



Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 9 May 2024 at 7pm in the Burgh Chamber, Peebles. The meeting was recorded for the purposes of Minuting and Reporting.

Present: A Mackenzie, A Snoddy (Secretary), F Richardson, G MacDonald, G Mackie (Vice Chairman and Treasurer), G Ramsay, H Young, J Wilson, M Bruce, M Marshall, P Maudsley (Chairman), S Coe, S Watson, Cllr Pirone, Cllr Small, Cllr Tatler.

In attendance: M Davey of the Peeblesshire News, K Guiney Chair of the Peebles Business and Retailers Association.

Members of the Public: K Young, L Thomson, R Rowe.

Apologies: L Lovell-Henderson, Cllr Begg, Cllr Douglas, Cllr Thomson, S Mackay.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was recorded for the purposes of minuting and reporting. The minutes will be published with names of the public unless requested otherwise. Third parties out with the meeting will not be identified unless relevant.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the last AGM held on 11 May 2023 were approved by S Watson and seconded by S Coe.

Chairman's Annual Report: The report had been circulated and an emailed copy is available on request from secretary@ccrbpeebles.co.uk. From the Report:

This is the Chairman's second AGM and covers a full year from May 2023. The report includes a lot of detail, probably more than an AGM usually requires. However, it is included to make two important points.

Firstly, on occasion we, that is the PCC has been accused of doing nothing worthwhile. This form of comment is always via social media and although it says more about the poster than it does about the PCC, it does cause some angst amongst our members. The detail here surely buries those comments stone dead. Allied to these comments is the occasional complaint that we haven't taken a particular action that the poster would have liked to see. Assuming that the poster is eligible to be a member of the PCC, they are welcome to join us and work free for the community. We should take heart from all the supportive verbal feedback that we hear day in and day out.

The second point relates to the community council system itself. Peebles CC receives £1,501 per annum, with only Galashiels and Hawick receiving more at nearly £2,000. Communities such as Walkerburn receive just short of £700, which the writer would argue is still too little by a long way. Our population is approaching 10,000 and Walkerburn is a tenth of our size but receives 50% of our funding. Our funding has deteriorated year on year from an equivalent

today of around £2,100. If the reader considers the size and complexity of Peebles, and that de-facto our community council is a poor replacement for a town council, then the support we have is pathetic. The average cost of a secretary today in Scotland is £28K per annum. Our secretary works three days a week for an honorarium of a few hundred pounds. If we don't have a volunteer, we don't have a secretary and then we don't have a community council. Someone in government, local and national wants to think about this and with some urgency.

It is impossible for this writer not to follow a trail. How much does local democracy cost in the Borders and how much in the country for a year? A little rounded up research gave less than £60,000. There are 68 community councils. Applied to the 1,200 in Scotland this gives a rough estimate of less than a million pounds for the year. Of course, we are a low population here and the average may not be very accurate. However, it's almost certainly less than three million. So much for local democracy! Did those councillors who made the recommendations to SBC for another 10% fixed for three years after a hiatus since 2009 actually discuss anything of substance, or did they just decide 10% sounded like a nice round figure? Councillors should be on our side, the side of the voters, and although they have difficult decisions to make can they really defend such a position?

Other items from the report:

- Our team
- Our work, including:
 - General items (too many to list here, but available in the Report)
 - Peebles High School
 - Peebles Youth Voice/Youth issues
 - Parking
 - Peebles in Bloom
 - Place Making and the Town Action Plan
 - Annual Litter Pick
 - Town Bus Project
 - Chambers Institution Trust
 - Planning
 - Our website
 - The PCC Survey
 - Miscellaneous, including:
 - Support to Gypsy Glen hill race.
 - Attendance and support to the Tweedale Area Partnership.
 - Review and comment on windmill proposals.
 - Destination Tweed and the Innerleithen road crossing. 2 meetings with the project manager, Marina Piper, three onsite meetings and a presentation and discussion in PCC meeting.
 - Representation on the Common good
 - Representation on the NHS Community Hospitals group and a strong argument presented for renewal of the minor injuries' unit.
 - Engagement with the public through the PCC survey, PHS Freshers Fair and a volunteer fair
 - Peebles Life articles
 - Possible disbursement of (circa £600) funds
 - New equal Opportunities Policy for PCC

- Review new SBC draft Guidelines and make recommendations. Challenge SBC on their response which was full of errors and consequently received an apology.
- Conduct a survey on the Three fish at the Eastgate. This elicited the best response ever to a survey run by PCC.
- Considered an approach relating the accession of David 1 of Scotland the throne.
- Keeping up an overview of the Old School House at the foot of School Brae.
- Keeping up an overview of the Victoria Park Centre.
- Keeping up an overview of the Baptist Church building/
- Keeping up an overview of the potential for CCTV in Peebles. This is a possibility, although we had previously been told by the authorities, when under the previous Chair that it was definitely not possible.
- Build out for buses in the High St near the west end for disabled passengers.

The Chairman is going to keep pressing regarding increased funding for the PCC. S Watson asked if we have gone over the 10,000-population figure? There has not been an up-to-date figure since the last census, it may well be that we are over 10,000 now, at which point which there will be more funding.

Treasurer's report: The accounts had been circulated and signed off by D Pye, the Accounts Examiner. There is a deficit of £176 for the year which is misleading as it does not reflect £248 still outstanding from SBC. The balance carried forward is £911, which is more accurately £1,150. The report was proposed by A Snoddy and seconded by G Watson.

Election of office bearers: P Maudsley handed the chair to Cllr Pirone and the following positions were filled:

Position	Nominee	Proposer	Second
Chairman	P Maudsley	A Snoddy	G Ramsay
Vice Chairman	G Mackie	P Maudsley	S Coe
Secretary	A Snoddy	G Mackie	J Wilson
Treasurer	G Mackie	A Snoddy	F Richardson
Planning Convenor	M Marshall	P Maudsley	S Coe
Independent Examiner of Accounts	D Pye	G Mackie	S Watson

Cllr Pirone handed the meeting over to P Maudsley as Chairman.

Appointment for the following representatives:

		Proposer	Second
Peebles Community Trust	M Bruce	S Watson	S Coe
SBCCN	Vacant	-	-
Common Good	G Ramsay	S Watson	J Wilson
Peebles Civic Society	S Coe	G Ramsay	A Mackenzie
Motorhome Group	G Ramsay	G Mackie	J Wilson
Chambers Institution Trust Beneficiaries Group	S Coe	P Maudsley	M Marshall
Peebles Youth Voice	Would J McMordie be a candidate? Wait to next meeting as he was not in attendance. Need a volunteer either way. Someone with	-	-

	relevant skills would be an advantage.		
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Scottish Borders Council Code of Conduct: All community council members agreed to abide by the code. This is essential to allow for application of the grant.

AOB: None

The meeting ended at 1936 hrs.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 8 May 2025 in the Burgh Hall, Peebles.

..... Chairman

..... Dated

