



Community Council of the Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minutes of the 324th Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 14 November 2024 at 7pm in the Burgh Hall, Peebles. The meeting was recorded for the purposes of Minuting and Reporting.

Present: A Mackenzie, A Snoddy (Secretary), F Richardson, G MacDonald, G Mackie (Vice Chairman and Treasurer), G Ramsay, H Young, J Wilson, K Guiney, M Bruce, M Marshall, P Maudsley (Chairman), S Coe, S Watson, Cllr Begg, Cllr Douglas, Cllr Tatler.

In attendance: M Davey of the Peeblesshire News.

Members of the Public: None.

Apologies: J McMordie, J Wilson, S Mackay, Cllr Pirone, Cllr Thomson and Cllr Small.

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.

Open Forum: Nothing.

Approval of the Minutes of 10 October 2024: S Coe pointed out there was an incorrect date for the Chambers Institution Trust meeting which should have read 4 November not 1 November. The Minutes were approved as amended, proposed by M Bruce and seconded by S Watson.

Matters arising from the Minute:

Tourist board on Tweed Bridge: A Mackenzie said there had been time challenges, but it was progressing. He had spoken to Ian Thorburn, and it was on track to be completed next year.

Tourist Pointer Signs: Several are still pointing in the wrong direction. A Mackenzie agreed to ask the Callants to take it on. The Museum would like the putting green pointer that is no longer required. Cllr Begg said that Cllr Thomson had this on her list and this update should be communicated to her.

Parking fees: Cllr Thomson was not in attendance. She will be able to update us as to whether the Greenside parking fees have been transferred to the Common Good.

The shop window that used to be Della's: Cllr Tatler is liaising with Tricia Hill, Estates, SBC to see if it can be used by local groups for notices. It may be available, and he will put the Secretary in touch with T Hill.

Three Fishes Fountain: There had been a recent meeting with Cllr Tatler, the Chairman, the Treasurer and John Falla of Floral Peebles. Cllr Tatler said that J Falla has agreed that Floral Peebles will look after the fountain once it is repaired. The original quote for repairing it is now out of date so that will be updated. Considerations will be made regarding the mains water, drainage, and power. The works will commence after the festive break and there will be a request for crowd funding. Top up funding will be requested from the parking fund. SBC will manage the project, and Floral Peebles will maintain it once complete.

Gold post-box plaque. The plaque has still not been replaced. The Secretary will seek an update from Cllr Pirone.

Youth Representation: J McMordie was not in attendance so there was no update.

K Guiney said that Food Punks are keen to get involved with some local groups and associations and she had suggested they approach the PCC Chair for a chat. The Chair confirmed he had been liaising with Dave Hodson and had spoken to him about putting someone forward to join PCC.

Headstone testing. Correspondence with SBC had been circulated and everyone was happy with it.

Old Schoolhouse on Tweed Green: S Coe and Cllr Begg had not received any updates. The Chair said we need a target date otherwise it will drift. M Bruce said he was concerned about the safety. There appeared to be a tree growing out of the roof near the northeastern gable. M Bruce agreed to send some photos to Cllr Begg.

Chairman's report: The report been circulated.

Peebles Town Action Plan: This was all ready to go, however the Chair has received an email from a member of the public who wishes to remain anonymous. The Chair read the long email out. A copy of the email is available from the Secretary, secretary@ccrbpeebles.co.uk.

M Bruce pointed out that the plan is 72 pages, not 300 as the email stated. There are additional appendices. There is also an executive summary on pages 4 and 5 of the plans.

The Chair said he was satisfied that the plan had been shared with the relevant stakeholders for comment, ahead of its submission to SBC.

The Chair asked if setting up a page on the SBC website for the public would be helpful? The Secretary said it could do no harm. M Marshall said there had already been numerous public consultations over several years and that the town team believed it was appropriate to proceed to the statutory part of the consultation, i.e. with adjoining community councils and SBC councillors. K Guiney said she had attended one and not many people came, perhaps five in total. Cllr Tatler suggested making the document available to download and publicise the download is available. G Ramsay agreed with this. M Bruce said that perhaps a copy could be made available in the library for a month? Cllr Begg asked how much feedback is enough? Consultations had already been done and there comes a point where it must stop. Cllr Douglas said it would not be up to SBC to conduct a survey. Until the finished document is submitted, SBC will not be involved. The Treasurer asked which groups have been involved in creating this document? M Marshall confirmed the groups are PCC, Peebles Community Trust and Peebles Civic Society. S Coe said that the first part of the document (the 72 pages referred to by M Bruce) is the statutory part. The remaining text is a working document, an ongoing process. The Chair has had an email from Crick Carleton to say he is retiring at the end of the year and read out some of C Carleton's observations. Once C Carleton retires someone will need to take it on. There are different groups but not one coordinator. We need a Town Manager to oversee, look at long-term funding and create a more formal structure for the Town Action Plan. C Carleton's email sets out some huge questions and there is a lot to be considered, planned and discussed. C Carleton will be setting up a further meeting. The Chair will respond to the anonymous person who emailed. M Marshall encourages anyone who has strong views to submit their comments. H Young asked if there was still time to comment? The Chair confirmed there was, but it was a narrow window.

Grass cutting: A resident of Kingsway has made multiple complaints to Eildon Housing Association about the mess left by a firm they contract to cut the grass in the common areas of Kingsway. The Secretary will write to the SBC Cllrs to take this up.

Possible changes to Haylodge Park: There is a meeting scheduled onsite on 18 November.

Campervans: This is still an issue. Cllr Begg said that Callander Community Council have ambitious plans. M Bruce agreed to check out how Callander are going to fund and plan provision for campervans. S Watson pointed out that caravans should be considered too. G Ramay said that SBC need to change the law which currently prohibits campervans parking in SBC car parks, or it goes no further. The Chair said that no overnight parking is not enforced. Cllr Tatler said it is an outstanding issue. The Chair said that farmers can allow parking on their land for 80 days without approval. The Chair said there are many pitches in Moffat, and it is a good for the local businesses. It would be good to solve it for Peebles.

Baptist Church: Nothing to report.

Windfarms: M Marshall has recently done a considerable amount of valuable work on the windfarm issues (e.g. sourcing funding to engage solicitors to review the MOUs). The Chair is supportive of M Marshall's position that we should not be rushed into signing any document with any windfarm that ties us to their first offer. PCC is an organisation set up under statute to represent the community. As such PCC must seek the best possible deal and not necessarily the first on offer. The PCC does not have the resources to manage large amounts of money on an ongoing basis. Nevertheless, PCC has an important role to play in setting up fair community benefit and ownership structures across our community whilst avoiding potential conflicts of interest. We are actively working towards a solution.

Peebles Youth: The Chair had had an interesting meeting with David Hodson of Tweeddale Youth Action. D Hodson's facilities here and in Innerleithen are very impressive. The Chair also visited the pizza shed and the food was terrific.

Planning report: The report had been circulated. M Marshall said that there were two things that had come up. Firstly, the Kingsmeadows expired planning permission. SBC had made an error in stating objectors were not allowed to speak at the planning meeting when the matter would be discussed. As a result, the meeting has been postponed to 9 December. Everyone is aware of the history. M Marshall invited everyone to come and show their support. M Marshall will speak on behalf of PCC and Cllrs Tatler and Pirone will also be speaking. The second thing is the discussion around windfarms. The information is available on the PCC website (<https://ccrbpeebles.co.uk/Documents.php>)

Cllr Tatler wanted to draw to the PCC's attention that the development at Horsburgh Ford has stalled and that it should be included in the PCC's planning items as it is within the Tweeddale West boundary. It was agreed to have it as a standing item. Progress is currently sitting with the developer. Cllr Tatler asked M Marshall to include the Tweeddale Area Partnership when he sends out his information.

M Marshall said that in May we talked about our views on windfarms and generally support them. There are some environmental negative aspects to be mitigated. He has circulated a draft letter to say we do support, but 1) this is contingent on there being a community benefits package in place; and 2) he believes public support is contingent on experts' consultation responses being heeded by windfarm developers, e.g. bird and nature experts such as RSPB.

Regarding the community benefits; Eddleston, Innerleithen and PCC have met, and relations are good. We will work together to get the best deal for the community. Investigations for funding for lawyers is being. The memoranda of understanding are on the website to read. This is to benefit the entire community so if there are any issues they need to be raised now.

M Bruce said there had been conversations with Leithenwater Wind Energy Hub and that there needs to be a corporate body set up to receive and deliver the money to the community. The Chair said there are organisations set up for such things. The Treasurer said we need to set up a legal entity. M Marshall said we

can do it ourselves or get someone else to do it. There is the set-up phase and then we would look for people to deal with allocating the money. M Bruce said Foundation Scotland manage money for other communities in Scotland and they are very efficient. The Chair had read about how some communities had received some payments up front. M Bruce said that Belltown Power had said that they can set up a structure that will front load so that money will start to flow once everything is in place. The Treasurer pointed out that they want the three community councils to sign the Memorandum of Understanding. It is a legal document, and we ought to seek legal advice. The Chair asked if everyone is happy with way things are progressing. Everyone said yes. M Marshall asked everyone to talk to the community and see what is wanted. The Chair said a sheet of bullet points with what is being offered would be helpful. M Marshall asked all the elected Cllrs to feedback information they may hear from the community. Cllr Begg said he had been heavily involved with others and that it is not simply signing up to turbines. M Bruce said for now we were discussing the community benefit, not planning permission which would be discussed another day. The Chair suggested if anyone has any questions, they should email M Marshall directly.

Police report: This had been circulated. There were some minor problems reported in Peebles.

Peebles Community Trust: The report had been circulated. No questions.

Cllrs reports

Cllr Tatler: The bus timetable is now on the bus stop at the Post office and there will be leaflets in Peebles Life. There had been concerns raised from the public about dogs in the cemetery, and signs were going to be put up. Legislation will also be considered. Tweedbridge Court will be trimmed and tidied up. Destination Tweed is continuing with the section from the Gytes to Priorsford Bridge. There is a new community police officer, PC Crawford Laing.

Cllr Begg: Cllr Thomson has provided a report. PC Laing has met with Tweeddale West Cllrs to discuss policing which was useful. These are meetings around the buses on routes 91 and 93. They have gone to tender for options. The phone box has finally been painted and looks very smart. Please keep bringing forward jobs, such as this.

Cllr Thomson: Cllr Thomson was absent but sent in the following report: Parking funds – she requested that the payments to PCC and Street Pastors be made prior to the Process review. Parking in the Old Town – she was approached at her surgery in Tesco and asked if anything can be done about the parking in the Old Town by Castle Warehouse. It was suggested increased double yellow lines. She sought advice from the Road Team – the single yellow line that is there currently allows resident to park there in the evenings. The issue is largely caused by irresponsible parking on both the double and single lines during the day. The ‘Doorbell’ initiative which was suggested where the town’s retailers would put doorbells on their shop fronts to allow accessibility for those unable to enter the shop has not been straightforward, and we are looking at options to take forward. Old School House – no further update. Team working on the compulsory purchase order as advised last month. Common Good – Hay lodge Park – visit on 18 November is a continuation of the users meeting held last week so they can ‘see’ what is being proposed more accurately in situ and not an ‘open’ meeting per se as could be ‘unwieldy’. Small schemes – update meeting on 19 November.

Cllr Pirone: Cllr Pirone was absent but has sent in the following report: Please remember that the nominations for Tweeddale citizen of the year is now open. She has asked for an update on the Tweedlove issue that is outstanding. This is still with legal. She attended the Tweeddale sports awards recently and we should congratulate all the winners especially Caroline Connor at PHS who swam lake Geneva to raise funds. She is working with PC Laing at the police to set up a Tweeddale east meeting with him and relevant community councils in early December. She has been working with M Marshall and Cllr Tatler on objections for Kingsmeadow House for the next planning committee. She has been working with communities affected by the

new SPEN cross border pylon project which currently runs over the Tweed at Thornielee over the southern uplands. She asks that PCC may consider putting in a comment to this via the SPEN website, as it will have an impact on tourism and the economy along the Tweed Valley. She continues to work with PHS on parking, and the intention is to paint white line areas on corners and install H lines over driveways to help resolve the problems. The new puffin crossing on Glen Road and Springwood Road is now installed. She has been working with Kenny Harrow on a small consultation for the bollards and possibly two parking spaces at the play park end of Victoria park. Peebles Youth Voice continues, and the first meeting led by the community learning and development team has been held. She is also working on youth development across the region and how we move this forward. There will be another walkaround the ward in December to look at issues we may be able solve with small scheme money. There have been issues with waste collections in the last couple of weeks, but this seems to have settled down.

Cllr Douglas: The next meeting of the Area Partnership is 4 February. They are looking at applications for the neighbourhood support fund, there is still £30k left. Any community groups should please come forward. It is important that people apply as the money will not be carried forward. The deadline is 13 December. The next planning meeting has been postponed to 9 December. The Irvine yard on Kingsmeadows Road has been given permission to continue. Exceptional approval was granted and there are some conditions. Live Borders, the legal set up has changed to a single member trust where SBC is the only member. The budget process is underway which is a difficult process. Community Council Scheme working group which has been five years in process is nearly at a point where a final report will go to the council. Should come back to council in April where a lot of changes will come about since the original documents. It should give good guidance. Pension credits, the last day to apply is 21 December, please apply.

Treasurer's report: This had been circulated. The Treasurer had received a letter from Bank of Scotland to let him know that the PCC Treasurer's account was being converted to a community account and charges would apply. The previous account cost nothing. The charges are going to be £4.25 per month. Electronic payments are free, but cash and cheque transactions will be charged for. On basis of last year's transactions that would incur a cost of around £62. This is expenditure the PCC could do without. There are two accounts; one is used for special projects. The Treasurer proposes to close the second account. He will investigate whether it will be beneficial to move to another bank, but they may also impose charges. H Young suggested looking at one of the ethical banks. The Treasurer said there are no branches. G Macdonald said banks without branches can use Post Offices for cash transactions and the like.

Chambers Institution Trust: S Coe's report had been circulated. They are at an important stage in the project which is going well. They are waiting for some decisions for trustees before moving on. Then he would hope they will be able to send plans out.

AOB

S Watson: Why are the toilets in East Station car park still closed? It's been many months. Cllr Tatler said they are pushing as hard as they can to get them open. S Watson also said that the toilets in the Kingsmeadows car parks were very dirty and have not been cleaned properly for months. They need a deep clean. Cllr Tatler will feed that back. They are owned by SBC and SBC clean them. Cllr Tatler said SBC agreed to have one set of toilets in each town and the ones they decided to keep open in Peebles is the block at East Station. Common Good asked for the block at Kingsmeadows to be open also. The Haylodge block belongs to the Common Good and is cleaned by the Common Good and they are immaculate. Haylodge is free and Kingsmeadows charges. S Watson also said the grass area outside the County Buildings was looking overgrown and untidy. Cllr Begg will attend to this. The crossing at PHS is causing issues with parking.

G Ramsay: Why are private contractors working on the wildflowers area? Cllr Tatler will find out. It should be SBC who are maintaining them, not private contractors.

A Mackenzie: Has SBC procured any land for the new cemetery? Cllr Tatler said no, but they have identified some sites. A Mackenzie said that some of the graves need topping up. They have sunk and it is a health and safety issue. Cllr Tatler is having a site meeting with the parks and will add that to the agenda. A Mackenzie is unhappy to hear about the rewilding at Haylodge Park; it is not a good place for it. The Chair confirmed there was a meeting set up and it would be discussed fully at that meeting where all comments would be taken on board.

G Macdonald: On behalf of S Mackay some residents are having issues with the cars parking on the pavement on Innerleithen road during sports events in Whitestone Park. The evenings are now dark and some of the vehicles are taking up the full pavement and/or blocking the cycle lane. What can be done? Cllr Begg said the cars should be reported online to Police Scotland. This is not a new issue and there is an issue with finding alternative parking for visitors. G Macdonald received good feedback about the remembrance garden. Someone had complained about the speed of cars on Port Brae. She had also heard complaints of lots of cigarette butts being left at 7 Bridgegate. K Guiney said this was also an issue at outside Wild Wool. Cllr Douglas said the licensing officers could take a look. G Macdonald had been approached with concerns regarding community care from DDL. DDL are to cease trading from 20 November and their clients were worried about finding care for their families.

K Guiney: She pointed out that the building that houses Costa Coffee is in a poor state of repair. It was agreed that PCC will submit a complaint by writing to the local manager first and then to head office. K Guiney also said that a number of traders had noticed that the Keystore has three temporary signs where other traders have had to comply with planning regulations. Why are they allowed to do this? The PCC can report this to the enforcement team. The new Christmas tree looks good.

Cllr Begg: The Elf Hunt has been a good initiative.

The meeting ended at 2104hrs.

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

..... Chairman

..... Dated