



Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minutes of the 306th Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 11 May 2023 at 7.20pm in the Burgh Chambers, Peebles. The meeting was recorded for the purposes of Minuting and Reporting.

Present: A Mackenzie, A Snoddy (Secretary), C Forsyth, F Richardson, G MacDonald, G Mackie (Vice Chairman and Treasurer), H Young, J Crawley, J Mitchell, J Shearer, J Wilson, P Maudsley (Chairman), S Coe, Cllr Begg, Cllr Pirone, Cllr Thomson.

In attendance: M Davey of the Peeblesshire News, S Morrison of the Peebles Business and Retailers Association.

Members of the Public: F Lumb, G Lumb, M Towers, S Towers, B Scott, H Black.

Apologies: M Bruce, S Watson, S Hamilton, G Ramsay, Cllr Douglas, and Cllr Tatler

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting would be recorded for the purposes of minute taking and reporting.

This monthly meeting followed the Annual General Meeting.

Open Forum:

G Lumb wanted to speak about flooding in Tweed Avenue, Peebles. In December 2022 several properties were flooded. Four properties, so severely, they had had to lift their floors and vacate their properties. This was also the case for properties in Tweed Green. He wanted to know what the update is in respect of flood prevention. There had been a strategy report produced in December and there was also a shortlist of actions drawn up for prevention. What stage are things at now? Have consultants been appointed to work up the detailed proposals? He would like an update. There has been a lot of information available but the communication between SBC and those affected by the flooding could be better.

The Chair thanked G Lumb and confirmed that he had sent a report to SBC, and the Councillors, following the flood in December 2022 after conversations he had had with affected residents.

Cllr Thomson confirmed she and Cllr Begg had gone round the doors speaking to residents and had spoken to the council officers involved and were keen to arrange a meeting with the officers together with the residents. They have been following this up, sending regular reminders. Cllr Tatler has now confirmed there will be a meeting arranged in the coming month. The meeting will involve public resilience groups and community groups across Tweeddale. Cllr Begg said the officer has been coordinating the meeting between SBC, SEPA and Scottish Water, and they are still waiting for input from Scottish Water. There is a plan to have a review. We need to obtain an update on the flood prevention plan. Cllr Begg will take G Lumb's questions away. F Lumb said she is interested in the process and would be like to know how the decisions are made, and to know the timescale. Cllr Pirone said that they will need to work out what defences and strategies to take forward. There will be a consultation with residents, and then they will come up with a plan to prevent flooding, like the one at Eddleston. The issue for SBC is that flood schemes are reliant on Scottish Government funding and

there is no funding currently available. SEPA provide evidence of what flooding is going to be. Cllr Pirone suggested they join the local resilience groups so they get access to first hand information straightaway.

G Lumb understands that three proposals have been put forward. He recognises there is no funding and asked if anything more could be done locally on that issue? He also feels the communication has slowed down. Additionally, the flood alerts are not always accurate, sometimes the threat is higher than the warning suggests. Cllr Pirone said she believes there are remedial works that could be done, and SBC would need to fund those. SEPA also have funds. Peebles is next on the Scottish Government list. The Chair agreed to write to SBC again. Some measures cost very little and more sandbags should be provided asap. There was also a flood gate missing which has not been replaced. This is apparently being held up by possible litigation.

J Shearer said there is no point in putting up sandbags when the water is coming up inside properties, e.g., the drains.

Kingsland PTA

J Mitchell has been approached by the Kingsland PTA who wanted to know why 10% is taken off their budget, in respect of an administration fee. This is a published budget, and it was not clear what it was taken for. It is classed as going back to children, but they felt the school could do with the money. They asked PCC to investigate where it goes and what it is used for. Why can't they keep 100%? Cllr Pirone agreed to raise it. J Wilson said, as far as she knew, it was an historic decision. Now that all admin is centralised, this fee went towards that. It represented administrative staff, e.g., janitorial staff, administrative staff, cooking facilities, etc. The Chair asked if there was a breakdown available to a school of these costs? J Wilson said, no.

Approval of the Minutes of 13 April 2023: G Mackie proposed, and S Coe seconded.

Matters arising from the Minutes:

Tweedlove

The Chair said that TweedLove had had another successful event. He had received emails from residents about chaotic traffic, campers not using the designated site and illegally parked campervans. He had been asked to raise this with SBC Councillors at the meeting. The Chair was not going to open this debate again but this event needs to be reviewed by SBC and both the benefits and adverse issues weighed. There had been access issues for wheelchair users on Kingsmeadows Road at the entrance/exit to Victoria Park because of the parking, and on Caledonian Road cars were having great difficulty passing one another. The Chair asked SBC Councillors to take it forward. Cllr Pirone confirmed she has already taken it forward. The issues have gone to licensing and events planners to see what can be done. The complaints have also been forwarded to the organisers. Cllr Pirone will report back.

J Wilson said we need to be clear about lessons learned as we have another event coming later in year and we don't want a repeat performance. We need to look at the impact of what's happened and what can we do next time, e.g., campervans. The Chair said toilet provision was another question, and A Mackenzie said he'd been approached also by a resident about the illegal parking. A Mackenzie said SBC needs a future vision as Crossburn caravan park won't take campervans. C Forsyth said he is a carer and accessibility is an issue on the roads. Cllr Pirone agreed. Those involved in organising need to consider what's gone before. There needs to be balance. The Chair said that the pros and cons need to be captured formally and documented. Cllr Pirone said there needs to be a holistic plan discussed.

J Shearer asked if the events could use a local farmer's field? S Morrison said the World Championships have arranged two dedicated campsites in the area.

Coronation celebration: The event was a great success with 40 people attending. The feedback was good and the goal to bring in some people who may otherwise have been watching the coronation by themselves was reached.

Parking group: G Ramsay is not here to update. The next parking group meeting is on 18 May.

Town Bus: C Forsyth attended a recent meeting with the town bus group who have asked everyone to return feedback and come up with ideas for the bus route. G Macdonald will be attending the next meeting.

Police report: The report had been circulated. M Bruce not in attendance. The Chair has written to the police and the manager at Costa Coffee with thanks for their recent help with the youth evenings. He had also spoken to Police Officer Carsley to persuade her to come along as we have not had police presence yet during the present Chairman's tenure. Cllr Pirone has also raised this at the highest level.

Community Action Team: This continues to be a work in progress.

Peebles Youth Voice. M Bruce's report has been circulated. The Chair had circulated an article from the *Yorkshire Post* which demonstrated that a purpose-built shelter for youths had a major effect on youth behaviour, bringing a 46% reduction in poor behaviour.

SBC Councillor Reports

Cllr Drummond: The walk around Peebles with PCC and SBC had been summarised in the Chairman's report. Cllr Thomson and he had also had a good walk around and dealt with some of the smaller issues that were easily resolved. They are keen to engage with residents who do not use email and to find the best ways to communicate with them. The area around George Street is a good example.

Cllr Pirone: A lot of items have been covered. Speedwatch is up and running, the working group is set up. Has a good meeting with the police re ASB. Need to look at disassociated youth. Would be helpful for them to know what the impact of their behaviour has on residents. She has been working on working group for strategic review of LiveBorders. She had attended the PCT meeting at Peebles High School and heard feedback about the new school which H Young will discuss later. She had also had the business plan for the Burgh Hall and Chambers Institute Trusts going forward and will be issuing invitations to discuss that in a few weeks' time.

Cllr Tatler: In Cllr Tatler's absence the Chair read out some of the items from his report. Haylodge path; Destination Tweed will be giving update at next meeting of Common Good Committee. Victoria Park; proposals have been made to improve the lighting in the park. Display boards are being made to communicate information on the Common Good. These will be on display at the Volunteer Fair on 27 May. Parking Group; next meeting is set up and to move to conclusions and recommendations including a contribution from the new retailers association. Decriminalisation of parking on street, the PCC is still to have the debate. PHS new build project team have agreed to a form of communication with residents in respect of parking arrangements during the rebuild. Whitestone Park group considering response following consultation in April.

The Secretary confirmed that Destination Tweed will be attending our meeting in July.

Cllr Thomson: Most items have been covered and she has been involved in a lot of the same. She is keen to try and get those who do not come forward to speak up. She and Cllr Begg have regular surgeries. They attended at Dovecot Care Home which was good.

Treasurer's report: The only transaction for April is for £500 for the Coronation celebration event and that will be dealt with next meeting.

Chairman's report. The report has been circulated.

Peebles Town Action Plan. There has been a huge amount of work received from C Carlton. The Chairman is to update the original housing report to incorporate some of the 1000 comments from the public. It is important that the finished document reflects the wishes of the majority in Peebles and is not seen as just reflecting the views of the small team working on it. It is necessary that SBC buy into it, but this will require a major culture change within SBC as historically they did not involve communities in decision making to the extent now required by the Scottish Government.

Coronation event as mentioned earlier was very successful and the Chair wanted to thank, and say well done to, the Secretary for all her hard work together with Cllr Pirone and the other supporting councillors who helped on the day.

The Volunteer Fair is in the Burgh Hall on 27 May and the Chairman needs some volunteers. J Wilson and G MacDonald offered to help. More volunteers would be helpful. The Chairman will be there all day.

Town maintenance, covered by the walk round town and Cllr Begg's report. There is a need to consider loos during the cycling championships, additional portaloos will be required.

Peebles in Bloom. All councillors will be involved with the vetting, but the project needs managed. G MacDonald has offered to manage it, but one person is not enough. J Mitchell and F Richardson offered to assist, advised by the Secretary. The Secretary asked if everyone can also look at overgrown hedges and branches, etc, and report back.

Planning report: PHS, a lot of good has been done but there are some loose ends and again communication could be improved. Cllr Pirone said that SBC is trying to make sure that the headteacher takes a lead. She is speaking with T Compton. The information is out on the websites although the project is behind because of weather. There is more the school could do to improve communication. Any issues can be brought to Cllr Pirone.

The Chair said the PCC's position has been to give the parent council a forum. H Young said there is not much to raise other than the Quality Impact Assessment which is still outstanding. SBC should have produced this at the start as it is meant to inform the design. This has not happened. There has been positive engagement, but the QIA is still outstanding. Cllr Pirone said she would chase it. It has been written and was subject to some changes, but it should be published soon.

S Coe said the performance space has been reduced and there is no way it will accommodate a large group of musicians, it's more like lecture hall. PHS has a huge reputation for its events, and this will reduce quality. Resolving this will be difficult. The Chair said these concerts generate income for the school and alternative hall hire would reduce this.

Cllr Pirone said she will raise the points again, but we must look at it holistically. Other facilities in the town need to be used. If we put everything in one building, those other facilities will suffer, and we must think of Peebles as a town. Some of the teachers like to take concerts outwith the school. This helps students learn

about other buildings and the challenges, such as lighting. S Coe agreed but the other town buildings are not all suitable. The Chair said this expands into a wider debate. Church of Scotland are thought to be considering closing a church and when one closes, we will have another huge building to find a use for and it will need to be maintained.

Baptist church: There has been a meeting with officers from the church; there are two issues. Can it be finished? It's unlikely, so the alternative might be to find another use for it. A solution is being actively pursued.

Windfarms: Cloich is going ahead. Scawd will be coming to talk to us in June. Are three windfarms too many? Cllrs Thomson and Begg feel there is merit in the local community councils getting together to discuss the benefits and strategic plans for wind farms in South of Scotland. Cllr Begg said we need to obtain all the information to ensure the balance is right for this area. H Young agreed with Cllr Begg but pointed out there is a higher-level issue with the National Grid not being able to cope with the surplus energy, and wind farms are then "switched off", but there is no doubt we need to move to renewables. S Coe said often these enterprises are commercial and agreed we need a better strategic overview at governmental level.

Chambers Institution Trust Roof: The roof application by SBC for the Spanish slate has been withdrawn and they will presumably be putting in an application for reinstating the West Moreland green slate. S Coe said this will be done as part of the main project. It is in his report.

Planning objections: Only 2 to highlight, an erection of a shed on land at Knapdale and erection of 20 dwellinghouses next to the Cardrona Macdonald Hotel and the Chairman suggested anyone who has concerns should consult the portal and inform him.

Chambers Institute Trust. S Coe's report has been circulated. It was hoped we would get into the Burgh Hall for this meeting but alas there is still additional work to be done. There will be an open day from 3pm to 8pm on 19 May if anyone wants to attend. At the Volunteer Fair they will be marking the 140th anniversary of William Chambers' death and celebrate his legacy to the town.

AOB:

Island in the Tweed: The Secretary wrote to SEPA about the growing island in the Tweed. SEPA said this is the responsibility of SBC, so the Secretary has written to SBC. SEPA will have to approve any works.

Barriers in George Street: G MacDonald reported damage to the new barriers in George Street, behind Halyrude. A Mackenzie said that there are cars parked there, and cars and lorries are trying to service the buildings in that area. What are the barriers need for? To prevent the lorries. Cllr Begg confirmed the lorries are no longer going through there, only cars. Buses still go there and that is challenging.

Local book: Cllr Begg wanted to recommend a book by Philip Hutton, a local painter, of paintings of Peebles. It can be purchased from Elmbank print.

Bus timetable: J Crawley had been approached because of a recent fiasco one Saturday/Sunday night at the bus terminal at the post office. This is because there is a large gap between the buses of a couple of hours. There were young people and adults involved. The report was that the bus was like a war zone. He wanted to know how the bus company can run a bus on the hour during the week, but not at the weekend. Cllr Pirone will speak to Police Scotland and the Secretary will write to Border Buses about the timetable.

Congratulations: The Secretary, on behalf of the Community Council, congratulated fellow councillor J Mitchell on the announcement that her daughter is this year's Beltane Queen. We have a Queen Mother on the council !

A Mackenzie: SBC have not yet procured any new ground for a new cemetery. Idea where and when?

J Shearer asked about the bins on Tweed Green? Can they get bigger bins? The Secretary asked her to take photos of the overflowing bins for forwarding to SBC.

J Mitchell had reported a bollard that had fallen to SBC and the response was first class. They came out straightaway, did an excellent job and were very pleasant. She wanted it noted what a great job they did.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their time.

The meeting ended at 8.56pm.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 8 June 2023 at 7pm in Burgh Hall, Peebles.