



Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minutes of the 294th Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 14th April 2022 via Zoom. The meeting was recorded for the purposes of Minuting and Reporting.

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

In attendance: J.Hislop of the Peeblesshire News, S.Whitnell of the U3A, D.Cameron of the Street Pastors Group, J.Pirone, candidate in the forthcoming Local Election.

Apologies for absence: Cllr Anderson, Cllr Bell, Cllr Tatler, Cllr Haslam, Local Election Candidates D.Pye and J.Smith.

Open Forum: No matters were raised.

Presentation about the proposed Peebles Town Trail by Sandra Whitnell. Ms Whitnell leads the local U3A history group and is also the U3A National Adviser on local history. The plan is to have a town trail in Peebles on Open Doors Day in September. The theme will be 'Peebles for Pleasure'. Open Doors Days take place across the UK and Europe and it is hoped the trail would appeal to locals and people from the wider area. Ms Whitnell illustrated her talk with 4 slides. There will be 'leaflet spots' starting at the Eastgate Theatre and others include Tweed Green, the Parish Church and the Chambers Institution. The work to create posters has been undertaken by the local history group who are very enthusiastic about the project. The cost of producing waterproof leaflets is estimated to be around £300.

The Chairman, L.Turnbull, commended the initiative and wondered if the trail could be permanent. He suggested that Ms Whitnell apply for funding to SBC's Community Fund.

J.Pirone has experience of creating a guided walk via a mobile phone app, and suggested funding for that might be available through the Big Lottery. She said she would be happy to discuss the matter further with Ms Whitnell. Children will be catered for too with questions on the leaflets specially devised to interest them and certificates awarded at the end of the trail.

The Chairman thanked Ms Whitnell, as well as the other people who have worked on the project. He said the Community Council are 100% behind the project, and invited Ms Whitnell to contact the Community Council again if she needs any more advice about applying for funding.

Ms Whitnell concluded by asking members to think of someone – a celebrity perhaps – who could walk the trail to generate publicity for it.

Discussion with Street Pastor, Duncan Cameron. L.Turnbull introduced Mr Cameron by saying that there is a growing problem in Peebles of anti-social behaviour. The Community Council have entered into discussions with Peebles High School and the Police. He would be interested to find out more about Street Pastors and what they do.

Mr Cameron said there are 280 Street Pastor initiatives in the UK, of which 20 are in Scotland. They operate under a parent organisation called Ascension Trust. The Pastors are trained volunteers from local churches. Their role is one of listening, caring and helping, all in a confidential and non-judgemental way. Street Pastors began operating in the Borders in 2016, and work mainly between 10.30pm and 3am. They work in both Galashiels and Hawick. Street Pastors usually operate in teams of 3. The Pastors do not have, nor do they wish, any powers. Although they are a Christian organisation they do not preach to anyone. Street crime tends to reduce when Street Pastors are out and about.

Street Pastors undertake 50 hours of training; they require references; they are part of the PVG (*Protecting Vulnerable Groups*) Scheme. It is the local churches who instigate the presence of Street Pastors in their area. Mr Cameron had emailed local churches in both Innerleithen and Peebles prior to tonight's meeting to ask if they would be interested in taking part in the project. So far he has not had much response, but it is a busy time for churches at the moment (*Easter*). If local churches wished to be involved then they would have to find and train local volunteers because there are currently not enough in the Borders.

As well as Street Pastors there are School Pastors in a few areas who work with schools and might, for example, be around during school lunch breaks. There are also Rail Pastors, set up in response to railway suicides.

Mr Cameron is aware of the situation in Peebles and envisages that Street Pastors would work during the evenings targeting the areas where there is known to be anti-social behaviour. Mr Turnbull asked if the Street Pastors worked with youth groups in Galashiels and Hawick? Mr Cameron said there was some liaison between themselves and the Youth Club in Galashiels, but that in Hawick they work later at night than young people (*of youth club age*) would usually be out and about. Street Pastors do liaise with police, and they will respond to information from the public about trouble spots.

Mr Turnbull said he thought Street Pastors could be a very useful addition to the scarce resources we have in Peebles to address some of the ant-social behaviour. He was also interested to hear what Mr Cameron said about School Pastors because we are becoming concerned about the behaviour of some pupils from Peebles High School at lunchtime. Recently he and Community Councillor M.Bruce met with Campbell Wilson, Head Teacher at the High School, to discuss what can be done to address the problem. Mr Bruce asked if all local churches would be involved in setting up the project? Mr Cameron said they would hope for as many local churches as possible to be involved. Mr Bruce clarified that PCC's first step should be to contact the local churches, tell them we have spoken with Mr Cameron, explain

that we are keen for the project to be established in Peebles, and then hope the churches take it on board and that volunteers from their congregations come forward for training.

A.Snoddy asked about funding. Mr Camerson said that in some cities there are paid co-ordinators but in the Borders all the Street Pastors are unpaid volunteers. Their running costs of £2,000 to £3,000 per year are covered by funding from the Co-op, Tesco, collecting cans and individual donations. Costs include uniforms, training, and a licence fee of £800 paid to Ascension Trust.

J.Shearer asked if Street Pastors ever felt threatened, and secondly if they receive payment? Mr Cameron replied that they are widely respected and do not get threatened. He confirmed that they do not receive any financial benefit – indeed they have to pay their own travel costs.

Mr Cameron said that Street Pastors do sometimes take observers out with them.

Police Report Mr Turnbull asked if M.Bruce had anything to add to his comments on the Police Report (*comments and Report were circulated prior to the meeting*)? Mr Bruce has been unable to speak with Sergeant Granger prior to tonight's meeting so had little to add. However he thought the Street Pastors initiative might be a way forward in Peebles to tackle some of our anti-social behaviour issues working, as always, with the High School on board.

Mr Turnbull thanked Mr Cameron for his very useful presentation about Street Pastors. He and Mr Bruce will discuss the subject further outwith the meeting. Mr Cameron suggested finding out more online about Street Pastors on YouTube, and www.streetpastors.org.uk

Approval of the Minutes of 10th March 2022 was proposed by P.Maudsley and seconded by M.Bruce

Matters arising from the Minutes:

Minute Secretary still required.

Measures to reduce speeding and improve safety on the Glasgow Road outside Kingsland Primary School. Community Councillor H.Young said that following concerns of parents she attended a meeting along with Cllr Small, the Head Teacher, two SBC Officers, another member of the school staff and the Chair of the Parent Council to discuss ways to address the problem. Ms Young had circulated a survey round parents prior to the meeting and received 112 responses. 76% were concerned about the speed of traffic passing the school, and 68% thought that the existing measures were insufficient. Solutions suggested by those who responded included build outs, speed bumps, signage, road markings and speed cameras. SBC are not prepared to put physical measures in place so there will be no speed bumps, no build outs and no chicanes. However SBC did suggest the following measures for which they seek the opinion of PCC:

1. The creation of a 40mph buffer zone, which has the approval of Police Scotland. The 40mph limit would be from the traffic lights east of Neidpath corner to the 20mph zone which would be moved closer to the town. No members of PCC disagreed with the proposal.

2. Visual markings on the road will include 20mph roundels, 'dragon's teeth', signs showing children holding hands, there will be better 20mph electronic signs and a new school warning sign. Two poles on a pavement which have made life difficult for people pushing buggies will be removed.

3. Pencil bollards will be installed at 4 metre intervals on the approach to the school. Unfortunately the pavements in the Old Town are deemed too narrow to install railings or traditional bollards. SBC would like to know how far PCC would like the pencil bollards to stretch. Ms Young will ask for a diagram of the maximum number permitted to enable PCC to reach a decision.

S.Watson said rumble strips are very effective. It was pointed out that they had been in place previously but were removed due to complaints from nearby residents about the noise they caused.

The Chairman asked Ms Young to contact P.Gilhooley of SBC to report that PCC agrees with the change to the speed limits, and that PCC will be interested to see the diagrams showing where the pencil bollards might be located. He thanked Ms Young for all the work she has done on this matter.

Chairman's Report

As mentioned earlier the Chairman and M.Bruce met with Campbell Wilson, Head Teacher at Peebles High School, recently to discuss incidents of anti-social behaviour, especially during the school lunch hour. Mr Wilson is aware of the issues and is anxious to find solutions. It was agreed that there should be a special meeting at the High School on Tuesday 24th May. This will be a full Community Council meeting. Other people in attendance will include the Police and Dave Hodson of Tweeddale Youth Action.

On 22nd March the Chairman attended the Place Making Workshop which was online. He was disappointed in the lack of details provided. Place making is essentially about community engagement and involving local people to improve their communities. P.Maudsley also attended the online meeting and reported back on the discussions within the breakout groups at the meeting. Those groups concluded that there has to be a major culture change within SBC so decision making is no longer 'top down'. It will require all management at SBC to get onboard.

L.Hayworth said that in his opinion SBC Officers should have to add at the end of each report the impact of their plans on equality, finance, the environment and their efforts to seek the community's response to their proposals. However he thinks that there is currently no mechanism to achieve this. Communities make their views known but those views are not incorporated in the proposals.

L.Turnbull agreed with both P.Maudsley and L.Hayworth: there needs to be a change in the culture at SBC by both SBC Councillors and SBC Officers.

SBC Cllr Reports. Only Cllr Small was present, and he had nothing to report as things are winding down ahead of the Council elections. He has just one Planning meeting to attend before then. The Chairman thanked him for his efforts over the past 5 years.

Treasurer's Report: It was circulated prior to the meeting. G.Mackie said the current balance is about £250 less than this time last year. One factor is that the costs of Peebles in Bloom 2021 were not offset by income from the usual raffle, because the Presentation Evening was held online. The other added expense is the Zoom subscription at £14 per month. A second cheque for £121 (*for the locksmith who altered the locks on our Community Council noticeboard*) had to be issued because the locksmith accidentally spoiled the first one.

Planning Report: It was circulated prior to the meeting. P.Maudsley said that the number of objections to the proposed development in the grounds of Kingsmeadows House now exceed 500. SBC's Heritage and Design Officer has asked today for more information about the plans. L.Turnbull asked when the Kingsmeadows application is likely to be heard and Mr Maudsley replied that we do not have that information yet. M.Bruce asked why, when SBC's stated policy is that there should be no more building south of the Tweed in Peebles until the construction of a second bridge, the Kingsmeadows development is not turned down on those grounds? Mr Maudsley responded that the SBC qualify that statement with the word 'major'. This proposed development is not considered to be a 'major' one.

Peebles Community Trust: The report was circulated prior to the meeting. Mr Bruce had nothing to add but did comment on the challenges of transitioning from a smalltown Community Trust to an organisation managing funds of £500,000, with major projects ahead such as the March Street Mill.

Chambers Institution Trust. At the last PCC meeting the Chairman asked the Trustees to refrain from using the term 'stakeholders' and instead use the word 'beneficiaries'. Cllr Bell had suggested that Mr Turnbull write to the Chairman of the Trustees explaining the difference between the two terms. Mr Turnbull is in the process of doing just that.

Any Other Business

- **Hustings:** PCC has organised hustings for Tweeddale East on 19th April, and Tweeddale West on 26th April in the Burgh Hall. We need Community Councillors to come along to assist with the meetings.
- **Our AGM** will be on Thursday 10th November. Prior to that the PCC Elections will be on 25th October. Community Councillors who will have completed their 3 year stint and who wish to continue will have to complete Nominations Forms. They are Scott Rae, Olga Olesheva, Chris Forsyth and Peter Maudsley. Sophie Hamilton is currently a

co-optee and will also have to complete a Nomination Form should she also wish to stand for election. Forms will be sent out nearer the time.

- **Jedderfield farm:** A local resident has contacted PCC to share his concerns about the access to Jedderfield Farm (*which is a Common Good asset*) for the new tenants. The Chairman asked Mr Maudsley if, in his role as PCC's representative on the Common Good committee, he could share any information with us. Mr Maudsley said that the discussion was held in private session, and that he has been told he cannot share anything discussed in private session with the Community Council, including the Chairman of the Community Council. Mr Turnbull said it was a ridiculous situation, and he would be raising the issue with the next Chairman (*after the local election*) of the Common Good committee. A.Mackenzie said he has been commissioned to do some work for the new tenants. He said that the company, Graham Irvine and Partners, have been contracted to improve the access to the farm from the Glasgow Road. G.Ramsay added that he understands the access road is owned by March and Wemyss Estates and is nothing to do with the Common Good. Mr Turnbull asked Mr Maudsley to make some enquiries.
- **Parking consultation.** A draft consultation drawn up by SBC had been circulated round Community Councillors for comment. A further consultation document, this time drafted by Mr Turnbull, was subsequently circulated. The meeting agreed this was the preferred one and the Secretary was asked to send it to SBC, with a copy sent to Cllr Tatler (Chairman of the Peebles Parking Group Committee).
- **Gypsy Glen Hill Race** 11th May. Volunteers to assist with this event will be sought nearer the time.

Round the Table

A.Mackenzie is concerned about the expense incurred when roads are gritted unnecessarily, for example when it is raining. S.Rae said SBC will have a contract with a weather forecaster who probably do not always get their forecasts right.

A.Snoddy. Closure of Glen Road Post Office. An email from Post Office Ltd suggested this was a temporary closure but local knowledge suggests the PO will be closed permanently. She has emailed PO Ltd for clarification.

The gold letterbox was knocked over by a vehicle and has been taken away. She will contact the Post Office to ask if it will be replaced.

The Great Borders River Clean will take place 27th – 29th May. More information will follow.

Graffiti spotted on the Mercat Cross was reported to SBC and cleaned away within a few hours, though it is not known whether that was by SBC or someone else.

H.Young wondered if efforts had been made in the past to recruit a young person on to the Community Council? The Chairman responded that it has, and that the matter is on

the agenda for discussion when he and Mr Bruce have their forthcoming meeting at the High School. Mr Bruce said that Community Councillors were not invited to the recent meeting between the Tweeddale Councillors and members of the School Parliament – a missed opportunity.

C.Forsyth spoke about a (redundant) pole in the centre of a path on Kingsmuir Crescent which causes people pushing buggies to have to step out onto the road. Cllr Small will raise the matter with SBC Officers. Mr Forsyth also raised concerns about the number of potholes in the roads, which is an ongoing issue.

The next meeting will be at 7pm on Thursday 12th May 2022 by Zoom.