. S.Rae said there had been an exchange of emails between Community Councillors about types and sizes of bins, and wondered if SBC had different types available? Cllr Tatler said that they just have a standard bin but would ask SBC again. S.Rae suggested that we could send pictures to our Tweeddale Councillors of the bins we have discussed by email. Cllr Haslam will send us a link to a website showing bins made out of discarded chewing gum! One of the bins by the Tweed advertises a local company (Gold Star taxis). Cllr Tatler will find out if SBC currently look for advertisers to cut the cost of the provision of bins?

Peebles Christmas Lights Association (PCLA). A.Snoddy announced that the Switch On event will be on Sunday 28th November from 3pm till 7pm. The High Street will be closed from 12noon till 9pm to allow for the erection and dismantling of the market stalls. M.Bruce is also a member of PCLA and part of the installation team. Work has already begun to put up the lights, a task which takes many weeks. Mr Bruce would hope that this year the average age of the volunteers would be less than last year which was 67. Cllr Tatler suggested that PCLA could ask members of Peebles Rugby Club to help. E.Rae suggested PCLA put out a request on their Facebook page. There was a general discussion about how to recruit new members to all the groups in Peebles. Cllr Haslam suggested contacting Volunteer Centre Borders or paying for more prominent adverts on Facebook. A.Snoddy commented that the new Community Engagement Officer may be able to help with recruitment.

Minute Secretary. The post remains vacant. As long as the meetings are held online A.Snoddy can write up the Minutes from the recordings. However once the meetings return to the Old Burgh Chamber it will require a Minute Secretary as well as the Secretary to take notes. G.Mackie, Treasurer, noted that the honoraria paid to the Secretary and Minute Secretary have been £150 and £50 respectively each quarter since he joined the Community Council 7 years ago. He asked P.Maudsley to find out at the next SBCCN meeting what other Community Councils are paying. M.Bruce wondered if the Minute Secretary had to be a

Community Councillor? He wondered if a member of SBC Staff could undertake the role? Cllr Haslam suspected there was a rule or reason why that would not be allowed but will find out. S.Rae suggested it could be a senior pupil at the High School and A.Snoddy offered to send a note to the Head Teacher to be posted on the sixth form noticeboard. It was agreed that any school pupil fulfilling the role would be encouraged to contribute to the meeting discussions.

Neidpath View. S.Rae has received concerns from a new resident in an Eildon house at Neidpath View (*the newly built Persimmon houses at South Parks*) that neither Persimmon nor Eildon were dealing with their complaints about their property. Mr Rae has given them Cllr Tatler's details. Cllr Tatler said that when/if he hears from them all he can do is pass on their complaints to Eildon.

Care Home charges. S.Rae said there was a consultation about care home charges which had finished. The new charges have been applied but with out notification to the service users. The increases have been applied retrospectively. Cllr Anderson asked Mr Rae to send her the details and she will look into the matter.

Working Parking Group S.Watson asked which Community Councillors are on this group. The Chairman is Cllr Tatler and L.Hayworth, P.Maudsley and E.Rae are members. However E.Rae is standing down from the Community Council. Mr Watson and George Ramsay would like to join the group. Cllr Tatler asked Mr Watson to send him an email to that effect. Mr Watson has received a complaint about a shop keeper's vehicle which is parked permanently on the High Street (where parking is restricted to 45 minutes). It was agreed that he should have a word with the shopkeeper. Mr Watson asked when white road markings were due to be repainted? Cllr Tatler said several had been repainted recently. There will be more information at the next Tweeddale Area Partnership meeting but meanwhile he will send Mr Watson the programme of road painting for Tweeddale.

E.Rae confirmed S.Rae's concern about shopkeepers parking in the High Street. She has spoken with three of them and advised them to park their vehicles in the Edinburgh Road car park to free up spaces in the High Street for potential customers. Two have done so. She asked when the new crossing outside the Post Office will be put in (which will result in the loss of the loading bay)? Cllr Haslam said it would happen in January or February. Cllr Haslam said that the majority of people who responded to the public consultation wanted a crossing there. Mrs Rae doubts it will be used very much, and will only serve to jam up the traffic.

J.Shearer wondered if the High School could provide some fit young students to assist with putting up the Christmas lights? A.Snoddy said she would raise the suggestion at the Christmas Lights Association meeting on Wednesday night.

G.Mackie thanked E.Rae for her work on the Community Council, and S.Rae thanked H.Young for her attendance and hoped she would return next month.

The next meeting will be our AGM and will be held on Thursday 11th November at 7pm by Zoom