



Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minutes of the 323rd Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 10 October 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, H Young, J McMordie, J Wilson, K Guiney, M Bruce, M Marshall, P Maudsley (Chairman), S Mackay, S Coe, S Watson, Cllr Pirone, Cllr Small, Cllr Tatler, Cllr Thomson.

Members of the Public: G Forbes, D Brunton.

Apologies: A Mackenzie, Cllr Begg, Cllr Douglas.

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.

Approval of the Minutes of 12 September 2024:

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

Matters arising from the Minutes:

Tourist Pointer Signs: Cllr Small confirmed they are going to be painted. One is damaged, has been taken down and is going to be fixed. A Snoddy commented that they are still pointing in the wrong directions. Cllr Thomson said that this had been noted and would be addressed at the same time, but she had no timeline for completion.

Children's Cemetery: A Snoddy confirmed the cherry trees have now been pruned thanks to Campbell Johnstone. There may be further pruning if appropriate. Ownership of this part of the cemetery is being looked into by the NHS.

Parking fees: SBC are still to reimburse the Common Good. Cllr Thomson confirmed the funds have been located and now, finally, everything would be looked into and squared off.

Public Toilets: The Secretary had communicated with both North Berwick and Biggar Community Councils to ask how they managed as their conveniences were good. However North Berwick said they had the same problems as PCC with reduced funding and vandalism. Biggar's response had only been received today and not circulated yet.

Old Schoolhouse, Tweed Green: Cllr Thomson said the position has not changed and that SBC was continuing down the compulsory order purchase route. M Bruce is concerned the legal team is simply prevaricating. S Coe asked about a timescale and Cllr Thomson said it could take years. The Chair said some target dates from the legal team would be helpful.

Open Forum:

The Chair said David Brunton, a member of the public was in attendance to discuss, not current practices, but past processes of the destruction of listed buildings in the Scottish Borders region, specifically headstones in local cemeteries. D Brunton had attended the meeting before. The Chair had produced a report in October 2019. Orkney's local authority had done the same thing as SBC; however, Orkney had acknowledged their error, apologised and made some reparation, but SBC had not. D Brunton had been looking into this ever since and wanted to bring everyone up to date.

D Brunton talked about, what he described as unnecessary destruction of listed buildings in the Scottish Borders region, and the unwillingness of the council to release documents via a Freedom of Information request until the ICO threatened them with contempt of court. D Brunton had sent the PCC many years of correspondence and that correspondence is available from the Secretary (secretary@ccrbpeebles.co.uk) for anyone who would like a copy. D Brunton read out highlighted sections of his correspondence to the meeting.

The Chair asked D Brunton what is it he is looking for? D Brunton wants repairs made to the criminal damage done to the headstones at SBC's expense, and he wants them to use individual notices. D Brunton has the Chair's support, but the Chair is unable to tell SBC what to do. S Watson believes it should have been rectified years ago. The Chair said he would circulate the report he did in 2019 to the PCC.

Cllr Pirone said it was important to note that the policy has now changed, but that she has passed D Brunton's complaint on again to the SBC legal team. There is a difference of opinion on his facts. Cllr Tatler will update the PCC with SBC's point of view at the next meeting. Cllr Small said local authorities have to make sure the cemeteries are safe.

Chairman's report: This had been circulated

Peebles Town Action Plan (Place Planning): M Bruce said that the plan had been provided to the Peebles Community Trust board meeting. It provides a clear vision for Peebles. Many thanks to Crick Carleton for his significant input, although he is retiring at the end of the year. It will be delivered to the PCC in due course for approval to vote on. M Bruce said that a professional will need to be employed to manage and execute the plan as there are large sums of money involved which cannot be dealt with by volunteers alone.

Community Hospitals Review: Still not completed. Next meeting in November.

Tweeddale Area Partnership: A meeting is arranged for 29 October.

Peebles Baptist Church Site: Cllr Tatler said that John Dalrymple from the Baptist Church has a meeting arranged with the recently formed group. The new group have now formed a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation [*this is a legal form unique to Scottish charities which is able to enter into contracts, employ staff, incur debts, own property, sue and be sued. It also provides a high degree of protection against liability*]. It is moving along. M Bruce said that it had been roughly agreed that the group would speak to the PCT who would act as a vehicle for them for banking, etc, but he had heard nothing for over three months.

Working party on non-financial support to community councils: Cllr Tatler said the review started 4 years ago and it needs chasing.

Peebles Youth: Not much change. The Chair had written an article for Peebles Life. Tweeddale Youth Action had read it and although the view was agreed, they would like to have been involved. The Chair had responded to let them know that the article had been written in response to PCC actions. The Chair has invited them to put someone forward to sit on the PCC. Cllr Pirone had an update from Peebles Youth Voice as she was concerned that Iain Gibson was stepping down having done a lot of good work. She has asked colleagues if it

can be taken forward by SBC and some volunteers. They hope to hold quarterly meetings to continue the work that has been done to date and so that it is not lost. They do need a parent representative as parents' input is very important. J McMordie said young people need to be involved and to be given more rights. The Chair said he would like a young person to join PCC. J McMordie said he has two potential candidates. SBC has recently launched their YELL strategy, and he will circulate that. *[This is a multi-agency participation and engagement strategy for young people aged 12- 25 was launched in September 2024. The Youth Engagement Listen to Learn (YELL) strategy is a 'How to Guide' written by local young people to support agencies in the Scottish Borders, to involve young people in their work]*. He said we should consider how the meeting environment could work for young people, as it is currently set up to work for adults.

Live Borders: Cllr Pirone confirmed that there is interim management in place, but it is not the right time for someone to come and talk to PCC. If anyone has concerns about their services, they should let SBC Councillors know, and they will obtain some answers. Cllr Tatler suggested giving them some space to settle in their new management.

H Young asked about the library opening times, and if they would be changing? Cllr Pirone confirmed it is in the plan.

Street Pastors. This is going well. They are looking for two new high visibility jackets. The Chair asked if PCC could donate some money, say £50? The Treasurer said that unfortunately this was not possible due to rules. It was agreed an application could be made to the parking fund and Cllr Thomson would arrange payment.

Planning Report: This had been circulated. M Marshall said that we had supported the new multi-use path at Glentress. The project manager was pleased.

Wind farms: The information had been circulated. Discussions have begun around community benefits. Peebles are not the only potential recipients and there are FAQs on the circulated sheet. Peebles will need to speak to and work with other groups. Peebles will have funds to give and distribute to different local groups. Community ownership will also need to be considered and discussed. Any feedback or thoughts should be directed to M Marshall or M Bruce. Advice should be taken from a professional, such as a lawyer, accountant or land agent. Cllrs Tatler and Thomson confirmed that SBC does not offer advice. Cllr Thomson suggested she could speak to Upper Tweed and Tweedsmuir CC. M Marshall said he had contacted them, but there needs to be money for the analysis. The Memorandum of Understanding is difficult to understand, and Peebles will need someone professional to look at it. M Marshall said nothing should be signed until we have legal answers. M Bruce suggested speaking to Cloich Windfarm which is currently ongoing.

Police Report: For the third month in a row there is no report. Cllr Tatler will find out what's going on. A Snoddy pointed out that there is no police representation at our meetings either; the agenda is circulated to them monthly.

Peebles Community Trust: M Bruce has circulated his report.

Cllr Reports:

Cllr Small has been working closely with the Access Group. This involved dealing with access for mobility scooters on the pavement on March Street and signage erected. They're also looking at the dropped kerb in the cemetery. G Macdonald asked if he could chase up the dropped kerb on Kingsway. The group want to be involved with the new March Street houses, so there is adequate accessibility to the flats. Cllr Tatler said the Access Group (Paul Nicholl) should share these requests with the Civic Society who can then refer it officially.

Cllr Tatler: The lights in Victoria Park are almost complete. There is ongoing discussion in respect of the Fishes Fountain before works can be started. There are now 4 new mobile CCTV cameras for the CAT team to use.

There has been dog fouling in the cemetery. Signage will be erected. The SBC legal team are looking at a by-law to prevent dogs entering the cemetery. Cllr Small said that it might be better to allow dogs access to the cemetery so long as they are under control and kept on leads. J McMordie asked about the lighting on Tweed Bridge. Only one side appeared to be lit. Cllr Tatler will feed that back.

Cllr Thomson: The Access Panel had alerted some difficulties in getting into the shops and it was agreed to install bells outside the shops. A list of retailers had been drawn up and both the Peebles Charitable Trust and the parking fund will help to pay for bells. K Guiney said that the retailers were very pleased. There were ongoing Common Good planning discussions for Haylodge Park and a meeting of all the park users was being organised. The Chair said residents were concerned about the area that had always been used for sledging. A Snoddy said there are plans to plant an oak wood at the top but that might obscure the views of the southern uplands. Cllr Thomson said the meeting for all users will make sure everyone knows what is going on. There are some small schemes items still outstanding but are being looked at. There will be a walk around at the beginning of December.

Cllr Pirone: The Tweeddale East Councillors are continuing to work up at Peebles High School regarding the parking. Courtesy white lines will be painted to stop parking, and the Head Teacher has written to residents and staff. The residents will be kept updated. J McMordie said the construction company has built their own car park, but the teachers are expected to park on the streets. The upcoming road closures have been circulated. Nominations for Tweeddale Citizen of the Year are invited and Cllr Pirone will circulate the information. The deadline is 15 November.

J McMordie asked if silent fireworks could be considered for the display. Dogs and other animals and wildlife would benefit. Cllr Tatler said this was looked at for the Innerleithen display but it is very expensive. M Bruce said it is the Round Table who organise the display and they are aware of silent fireworks. The funding is sometimes arranged 5 years in advance.

Cllr Thomson said there is a live consultation re the bandstand.

The Treasurer's Report: The report had been circulated. G Mackie confirmed he has now received all the expenditure from Peebles in Bloom. The total cost was £507. The raffle raised £270; net cost £237. The parking fund is going to contribute, as they did last year. Cllr Thomson said yes. The money in the other account has been distributed to two charities. G Macdonald asked what the CC balance is? G Mackie confirmed it is £370 but does not include this year's grant. G Mackie confirmed the parking fund paid for the projector.

Chambers Institution Trust: The report had been circulated. S Coe said they have been liaising with the architect looking at the lift, the fire escape and how to make the front entrance work. Surveys need to be done. The Chair asked if the beneficiaries' group was now an integral part of the process? S Coe said they are working on it. The stakeholders are being liaised with closely. There is a meeting on 1 November. G Macdonald asked what is happening to the Contact Centre? S Coe said they are on the list. Cllr Pirone confirmed the Contact Centre has been discussed and they are aware. The Chair said if any of the PCC had any questions or issues to contact S Coe who will take them up at the appropriate time.

AOB

Garry Forbes, a member of the public, had come to discuss a pile of trade waste that had been accumulating outside the Post Office. It had been reported to SBC and to the Fire Service. The Fire Service agreed that it was a fire hazard and had raised a notice on the Post Office. However, G Forbes said that the members of the public who had raised the issue said they were unhappy with the way that SBC had addressed it originally having been given the brush-off.

The original complaint has now been resolved however they are considering raising a second complaint about the way the matter was dealt with by SBC. They are currently researching to see if the concerns are shared by all. The Health and Safety Executive has had to be involved because of SBC's failure to deal with the initial complaint.

A Snoddy asked if the windows in the premises that used to be Della's could be used to display local notices? Cllr Tatler said he would investigate. A Snoddy will email Cllr Tatler to remind him. SBC had asked the PCC some questions about the back road from Peebles to Innerleithen and Walkerburn and there had been lots of responses. The majority of respondents supported keeping the 40-mph speed limit. A Snoddy will collate the responses and send to SBC. Bonnie Peebles have confirmed, again, they will not be putting in any lighting for the Scott Brash sculpture. The PCC had sent a letter to Lady Maxwell Stuart to congratulate her in her new role as Lord Lieutenant. The meeting tables would be better "in the round" as tonight's meeting was tricky to hear in places.

F Richardson said how smart the newly painted white milestones were in and around Peebles. Thanks to the Gutterbluids.

H Young said the new lights in Victoria Park were appreciated.

S Coe asked if the tables could be set up differently for next meeting as the current set up made it difficult to hear everyone.

M Bruce said that there would be scaffolding erected on some of the buildings during the festive period which was going to cause an issue for some of the Christmas lights. It might not be a complete display.

S Watson said the Highland Games had been very successful. K Guiney said the businesses had reported the best Highland Games yet, especially the cafes and restaurants. S Watson said takings were up again this year. He thanked all the volunteers who are so essential for the success of the day.

G Macdonald has been using the small town bus recently and has had to rely on accessing the timetable on her phone. There had been several meetings where it was agreed we need a paper timetable. Could it be put into the Peebles Life? Cllr Tatler agreed to go back to Border Buses.

K Guiney said that the mood was positive on the High Street. There are three new businesses and Manse Interiors has now been sold. The premises that was the Potting Shed, next door to the Tontine Hotel, is still vacant. It is such a waste of space and of a beautiful building – could it not be used for some pop-up shops? E.g. one of the maker markets or craft stalls would be delighted to take up the space. Even if just on a Saturday morning, or once a month, or in the run up to Christmas? The retailers are also going to be working with the Christmas Lights Association to run an Elf Hunt around the town in November. This would help raise funds for the Christmas Lights Association too. Details will be released soon. The shops said that all the young people from the High School have been very well behaved recently.

M Marshall wanted to commend Haylodge Park for their biodiversity projects.

The meeting ended at 2055hrs.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 14 November 2024 in the Burgh Hall.

..... Chairman

..... Dated