



Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minutes of the 317th Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 11 April 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), L Lovell-Henderson, M Bruce, M Marshall, P Maudsley (Chairman), S Coe, S Watson, S Mackay, Cllr Begg, Cllr Pirone, Cllr Small, Cllr Tatler, Cllr Thomson.

In attendance: M Davey of the Peeblesshire News, Rose McKiernan and Barbara Vecchione from New Practice Consultants.

Members of the Public: D Pye, J McMordie.

Apologies: G Ramsay, H Young, J Wilson, Cllr Douglas.

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.

Presentation: There was a short presentation from Barbara Vecchione and Rose McKeirnan from New Practice about "A Plan for Peebles". New Practice is a consultant appointed to run a public consultation to inform on the development of the local Place Plan. Local Place Plans have been introduced by the Scottish Government to give communities the opportunity to have a say on what development in their area would look like. The aim is to increase community participation into planning processes. The plans are to be taken into account in the preparation of the Local Development Plan. The initiative in Peebles is headed by the Peebles Placemaking Team. Other Peebles groups involved include the Peebles Community Trust and the Peebles Civic Society and New Practice is supported by SBC.

New Practice has arranged some drop-in sessions, pop-up sessions and a workshop in April and May in Peebles. All information about New Practice, the plan and details of the sessions can be found at www.aplanforpeebles.co.uk.

The Chairman pointed out that most of this has been down to the hard work by Crick Carleton who is acknowledged as an expert. New Practice are going to assist in raising awareness as it is important to reach people and areas that have not yet had their views heard. Cllr Begg also commented that there are some areas who have not made any input including housing associations. New Practice have contacted the housing associations.

Open Forum

It had been discovered that the rules for community councils meant that S Mackay could not join the Peebles CC as a councillor as she lived outwith the boundary. S Mackay has a business in Peebles and is very involved with the Peebles community. The Chairman said that as a member of the public, S Mackay was still welcome to join the meetings. **[UPDATE:** during the course of the meeting Cllr Pirone and M Marshall investigated and confirmed that the PCC can co-opt people with certain skills and knowledge. Under 4.1 (c)(1) and 4.2(a) of the

rules they can be co-opted but cannot hold office. There is no limit to their number nor time limit to how long they can remain members. They remain members until the PCC decides that their services are no longer required. It was decided on that basis that S Mackay could be co-opted, and K Guiney Chair of the Peebles Retailers and Traders Association would also be invited to be a co-opted member].

David Pye, a member of public, had attended on behalf of the Rugby Club, to talk about two issues. Firstly, about two areas along the side of the Gytes on the riverside walk that are in a poor state of repair and had been for over two years. Cllr Begg agreed to follow up on this. Cllr Tatler pointed out that this was part of the path section next scheduled to be done next by Destination Tweed. Secondly, there were a lot of dead plants and bushes at the main entrance to Whitestone Park. It is the main entrance to Whitestone Park and is an eyesore. Cllr Begg and his fellow Councillors will pick this up too.

The Secretary asked D Pye, as a representative of the Rugby Club, about their members driving their cars onto the grass at Haylodge Park. A complaint from the public has been raised with the PCC. D Pye pointed out that to unload all the sports equipment there was a requirement for the coaches to drive their vehicles into the park, but that it was only one or two vehicles.

Approval of the Minutes of 14 March 2024: There was an amendment to last month's minutes:

"Sam Coe noted that the most recent application was for the same minor changes to conditions as before and appeared to be a continuing attempt to make use of technicalities under Section 42 regulations to avoid the renewal of planning permission being subject to current planning policy. In S Coe's view Section 42 should not be used for this purpose, which seemed like an abuse of the system. As the original application had now expired, he agreed that the new application should properly be considered under current planning policy."

The minutes were approved as amended. G Mackie proposed, and M Bruce seconded.

Matters arising from last month's Minutes :

Bin The Litter. The Chairman thanked A Mackenzie and everyone for a job well done and thanked the Callants, Gutterbluids, Peebles Business and Retailers Association, Cllrs Tatler and Pirone, and local school students for their help. Campbell Johnstone also went above and beyond to help.

Bus stop in High Street. The Secretary and Cllr Tatler have written to SBC to ask if the pavement can be built out and there is now a plan to look at it.

Tourist Fingerpost Signs. Only one is out of date and Campbell Johnstone, of SBC, is going to fix it.

The Old Schoolhouse: S Coe had written to SBC who confirmed that this had been referred to a senior officer. S Coe had asked for the name of the officer but was then told that there is no senior officer appointed. D Pye, a member of the public, said that when he was Chair of PCC years ago this issue was raised monthly, and SBC made many promises to deal with it, but nothing ever happened. No one took responsibility for it. S Coe suggested PCC request a meeting with the relevant officers as there needs to be a conversation. Cllr Begg said that he and S Coe would meet to discuss a way forward and report back. M Bruce pointed out that the building next to the Old Schoolhouse belonged to SBC and it was in their interest to deal with the Old Schoolhouse because of the risk of damage occur to their building.

Chairman's Report. This had been circulated. J Curry, SBC, had written to the flood group to thank them for getting proactively involved. The Equality Impact Assessment: The Chair is going to write to the CEO of SBC about their internal audit processes and legal obligations as it could be better. The broken lift at the library is going to take some time to repair. Campervans: the Chairman has spoken to Cllrs Pirone and Tatler and a

working group is going to look at the issue. S Coe suggested SBC planning department speak to Rosetta Caravan Park to see if they could include some spaces. M Marshall agreed to include the suggestion.

Planning Report: The report had been circulated. S Coe made an observation about March Street Mills in relation to the place planning discussed earlier. According to the planning officer the site was required to address the shortfall in the government's 5-year housing land supply in accordance with policy HD4. The new housing at March Street Mill was more needed to make up numbers in the housing land supply requirement rather than to meet local needs. Policy HD4 also states that where a shortfall of housing land is identified within an area new development will be directed to the long-term safeguarded areas identified relation to settlements, which are outwith the town. March Street Mill is not of course outwith Peebles. So it was an opportunity to meet a strategic need by the planners but not to meet local need. The Civic Society and placemaking team objected to the use of this site for so many private developer housing citing the lack of supporting infrastructure and other reasons. The point is while planning is often driven by strategic requirements for the Local Development Plan the development of the local place plan in the town action plan is an opportunity to make community needs and desires heard and taken account of. The planners need to know what we prefer. Cllr Thomson said at planning meetings she often points out that the views from communities should be listened to.

The Chairman said that place planning is important and that in theory it is to give the population more say in what happens. However, if the community takes all this time and makes all this effort and they subsequently are not listened to, then not only it is a waste of everyone's time it will finally destroy any remaining faith in the system. It is extremely important that SBC buy in.

G Macdonald said that the SBC planning portal is very clunky and difficult to navigate, and others agreed. The Chairman said that objections could also be communicated by letter. Cllr Pirone said the portal is maintained by Scottish Government but that anyone can email her, or Cllr Tatler and they will lodge any objections.

Police report. This has not been received. M Bruce's report mentioned what a challenging job police officers have, and they are often underappreciated. They have no control over strategic issues. M Bruce had voiced his appreciation of what the police officers did in the day-to-day course of their work, which was endorsed by the Community Councillors. M Bruce will send a copy of his report to the community officers. It will also be put on the PCC website.

Cllr Thomson was delighted to see the obvious joy that the new shelter in Victoria Park had brought to the young people at the opening event.

Peebles Community Trust: M Bruce confirmed the AGM is being held on Saturday 20 April at 10am in School Brae Hub. They are seeking feedback so please try and attend. They have around 250 members. They are receiving weekly updates from SBC regarding the railway building. They are seeking a community asset transfer and have already received 133 positive written comments. Popular comment from the public is that it has an economic future. M Bruce said that he was disappointed that the planning application presupposes digital access only. He would like there to be an option to make a comment on paper; he had checked the folder that was available on the High Street and there was no paper option to comment. Cllr Pirone said that should have been available and will investigate.

SBC Councillor Reports

Cllr Begg: A report has been circulated. The Tweeddale West Councillors are going to be doing a walk around north of the river to get any issues looked at early in the financial year. He welcomes the key strategic repairs for some of the pavements and roads. 700 metres on Edinburgh Road is about to be repaired. The flood prevention officers are looking upstream in Eddleston and it's looking promising, this has an effect on Peebles,

downstream. The delay in updating retailers about their business rates is being looked at. Cllr Begg has raised this. Businesses are struggling.

Cllr Pirone: There will be a new post box erected on Glen Road, to replace the one being removed. The plaque on the gold post box is also to be replaced. The shelter in Victoria Park is wonderful and other communities are taking an interest. The funfair had to be relocated last minute because of the ground conditions, which was successful. There is a lot of money being spent on the roads, but it is unlikely to be enough. Please let her know if you continue to have problems with potholes. The licences for the Peebles Community Day at the end of May, being funded by the Peebles retailers have been applied for. CCTV is being progressed across the Borders, including for Peebles. The Live Borders review continues. If anyone has suggestions for what they want to see in the town, e.g. sports facilities, please let her know. SBC has published its grass cutting strategy, but the ground is wet so they will be out and about as areas improve. The refuse collection calendars are still not available but will be soon.

Cllr Small: Cllr Small had nothing further to add to Cllr Begg's report.

Cllr Tatler: He wanted his appreciation to Campbell Johnstone and his team to be minuted for their help moving the fair at the last minute which was challenging. Peebles Common Good: there is going to be a meeting in September about the Common Good, to inform the public. There will be an in-person meeting with the Common Good on 19 June and everyone is invited to attend. As mentioned earlier, a campervan group is being set up and will be on the Common Good agenda. The paths are being redone in Haylodge Park.

Cllr Tatler said that the fishes installation which has been situated outside the Eastgate Theatre for the last 20 years is now in a bad state of repair and needs a lot of work done which is going to cost thousands of pounds. Cllr Tatler asked the PCC if they would like to conduct a consultation about what should be done with it. Should it be repaired? Should it be moved? Where could it be moved to? How much should we spend on it? He asked everyone to have a think about it. The Chair will arrange to have this put on the PCC website and Facebook page and ask for comments. He will also email the Peebles Civic Society. G Macdonald suggested attaching a photo of it, so people know what is being referred to.

A Mackenzie asked about repairs to the path on the south side of the Tweed from the cauld to Fotheringham Bridge as it has some unbelievably bad sections. Cllr Tatler will raise this and see if some of the worst sections can be repaired.

Cllr Thomson: Nothing further to add. She thanked Cllr Begg for covering for her, and Cllr Small, during their recent absences.

Treasurer's Report. The report had been circulated. The £200 for Peebles in Bloom 2023 has still not been received. Now at the end of the financial year the PCC has an overall loss £176. This is not a major problem as there are reserves which can be carried forward. Cllr Tatler also expressed the Councillors' shared frustration at the delay and the Chairman said he would write to SBC.

Chambers Institution: S Coe said there is a beneficiaries meeting coming up. They have not received the final confirmation regarding the funding being secured but are hoping for a positive response. Although this is a Council led project it is important that members of the beneficiaries group have a say in the design and process. It is a hugely important project and there should be more inclusivity to avoid potential problems with communications. Discussions on procurement and project governance continue. The Chair agreed that someone from the beneficiaries group should be on the design team and S Coe is very experienced. Cllr Tatler said that S Coe has always been involved in the discussions with the scope and should always be involved. The beneficiaries' views will be represented. There needs to be an open dialogue. Cllr Tatler is chasing an acoustics

update. Also, at the meeting on 18 March, they looked at the wider project of improving the Chambers Institution and it was all really positive .

Peebles High School: S Coe confirmed that there has not been a recent update from T Compton. The Secretary will email.

Peebles in Bloom: G Macdonald announced that the working group had begun planning and organising this enormous task. This year she is being assisted by A Snoddy, S Mackay, C Mackie (G Mackie's wife) and F Richardson. The presentation evening will be on 15 August. She would like all Community Councillors to be there and take a specific role on the evening and will let everyone know what that will be. S Watson and G Ramsay will oversee refreshments. This year the PCC will invite the public to also nominate gardens which will help to ensure that nothing is overlooked. In place of the usual prizes in the raffle, there will be a hamper of gardening-related goods. G Mackie handed out a list of suggested items to donate. The judges will wear rosettes, so everyone knows who they are. There will be the usual quiz hosted by Gary Rennie, who will also be master of ceremonies. There will be an order of service on the tables, so people know what the running order is. The dates are important, and the Secretary will send those out to all Community Councillors. It is important to note that garden walk arounds will be carried out by all Community Councillors between 12 July and 21 July inclusive. Anyone who cannot attend should inform the Secretary. All ideas are very welcome.

AOB

The Community Council will be holding its AGM next month. There is no requirement for an election this year.

J Shearer will be standing down and the Chairman thanked her for all her hard work and contribution over the years.

The Chairman has ordered a portrait of King Charles III for the Burgh Chamber. This did not have a cost attached to it.

The PCC had been asked for comments on the reintroduction of lynx to the area. It was agreed the PCC would take a neutral position.

The Tweeddale car boot sale has been cancelled.

A local Polish gentleman is arranging an event in respect of the map at Barony Castle and is asking local groups and communities to get involved. It is not in the PCC's area, but we should help spread the word.

Kingsland school and transport. There continues to be concerns regarding the road safety issues outside Kingsland School. There is a support group and SBC have done a lot to try to make it safer. M Bruce will speak to Police Scotland about more speed checks, and Cllr Pirone will speak to the CAT team. Pop up Bob could be placed there. A speed camera could have been an option, but it appears they can only be erected on trunk roads. Police Scotland would have to look at a speed camera.

Cllr Tatler reminded everyone about the Gypsy Glen Hill Race on 15 May. Anyone willing to assist should let him know.

The Secretary asked Cllr Tatler about public concern around the bicycle trails at Venlaw. Cllr Tatler said there is a dialogue going on. All groups should respect one another.

The Treasurer thanked David Pye who has agreed to be the accounts examiner.

F Richardson had been asked by a resident why the Scott Brash monument does not have lighting on it? The Secretary said it was Bonnie Peebles who had raised the funds and installed the sculpture, and it would be up to them to organise lighting. It had been discussed before and they had decided against having lights.

The meeting ended at 2103 hrs.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 9 May 2024 following the AGM at 7pm in the Burgh Chamber.

..... Chairman

..... Dated

