



*Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District*

Minutes of the 319th Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 13 June 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 Ramsay, J McMordie, J Wilson, M Bruce, M Marshall, P Maudsley (Chairman), S Mackay, S Coe, S Watson, Cllr Pirone, Cllr Small.

In attendance: M Davey of the Peeblesshire News, C Cooke, Parks and Environment Manager, Scottish Borders Council.

Members of the Public: None.

Apologies: G Mackie, H Young, K Guiney, L Lovell-Henderson, Cllr Begg, Cllr Douglas, Cllr Tatler, Cllr Thomson.

The Chairman welcomed all 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 outwith the meeting will not be identified unless relevant.

Our Q & A session with the CEO of Live Borders, has been cancelled. SBC and Live Borders have been looking at the structure and sustainability of Live Borders, and an announcement is expected on 27th June.

Peebles Cemetery Headstone Testing Update

Carol Cooke, Parks and Environment Manager from Scottish Borders Council was in attendance to give an update on headstone testing. SBC are coming to Peebles to do another round of safety testing this year. SBC want to raise awareness in the community of what is being undertaken.

There is a statutory obligation for Local Authorities to make cemeteries as safe as they possibly can for staff and members of the public. This is a sensitive issue and SBC are doing their best to get the information out to communities as a priority. There is new signage already in place in the cemeteries. Members of the public who want to carry out their own maintenance should consider doing so before SBC do their testing. Peebles is scheduled to be tested starting in September this year. They will socket the headstones where possible. Where they cannot socket the headstones, they will be laid flat. The work will be done by Local Authority staff. Full information, can be found on the SBC website at:

<https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/environment/headstone-testing>.

The Chair said there is a big difference between what is being proposed now and what happened originally. The public will still remember the original inspections where it was considered not to have been done properly, so it is important to get the updated information out now. PCC can put it on their Facebook page if SBC give them the correct information and the Peeblesshire News could also publish the information in it. A Mackenzie queried the notice period. C Cooke confirmed the notice period set down by the Government is to give notice for testing, not for laying the headstones flat, and that is 28 days. Once a headstone is deemed unsafe, measures need to be taken as soon as possible to make it safe. S Watson said that SBC should be commended for reviewing the process but felt compensation should still be considered for the previous works.

Open forum: There was nothing from the open forum.

Approval of the Minutes of 9 May 2024: The minutes were approved, M Bruce proposed, and S Watson seconded.

Matters arising from the previous month's Minutes:

Boundary wall in Rose Park: Cllr Begg is liaising with the residents and will update next time.

Money owed from parking fund: Not yet received. Promises made that it will arrive next week.

Fish fountain: Cllr Tatler was not in attendance to give an update. The quote is for £4,000. It is not clear if this includes the water supply to the fountain. Does it need an internal water supply? S Coe said the original design was for indoor use and asked if the quoted costs cover an upgrade to materials for outdoor use? The Chair said consideration should be given as to who should maintain, and clean, the fountain following the refurbishment. This is not something that PCC could take on. Cllr Tatler will lead on this and Cllr Pirone suggested it be added to the Common Good agenda. G Ramsay could bring it up at the meeting.

Tourist Sign on Tweed Bridge: A Mackenzie confirmed this will be finished next week.

Build out on Innerleithen Road: The architects have been looking at this issue where the edge of the crossing is not obvious, and it is proposed that bollards will be installed when the traffic lights are installed, which should solve the problem. The Chair explained why this location was chosen.

Leithenwater Windfarm: The Secretary wrote to the Upper Tweed Community Council who have agreed to arrange a meeting with PCC to discuss their experiences with a local windfarm. The Secretary will set the meeting up.

Old Schoolhouse: Cllr Begg was absent. S Coe said he and M Bruce have offered to help but the SBC officers say they will handle things for now. SBC are working under a written plan being overseen by senior officers. The first phase of that plan ended on 8 May. Completion has been delayed because of the election. The next phase is due to start on 5 August. The first phase included the unresolved legal issues. Cllrs Begg, Thomson and Small are meeting with officers next week for an update. The PCC is grateful to the three Councillors for keeping tabs. It will be kept on the PCC agenda.

Chairman's report: The report had been circulated.

General Election Hustings: Plans are going well. It will be chaired by Father Lappin and all 7 candidates will be attending. Police Scotland will also be in attendance. The Secretary will ask the Beltane Committee if they can lend their PA system. The hustings are on Monday 24 June at 7pm in the Burgh Hall.

NHS review: This is ongoing with regular meetings and will go on until December. The Chair has not seen any real threat of closure for the community hospitals.

The Site of the Baptist Church: A group has sent out a survey about the use of the site and invited views from the community. The Chair has questions he'd like answered and which are supported by the PCC. The group have not yet approached PCC. It was agreed the Secretary will invite their representatives to the next meeting.

Peebles Youth Voice: The survey results had been circulated. It had received good response from the young people and provided good information. J Wilson said the responses to the survey should be analysed further, as there were a significant number of "don't know" responses and the data should be looked at in more detail. J McMordie has been suggested as PYV Chairperson, and J Wilson was asked to support, or share responsibilities with him. J McMordie will arrange a meeting with Iain Gibson, who is staying on until things

stabilise. There needs to be more young people involved and J McMordie suggested a good time to attract young volunteers would be at the Peebles High School Freshers' Fair. M Bruce suggested J McMordie, and J Wilson go to the next PYV meeting and speak to the youth workers.

Planning Report: The report had been circulated. M Marshall pointed out the housing emergency that had been declared by SBC. Cllr Pirone said that housing is something about which she receives a lot of mail. There are issues with affordability. Some older residents with larger properties want to move but there are not enough suitable smaller properties for them to move into. SBC needs to discuss ways to change the situation. Planning needs to be considered from the outset.

Police report: The report had been circulated. Recent incidents reported were relatively low key. Street Pasters are now out and about and are sometimes reaching potential problems before the police.

Peebles Community Trust: The report had been circulated.

SBC Councillor Reports:

Cllr Small: Due to the forthcoming election, lots of meetings have been cancelled. Cllr Thomson's Restorative Justice Team has been looking at the allotment fencing and will arrange for it to be fixed and painted. With everyone being so busy, Cllr Small had not had much of an opportunity to sit down and talk with his fellow Councillors. Cllr Thomson had arranged for the spikes on top of the cross at the War Memorial to be looked at. The list of jobs scheduled by Tweeddale West from Cllr Thomson had been circulated.

Cllr Pirone: Cllr Pirone has been involved in discussions about stopping young people vaping in Peebles High School. A Common Good exhibition is being developed and she is helping work on that. They are hoping that will be ready by 31 August. The tenders for the Chambers Institution Trust are going out this week. The traffic lights at Tweed Bridge are due to end tomorrow. There are lots of events on this weekend including Borders Book Festival and TweedLove. Cllr Pirone reminded everyone that they will need photo ID to vote.

Treasurer's report: The report had been circulated.

Chambers Institution Trust: S Coe reported that the application for funding under the Government's levelling up scheme was still being finalised but should be finished soon. Procurement of architects is in process and the tenders are going out soon. Matters are progressing steadily, and they need to make sure they get things right. He is concerned about the dwindling timescale. There is a danger it will be affected by the election. By next month's meeting there should be some positive news. S Coe is the Chair of the Beneficiaries Group, which is beneficial to PCC's involvement. A subgroup has been formed to look at the purpose and governance of the group which will provide an opportunity to enable effective communication going forward. They may need to find a way of restructuring it because local Councillors are attending both meetings and this may not be a good use of their time. At a meeting with Cllr Tatler recently it was agreed that they need to think out of box; no need to push on with the old way of doing things. They should be innovative. The acoustic panels will be installed next week in the Burgh Hall.

Peebles High School: S Coe had no update. He had not heard about the engagement session. The Chairman proposed leaving things with the Parent Council now. The Secretary had written to the Parent Council on 31 May but had received no response other than an acknowledgement of receipt. We should remove it from our agenda. J Wilson said the Parent Council can co-opt a member should they wish. The ball is in their court. S Coe said, regarding the new build, there were lessons to be learned from lack of early engagement. The Chair agreed there had been missed opportunities.

Peebles in Bloom: G Macdonald confirmed all the blocks had been distributed to the PC Councillors so the Councillors can start thinking and planning their walks around the gardens during the period 12 July – 21 July.

This is a community event ending with the presentation evening on 15 August. It will be a fun evening and the SBC Councillors; the PC Councillors and all the judges will be there. G Macdonald wants everyone to sit amongst the guests at their tables. This will give us all an opportunity to speak to the residents. G Macdonald reminded everyone to keep their eyes open for obvious street repairs whilst out and about so they can be reported. G Macdonald is happy to collate them if anyone wants to send them to her. Please remember to donate raffle prize for the hampers. G Macdonald also said she welcomes any ideas anyone has. The Secretary will be distributing a marking form with 4 headings on it to help everyone make their nominations.

AOB

Edinburgh Road Public Toilets: They remain closed. The Secretary asked if we could get them open? The Chairman asked, why do the toilets in Peebles always get vandalised? There does not appear to be this issue in other areas. What are the plans? Cllr Pirone confirmed there is a plan for shutters. Cllr Pirone will check progress with Campbell Johnstone, in Cllr Thomson’s absence.

Bus Shelter in High Street: The bus shelter in the High Street needs a good clean. Cllr Pirone said she would pass this over to the Restorative Justice team.

Kingsland School: What is happening with the suggestion of speed cameras outside Kingsland School? Cllr Pirone said only Police Scotland can make that decision and they continue to review it annually. For now, they have said that there needs to be a serious accident before the speed cameras are resurrected. They will be guided by speed and accident data. The Councillors agree that outside a primary school this is wrong. M Marshall said he would look at the accident data available online.

S Watson mentioned Leadburn junction as there had been two very recent road traffic incidents there. This junction belongs to Midlothian but often it is Peebles’ residents who are affected by the road traffic accidents that occur frequently. Midlothian Council do not believe there is a problem. M Marshall said he would look at the data for that location too.

King’s Portrait: The King’s portrait will be hung soon by SBC.

A Mackenzie said that some of the road signage may not need replaced, but simply needed cleaned. Should the Callants take that on? Cllr Pirone will check. Also, was SBC aware of the streetlights that had been on 24 hours? Cllr Pirone confirmed they had been reported and will be switched off.

A Mackenzie asked about the grass cutting in the graveyard. The grass had grown very long, had been cut and then they’d had to collect up the cuttings because there was so much. Perhaps if it was done more regularly it would not need to be collected up. It seemed they were giving themselves unnecessary work to do. He also pointed out that the grave topping needs doing again. Cllr Pirone confirmed that it is being done, and that they are aware of the long grass.

The meeting ended at 2050hrs.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 12 July 2024 in the Burgh Hall.

..... Chairman

..... Dated