



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

**Minute of the 289th Monthly Meeting of the Community Council held
on Thursday 11th November 2021 by Zoom**

Present: L.Turnbull, S.Rae, A.Snoddy, G.Mackie, P.Maudsley, S.Watson, H.Young, A.Mackenzie, L.Hayworth, M.Bruce, O.Olesheva, C.Forsyth, J.Shearer; Cllr Bell, Cllr Haslam, Cllr Small, Cllr Tatler

In attendance: H.Scott of the Peeblesshire News. Members of the public: Lyndal Bale and David Ferguson

Apologies: G.Ramsay, J.Crawley, Cllr Anderson

Presentation by Hannah Lacon, Community Engagement Officer: Unfortunately this was unable to take place as Ms Lacon was unwell.

Open Forum: no issues were raised.

Minutes of the meeting held on 14th October 2021 were approved by S.Watson and seconded by P.Maudsley.

Matters arising from the Minutes

Lighting up the Scott Brash sculpture: A.Snoddy reminded the Community Council that the creation of the sculpture of Scott Brash on Hello Sanctus was a Bonnie Peebles project. They submitted the plans, sourced the blacksmith, raised the funds (a mammoth task), maintain and insure it. As agreed at last month's meeting she contacted Bonnie Peebles to ask if there was any mileage in investigating lighting up the sculpture at night? Their unanimous decision was that it was not something they were currently considering and that they would decide if and when to proceed with such a project.

Minute Secretary: We are still without a Minute Secretary and L.Turnbull urged that if anyone knows of a suitable candidate, please ask them to speak to us.

Police Report: circulated prior to the meeting.

Anti-social behaviour: M.Bruce, S.Hamilton and youth leader D.Hodson will be joined at a meeting next month by Laurie Lee and Hannah Lacon. They are keen to work with Peebles High School to find a solution to the problem of anti-social behaviour.

Chairman's Report

Tweeddale Area Partnership meeting

Last week the Chairman attended an online Tweeddale Area Partnership Meeting along with Anne. There was a presentation by SBC officers about a consultation held about Place Making. Unfortunately they only received 21 responses to the consultation, 8 of which were from Tweeddale. A lot of people do not understand what the term 'place making' means. There will be an event in January where more detail will be provided. SBC needs to look at how to re-engage with people. P.Maudsley said that he attended a Community Council Network meeting 3 weeks ago, and there was difficulty there, too, with the concept of 'place making'.

Community Catch Up Event held on 6th November

The Chairman attended an event organised by Peebles Community Trust. There were representatives from Peebles Community Council and SUStrans present. There was a display of proposals for the March Street Mill site should PCT win the appeal regarding their 'Community Right to Buy'. There were displays by SUStrans of the various path networks and cycle routes across the town, and an opportunity to engage with Jeremy Cunningham of SUStrans. Over 70 people attended. Mr Turnbull thanked those Community Councillors who came along.

Remembrance Sunday 14th November

The Chairman will lay a wreath on behalf of the Community Council at Sunday's Service of Remembrance.

Chambers Institution Trust (CIT)

Cllr Chapman has resigned as Chair of CIT, and Cllr Tatler and Cllr Bell will act as co-Chairs until May, subject to ratification at a meeting next week. L.Turnbull will meet both Councillors next Thursday to discuss CIT. He will be accompanied by a member of Peebles Civic Society. Mr Turnbull understands that the report about CIT will be put before the full council at SBC at the end of November.

SBC Councillors' Reports

Cllr Haslam: Peebles High School have been holding Parliamentary elections and by 4pm today had achieved a 70% turnout. Voting closes tomorrow at lunchtime. The pupils have run campaigns and dealt with issues such as place making and participatory budgeting. She suggested that 16 year olds and over could fill the 2 vacancies on PCC. The Chairman said we had made efforts in the past to recruit young people but that if Cllr Haslam could encourage them to come forward we would welcome them.

Cllr Small: he thanked members of Peebles Resilient Community for all their efforts during the recent flooding. He was pleased that Edinburgh Road has been partially resurfaced.

Cllr Tatler also paid tribute to Peebles Resilient Group. Cllr Tatler (who is a member) said that the group will have a 'debrief' where they will discuss the recruitment of more volunteers,

the response of SBC to the recent flooding, and some drainage issues. He suggested that PCC invite the Resilient Group to make a presentation at one of our meetings. Community Councillor O.Olesheva, also a member of the Resilient Group, said they would have appreciated a more effective response from the Police, specifically in relation to a car parked beside the Cuddy. No-one knew who owned it. Later a post on Peebles Facebook pages established ownership and the car was moved. L.Turnbull asked A.Snoddy to issue an invitation to the Resilient Group to come to our meeting in the New Year.

There will be a workshop about place making during the week commencing 10th January 2022 specifically for Community Councils and other organisations in Tweeddale.

There is online training about community engagement going on right now. This is being done with the Scottish Community Development Centre. The first of 4 sessions was held last night and was about participatory budgeting. The remaining 3 sessions will take place each Wednesday until 1st December. The link to the online sessions was shared in the email which came out following the recent TAP meeting.

The next TAP meeting is on 18th January. All welcome.

S.Rae commented that he was surprised the Police had not towed away the car by the Cuddy: it could have been swept under a bridge. While he said the resurfacing of Edinburgh Road is fantastic the recent patching work done on Venlaw Quarry Road is terrible. He wondered if, should there be any tar left over from the Edinburgh Road project, it could be used to resurface Venlaw Quarry Road? Cllr Haslam and Cllr Tatler asked if he could share with them the photos of Venlaw Quarry Road which he recently posted on social media? They will pass them on to SBC Roads Department.

Treasurer's Report: It was circulated prior to the meeting. G.Mackie had nothing to add.

Planning Report:

P.Maudsley said there have been 8 new planning applications which do not concern us but may be of interest to Peebles Civic Society. M.Bruce said concerns about the possible development in the grounds of Kingsmeadows House were raised at the recent Community Catch Up event in the Burgh Hall. Mr Maudsley said he is waiting for the developer to submit a planning application before taking action. Cllr Haslam commented that there will have to be an Environmental Impact Report. She reported that the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) has been published and there are going to be massive changes to Local Development Plans (LDPs). Councils may have to re-do them or change them significantly. There are no further details at present. Mr Maudsley pointed out that we are currently waiting for the draft of LDP2 to come out and wondered if it might have to be pulled? Cllr Haslam said that is not yet known. Mr Maudsley expressed concern that without LDP2 we are left with LDP1 under the terms of which there could potentially be plans for another 500 houses in Peebles. Cllr Bell said NPF4 will have more impact on LDPs than previous NPFs. He is particularly concerned with the ten year plan for housing in the Scottish Borders but pointed out that NPF4 has been released *for consultation*. He would expect that SBC will proceed with LDP2 and incorporate the consequences of the NPF in the next iteration of the LDP. Mr Maudsley said he

understood that LDP2 would be in place for 10 years. Cllr Bell said the LDP can be published and if there is a problem with the housing allocation a Supplementary Guidance can be added which becomes a material consideration. Mr Maudsley asked when LDP2 might be published and Cllr Bell responded 'soon'. Cllr Tatler clarified that the planners have decided that a planning application for development in the grounds of Kingsmeadows House would not require an *Environmental Impact Assessment* but an *Ecological Impact Assessment* instead.

Peebles Community Trust: The report was circulated prior to the meeting.

March Street Mill site. M.Bruce said the Sheriff in the Selkirk Appeal Court is recalling the case (the Appeal by Moorebrook Textiles against the Community Right to Buy) in January 2022, presumably to hear further representations.

Any Other Business:

Public Toilets. Peebles Community Trust kept the School Brae toilets open over the summer with funding from various sources. Unfortunately the cost of running the toilets meant the project became unsustainable and they were closed at the end of October. That means there are now no public toilets in the centre of the town, though there are toilets in Kingsmeadows carpark. Cllr Bell said that a report into the provision of public toilets in the Borders is expected in November or December. Requirements surrounding Covid precautions have used up SBC's allocated budget, though a slight easing of those requirements has meant some smaller communities can have their public toilets kept open till the end of December. Peebles is in the same situation as other significant towns in the Borders with one public toilet facility in each.

L.Turnbull said he appreciated the difficulties. It would be helpful if the Scottish Government said all councils must provide public toilets. He suggested that Kingsmeadows car park toilets could be closed and School Brae toilets, which sit in the centre of the town and are halfway between our two large carparks, could be reopened. It could be a compromise until we learn from SBC whether we can have more toilets open. Cllr Bell said that the Community Council should make that suggestion to John Curry, Director of Environment and Infrastructure.

S.Rae wondered which would be the most useful of the town's 3 public toilets to keep open? Cllr Tatler spoke about the repeated vandalism at the School Brae toilets, and the reluctance of some users to pay to use them. P.Maudsley pointed out that the Kingsmeadows toilets are the closest ones to the new children's play area in Victoria Park. He said he has found the public toilets in East Lothian and in Fife so much better than ours.

S.Watson has received an email asking if the School Brae toilets could be opened on 28th November, the day of the Christmas Lights Switch On event? Cllr Tatler will find out.

Cllr Haslam suggested that PCC hold a consultation before submitting a request to close one set of toilets in order to open another.

The Chairman asked Community Councillors to think about which would be the best toilets to have open and let each other know through the Secretary. He also asked H.Scott of the Peeblesshire News if she could write an article to find out what local residents thought?

P.Maudsley said that if he is sent all the responses he will pull together a report for next month's meeting. S.Rae also suggested putting a poll on Facebook to gather in opinions.

Puffin Crossing

The Chairman said he understood the work on the puffin crossing at the Eastgate might start in the next month or two. PCC has received a number of emails and letters from concerned members of the public. He said that we are not saying that there should not be a crossing at the Eastgate; the concern lies with its precise location which would seem to create more problems than it would solve. Castle Warehouse rents property at the foot of Tweed Brae and they receive deliveries by large vehicles every day. Some are articulated lorries which come from the west and would have difficulty negotiating the proposed build outs whilst turning right into Tweed Brae. There is also concern that these large lorries will have difficulty turning left with ease from Tweed Brae onto the Eastgate round the build outs. Coaches and tractors also go up and down Tweed Brae.

SUStans are looking at creating a link path between the Eddleston Water path and the Innerleithen path as well as safer walking and cycling routes around the town. Mr Turnbull said we need to put this plan (the puffin crossing) on hold while we look holistically at the needs of the town. We need to engage everyone and find out what their concerns are. There was a consultation, but the question of the puffin crossing was asked in the consultation which was primarily about cycle lanes. Mr Turnbull is asking for a moratorium on the issue while we find out what the people in Peebles want.

S.Watson said that as an HGV license holder he knows that it would be impossible to drive an HGV up Tweed Brae and turn left at the top, negotiate the build out and stay on the correct side of the road. Mr Turnbull said Castle Warehouse had expressed concern that if any of their suppliers had to take a longer route to approach Tweed Brae from the east instead of the west then those businesses might opt out of supplying Castle Warehouse altogether.

S.Rae is concerned about the crossing being next to a junction; that it will be just 75 metres from the next traffic light controlled crossing. The crossing at the Mercat Cross is even closer though it may need ramps or similar installed. Two sets of traffic lights in such a short stretch could potentially lead to traffic queues stretching back out of the town.

Cllr Small said Philippa Gilhooley of SBC is planning to put out a letter to all the shops in the vicinity to ask for their thoughts, as well as the Community Council, so there will be a consultation before work goes ahead. The chairman thanked Cllr Small for that reassurance. Cllr Small added that he understood that Ms Gilhooley would also be looking again at the proposed location. Mr Turnbull said that with a build out in the planned location it will be nigh on impossible for 2 buses to pull in, as often happens. Borders Buses certainly had not been consulted up until 2 days ago.

Cllr Haslam said no-one had contacted her with any concerns and would encourage them to do so. Cllr Tatler said businesses and PCC would be contacted by Ms Gilhooley but it was with regard to the loading bay. He added that Ms Gilhooley is also carrying out an external road

safety audit of the proposals. (i.e. by an external body, not the Council) and that she is confident that what she is proposing is entirely safe.

P.Maudsley said that some years ago there was planning guidance that crossings should not be within 20 meters of a junction. Unfortunately that guidance was not reissued but it is an indication of what planners thought reasonable. In response to Cllr Haslam, Mr Maudsley pointed out that PCC's role is to represent the views of local residents and businesses to the Council and that is why they come to us.

A.Mackenzie suggested the island at the Mercat Cross could be made a more accessible safety crossing for wheelchair users and others, and that might be a project worth trialing. He also added that calculations made in theory about traffic manoeuvres do not always reflect the practical reality. He has spoken to a number of businesses and none of them want the crossing at the proposed location.

J.Shearer's concerns are that cars might speed up to get through the traffic lights at green, that traffic will trail back to the roundabout and beyond, and that exiting Tweed Brae by car will be even more difficult than it currently is. It is a very busy part of Peebles. Mr Turnbull responded this is why a crossing is being considered.

O.Olesheva wondered where the idea for a crossing came from in the first place? She also pointed out that there are large Post Office vehicles using that junction. There is a crossing within 100 metres of the proposed puffin crossing, there is the crossing at the Mercat Cross, we would lose the loading bay, people cross the road at the Green Tree Hotel, and the taxi rank has only recently been moved. She thinks the proposal is completely ludicrous.

L.Turnbull asked Cllr Small if he could confirm that no work will begin until the consultation he spoke about? Cllr Tatler doubted that work would begin before January. Mr Turnbull said all we can do meantime is monitor the situation and await the consultation letters to the shops and PCC. Cllr Tatler said that if the Community Council is so against the proposal then we should write to Ms Gilhooley saying that and stating our reasons.

Cllr Haslam wanted to clarify if PCC proposes changes to the Mercat Cross, which is a listed ancient monument. S.Rae replied that while the Mercat Cross is listed the island on which it stands was built in the 1960s and so there should be no objection to creating, for example, dropped kerbs.

'Round the Table'

S.Rae was approached by a member of the public at the Community Catch Up event with concerns about the legality of the proposed testing of gravestones in Peebles Cemetery and elsewhere in the Borders. Cllr Tatler said that well in advance of the testing, and indeed well in advance of the 28 days notice which is the legal requirement, communication will be made with relatives who have gravestones in the cemetery. Testing of gravestones is a responsibility put on local authorities by the Scottish Government.

S.Watson has received an email from Peebles Christmas Lights Association to say that they have been quoted £194 + VAT for the provision of 8 wheely bins at the Switch On event on

28th November. Cllr Tatler said he is dealing with the matter: he hopes that the charge can be removed or that there will be some way of funding it.

Cllr Tatler. Community Council representation on the Common Good Trust (CGT). L.Turnbull had indicated prior to this meeting that PCC would like to send a substitute to the next meeting of CGT. L.Hayworth is unable to attend the meeting and it is proposed that P.Maudsley attend instead. Cllr Bell raised doubts that a substitute was allowed but Mr Turnbull said they had checked the position with Louise McGeoch at SBC and confirmed that it was in order. However Mr Turnbull asked Cllr Tatler, as Chair of the CGT, to double check.

C.Forsyth raised a number of concerns. Firstly a number of shops do not have wheelchair access. Cllr Tatler said that Tweeddale Access Panel has done an audit of shops, hotels, etc, and indicated which ones have wheelchair access and which do not. It is up to shopkeepers to provide the access. After further discussion it was suggested that Tweeddale Access panel would be the best people to speak with shopkeepers about facilitating access to their premises. Cllr Tatler will share the link to the Access Panel's website with the Secretary for circulating. Secondly, people are parking their cars in spaces for disabled drivers and not displaying blue badges. Mr Turnbull said that all we can do is report such instances to the Police. Thirdly Mr Forsyth wanted to report that he is a member of the new Victoria Park Committee. They met recently and discussed plans for the new skateboard park, and for achieving Green Flag status. He will keep PCC up-to-date with developments.

L.Turnbull said the next meeting will be on **Thursday 9th December 2021** at 7pm by Zoom, and Christine Grahame, MSP, has accepted the invitation to join us. Cllr Haslam asked if PCC was planning to invite other political representatives to our meetings? L.Turnbull said that we could look at issuing invitations to other MSPs next year. Cllr Haslam asked if Ms Grahame would be expressing her views or would PCC be putting its views to Ms Grahame? Mr Turnbull said we would be putting the views of PCC to Ms Grahame about the level of policing in Peebles and the Police response to calls for assistance through the 101call system. L.Hayworth pointed out that while he is unsure of Ms Grahame's role in this parliament, in the last Parliament she was on the Police and Justice Committee.