



Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minutes of the 321st Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 8 August at 7pm in the Burgh Hall, Peebles. The meeting was recorded for the purposes of Minuting and Reporting.

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

In attendance: M Davey of the Peeblesshire News.

Members of the Public: None.

Apologies: Cllr Thomson, Cllr Begg, Cllr Small, S Coe, K Guiney, H Young 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.

Presentation: Eve McCurrich from Whiteburn Developers was invited to attend to present the latest update regarding the March Steet Mill Development. Unfortunately, she was unable to attend, however she sent a comprehensive report which had been circulated to all CCs and SBC Cllrs.

Open forum: Nothing.

Approval of the Minutes of 11 July 2024: There were two amendments to last month's minutes:

A clarification regarding the discussion at last month's meeting about woodland planting: PCC support the RSE's recommendations that woodland creation funding should be directed to communities instead of commercial forestry companies.

K Guiney was in attendance.

The minutes were approved as amended. S Watson proposed and M Marshall seconded.

Matters arising from the Minutes:

Tourist Sign on Tweed Bridge: A Mackenzie will update when he is in attendance.

Tourist Finger Pointer signs: Several are still wrong. The Secretary will chase up.

Income from windfarms: M Marshall going to form a subcommittee with M Bruce and G Mackie and then contact Upper Tweeddale CC to arrange a Zoom call.

Fish Fountain: This was discussed. It was suggested that the money could be raised by a Just Giving page organised by the PCT, and that way the Gift Aid scheme could be applied. M Bruce agreed to speak to the Board of the PCT and liaise with M Marshall. Once the public funds are raised, Cllr Tatler said the Common Good would make up funds if there was a deficit. M Marshall pointed out that if there was any money left over from the Just Giving page it would be used for other PCT charity projects.

CLlr Pirone was looking at how Common Good Assets should be charged. CLlr Pirone has raised it again with Nuala McKinlay, Chief Legal Officer at SBC, who is working on it and is hoping to have a response soon. This is a decision for the whole of the Scottish Borders, not just Peebles. The Chair has seen a recent Freedom of Information Request and currently it seems anyone booking is asked if they would like to make a donation. CLlr Tatler confirmed he had also had a meeting with N McKinlay and the timescale she is working to is for it to be completed by the end of the financial year, that is March 2025.

Trees in children's cemetery: A foreperson from SBC has agreed that the cherry trees can be pruned, and they will further update the Secretary in due course.

Projector: PCC has purchased a projector but will be borrowing a screen for now. Once more is determined about which size is most practical, the PCC can look to purchase one next year.

Website: A reminder to all PC councillors to send a photo and a bio to M Marshall to update the website.

Chairman's report. This had been circulated.

Lack of Minor Injury Cover: The Chair will continue to chase this.

Parking at Haylodge: PCC had been contacted by a member of the public regarding the lack of parking spaces. That concern had been put to the NHS and the response had been circulated. There are spaces allocated to the GPs, consultants and community nurses and some disabled spaces. The car park is there to serve staff and patients. They agreed to send an e-mail to staff, encouraging them to park elsewhere (the public car park along the road), take public transport or walk.

Tweeddale Area Partnership: CLlr Douglas confirmed that the format of the meetings is going to be different. The Neighbourhood Support Fund will be looking at some applications, but after that it will be a community conversation session with a forum at the end for any other issues for discussion. It will be held in the Burgh Hall on 20 August.

Baptist Church site: There was no update.

Peebles Youth Voice: There were concerns voiced by the Chair as to how this will progress with M Bruce and I Gibson stepping down. J McMordie was not in attendance to give an update. J Wilson said that she and J McMordie are going to attend the next scheduled PYV meeting following which further discussion could be had with PCC as to how and who would take things forward.

Live Borders: Comments had been brought to PCC regarding the current opening times of both the Library and the Swimming Pool. The times had been compared to other libraries and swimming pools and Peebles' times appeared to be the most restrictive. The library closes at 3pm, for example, which makes no sense as it is not open for schoolchildren and the swimming pool is closed on weekend afternoons. Unfortunately, because of the limited hours for both the library and pool, this could become a "self-fulfilling prophecy", whereby, due to the inconvenient hours, less public attend, footfall falls and hours are again reigned in. Finally, we are told that there is no demand and facilities close. Something needs to be done. CLlr Pirone suggested inviting the new Live Borders' CEO to discuss the Peebles' opening hours, or Fiona Colton, Live Borders Head of Museums, Galleries & Archives. CLlr Tatler agreed that the swimming pool does not have the best opening hours, and it needs to match what people want. The Secretary will send the invitation.

Electoral roll: The Secretary had recently required sight of the Electoral Roll at the local library for the Peebles in Bloom invitations. The existing one was dated 2020. She was informed it needed to be requested from Newtown St Boswells, but this may take time. The Secretary was told she could travel to Newtown St Boswells to see the up to date one meantime. More recently she was informed that it had been sent, electronically, but

she could not have access to it as it was on an employee's PC. Cllr Pirone agreed to follow this up as it is a statutory duty to have this available to the public across the UK. The Chair had written to John Curry (SBC director) and he would also be looking into it.

TweedLove: TweedLove announced that it has now come to an end because the economics no longer stack up. Everyone had read the published statement by TweedLove. There had been a comment on social media that the PCC will be happy with this. Nothing is further from truth. The PCC minutes demonstrate without fail that the PCC has always been supportive of the event. However, it is important once more to note that two questions had been asked, and only two, on behalf of the public, and at no time did PCC prejudge the outcome. The first one was of the Common Good Committee, that it should be debated as to whether commercial users of Tweed Green should pay to use it or not. PCC have never said whether users should pay or not, but simply that it should be debated and formulated. That a standard should be set for all users. The second, more recent, question was whether the TweedLove event had grown too big for Tweed Green. Social media is often used to spread discord, and we have no wish to add to it.

S Watson said that N Dagleish, from TweedLove, had attended a PCC meeting in April 2023 where he had stated some money received as a grant had been used for something other than the stated purpose. The Chair said that a member of the public had raised this and carried this query forward, but he has no knowledge of the outcome. Cllr Pirone said this had been subject to a discussion between SBC and N Dagleish but that she also does not know what the outcome was.

M Bruce pointed out that when the Common Good make their grants, they're made in good faith and there is no requirement to follow up or seek validation further down the line. Cllr Tatler said the TweedLove application pre-dates his and the other Councillors' time, so cannot comment. Cllr Tatler went on to say that people do sometimes come back to show what they have spent their money on and Cllr Pirone said that this should be made standard practice. G Ramsay said if there had been an investigation, then there must be an answer? Cllr Pirone said there will be an answer. The Chair asked the meeting to move on; there was an investigation, but no one knows the result. The Chair added he is in no doubt that the money would have been spent on something useful appertaining to TweedLove.

Planning: The report had been circulated.

Rosetta Road Development of 100 Holiday lodges – Ref No: 23/01564/FUL & 23/01563/LBC – Planning officers recommend approval, subject to conditions and will be considered at SBC Planning Committee meeting Mon 12 Aug 2024. Conditions including: 2) holidaymakers only, maximum stay 99 days per calendar year; 4) Travel Plan applies in perpetuity, re-approved every 5 years (this condition requested by PCC); and 25) Cross Borders Drive Road to be kept open.

Dog day care and dog walking facility: St Andrews Road, Peebles (ex premises and land of Rossi Monumental Sculptor) Dog care centre, has been chased up. SBC have looked at this and there is no change of use, so M Marshall has asked for their rationale.

Police report: The report had not been received, and PC Carsley has sent her apologies.

Peebles Community Trust: The report had been circulated. There were no questions.

SBC Councillors reports:

Cllr Tatler: The lights in Victoria Park are about to be installed, starting with the solar lights, then the columns. There is a new fence up on the new entrance to Springhill Road to stop people creating a path where there should not be one. The visiting Fair has requested an extra date in September which has been approved. They will also be asked to have a wet weather plan and security plan in place. The Chair said that the green spaces

contracts have a clause in them which states that restitution to the greens must be made. Cllr Tatler had also attended a recent meeting with N McKinlay, Chief Legal Officer at SBC to discuss the Common Good and other matters. The parking charges for Greenside was discussed, and Kingsmeadows overnight car parking is being looked at, as it is prohibited as things stand. The Chair asked for an update on the opening of the bandstand on Tweed Green. Cllr Tatler confirmed it is on the Common Good agenda. The Common Good exhibition is proceeding well and will run from 1 September. The parking fund received £433 from the RingGo app for one day of TweedLove.

Cllr Begg: In his absence, he had sent the Chair a report. He is waiting for an update on The Old Schoolhouse. The swimming pool car park had been cleaned up and there was a quote in for the bollards to be painted. There is a site visit to Rose Park scheduled for 20 August at 11am. The developers at March Street Mills had arranged a meeting to facilitate discussions about the allotments. M Bruce said the PCT will take ownership at some point and sub-let back to the association.

Cllr Thomson: In her absence, she had sent the Chair a report. Police reports: she has agreed with Sgt Harrison for a meeting two times a year. The next one is on 24 October at 7pm and the Chair will attend. Peeblesshire Charitable Trust funds are available to benefit residents in nursing homes in Peeblesshire, day care and in-patients of Peeblesshire hospitals and individuals who are being supported to remain within their homes in Peeblesshire. For more information, please contact Cllrs Thomson or Tatler. Cllr Tatler confirmed there are funds available to be applied for. They have already helped lots of organisations. There is a budget of around £15,000 per annum.

Cllr Pirone: She has been working with local businesses and is helping them with an action plan. Some businesses are up for sale and some want to move. The Chair asked about non-domestic rates which sound expensive. It is reported that Manse Interiors pay £17,000 per annum. Driving shops out of business and leaving empty premises help no one. Cllr Pirone said they'd been reviewed last year which is why a lot of them have increased. The rates are set down by the Government's Assessors Office and SBC does not have a particular say in it, unless it is a Scottish solution and not just a regional solution. There is an investment fund available to retailers to get through difficult years, but all traders must agree to it. Galashiels' traders were looking at this. The Chair said there needs to be a solution. Cllr Pirone updated the Secretary about the plaque for the gold post box; it will be attached soon.

F Richardson and G Macdonald had both been asked by residents if there was likely to be a revisit to adding lighting to the Scott Brash sculpture. The Chair confirmed this decision would need to be made and works done by Bonnie Peebles. The Secretary said the answer was no last time they asked, but it was agreed to ask them again following Scott Brash's recent gold medal win.

Peebles High School pupils had this week received their exam results and the results were good across Scottish Borders. The rebuild of the school is currently ahead of schedule and progressing well.

Cllr Douglas: Most things had been covered already by the others. There is funding available in the Neighbourhood Support Fund and he welcomed applications. More planning applications for windfarms are coming forward and a lot of them are section 36. These will bring not only planning decisions, but also community benefit discussions. M Bruce said that Bowbeat Windfarm have applied to extend their lifespan by 5 years from next year. They do not currently pay any community benefit as they were established before the legislation was set down for wind farms to do so. Will they now become liable to pay the community benefit? It was agreed this was a good question and M Marshall will pick up on it and write a letter on behalf of PCC.

Treasurer's Report: The report had been circulated and there was nothing to add.

Chambers Institution Trust: S Coe's report had been circulated. Cllr Tatler confirmed they had been waiting feedback from the selection process appointing the architects for the project had been received today. S Coe will share shortly. The decision was clear, and they are happy with the decision. There have been time delay concerns which were out of their control and an extension will have to be factored in.

Peebles in Bloom: G Macdonald confirmed the presentation evening was one week away and everything was scheduled as planned. There has been an enormous amount of hard work done by G Macdonald and her sub-committee to pull it all together and G Macdonald thanked her team, being A Snoddy, F Richardson, S Mackay and G & C Mackie which was endorsed by the Chair. M Marshall and C Mackay were thanked for preparing the slideshow. All SBC Councillors are invited to attend and both they and the PC Councillors were encouraged to mix with the guests and sit at the tables to make everyone welcome. G Macdonald went over the format and timing. The dress code is to wear something floral. There are three gardening hampers to be won and some gift vouchers, so bring cash, and Savourna Stevenson will be playing her clarsach. Refreshments will be organised by S Watson, G Ramsay assisted by J Wilson and A Maudsley. S Mackay has procured tablecloths from Peebles Hydro Hotel, for which thanks. G Macdonald will liaise with the Treasurer about the final expenditure. PC Councillors are asked to please stay back after it's finished, if possible, to help clear up.

AOB

Dog Fouling on Kingsmeadows Road. The Secretary had contacted the Dog Education Officer at SBC following a complaint from a member of the public. Cllr Pirone suggested asking C Johnston, from SBC, to do some stencilling on the road. The Secretary will make a request.

Irvine Plant Limited Planning Permission. The Chair has drafted a letter of support from PCC to SBC Planning Department but is still awaiting some details from Irvine Plant Ltd before sending. The officer's report contains some valid points, but nothing that cannot be managed. There appears to be a strong commercial argument in favour of Irvine Plant, and outstanding issues look manageable.

The Chair said he felt that apprenticeships for the trades should be encouraged and supported and where possible to allow young people to try different trades, e.g. plumbing, joinery and electrical. Many young people would excel in these areas if they were readily available - and flexible. M Bruce said it was a shame that the classroom space at the PHS to teach young people these types of skills was being taken away. There needs to be more consideration and choices given to non-academic young people.

Public toilets: S Watson asked why the East Station toilets are still closed? Cllr Pirone said they are waiting to be fixed. The Secretary will email J Currie. S Mackay said she was speaking to some visitors to the town recently who thought the lack of available public lavatories in Peebles was a disgrace. The Secretary will write to SBC to see if some Portaloos could be placed there until they are fixed. The Chair wanted to know why Peebles had such a problem with public toilets when other areas such as Fife, East Lothian, etc, had open, beautiful toilets and apparently less vandalism. Even the Victorians provided better facilities!

J Wilson wanted it noted that she had also been approached with concerns about what is happening with the Peebles High Street, and had received complaints about the opening times at the swimming pool.

G Ramsay asked if SBC is going to recognise our local Olympic medal winners? Cllr Tatler said yes, something would be done once the Olympics if finished and we know what the medal table looks like.

Cllr Douglas said another consideration for young people who have not achieved formal qualifications could be a career with Police Scotland, they had been advertising recently. This could be a very worthwhile career.

Cllr Tatler reminded everyone that it is every property owner's responsibility to trim their overhanging trees and shrubs extending onto public footpaths. There are lots of overhanging trees and shrubs on the roadsides at the

moment. It was raised at a recent Access Panel meeting. This is important for those with wheelchairs, mobility issues and pushchairs who are impacted. If it is the responsibility of SBC, or on highways where sightlines are being encroached upon, it can be reported on the SBC website. The Chair said the hedges and shrubs on Kingsmeadows Road are overgrown. Cllr Pirone will mention it to Campbell Johnstone.

M Davey of Peeblesshire News said that the lodges at Glentress are due to open in November and being booked up quickly for December. He said that the access roads to the new development were very narrow. Cllr Pirone pointed out that these roads belong to the Forestry Commission.

F Richardson said that the new crossing at Innerleithen Road looked finished and it appeared to be working as planned. S Watson said that he had heard an issue with the placing of a bollard, but he had not been there to have a look as yet.

The meeting ended at 2040hrs.

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

..... Chairman

..... Dated