



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

**Minutes of the 320th Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 11 July at 7pm in the Burgh Chamber, Peebles. The meeting was recorded for the purposes of Minuting and Reporting.**

**Present:** F Richardson, G MacDonald, G Mackie (Vice Chairman and Treasurer), G Ramsay, M Marshall, P Maudsley (Chairman), S Coe, S Watson, K.Guinney, Cllr Small, Cllr Tatler, Cllr Thomson, Cllr Begg.

**In attendance:** M Davey of the Peeblesshire News

**Members of the Public:** Jennifer Misak, Ewan Irvine.

**Apologies:** A Mackenzie, A Snoddy (Secretary), H Young, J McMordie, J Wilson, M Bruce, S Mackay, Cllr Douglas, Cllr Pirone and PC Carsley.

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.

Jennifer Misak of the Tweed Valley Community Collective came to speak to the PCC about various ideas for the Cleland Avenue area which is where the Baptist Church had been partially built. J Misak is a Scottish Government economist and one of six members, those members being locals with diverse backgrounds and skillsets, including an economist, architect, social entrepreneur, project manager, service designer and social worker. Their motivation is to create something on the south side of Peebles which meets the community need. They have identified issues of isolation, poverty, loneliness, lack of safety, community facilities and their main aim is to meet those needs. How they do that is yet to be determined. The Baptist church building is seen as an opportunity, and one that brought them all together. How they address the needs and what form any facility will take has yet to be discussed and proposed. This is at an early stage of information gathering mainly.

They have spoken to many groups and people representing the community in Peebles (including Baptist church, councillors, Peebles Community Trust and Peebles Community Council) and engaged with the Peebles Place Plan and are looking forward to seeing more on that soon. They had 150 responses to their recent survey giving them good ideas and further thoughts about what might be right for that space. They need to get more feedback from youths and others.

Initial thoughts about use of the space align with much of what they've already been told: space for community groups to meet, possible offices/workspace, cafe, toilets, shop. No one is aiming to displace activity from the North side nor compete but to add to the community offer for the whole of Peebles.

They are in the process of setting up as a charity under OSCR (Tweed Valley Community Collective TVCC) and will continue to engage and iterate plan for the space - ensuring it is community-led. They have made a funding application to the Scottish Land Fund.

M Marshall asked how the PCC could help? J Misak said that when they reach the planning stages they would come back to the PCC and would welcome the PCC's endorsement. They would also welcome any ideas the PCC

might have. They are still working out how all the different groups in Peebles fit together and want to ingather as many views from residents as possible.

G Macdonald asked about the existing frame, particularly the height. J Misak said they were consulting with an architect about the existing structure and whether it can be used or not. The coating would need to be redone as it is no longer weatherproof. Whether it would be cheaper to remove the structure and start again are all things to be looked at.

G Mackie commended the initiative and asked about the plans for finance. The group has already engaged with a few of the options available including the Scottish Land Fund and future funding streams in community grants. Much will depend on what is going to happen on the site. M Davey of Peeblesshire News asked how much the site is selling for? J Misak said they are asking for £250k.

S Coe also agreed that it is a great initiative and commended the group. He said that the current design is likely to be very restrictive. It might be best to take it away and start again. Recoating would be expensive. J Misak said they are aware there is a parking issue around the site but there is a car park design feature for underneath which they would like to maintain.

G Macdonald asked if the grounds could be used for parking? J Misak said they are looking at entire footprint and some areas could be repurposed for parking.

The Chair asked why the group did not approach the PCC earlier? The PCC is set up by statute to liaise between the public and the local authority and the members carry a fair amount of expertise and may have been able to assist in an advisory way. J Misak said everything is still in the early stages and she thought they had liaised with the PCC via M Bruce. The Chair asked what is driving the group? J Misak said she brings her children to Victoria Park and she and the group had become aware of the lack of facilities such as toilets and saw the site and started to talk to the people in Peebles. The Chair said that he had a list of items relating to the group's plans, the first thing being does the project meet a need? Clearly it does, and it is rational. The suggestion of toilets is obvious, and the PCC had discussed this with the previous councillors who had said there was not a need. The next item was whether the project is being supported by those in the adjacent properties and the wider community. It is clear the group have been reaching out to the local community, but the ideas are still quite loose with no specifics. J Misak pointed out that they don't want to be too directive at this stage and want to see what the community wants and needs. They've made some assumptions that it is likely to include toilets for the park, a café, a shop, perhaps office workspace for community groups. The Chair could see that it was aligned with the placemaking plan.

The Chair said that costs were going to be high as a guess it is a £2M project, and it was important that going forward there was a financial plan in place both for the build and for the management going forward. A realistic 5- or 10-year financial plan would need to be put in place. Grants cannot be relied upon; it would need to be self-funding. J Misak agreed.

The Chair said that there would need to be an impact assessment done to show there was not going to be an adverse effect on the other businesses such as the Eastgate. The Chair also said it was important that the management group can demonstrate the skills and resilience to sustain the project.

J Misak said the intention is, once they have funding, to do a feasibility study and build out the economic case. One of the guiding principles so far as the group is concerned when it is set up is that it needs to be a community facility that is self-sustaining, and that might be a shop or a café for example.

S Coe agreed that everything is at a very early stage and to go ahead with their own ideas only to find out that it is not going to work would not be a good plan. They are right to do this exercise first. They need to select things that are sustainable. They won't know what the budget is likely to be until they crystallise the ideas.

J Misak said the funding is in two stages. The first stage is for project and capital funding. She also believes the management group has longevity and they are aware that the group of six will change over the years.

Cllr Tatler thanked J Misak for coming along and commended her and her group for looking at a solution which is needed.

The Chair thanked J Misak for attending and asked her to keep the PCC informed.

**Open forum:** Ewan Irvine of Irvine Plant Limited has had a retrospective planning application refused and is now facing eviction from his site at White Bridge Park near Cavalry Park, which is threatening up to sixteen jobs. The business has been there for seven years. E Irvine discussed the background in detail with the PCC. He believes that the decision is wrong and asked the PCC if they would write a letter of support to SBC. The PC Councillors agreed unanimously to support him. The Chair said that he would arrange to have a site visit with E Irvine and go over all the facts with a view to writing a letter of support from the PCC to SBC. The Chair pointed out that the business has been on the site for several years and no one has complained about it. Cllr Tatler would also like to attend the meeting and suggested inviting Cllr Pirone too. The Chair also agreed to liaise with S Coe when drafting the letter about the separate access which will have a bearing.

**Approval of the Minutes of 13 June 2024:** The minutes were approved, S Coe proposed, and S Watson seconded.

#### **Matters arising from the Minutes:**

**Accident statistics for Leadburn junction:** M Marshall had researched the statistics which were not that notable but had put them in his planning report and suggested if anyone wanted to know more that they get in touch with him. He had also looked at the stats for outside Kingsland School.

**Tourist pointer signs:** Several are still wrong.

**Members of Upper Tweed CC** are happy to speak with us over Zoom to discuss how best to manage income from windfarms. We need some volunteers to take this forward. M Marshall will look at this and ask M Bruce if he will join him. M Marshall will contact Upper Tweeddale CC to arrange a Zoom call. G Mackie would also like to be involved.

**Old School House, Tweed Green.** S Coe did not have an update. Cllr Begg is continuing to pursue and is in regular contact with the SBC lawyer. Cllr Thomson said the route they're planning to go down is a compulsory purchase order. A paper will need to go to Counsel, but there is no timeline for it. It's been a difficult transaction. Three of the Councillors have been involved and it's down to the complexity of the case rather than SBC dragging their feet. S Coe said we should wait for SBC to follow through on their plans before taking next steps. The Chair said it is being progressed and we should wait for the next stage.

**Chairman's report.** The report has been circulated.

L Lovell-Henderson has resigned from the Community Council as he is going to university to study law. The PCC thanked him for all his contributions and wish him the very best. We will need to recruit a replacement.

**Election Hustings:** This had been a great success. Father Tony was a good Chairman. Cllr Begg thanked the PCC for arranging the event, it was very well organised, and said that the new Burgh Hall had been an excellent venue. He said that everyone was respectful and allowed one another to talk and he wanted to thank everyone for that. He said it was a demonstration of the respectful art of disagreeing.

**TweedLove:** The correspondence between TweedLove and the PCC had been circulated.

There was a discussion around the wider issues. The comments made by the public had been circulated. There were a small number of the public who were unhappy with the event who had contacted the PCC, but it was fair to say that those who were happy with the event were unlikely to approach the PCC.

SBC have had 18 months to respond to the question regarding their formula about who should pay for the use of Tweed Green. The answer remains outstanding. The Chair said he would be grateful if the SBC Councillors could chase this. There were also questions raised as to whether TweedLove has outgrown Tweed Green. No one is suggesting it should be banned, but perhaps elements of it could be removed from the centre of Peebles. There have been issues around parking and use of the car parks for camping. It's good to have the festival atmosphere in the town but perhaps parts of it could be taken to different areas such as Victoria Park. A multi-site event. Cllr Tatler said that we are very fortunate to have the event in the town and that it brings benefit to the town. The Chair said the PCC needs to listen to the public, as this is raised every year. Cllr Tatler said there needs to be a wider consultation. The Chair said this would need to be done by SBC as PCC does not have the resources. S Watson said that sorting out the camping in the car parks was down to SBC, not TweedLove. The Chairman suggested arranging a meeting with someone from SBC, someone from the Retailers Association and someone from TweedLove. Everyone should be working together. Cllr Tatler pointed out that TweedLove helped repair the grass, not just SBC. However, SBC were apparently not compensated for their work by TweedLove.

Cllr Thomson confirmed that the charging mechanism was due in July, and she will chase.

**Police report:** This had been circulated.

**Planning Report:** This had been circulated. M Marshall wanted to mention one thing; Hamilton Hill:

Hamilton Hill woodland creation on-site consultation 10am 26 Jun 2024. David Smith (Forest Manager, Fountains Forestry) explained: 65% coverage with Sitka Spruce; will be the subject of a Forestry Grant Scheme application in due course; happy to maintain public access and asked for maps showing existing routes used by the public. Requests and comments from members of the public included:

3.1.1 Peebles March Riding & Beltane Queen Festival requested the traditional route of the March Riding over the site be maintained as open ground suitable for multiple galloping horses (maps provided).

3.1.2 Peeblesshire Archaeological Society mentioned multiple sites of Roman ruins (maps provided), asking these to be preserved.

3.1.3 A member of the public pointed out walking routes across the site (maps provided) and asked these to be maintained.

3.1.4 Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) report on public subsidies in forestry<sup>34</sup> was cited, which calls for "subsidies for commercial forestry ... be redirected to long term, mixed native tree planting." "commercial conifer forestry, which benefits from 100% tax relief, no longer needs public subsidies that distort the market, reflected in the rapid increase in the price of land for tree planting, and that the money should be redirected to maximise the common good."

Does PCC support the recommendations of the RSE? M Marshall suggests we support it. G Mackie pointed out there were lots more recommendations in the 76-page report and that we may not want to support all their recommendations. We might be better to draw their attention to it. Cllr Begg said this was like windfarms, and suggested lobbying MSPs to get the balance right, as there are broader issues.

M Marshall believes we should write to say we support the other groups, and he will watch the FGS application.

Cllr Tatler mentioned that there would be an application to build a path to the mast on Cademuir Hill to allow for repairs.

### **SBC Councillors' Reports:**

**Cllr Small** asked if the PCC had seen the proposals for naming the March Street Development? Yes, they had and were supporting the names suggested: March Street Mills and Weavers Court.

**Cllr Begg:** Re March Street Development, he met with the developers, and everything is going ahead. The developers are in touch with the allotment holders and neighbouring properties. A site meeting will be arranged with the allotment holders and the PCT. The path needs to be explained together with a plan to make it clear. The Chair agreed to sit in on the meeting.

**Cllr Tatler:** The Common Good Exhibition is going ahead in the Museum on 1 September. The media have reported how the 20-mph speed limit has drastically cut down incidents which is good news. R Tatler agreed to circulate the information. The Fish Fountain will be looked after by J Falla's group once the work has been completed. Parking fees would pay for some of the work and perhaps crowd funding would make up the rest. S Coe pointed out that crowd funding brings a sense of ownership. M Marshall offered to set up the crowd funding. What is happening with opening the Bandstand on Tweed Green? The railings should be removed so it can be used as a shelter. Cllr Tatler agreed to put it on agenda for the next Common Good meeting.

**Cllr Begg:** Rosetta Road's wall is on the SBC repair list and Cllr Begg has met with residents to discuss.

**Cllr Thomson:** She has been working with Gytes' allotments and is arranging for the fences to be repaired there and near the Rugby Club. She wanted it noted that the Food Bank are covering packed lunches over the school holidays and by the end of the summer will have done 5,000 lunches which is amazing work. She has arranged to have spikes put on the Cross in the Square to stop pigeons landing on it as their droppings are causing issues.

**Treasurer's report:** This has been circulated. The outstanding £248 has finally been received from the Peebles Parking Fund and £135 has come in from Moorfoot runners. The Treasurer is purchasing a projector for the PCC.

**Chambers Institution Trust:** S Coe has not got an update, but the new acoustic panels have made a huge difference. Cllr Tatler said that SBC are going to send a fuller report but that nothing had changed regarding funding because of the change of government. The Fund Raiser is doing a fantastic job. The Chair asked if the project is moving forward fast enough? S Coe and Cllr Tatler agreed that it is not. It is frustrating. They hope for an update before next month's PCC meeting.

**Peebles in Bloom:** G Macdonald reminded everyone that the nominations for the blocks start this Friday and asked for all completed sheets to be returned to her or the Secretary by Monday 22 July. SBC Councillors are invited to attend, and all PC Councillors should attend on Thursday 15 August. Everyone should sit on a table with the visitors. 7pm for 7.30pm start. G Macdonald said it is important and helpful for everyone to take the time to engage with the guests to underline that it is a community event. There are three gardening hampers to be won and some vouchers. Please bring cash on the night. A card reader could be considered? G Macdonald is expecting everyone to attend and anyone who is unable to attend should let her know. G Mackie reminded the sub-group that the budget is limited, and all expenditure should be run by him first.

### **AOB**

M Marshall reminded the PC Councillors that they should send him their bio and photos for the website as there are some missing.

Children's cemetery. The Secretary has emailed SBC but has not had a response.

The Secretary has reported the faded road markings at the junction of Rosetta Road and March Street and the broken sign on Tweed Bridge.

G Macdonald believes Peebles does not have enough electric car chargers. Cllr Tatler said there is a strategic plan to increase the number of charging points, but it needs funding. G Macdonald also said she thought that someone at SBC was going to be appointed to look at green energy?

K Guiney said she was sad to see that Manse Interiors on the High Street is closing. It's concerning. Coltmans is up for sale as is the Potting Shed; three large premises. The High Street retailers are really struggling and need support. Footfall is decreasing.

Cllr Thomson said that there is a meeting in Broughton Hall on 18 July to discuss the buy out for the woodland at Stobo Hope. 4pm - 7pm. Please support.

The meeting ended at 2107 hrs.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 8 August 2024 in the Burgh Hall.

..... Chairman

..... Dated