



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

**Minutes of the 322nd Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2024 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 Mackie (Vice Chairman and Treasurer), G Ramsay, H Young, J McMordie, J Wilson, K Guiney, P Maudsley (Chairman), Cllr Douglas, Cllr Pirone, Cllr Small, Cllr Thomson

**Members of the Public:** John Falla, Paul French, Janice McKinlay, David Baird, Jim Murdoch, Brian Kelman, Fiona Hodgkiss, Richard Turton, Matthew Brown, Michael Hails, Andrew Mattocks, Kevin Clark, Denis Sheridan, Andrew Harris, Blair, Sarah and Travis Drever.

**Apologies:** G Macdonald, M Bruce, M Marshall (Planning Convenor), S Coe, S Mackay, S Watson, Cllr Begg, Cllr Tatler.

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.

An invitation was extended to the CEO at Live Borders to come and speak to us, but the current interim CEO is leaving that post at the end of this month. The new CEO will be invited when appointed.

**Open forum:**

J Falla, a member of the public, wanted to speak to the Community Council about signage that is being left all over Peebles following, among other things, development building works and road works. Examples included a sign about keeping the roundabout on the High Street clear, which had been simply dumped nearby and signs being left on lampposts which can sometimes remain for many years. Can someone please deal with these and help tidy up the town? J Falla also suggested recycling them for other works. Cllrs Thomson, Douglas and Pirone agreed to investigate this and to arrange for a tidy up.

Several members of the public were in attendance to discuss the proposed storage container development at South Parks. The Chairman had lots of paperwork, including many emails mostly objecting to the development, and he read out all the pertinent information to all in attendance. Everyone had seen the plans. The Chair pointed out that the PCC had a statutory right to be consulted by SBC on planning applications as the PCC had a duty to represent the population of Peebles. The PCC will look at all sides and then decide whether they support, object or are neutral. If there are more than four objections lodged with SBC, the application will go to a planning committee. There will be a deadline for objections; the Chair estimates this to be 25 September as there did not appear to be a date on the planning portal. All information is available on the SBC planning portal. The Chairman explained the process and how the public would have only 6 minutes to make their case to the committee. It therefore makes sense to have one or two representatives.

Some of the concerns raised to the Chairman from the public were traffic congestion on Caledonian Road and surrounding streets, particularly around the fire station where there is often single file traffic and the pavements are already narrow; traffic backed up to Tweed Bridge; concerns about what would be stored in the containers,

e.g. chemicals or inflammable substances, and leakages into the Tweed; unsuitable conditions for heavy goods vehicles; vehicles of varying sizes coming and going 24-hours a day causing noise pollution; light pollution, and the unsightly collection of metal containers in an area where people walk their dogs and children play. Objections are both visual and environmental.

S Watson is in support of the development because, as a local businessman, he needs an option of local affordable storage and believes the site next to the industrial park is right for this type of storage facility. J Falla, a member of the public, pointed out that by creating storage options for small businesses, run by say one person, may bring business and employment to the town.

The Chairman said the area is included in both Local Development Plans 1 and 2 and there is a need for industrial storage locally for small businesses. There is an industrial park in South Parks already, but self-access brings different issues and there is the question of the creation of jobs and how many that might be.

The Chairman said if we object it will be necessary to look at the policies SBC have in place. The policies are available on the SBC website and there is a link to them on the PCC website.

M Brown, a member of the public, said as a local resident to the site he had concerns regarding the noise both day and night. He said that the containers would be as close as 15m from some of the nearby houses where there may be children sleeping and playing. There would be loading noise and disruption. As these containers are for storage there would be no staffing. He is concerned the impact would be massive for those living locally. There is no mitigation of what it is going to look like. There will be 55m of continuous containers, and the plan simply shows a small area of grass turf in front of it, with some planting. The visual impact will be huge. He has already spoken to lorry drivers who currently find it tricky to get into the Harbro yard. The Chairman said that all these points should be raised in the objections. It might be that it could be made conditional, e.g. reducing access to 12 hours a day.

J Murdoch, a member of the public, said he is concerned about what might be stored in the containers. There could be flammable substances which could even be explosive. It would need to be controlled, but how would that be done? It would be difficult and unlikely that conditions would be enforced. And which body would oversee that? All together there is a lack of information available. The applicant is not named on the planning application, only an agent's name is given. More investigation needs to be done. A painting and decorating business might have white spirits stored, another business may have fertilizer stored or wood. We should not forget the fire station is only staffed by retained firefighters.

Cllr Pirone said she had read the application and there is missing information, and she is very concerned about safety. Cllr Pirone will put in an objection on behalf of those objecting and will encourage her fellow councillor Cllr Tatler to do the same. Everyone was encouraged to put in their own notes of support and objections too.

G Mackie reminded everyone to lodge their objections individually rather than as one objection with several names.

K Clark, a member of the public, pointed out that it is a scenic area and said that someone should have contacted Nature Scotland. It is not clear if this has been done.

The Chairman asked the PC Councillors present to vote to support or to object to the planning application. For the reasons noted above, all 8 PC Councillors present voted to object.

The PCC will therefore submit an objection.

#### **Approval of the Minutes of 8 August 2024:**

The Minutes were approved, proposed by G Mackie and seconded by J Wilson.

**Matters arising from the Minutes:**

**Tourist pointer signs:** Four of the seven pointer signs outside the Eastgate Theatre are still pointing in the wrong direction. Campbell Johnstone will remind Gareth Smith of SBC Estates Department. Campbell has been in touch to say he has the pointer signs which were knocked down in the recent car accident outside the shop 'House of Gaia'. He has contacted the appropriate department at SBC to have that post reinstated. Cllr Thomson said they are on a list to be painted.

**Income from windfarms:** M Marshall and M Bruce will represent PCC in the various discussions.

**Children's cemetery.** Campbell Johnstone has said he will prune the cherry trees in the Autumn. The children's cemetery is owned by Borders General Hospital but is maintained by SBC.

**Scott Brash Sculpture:** Bonnie Peebles agreed to discuss the request to light it up at night at their committee meeting on 2nd September. There is no further information at this stage.

**Public toilets:** The Secretary has contacted SBC about the ongoing closure of the public toilets in the East Station car park. However, the case was closed without remedy and the Secretary is querying why. The continuous closure is unacceptable. How can we escalate this? Cllr Pirone said to write to John Curry and David Robertson of SBC and copy in all the SBC Cllrs. The Secretary will do so, on behalf of PCC. Cllr Thomson said the council's policy is to provide one paying public toilet in each town. The other two toilets in Peebles are funded from Peebles Common Good Fund so the council is not paying for any.

**Dog fouling on Kingsmeadows Road:** Campbell Johnstone of SBC has painted stencils all along the pavement on Kingsmeadows Road reminding people to pick up after their dogs. The local resident who complained to PCC is most appreciative of the quick response. The Chairman commended this department of SBC which does an exceptionally good job in Peebles.

**The Old School House.** Cllr Thomson confirmed this is moving towards a Compulsory Purchase Order but that it will take time.

**Chairman's Report:** This had been circulated.

J McMordie had not met with I Gibson, however J Wilson had met with both I Gibson and M Bruce to see how things could be taken forward. The difficulty is getting volunteers involved. Cllr Pirone said that she is looking at youth structure and although there is support from PC V Carsley and the Head Teacher at PHS, bringing all the different groups is difficult to co-ordinate. There is a lot of work to be done, and budgets are tight. The Secretary had attended the recent Fair at PHS and felt that the profile of PCC had been raised but had not managed to get any new recruits. The children visiting the stalls were under the age of 16 but a couple expressed great interest and who knows, they may come back to us when they are older. She and M Bruce spoke to both the Head Teacher, Mr Ryalls, and J McMordie and they have a couple of senior pupils in mind who might make good Community Councillors. However, the senior students are currently involved in elections to the School Parliament. M Bruce and the Secretary had a wander round the other stalls and were amazed at the variety of activities on offer to school pupils these days. Feedback from Street Pastors demonstrates one success that is being maintained.

**Planning Report:** This had been circulated. M Marshall is not in attendance. The draft planning report for this month identified a number of important items. The South Park site had been discussed already.

**Ewan Irvine's appeal following SBC's rejection of his planning application.** At the previous meeting, the PCC agreed to support the appeal. However, that was prior to an in-depth analysis of the Planning Officer's report which recommended not supporting this appeal until more substantive responses were given to issues in the

planner's rejection letter. M Marshall had provided a detailed and accurate report of the facts, and the Chair went over the background again for clarity. He explained that Irvine provided local employment and training, charitable support to local organisations, was used regularly by SBC as a sub-contractor, the lack of a suitable alternative site in the area, and the likelihood of this site being left to deteriorate should Irvine be instructed to leave it. The issue was further debated at length and the eight PC Councillors in attendance then declared they supported Ewan Irvine's appeal. However the planning convenor's dissent was noted.

Bowbeat Windfarm has been granted their 5-year extension. They have been asked by SBC to consider legislation on community engagement or they may not get further extensions in the future.

**Police report:** No report had been received.

**Peebles Community Trust:** M Bruce's report had been circulated. M Bruce was not in attendance but wanted to publicly thank the Elected Members, in their capacity as the Peebles Common Good Fund Sub Committee, for the decision to award the Lease of Hay Lodge Depot to Peebles and District Men's Shed.

### **SBC Councillors' Reports**

#### **Cllr Thomson, on behalf of her, Cllr Small and Cllr Begg:**

There had been a meeting at Rose Park with residents, Cllrs and the new factor. A plan of action has been put together and things will start moving forward. Cllr Tatler has stepped down as Chair of the Common Good and Cllr Thomson is the new Chair. There is an ongoing discussion about using the pavilion on Tweed Green as a shelter. A paper has been drafted about potentially extending the woods in Haylodge Park. Cllr Thomson will send over a plan. There are also plans to plant wildflowers once a site has been identified and there have been conversations with local schools about planting and growing projects. All park users will convene where the plan will be shared to hear views. The Community Conversations have started and there will be a meeting in the Drill Hall to discuss the flooding options. They hope to have an example of one of the Hawick barriers to demonstrate how it works. She had recently held a surgery at Eastgate which had been well received. Their list of small schemes is almost up to date including the fencing around the allotments at the Gytes and the fence at the bottom which has now been painted. There had been a meeting with the Access Panel who have a list of items to address in and around the town. K Guiney had recently held a Traders' meeting where accessibility had been discussed. It had been a positive meeting with retailers discussing how they can best serve customers who cannot get into their shops. Motorised wheelchairs often struggle. It was agreed that shops and businesses could have a bell outside their shops so that anyone who needed assistance could ring it from the street in order to be served by the retailer. Everyone agreed this was a good idea. K Guiney suggested that Peebles could aim to be the most accessible town in the Borders! The cost of the bells is around £180 each and she asked if there was any funding that the retailers may be able to apply for to assist with the initial outlay? Cllr Thomson said that Peebles Charitable Trust might be able to offer some assistance and asked K Guiney to send her the details. She also said she was going through consultations for bollards in Victoria Park and one for the change of use for the Men's Shed.

**Cllr Pirone:** warned that there would be some work done to the roundabout at the Parish Church on the High Street following some damage that had resulted from a recent road traffic incident. The works are scheduled for 3-4 days commencing on 23 September. She had also been involved in resolving issues with parking at Peebles High School. Cars have been parking on corners and across dropped kerbs. The queries on the swimming pool hours has been raised and there is a system being trialled elsewhere that will be looked at. She is aware of the delay with the funding of the Chambers Institute. The funding is in place but there is a delay in the timescales.

**Cllr Douglas:** had attended the Tweeddale Area Partnership on 20 August. They have received a number of funding applications. There is a whole range of funding available. The Community Conversation took place. The new format was confusing to start with. Bowbeat Windfarm has already been mentioned. He will be attending a surgery with Christine Graham MP in Tesco's in Peebles on 13 September from 11 to 12 noon.

**Treasurer's Report:** The report had been circulated. Most of the expenditure for August was for Peebles In Bloom, although the Treasurer does not have the final figures yet. The total is around £500 compared with £360 last year. The raffle raised £270 this year compared to £158 last year. He should have the final figures available for next month's meeting.

**Chambers Institution Trust:** S Coe was not in attendance, but his report had been circulated. The Levelling Up funding has been confirmed. The design team has now been appointed, and meetings are planned this month to begin the process of developing the design brief and the optimum scope for this first phase of work within the Trustees' emerging Vision for the overall project, with the involvement of users, Live Borders and the Beneficiaries Group. The Trustees are already working with their fundraising consultant to identify further potential sources of development funding to build on the momentum that the Levelling Up project will provide.

**Peebles in Bloom:** G Macdonald was not in attendance but had given the Secretary some items to read out. The presentation evening had been on 15 August and had been very well attended and received. G Macdonald thanked M Davey for the coverage in the Peeblesshire News, S Mackay for the fabulous tables, C Mackie for putting together the wonderful hampers resulting in a significant rise in raffle monies, G Ramsay and S Watson for their kitchen duties, M Marshall and C Mackay for the IT presentation and Cllr Pirone, J Wilson, and A Maudsley for generally helping out with everything on the night. The floral dress code had boosted local retailers' sales of floral shirts and dresses, and the invitation list had included local businesses such as Scott Bros and Harbro who support the community with their plant knowledge as well as their garden supplies.

G Macdonald also thanked the Food Foundation who picked the flowers and raspberries in the pouring rain to bake the delicious cakes. Thank you to all the PCC and SBC councillors who also attended.

Feedback has been mostly positive, and we will discuss some things we can tweak. G Macdonald asked all who attended to email her or the Secretary with any additional feedback. Funding was an issue that G Macdonald was always aware of and perhaps next year the sub-group could look at additional sources. On a final note, G Macdonald wanted to say to the Secretary: Anne, you are the glue that hold all the pieces of Peebles in Bloom together!

F Richardson wanted to note everyone's thanks to G Macdonald for all her hard work. Like most of the PC Councillors, G Macdonald has many personal commitments, however she had invested a huge amount of herself and her time over many months into coordinating Peebles In Bloom this year and had done a sterling job.

#### **AOB:**

The Secretary asked what is happening about the premises that used to be called Della's? K Guiney said she had heard that various enquiries had been made but which had not received a substantive response. Cllr Thomson agreed to investigate and see if the premises could be tidied up a bit.

The Chairman asked Cllr Pirone for an update on the availability of access to the electoral roll. Cllr Pirone said it was still on her agenda of items to deal with but has found out it is available to purchase.

The Chairman asked about the parking money from Greenside being transferred to the Common Good. Cllr Thomson said that they have located the monies and are currently working on the transfer.

S Watson was not in attendance, on his behalf the Chairman asked for an update on the grant that the Common Good gave to TweedLove. What was the outcome of the investigation? Cllr Pirone has raised it a several times. It is with Nuala McKinley at Scottish Borders Council, and Cllr Pirone is waiting for advice coming back.

Cllr Small reported it was suggested, at the Access Panel meeting, that dropped kerbs could be painted, and it was agreed it would be looked into.

J Wilson wanted to extend congratulations to K Guiney whose business, The Perfect Fit, had won the award the "Borders Favourite Business". The PC Councillors also congratulated Cllr Pirone on her new role as executive member for education, youth development and lifelong learning, and to Cllr Tatler in his new role as executive member for public safety and resilience.

Cllr Pirone said that the Community Action Team had been out on Kingsmeadows Road this week checking speeding motorists and had spoken to some drivers who were going too fast.

G Mackie had said that he had visited Melrose to watch the Tour of Britain. He was surprised to learn that national speed limits do not apply to cyclists. Additionally, he recalled a discussion about changing some of the 20mph speed limits back to 30mph and could not recall which roads or streets those were, and whether the consultation had happened? Cllr Pirone confirmed that some of the Borders settlements had reverted some streets to the 30mph limit and were now hybrid. Peebles is not currently one of them.

The meeting ended at 2100hrs.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 10 October 2024 in the Burgh Hall.

..... Chairman

..... Dated