



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

**Minutes of the 291st Meeting of the Community Council held on Thursday  
13<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 7.00pm via Zoom.**

**Present:** L.Turnbull, S.Rae, A.Snoddy, G.Mackie, P.Maudsley, H.Young, A.Mackenzie, L.Hayworth, M.Bruce, C.Forsyth, S.Hamilton, G.Ramsay, J.Mitchell, J.Shearer; Cllr Bell, Cllr Small, Cllr Tatler

**In attendance:** H.Scott of the Southern Reporter, John Hislop of the Peeblesshire News.

**Members of the public:** David Ferguson, David Pye and Dominic Ashmole

**Representing Dementia Friendly Tweeddale:** Lyndal Bale and Christine Drummond

**Apologies:** S.Watson, J.Crawley, Cllr Anderson and Cllr Haslam

**Presentation by Dementia Friendly Tweeddale.**

While slides were displayed on the screen Christine Drummond explained that dementia is not a disease in itself but a collection of symptoms: problems mostly around cognitive functioning to such an extent that people's daily life and activities are affected. The diseases causing dementia are almost always progressive and eventually the damage can be global – meaning that in late stages other functions controlled by the brain, like mobility, swallowing and breathing, can be affected. Up to 100 different diseases can cause dementia. They include Alzheimers, vascular, dementia associated with late-stage HIV, and Huntingdon's. At the moment there is no cure for the progressive dementias, although there are some treatments that can slow down the progression of some types for some time in some people.

Dementia is thought to be about the seventh most significant cause of death worldwide and one of the major causes of disability and loss of independence among older people.

Even when people have dementia with the same causal disease - and are at the same "stage" - they can be affected, or can experience life, very differently. Because for each of us – not just people with dementia – how we are and how we feel, depends not just on our health issues, but on our personality, our life experiences, and on our surroundings.

The Dementia Friendly initiative is about ensuring the environment – our accommodation, the shops and services we rely on, transport, green spaces, and maybe especially the human environment that surrounds us – is supportive.

More and more people with dementia themselves are able to tell us that there **IS** life after a diagnosis of dementia.

Since 2016, Scottish Government policy has been to devolve Dementia Services to the local community – it's called Community Capacity Building and Care. Since 2019 it is difficult to find anything happening in the community of Peebles at all.

A steering group was formed and started researching what was happening or not in Peebles. It was discovered that the RVS (*Royal Voluntary Service*) had been commissioned by SBC to open a meeting centre in 5 Border towns including Peebles. It was agreed that to duplicate this effort would be unnecessary, so it was decided to go for a Dementia Friendly Community to raise awareness about the condition of dementia and how to live with it. It was also resolved to engage the whole community in becoming Dementia Friendly and to try to change social attitudes about living with dementia, from fear of the stigma of social isolation to one of acceptance and inclusion by the community.

The Steering Group's plans are to form an Unincorporated Association and join the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations. They have a constitution, business plan and strategy plan. They seek associated status under the umbrella of the Peebles Community Trust who can be of invaluable help. They will appoint a committee of interested members and will seek support from local authority organisations as well as established 3<sup>rd</sup> sector groups.

Once they are established after the inaugural meeting to adopt the constitution and elect office bearers, they will start to contact everyone in Peebles by email, and use social media, local press, group newsletters and bulletins: they will ask to speak at local group meetings where appropriate, and eventually hold a public meeting to get people together and catch the "feel good factor" about becoming a Dementia Friendly town.

They hope to attract volunteers to help to produce a map and directory of information about dementia, services and events happening locally. The ultimate aim is to establish a meeting centre which offers on-going warm and friendly expert support to people with mild to moderate dementia and their families. It is essential to find suitable premises in Peebles for the long-term, so that it becomes well-known as the Dementia Hub, the "Go-to" place for all things related to dementia. It is hoped the right place will be found once the halls are open again after lockdown. We would hope to receive lots of information about local events, activities, courses, changes in legislation, information leaflets from official bodies, and that some volunteers will be knowledgeable enough to chat about them and discuss others' views. Until then it is planned to hold pop-up shops from time to time in town - perhaps in a vacant premises that crops up.

The steering group seek the full backing of Peebles Community Council for the project so that they can move ahead with confidence and credibility.

The PCC Chairman, L.Turnbull, thanked the ladies for the presentation. He assured them that they had the support of the Community Council and hoped that the members of the press in attendance would publicise the group.

**Open Forum:** No matters were raised.

**Approval of the Minutes** of 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021: proposed by M.Bruce and seconded by J.Mitchell

**Matters arising:**

Proposed Puffin crossing in the Eastgate: L.Turnbull wrote to SBC expressing the views of the Community Council that the crossing should not be installed until there is an assessment of

all the traffic problems in Peebles. He has now received a response from John Curry, Director of Infrastructure and the Environment, which has been circulated to all Community Councillors. The SBC Councillors confirmed that they had also seen the letter. Mr Turnbull said that contrary to what was stated in Mr Curry's letter there have been no accidents in the last 10 years at the junction of Tweed Brae and the Eastgate. The accidents referred to in the letter occurred at the Mercat Cross, the existing pedestrian crossing, and east of the junction. He submitted a Freedom of Information Request to SBC asking to see the report by Sustrans on which the decision to install a crossing at that particular location was based. The response was that there was no report. Mr Turnbull said the decision was made on the basis of discussions between SBC and Sustrans without any evidence.

Cllr Bell said that those people who were injured in accidents nearby might well have used a puffin crossing had it been in existence. He also said that in response to a consultation 307 respondents were in favour of a pedestrian crossing at that location while 223 were against it. An independent safety evaluation of the design has been conducted. Siemens, who will undertake the work, plan to be on site as soon as possible.

P.Maudsley said there are fundamental guidelines in how a Road Safety Audit is conducted. This audit only complies with about 10% of the requirements. The roads are full of potholes, social services are being cut back, and yet SBC plan to install this crossing on the basis of the support by just 51% of respondents to the consultation, in which there was no detail.

J.Shearer expressed her support for the project.

Cllr Tatler asked how many residents had contacted Community Councillors about the topic because neither he, Cllr Bell nor Cllr Small have received any correspondence. Turnbull, G.Ramsay and P.Maudsley all said they had received verbal concerns about the proposal with Mr Maudsley adding that he had pulled together all the comments received for a previous meeting. S.Rae said it would be far more sensible to put in a temporary crossing to see if it works instead of going straight to a permanent solution. A. Mackenzie has spoken with many of the taxi drivers who expressed concern about the proposal, and who also said that there are more problems with pedestrians crossing the road at the west end of the High Street. P.Maudsley said that articulated vehicles coming up from Tweed Brae will not be able to turn westward once the buildouts at the puffin crossing are constructed. Cllr Tatler responded that the design will allow easy access for lorries.

L.Turnbull concluded the discussion by repeating that this is not about stopping the installation of a crossing in the Eastgate but about waiting until the best solution for the town is found to deal with through traffic, parking, and safe passage for pedestrians and cyclists. PCC has made its view very clear but SBC seem determined to press ahead come what may.

Minute Secretary: the post is still vacant.

Public toilets: G.Mackie has researched how to petition the Scottish Government to make the provision of public toilets by local authorities a statutory requirement. He said it could be done, but that it could be difficult to word the petition correctly and that it was unlikely to lead to a resultant change in the law. However it would raise awareness of the issue. Cllr Tatler pointed out that the public toilets in Kingsmeadows car park are open. He hopes that the toilets in the East Station car park will re-open in March. He will provide an update at the next Community Council meeting. A.Mackenzie suggested it would be appropriate to

remove the sign directing people to the School Brae toilets (which are closed, possibly permanently), and Cllr Tatler agreed to arrange for that to be done.

L.Turnbull wondered if PCC should go ahead with organising a petition in view of the possible re-opening of the East Station car park toilets in March? G.Ramsay expressed a need for them to be re-opened sooner than that. Cllr Bell said he is Chair of SBC Petitions Committee. He said that it can take a long time for petitions to progress through the Scottish Government. The reason the public toilets in the Borders were closed was due to Covid. The cleaning costs in the circumstances were prohibitive. He anticipates that once Covid has passed then all the toilets will re-open. When L.Turnbull expressed concern that the toilets might not re-open due to financial constraints Cllr Bell suggested that petitioning SBC might be more useful than petitioning the Scottish Government. L.Turnbull asked G.Mackie to look into raising a petition with SBC and to report back at the next meeting. Cllr Tatler said the toilets in Haylodge Park which are funded from the Common Good Fund are open in the summer months only. He will ask at the next Common Good meeting whether there would be enough funding available to open them for longer.

Speeding on the Glasgow Road. Cllr Bell reported on behalf of Cllr Anderson that Police will monitor speeding outside the school and take enforcement action where necessary. J.Mitchell said she and others have repeatedly notified SBC that the flashing 20mph sign on the Glasgow Road outside Kingsland School is not working. Cllr Bell said the current part-time signs will be replaced with vehicle activated 20mph signs in the coming months. H.Young and J.Mitchell will also raise their concerns about speeding on the Glasgow Road with P.Gilhooley of SBC. Cllr Small suggested the temporary installation of a 'pop-up Bob' to slow down the traffic.

Member of the public David Ferguson reported that the existing 20mph sign had been fixed two days previously, a good thing because the fastest speed he saw recorded by it was 88mph, though he added that the sign might have been faulty on that occasion.

Street names (Neidpath Place and Neidpath Road): L.Turnbull reported that OS maps are in the process of being updated. THE SBC Roads Planning Officer will be visiting the site shortly and hopefully PCC will get an update on how the confusion between the two street names can be resolved.

**Police Report:** M.Bruce circulated it prior to the meeting. He had his usual monthly conversation with Sgt Granger and both agreed it had been a quiet month.

**Anti-social behaviour:** A small working group has been formed to look at this matter consisting of M.Bruce and S.Hamilton of PCC, Lori Lee who is a sports based practitioner with Live Borders, Hannah Lacon, Community Engagement Officer with SBC and Dave Hodson of Tweeddale Youth Action. Lori Lee and Mr Bruce met online with the Deputy Head Teacher of Peebles High School to finalise an online survey to go out to all pupils, and it went 'live' just before the PCC meeting. It will go to every pupil on the PHS roll and will be completed by them during time set aside for this purpose. It is an opportunity for them to express their views. The resultant data will be analysed by year group, locality and gender. The aim is to learn what issues are leading to incidents of anti-social behaviour. Because individual pupils cannot be identified there will be no data protection issues with Mr Bruce sharing the results with West Linton and Innerleithen CCs, who also have concerns about anti-social behaviour.

Mr Bruce, together with Dave Hodson, Lori Lee and Sgt Rourke of the Community Action Team appeared on ITV Borders the previous evening to discuss the community's concerns about anti-social behavior. Mr Bruce has arranged for the short video to be posted on local Facebook pages and hopes that it will engender some discussion and provide feedback.

At the request of the Deputy Head Teacher Mr Bruce has agreed to take part in focus groups at the High School which would involve those young people who may, without intervention, go on to get involved with anti-social behaviour. He is sure other members of his group will take part too, if required.

At next week's Tweeddale Area partnership meeting Mr Bruce will put forward a request for funding for a youth worker/street pastor to work in Peebles or perhaps Tweeddale. Mr Bruce hopes to report some findings from the survey at next month's PCC meeting.

The Chairman commended Mr Bruce and Ms Hamilton for all the work they have done regarding this matter.

S.Rae asked if we were still pursuing the plan to co-opt a pupil onto PCC? Mr Bruce said that he had spoken with the Head of Modern Studies, who was the driving force behind the creation of the Youth Parliament at the school. SBC Councillors hope to meet with the Youth Parliament next month and Mr Bruce has asked that a Community Councillor goes along as well.

Cllr Tatler also commended Mr Bruce for all that he is doing and said it would be worthwhile sharing the process with other areas of the Borders.

### **Chairman's Report**

L.Turnbull reported that a complaint about PCC has been received. At the moment it is anonymous. The complainant is being encouraged to identify himself so the matter can be progressed. It is not appropriate to say anything further at this stage, but the matter is in hand.

### **Chambers Institution Trust:**

L.Turnbull reported that he has received a letter from SBC to say that the decision has been taken that there will be no lay representation on the Board of Trustees. That is not a position which PCC accepts, nor does Peebles Civic Society, and both organisations are considering what the next steps will be.

Cllr Bell said that it was a decision of the Council, not the members of the Board of Trustees, that there should not be lay membership. Cllr Bell chaired a CIT meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> December (as joint Chair; Cllr Tatler is the other joint Chair). The Board reviewed how meetings are held and how to create a stakeholder group. The next meeting in January will be attended by Keith Belleville of the Memorial Hall in Innerleithen's stakeholder group to advise about that set up. Some funding has been identified to remove the suspended ceiling in the Burgh Hall, and there is the possibility of making changes to the structure and layout of the rooms in the rest of the complex. Cllr Bell would like it put on record that the CIT is proceeding with the improvements they think are appropriate.

### **SBC Cllr Reports:**

- Cllr Bell: nothing to add to his comments about the CIT, above.
- Cllr Small: nothing to report.

- Cllr Tatler: Tweedbridge Court will be built this year. The site will be tidied up before construction commences.

It is hoped that in February approval will be given for the steps in Victoria Park, currently out of action due to their dangerous condition, to be replaced by a ramp.

Cllr Tatler sits on the Tweeddale Access Panel. They recently put together a list of where there is a need for dropped pavements etc and that work has commenced and will be completed within this financial year.

He has received costings for repairs to the riverside path on the south of the Tweed which he will share with PCC. Some decisions will have to be made on which parts of the path to prioritise. He will also report the path on the other side of the river (near where the Cuddy meets the Tweed) to SBC engineers where water is pooling quite badly.

Eildon Housing Association have offered the murals on the hoarding round the Tweedbridge Court site to the local community. Cllr Tatler will ask Boots the Chemist if they could be mounted on their wall in the courtyard behind the Royal Bank of Scotland. He has been in talks for some time with the Royal Bank (who own the courtyard) to see if the raised hexagonals could be removed which would increase the potential use of the area. J.Mitchell offered to take one of the murals for the back of her fence. The fence backs on to the John Buchan Way and is very graffitied. Cllr Tatler will pass on her request to Eildon.

The next Tweeddale Area Partnership meeting is on Tuesday evening, 18<sup>th</sup> January.

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

**Planning Report:** circulated prior to the meeting. There were no questions.

**Scottish Borders Community Council Network:** P.Maudsley explained that there are 69 Community Councils in the Borders. He thinks it would be beneficial if all the Community Councils in Tweeddale came together in a focus group which could feed in to the SBCCN. He has therefore emailed those Community Councils and awaits their response.

Cllr Tatler supported the proposal, saying that there had been such a focus group in the past and it had worked extremely well.

**Peebles Common Good:** P.Maudsley had nothing to report at this time. L.Turnbull reminded everyone that there is an online consultation about Common Good Assets and encouraged everyone to take part.

**Peebles Community Trust:** Report circulated prior to the meeting.

### **Any Other Business**

Overgrown hedges and obscured sightlines: A.Snoddy pointed out that a lot of trees and bushes in Peebles have been allowed to grow beyond garden boundaries. It can make it difficult for pedestrians to walk past without stepping on to the road, never mind people pushing prams or using mobility scooters. There is also the issue of obscured sightlines at junctions, making life difficult – and dangerous – for all road users. She has confirmed with SBC that they are prepared to follow up any notifications sent to them by PCC. If they agree there is indeed a problem they will notify the home owner to take action. With the Chairman's agreement she has divided the town into 'blocks' and will send them out to

Community Councillors to identify any issues. Any relevant addresses should be notified to her by 10<sup>th</sup> February.

Cllr Tatler thought the initiative was a very good one and suggested that the journalists present might like to remind residents that trees and hedges should not be allowed to encroach pavements and pathways.

The SBC Place Making Workshop due to take place on 12<sup>th</sup> January was cancelled and will be rescheduled.

CCTV cameras: L.Turnbull said PCC has become aware that a commercial company is paid by SBC to maintain the CCTV cameras in the Borders. He has written to the Director of Infrastructure at SBC, John Curry, to ask him if the cameras in Peebles are covered by that contract or not. M.Bruce reminded the meeting that there is currently a very good camera in School Brae (*a mobile CCTV camera, referred to in last month's Minutes*) and the quality of the images produced is excellent. Mr Turnbull suggested that PCC could perhaps buy some cameras for use by the Police (whose own resources are limited). He and Mr Bruce will look at the provision of CCTV cameras in Peebles and report back to the Community Council.

Lighting on Tweed Green: Cllr Tatler said the lighting in Tweed Green and in Victoria Park will be discussed at the next Common Good meeting.

SBC Budget consultation: It can be found on the SBC website and the closing date is 30<sup>th</sup> January.

Testing of headstones: A member of the public has contacted PCC to express concerns about the damage caused when testing the stability of headstones in Peebles Cemetery two years ago. Mr Turnbull asked if there is a date yet for the testing of headstones in the rest of the cemetery? Cllr Tatler said it would happen this year but there was no definite date yet. As much advance warning as possible will be given to relatives.

Speeding in March Street: The Community Council has received a letter from a resident in March Street expressing concerns about vehicles speeding along that road. It appears it is being used as a 'rat run' to avoid the High Street. Cllr Tatler said SBC Councillors would raise the matter with Sergeant Granger and Mr Turnbull said Mr Bruce would also speak with Sgt Granger. Mr Turnbull wondered what practical measures could be put in place to dissuade both speeding and HGVs travelling along this residential road? J.Shearer suggested repainting the large 20mph signs on the road, and Cllr Small said he would investigate that possibility with Philippa Gilhooley at SBC.

### **'Round the Table'**

Scott Rae: Carers have spoken with him about the poor condition of the footpaths round Dovecot and leading into town. There is a danger of 'toppling' by the users of mobility scooters. There is also the issue of bins on pavements causing an obstruction. Cllr Tatler and Cllr Small said that money has been allocated from the Small Schemes Fund to improve the pavements in that vicinity, and that work will be done in the next few weeks.

A.Snoddy asked why the big layby between Peebles and Eddleston has been closed? S.Rae said it was probably being used to store equipment involved in the construction of the Eddleston Water Path.

C.Forsyth asked if a sandbox could be placed at Moss Park where a number of elderly people live? Cllr Tatler said he would ask if perhaps one could be moved from elsewhere. SBC are reluctant to distribute any more sandboxes.

G.Ramsay asked if signs could be installed prohibiting caravans and motorhomes from parking in Peebles car parks? Cllr Bell said motorhomes are allowed to park in the car parks, however not for long periods of time. (That restriction applies to all vehicles.) M.Bruce pointed out that in some other areas in Scotland motorhomes are actively encouraged to park up because it brings prosperity to the area. Cllr Bell said that SBC were looking into the possibility of providing online advice to motorhome owners on where best to park in Peebles.

M.Bruce. As a committee member of Peebles Christmas Lights Association he said that the Switch On Event was a great success and that the display of lights was magnificent. Their finances are not as good as they once were because their normal fundraising activities have been constrained because of Covid. They applied for a grant under Covid related funds for this year's event but were turned down. It is important that the town realises the event is put on by volunteers, the lights are put up by volunteers, taken down by volunteers, and every penny has to be raised by them. They will be launching a Just Giving page shortly to raise some funds because it would seem all grants are denied to them. If anyone feels like donating a tenner it would be much appreciated. J.Mitchell said she would speak with Peebles Round Table who raise funds for local organisations. Cllr Tatler said Peebles Common Good have given some money to the Christmas Lights Association in the past but he does not recall having received an application for some time. He suggested that Mr Bruce put in an application. Mr Bruce said he applied to the Build back Better Borders Fund before Christmas but was turned down because some of the purchases had already been made. He felt that was unnecessary red tape in view of the fact this is one of the most magnificent events put on by volunteers in this town on a regular basis.

S.Rae emphasised that it is particularly important that a Minute Secretary is appointed before 'in person' meetings return to the Burgh Chambers.

**The next meeting will be held at 7pm on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2022 by Zoom.**