



Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minutes of the 309th Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 10 August 2023 at 7pm in the Burgh Chamber, Peebles. The meeting was recorded for the purposes of Minuting and Reporting.

Present: A Snoddy (Secretary), F Richardson, G MacDonald, G Mackie (Vice Chairman and Treasurer), G Ramsay, H Young, J Crawley, J Shearer, J Wilson, M Bruce, P Maudsley (Chairman), Cllr Begg, Cllr Douglas, Cllr Small, Cllr Tatler, Cllr Thomson

In attendance: M Davey of the Peeblesshire News

Members of the Public: C McKay, M Marshall

Apologies: S Coe; S Hamilton, L Lovell-Henderson and Cllr Pirone

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting would be recorded for the purposes of minute taking and reporting. The meeting was hosted in the Burgh Chamber because of the difficulty with acoustics in the Burgh Hall.

The Chairman welcomed a new Peebles community councillor, Lennox Lovell-Henderson. L Lovell-Henderson is a young person, 16 years old, and his contribution will be very welcome. He sends his apologies for this evening.

Open forum: Nothing.

Approval of the Minutes of 13 July 2023: M Bruce proposed, and G Ramsay seconded.

Matters arising from the Minutes:

Proposed crossing on Innerleithen Road by Destination Tweed. The Chairman had heard nothing further. M Piper had put the proposals to the planners and was waiting for them to return. The Chair had recommended a traffic light-controlled junction. Cllr Thomson said the Tweeddale West councillors have been speaking to the planning officers and new drawings were being done. Once those have been done, they will have another meeting again to discuss the options. The Chairman and Secretary had been on a site visit where they spoke to a resident. They were shown the areas in discussion which had given them more clarity as to the issues.

Crumbling wall near Rose Park. Cllr Thomson confirmed, and officer had been out to have a look. The report is not back yet.

20 mph stickers: These have been ordered for wheelie bins.

Debris on Tweed Island. Cllr Tatler had nothing to update from the Common Good yet.

Police report: No police report received. M Bruce had circulated his report. He noted there has been good police presence lately. The street pastors from Galashiels had visited, which had been successful. The Peebles churches are not yet fully signed up, but the project was moving forward. J Shearer said that the street pastors had given a presentation at the Parish Church recently and it was very good.

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SBC councillor reports

Cllr Begg: Peebles swimming pool is now open, and Cllr Begg encouraged everyone to use it. Peebles is looking spectacular with the floral displays, and he wanted a big shout out to all the retailers for their late night opening on Friday 11 August. He has been in touch with Scottish Water to see how they can sort the recurring sewerage issue at Rosetta Road. They need to understand what is going on and why there is a backing up of sewage.

Cllr Douglas: The Community Conversations are starting up again this summer. The next one at Peebles High School on 29 August, 4pm to 7pm. The Tweeddale Area Partnership is on 22 August, 7pm in Eddleston village hall. Police Scotland will attend and there will be a session about youth engagement. There will be a member from the Youth Scottish parliament there too. It will include a Destination Tweed update, and some support funding decisions made. The Peebles Parking Group will be making their report, although no decisions will be taken. There will also be a discussion on the flooding in Tweeddale. The Chairman pointed out that one of the easiest things to do would be to increase sandbags. Cllr Tatler said that has been noted. The Chair added that if there is a flood tomorrow and nothing has been done SBC should be held accountable. Cllr Thomson suggested that people make requests for what they need to SBC. The Chairman said he had already contacted SBC with a report and recommendations. Cllr Douglas said there would be another engagement meeting in Victoria Park on 2 September from 10am to 1pm. Cllrs Douglas, Tatler and Pirone would be there.

Cllr Small: He was pleased to see that the swimming pool has reopened. The recent UCI World Cycling Championships had brought lots of positive attention to the Borders. There's not much happening in planning at the moment.

Cllr Tatler: Following the engagement sessions from Victoria Park they had passed on comments to the lighting officer, including the low-level lighting. They will be coming forward with alternative plans which may include a combination of high- and low-level lighting. Tweedbridge Court; the area and wall are going to be tidied up. Cllr Tatler wanted to say that following the incident on Tweed Brae on 9 August there had been many comments made across social media, many of which were insensitive and inaccurate. He was disgusted by some of the comments. He implored people to be more thoughtful about what they are posting on public fora.

Cllr Thomson: The recent Live Borders event was well attended. Cllrs have been invited to mop up session. They also discussed the format for the future of the events to get the best from them. Cllr Thomson will be attending the Home Basics AGM. She had also spent an afternoon at SBHA in the Dalatho area which she enjoyed immensely and came away with a list of items to attend to. The event at Glentress was fantastic, it worked well and there was a great atmosphere. All visitors would have appreciated the huge efforts made.

The Chairman said that the Victoria Park engagement results showed that there was support for lighting at 80% and support for the shelter at 78% support. 30 people left comments.

Treasurer's Report. The report had been circulated. The Chairman had written to the Chief Executive about funding for the Community Council and had received a polite response to say they are currently reviewing funding. They sent out a questionnaire to all councils asking for their ideas.

J Wilson pointed out that not all community councils get same amount of money. Some receive funds for additional things e.g., grass cutting. She asked if we apply and if not, could we? The Chairman pointed out that this would mean more responsibility and we have no capacity to do so. The questionnaire will return ideas that the community might have. The Chairman said that the SBC CEO had said in his letter that if we had specific needs we should apply for grants. The PCC resources would also depend on who joins. Industry-led retired members help; however, money will bring accountability. G Macdonald said that it's good to

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encourage the community to take more pride in the town and not always rely on SBC, it might be something we can talk about. G Mackie said that pathway maintenance grants are available and if someone wanted to do it, we could take it on. Cllr Douglas confirmed there are a number of funds which are available for community councils. Cllr Small said he is sitting on the sub committee that is discussing the funds for community councils. The funding is governed by population, and he is aware how difficult it is to get members and of additional rising costs, like insurance.

Chairman's report: Scottish Borders Community Council Network (SBCCN). There is currently a hiatus in the organisation, and it has stalled. The Chairman suggested that a strengthened Area Partnership based more on the East Lothian model may bring Tweeddale CCs into closer cooperation and provide a link to SBCCN. If other areas could be similarly strengthened, then the SBCCN may also be made to work more effectively.

Planning: a quiet month. Tweedbridge Court; no start yet. Peebles High School; M Stevenson was unable to attend but wants the ongoing concerns around the performance space to be reiterated. She said that S Coe's overlay had been looked at by the architects and it was not too far off theirs in terms of scale. She hoped that the inaccuracies would be corrected as the impact on our youngsters is going to be huge otherwise. S Coe's response is quoted below:

Referring to the minutes of the last meeting and the item regarding PHS New Build, I would like to make it clear that Steven Renwick subsequently confirmed that in contrast to his initial reaction that it didn't look right, my simple overlay sketch demonstrating that the new hall will be less than half the length of the existing hall, and thus significantly reduced in performance capacity, is in fact "not far off in terms of scale" according to the Council's architects. In response to this Steven pointed out that the space allocated to Peebles is comparable to the other new schools in the Borders, but this fails to take into account the relative size of each school, and the usability of the designed space provided. The new Kelso High School has a combined assembly, performance and drama space of similar floor area and function to the proposed (smaller) Peebles space, but it is a more effective shape for performance, and has apparently proved adequate for a school that is less than half the size of Peebles (613 compared to 1,400), whereas the latter is the largest in the Borders and consequently able to generate much larger assembled music and drama groups. I note that the PHS design has since been further amended to adjust the access door arrangement which will make the auditorium slightly longer, but the width of the shared "stage" area has now been further compromised by being reduced to approximately 7.5m. In response to a request from Morag Stevenson of the Parent Council, Steven Renwick has helpfully agreed to attend a meeting at the current PHS hall when the staff have returned later this month, to mark out the measurements of the new hall in situ, and this will be very useful as many find it difficult to comprehend the scale of the spaces on the drawings provided to the public by the Council during consultations. While it is accepted and agreed that construction of the new school should now proceed without further delay, and that many aspects of this (for departments other than music and drama I would say) will be a great improvement, I will reserve further comment on this particular issue until after the proposed meeting.

Cllr Thomson said that there is a revised budget due, but we must be mindful of costs, there is no money.

Baptist church: Cllr Tatler is attending a meeting on 11 August and will update in due course.

Victoria Park Centre: Cllr Tatler had taken the Chairman on a tour. The building is excellent and in good condition but underutilised. Cllr Tatler said that Greener Peebles needs office accommodation, and the Food

Foundation would benefit from a bigger room. Cllr Tatler is speaking with the Estates Department to see if some community groups can use the centre.

Planning applications: Edderston Farm; agents have contacted planning to move this forward. The planning officer asked the opinion of Environmental Health, but their view has not changed. There would be an issue with noise for nearby residents. Rosetta Road holiday park; there is an open session in the Eastgate on 15 August and the Chairman is attending. March Street Mills site; there are 13 objections and 2 supporting. The PCC has objected based on the reduction of allotments. It is likely the developers will be forced to protect the allotments. There is a lot of information and many documents, and anyone interested should look at the onlineportal.

Chambers Institution Trust: Cllr Tatler said that S Coe has circulated his report. The trust meeting was last week where several decisions were made. The Burgh Hall acoustics were discussed, and this will be taken back to the beneficiaries group. They also discussed the artworks, and it was approved that these can be displayed in the entrance, but a leak needs to be fixed first.

Peebles Community Trust: M Bruce has circulated his report. It is unlikely they will be able to put heating in. The bill does not match the grant. MSP Christine Graham visited and the dilemma was explained to her. Not sure of future. The Chairman said that C Carelton is getting on with the draft action plan. The Chairman is hopeful that following his meeting with SBC with officers that one day there will be a regeneration plan to cover all things, although estimated costs are £50m.

Parking Group: G Ramsay said there was a meeting on 9 August which was good. There is going to be another survey, with a proposal for 6 days of charging. Cllr Tatler said the community is divided on parking charges. There would be another specific consultation online. There have been many improvements made over the last year. The Chairman asked about the marking at Kingsmeadows car park and Cllr Tatler confirmed that has been approved which will increase capacity.

Town Bus: G Macdonald confirmed they are waiting for L Scott's report and once that is in, she will get a copy and bring to the October meeting.

Peebles in Bloom: The Chairman said a great deal of work had been going on to arrange this. G Macdonald said it had been very much teamwork and thanked the dedicated team for their time and hard work. This is a Peebles Community Council event, and everyone should make every effort to attend on 17 August. The doors open at 6pm and the public would start arriving at 7pm. G Ramsay and S Watson are in charge of refreshments. The Chairman would be overseeing the event and Garry Rennie is our master of ceremonies. Caroline Spray would be presenting the trophies. We have six judges, four new judges this year. Please bring raffle prizes. We need everyone to help. The Chairman said the councillors were given a different area each year and it was fantastic to see all the gardens.

AOB

The Chairman said the Peebles Community Council website is still not functioning unfortunately.

There had been discussions around barriers alongside the Eddleston Water path following an incident. Cllr Thomson has for the road safety auditors to review. Cllr Begg said it needed to be risk assessed properly with data and analysis. H Young said parents were concerned that there are no barriers, and where the speed limit is 60. Families were being encouraged to go on it and small children wander so now parents are questioning its safety. M Bruce said, once again, there was a lot of social media misinformation surrounding the recent incident. It was agreed to await the outcome of the safety audit.

Freshers Fair. This is at Peebles High School on 5 September. We attended last year's and this year H Young will attend to represent us.

Cross Kirk. The grounds are locked when the sole key holder is on holidays. Can this be resolved? The Secretary will write to Historic Environment Scotland and ask about the scaffolding and barriers.

J Shearer: Following her suggestion SBC have placed a bench on Edinburgh Road. It needs to be painted; M Bruce agreed to look at it. Also, a bench has been gifted to Peebles Community Trust's railway trust group. It is now in the quadrangle outside the library. It has been painted in the original colour which was sought out and historically matched specifically.

Medical Hall: There has been a change of ownership of the pharmacy, previously Lloyds and now there was a lunchtime clash. Neither the Hall nor Boots are open at lunchtime, whereas they used to stagger lunchtimes so there was always a pharmacist available. The Secretary agreed to write to the new owners to ask them if they would consider staggering their lunch breaks.

Trees in Kingsmeadows. M Marshall and C McKay were at the meeting as they requested SBC make a tree preservation order for the woodland at Kingsmeadows adjacent to the site with planning permission. 500 people objected to the removal of the trees including chartered experts who said that the arboreal (tree) impact assessment ("AIA") is severely deficient. It is missing an accurate description of the numbers of trees; there are 53 not 44 and of those noted 47 are important trees in categories A and B which would be material to planning. Experts went on to say that the AIA report lacks much of the information it should contain and is consequently misleading in the impression it gives. They recommended SBC make a Tree Preservation Order expediently for all category A, B and C trees at the site. The Chairman recommends the Community Council endorses this application for the TPO, and M Bruce congratulated M Marshall and C McKay for doing all the background work. The Chairman will write to SBC in support. C McKay thanked Cllr Tatler for all his support over the last couple of years.

Quote/statements are from the second objection (dated "4 Apr 2022"), available here: <http://savekingsmeadows.org.uk/#ExpertObj>

Eastgate Theatre: There is a public meeting scheduled on 17 August, called by a member of the public not the management, to look at the problems in the Eastgate theatre. This clashes with our Peebles In Bloom event. J Crawley agreed to attend as a representative of the community council. Any questions to S Dube, contact details available from the Chairman.

Cllr Tatler wanted to note everyone's appreciation of Campbell Johnston of SBC and his team. He acts quickly and efficiently every time and sorts everything out. The Secretary will also send him an email thanking him for his outstanding service to the community.

G Macdonald wanted to mention the increasing pressure on Haylodge Hospital as there is a backlog of patients that cannot be discharged because they are waiting for a care package. G Macdonald asked when DDL (a private care company from Peebles) would be opening their day care hub in Cavalry Park. It was confirmed it is opening very soon. She had also received very positive feedback for the new swimming pool.

H Young had also received positive feedback regarding the new pool; the parents are delighted. She also reported that SBC has finally published the Equality Impact Report for PHS. It is on their website. It is very very late, but she is pleased we now have one and hopes that they update it as the project progresses.

M Bruce wanted to say that he is delighted that Peebles Youth Voice have been offered financial assistance from the Peebles Walking Football Club for the next year. It is of huge help and it's good to see the youth supported by older members of the community.

G Mackie wanted to add his compliments to all the local traders and to Bonnie Peebles Plus for the smart appearance and beautiful flower displays in town for the cycling championships.

J Shearer asked about a cycle stand in the High Street. There did not appear to be many cycle stands. F Richardson asked about putting one in the Kingsmeadows car park and Cllr Tatler agreed to put that on the Common Good agenda. The Tweeddale West councillors could look at the small schemes fund for other cycle stands in the High Street.

A Snoddy said she had seen that there are workers in what was the sweetshop in the High Street. No one knows yet who is moving in.

The meeting finished at 8.39pm.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 14 September 2023 at 7pm in Burgh Chambers, Peebles.