



Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minutes of the 315th Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 8 February at 7pm in the Burgh Chamber, Peebles. The meeting was recorded for the purposes of Minuting and Reporting.

Present: A Cormack, A Mackenzie, A Snoddy (Secretary), F Richardson, G MacDonald, G Mackie (Vice Chairman and Treasurer), J Shearer, J Wilson, L Lovell-Henderson, M Bruce, M Marshall, P Maudsley (Chairman), S Coe, S Mackay, Cllr Pirone, Cllr Small, Cllr Tatler.

In attendance: M Davey of the Peeblesshire News.

Apologies: S Watson, G Ramsay, Cllr Begg, Cllr Douglas, Cllr Thomson and PC Carsley.

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 persons out with the meeting will not be identified unless relevant.

The Chairman welcomed new Community Councillor Alison Cormack.

Leithenwater Wind Energy Hub

There was an updating presentation from Doug Wilson of Smithy House Associates, Ellie Baker and Bill Primarolo from Belltown Power. A copy of the presentation is available from the Secretary for anyone who would like to see it. The slides contained information about the proposed development site; a wireline and photomontage from St Andrew's Church; the community ownership scheme; the community benefit fund; the public consultations; the feedback from the consultations and the project timeline. D Wilson can give out contact details for anyone who might want to speak to someone regarding the community ownership options. There is also a FAQ sheet available which he will send to the Secretary for anyone who would like a copy of that too.

The Chair asked if the £420k includes the 1% ownership? D Wilson said no the community ownership is separate and would have to be opted into. The community would then benefit from the profit. M Bruce asked if and how community ownership gives the community some of the profit? D Wilson confirmed it does. E Baker said that it would be a percentage of the electricity sold. Running costs would be deducted from this profit. The FAQ sheet addresses questions around this. S Coe asked if the community benefit was separated from ownership? D Wilson said yes. S Coe asked about the visual impact shown from St Andrew's Church. Is there something in place to mitigate this? E Baker said there has been a scoping exercise done and the vegetation will give screening. S Coe asked where the construction traffic would be coming from? B Primarolo confirmed it would be from the A7 and B7007. The Secretary asked if Belltown had other sites that are now finished where we could contact the communities to ask them about their experiences? D Wilson confirmed there were and he could give her contact details. The Chairman asked how the funds would be split, as there were three community councils involved with this site? D Wilson said it would be split on population, location and impact. The Chairman said if the majority of the PCC were in favour we would support the application, however if the majority were not the PCC would not.

Open forum: Nothing.

Approval of the Minutes of 11 January 2024: Where the town bus service meeting had been discussed it was minuted that there were no representatives from Borders Buses. Amendment: two representatives from Borders Buses were in attendance and their contribution was very positive. The Minutes, as amended, were approved; proposed by G Macdonald and seconded by S Coe.

Matters arising from the Minutes:

Review of the use of Common Good assets by commercial companies: This had been discussed previously. SBC have been looking into it, although it had been over a year now. Cllr Tatler confirmed that it is on the agenda for later this month and he will update us in due course.

Tweedbridge Court: Eildon Housing have agreed to fix the wall and works have started. There has been a planning application for a rickshaw house and heat pumps. This does not make any difference to the original application. Cllr Tatler has a meeting with N Istephan of Eildon Housing Association and will ask him when works will commence and update the PCC. Cllr Pirone said it is funding that is holding it up.

PCC Survey: The Secretary is co-ordinating a survey to take to the residents of Peebles. The survey will take place on Saturday 17 February with Community Councillors speaking to residents who are out on the High Street and in Tesco.

Payment of Community Council Honoraria: SBC are reviewing their guidelines and rules for Community Councils as discussed last month. One critical discrepancy that has arisen is the payment of honoraria. The newly reviewed documentation appears to say that honoraria for secretarial duties will only be authorised if the duties are undertaken by someone who is not a member of the community council. The Chair has been liaising with J Craig, Director of Resilient Communities at SBC, to clarify the wording. J Craig responded by saying there is not much difference in the new wording. The Chairman has read everything in detail and found there is a clear and significance difference. The Chair read out the relevant information to the meeting. The Secretary works extremely hard and dedicates many days in her week to support the PCC, in what is almost entirely a voluntary role. If no honoraria are payable for secretarial services, our current Secretary will resign. The Chairman agreed the amended wording is unacceptable, and he will also resign if the Secretary resigns. This would be likely to instigate the collapse of the Peebles Community Council. Cllr Tatler said when he was on the committee to look at the administration, there had been no discussion of change. Cllr Tatler said the letter should be sent to Caroline Cochrane at SBC and the SBC Councillors will arrange to do that. The Community Councillors supported the contents of the Chairman's draft letter which he will send back to SBC, copying in the six SBC Councillors.

Rosetta Road traffic issues: The Chairman has tabled a letter to SBC Planning Department.

Live Borders: As agreed the Secretary has written to SBC to ask if someone will come and speak to the PCC about the structure of Live Borders. Cllr Pirone has recommended writing to Jim Hutchison, the interim CEO.

Right Medicine Pharmacy: PCC had given the chemists the positive feedback about their service, and they had been pleased to receive it. However, members of the public are still disappointed that both they and Boots are closed for lunch at the same time every day. PCC did take this up. However, there are no plans for the chemists to change.

The Old School House, Tweed Green: S Coe had written to SBC about the property and was told the item is with the legal department. He will chase.

Tweeddale Area Partnership: There had been a recent meeting. Peebles Resilient Committee will mailshot flood areas asking for suggestions. A grant application had been made for walkie talkies in PCC's name. This was inappropriate as it had been done without consultation with PCC. Or the knowledge of the PCC Chair. The walkie talkies are for use across Tweeddale. However the Treasurer confirmed the PCC could bank the cheque and make disbursements to the group members. The meeting confirmed that this was acceptable and the Chairman agreed to revisit the issue. However, before we could proceed, the Chair would have to review the application form for suitability. Cllr Tatler thought that it had been agreed for the Innerleithen Community Trust to be approached and who should apply for the grant.

Chairman's Report: The report had been circulated. The Chairman is unable to attend the March meeting and offered his apologies. M Marshall will be standing in as Planning Convenor for the March meeting and thereafter would be taking on the Planning Convenor role for the PCC subject to members agreement at the AGM.

M Marshall has volunteered to create a new PCC website and has made a start. M Marshall would like feedback from all the community councillors as to what they would like to see on it. It should be discussed formally at our April meeting where we can agree content.

The Chairman has been attending the NHS working group on community hospitals which he considers to be well managed. The Chairman has submitted a report to NHS, U3A and our members. It is a complex subject and the public needs more information to make decisions.

PCC has been asked to invite an equalities officer from SBC, or whoever is responsible for implementing its equality duties, to address us at a future meeting. Equalities issues pervade all aspects of local authority work so it would be good to get an idea of how they operate. Cllr Tatler is establishing who the best person is and will update us.

Regarding the speeding issues outside Kingsland Primary school the suggestion of an opening in the Haylodge Park wall ('Campbell's Dyke') was made. However, this wall is likely to be listed which would make things complicated. Cllr Tatler is waiting for the parent group to do some further research and then it will be discussed at the Common Good meeting. J Wilson said that there was a lot of background documentation from when the school was built with regard to the road, and safety.

Planning report: The report had been circulated.

Peebles High School: S Coe has asked for updates from T Compton from the Parent Council, and the Project Manager from SBC, but neither of them had returned with an update, yet. It was agreed the Secretary will contact T Compton for an update on behalf of PCC. The Chairman had attended a photo shoot and official tour and had been impressed at the 3G running track and the sheer size of the operation of the new build project.

Victoria Park Centre. Cllr Tatler confirmed there is nothing new to update at this time.

Planning application: Variations to Conditions 2 and 7 for Kingsmeadows House: There are now around 70 objections.

Rosetta Road Development: The reports are now filed. March Street Mill has had its hearing and is now approved.

Police report: The police report had not been received and there was no police officer present at the meeting.

Peebles Youth Voice: M Bruce had circulated his report. In order to engage with young people, there are event hubs set up in the school aimed at years S1 to S3. The first one had gone ahead as planned and they were pleased with the turnout and engagement with PYV. The Chair said that at the Tweeddale Area Partnership meeting there were applications from youth groups. The debate was positive. M Bruce pointed out that the youth club, for older youths, benefits from core funding from SBC but other youth groups do not. It takes enormous effort to bring in funding. The lack of financial security for the future causes issues for the groups and the hard working staff who run them. This is a national issue. It was agreed that the Chair would look at sending a letter to MPs from PCC and all six SBC Councillors to see if something can be done about extending core funding.

Peebles Community Trust: M Bruce has circulated his report. The AGM should be in mid-May where proposals will be made. The Re-Use Hub is turning over around £1,000 per week but still has not found anywhere to go.

SBC Councillor reports

Cllr Tatler: Carol Cook has confirmed there is a working group looking at the cemetery issues. Peebles is a priority site. Cllr Tatler will come back to us with any news. The new clearer road signs for the Sware are ready to go up, this is to deal with the road safety issues and there are replacement bollards going in. The next new part of the path for Destination Tweed is going ahead. This involves the path from the Gytes to the new crossing on Innerleithen Road. After that the path between Fotheringham Bridge and the swimming pool will be looked at. There will be consultations put in place for the public. We need to get the consultation right, make sure all the information is available and the PCC can help take the lead with this. The Gypsy Hill race is going ahead on Wednesday 15 May and Cllr Tatler and the PCC will help with marshalling. L Lovell-Henderson has provisionally volunteered to go to the top of the hill. The parking on Haylodge Park is on the agenda to be discussed at the next Common Good meeting.

Cllr Pirone: There are still problems with obstructive parking around the Peebles High School. The Police are involved, and it needs to be resolved as it is currently at an unacceptable level. Tickets are being issued. The CAT team have been out issuing parking tickets on the High Street and several shoppers have noticed a big difference because they can now get parked on the High Street to do a quick shop. Sergeant Harrison will attend a PCC meeting to talk about policing in Peebles. The drugs paraphernalia issue under Tweed Bridge that was raised is being attended to. There have been some arrests, and the Police are continuing to monitor the situation. SBC are discussing budgets; times are tough and it is a difficult balance to strike. Please note that the Gytes Leisure Centre will be closed 19–23 February for essential repairs.

Cllr Small: He was involved with the planning for the March Street development which successfully went through. There must be compromises with allotments. He would have liked to have seen more affordable house on the site.

Treasurer's report: The report had been circulated. G Mackie has received the formal notification from SBC for the grant of £48 for the repair of the bench on Edinburgh Road.

Chambers Institute Trust: The report had been circulated. Everyone agreed the curtains in the Burgh Hall were looking good. S Coe confirmed the response from Government regarding the award from the Levelling Up Fund of over £4 million should be in in 4-6 weeks and that they would have only 2 years to spend the money. The new Fundraising Manager is an enormous asset. They hope to be able to hit the ground running when the funding comes in. Cllr Tatler said once the funding is in, it will act as a lever to apply for other funds, so it's all very positive. The Chairman asked if this funding would allow them to do the roof? S Coe confirmed that there was not enough funding at this stage to do the roof.

AOB

Bin the litter: This annual event is scheduled for Sunday 24 March. G Ramsay who normally leads operations has stepped back this year. Many thanks to G Ramsay for organising previous years. A Mackenzie agreed to take the lead this year. It was suggested by Cllr Tatler that perhaps the Community Payback team could assist? Cllr Tatler said that the new Head Teacher at PHS may like the school community to get involved? L Lovell-Henderson said he would speak to the PHS Head Teacher. J Wilson agreed to liaise with the local primary schools to see if some P7s would help. The Secretary will email round the dates.

Flooding on Glasgow Road: This was down to a blocked drain which has been sorted for now.

The fingerposts: The ‘finger posts’ (the maroon painted posts with directional signs pointing to Haylodge Park, Old Town shopping etc). Several are pointing the wrong way, and some are redundant such as the one for the Cornice Museum. PCC contacted SBC last year and as a result some of the signs were moved to the correct position. However, they were not secured so they may have moved again as a result of the recent strong winds. PCC was copied into an email Philippa Gilhooley sent to Jane Campbell in SBC about the matter on 14th September last year, but we have not heard anything further. Cllr Tatler agreed to take it up. It would also be helpful to have signs to the free water tap at the bottom of School Brae for members of the public to know where it is.

Tourist sign: A Mackenzie has it and it should be ready for the summer.

Wheelie bin stickers: There are 250 to distribute. Please hand out the 20 mph wheelie bin stickers where there are speeding issues. They will be available in the library and the Post Office too. The Secretary will also put this information on social media and in the Peeblesshire News.

CCTV: This is finally being looked at for Peebles. Cllr Pirone confirmed that the Police and SBC officers will have access to the footage.

A MacKenzie reported that that the traffic lights at Neidpath corner have not been working and he found that the traffic flow is quicker. It was pointed out that it might be quicker but not necessarily safer because if two large vehicles were to meet at the corner this would cause problems.

J Shearer: Following the construction of the new crossing on the High Street the litter bin that had been next to the Post Office was not replaced. As a result, there is a lot of litter lying about. Tweed Brae is a throughfare for the young people coming and going to Peebles High School and there is nowhere for them to deposit their litter. The nearest bin is at the bus stop. The Secretary will contact C Johnstone from SBC.

M Bruce asked if someone could deal with the vegetation growing on the outside parapets of Tweed Bridge? It is listed, and it needs a good clean. Cllr Tatler agreed to find out.

The meeting ended at 20:34 hrs.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 14 March 2024 at 7pm in the Burgh Chamber.

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Signed P Maudsley (Chairman)

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Dated