



Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minutes of the 328th Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 13 March 2025 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 Mackie (Vice Chairman and Treasurer), G Ramsay, H Young, J Holt Cabrera, J McMordie, J Wilson, K Guiney, M Bruce, M Marshall (Planning Convenor), P Maudsley (Chairman), S Mackay, S Coe, S Watson, Cllr Douglas, Cllr Pirone, Cllr Tatler, Cllr Thomson

In attendance: PC G Beaumont of Police Scotland, J Dubé of the Eastgate Theatre

Members of the Public: J Poots, D MacKenzie, K Crittenden, M Doherty, L Knox, M Davey, N Ghaleigh, K Peebles.

Apologies: G Macdonald, Cllr Begg, 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.

Difficulty hearing the meetings has been reported; a solution is being explored.

Reports referred to in the Minutes are available to view at <https://ccrbpeebles.co.uk/>

Presentation about a proposed development at Ballantyne Place by Sam Edwards, Ferguson Planning: The presentation discussed a proposed development at Ballantyne Place, familiar from previous applications, though no official planning application has been submitted yet. Background: The 2002 permission designated this site as a play area but play equipment was never installed. The new owner proposes to build a house on the site. Previous applications on the site for two dwellings without parking were refused. Current Proposal: The new proposal is for one three-bedroom house with a private drive and garden. Floor plans and elevations were shown. The remainder of the site will remain as open space. Residents of Ballantyne Place who were at the meeting discussed the proposal with Ms Edwards who said that the developer is open to feedback.

Residents expressed concern about the space and the potential development. The area is a community garden. The Scottish Government reporter highlighted the space as valuable and should be preserved as open space. Peebles Civic Society expressed opposition to development at the site due to concerns about density of housing on the site. A significant portion of residents (25 out of 28) opposed the proposal. Concerns included insufficient space for children to play as the site is small, and the removal of play areas. Some residents mentioned the land's previous dangerous state due to the previous owner bulldozing the area. S Ferguson asked if the community would be interested in taking ownership of the open space. The Chair mentioned that the PCC had asked for the space to be included as part of the Green Space designation in the Local Development Plan (LDP 2). However SBC had indicated that this was not necessary following the decision by the government reporter.

Next Steps: S Ferguson will follow up with residents regarding their concerns. A formal response from residents is expected when the planning application is submitted. The Chair said the PCC would support the views of the residents if the majority of them wanted to raise objections at the planning stage or indeed if

they supported the proposals. It is the PCC's duty to be democratic at all times and to represent the residents.

Police Report

PC Gary Beaumont was in attendance. Vandalism and Crime: There has been an increase in vandalism this month, but efforts are ongoing to address the issue. Police Presence: Two officers from Edinburgh will be patrolling between Peebles and Innerleithen this Friday and Saturday, focusing on anti-social behaviour (ASB). This patrol should occur regularly, with two additional response officers potentially added for patrolling, making it up to four officers. Officers will be using CCTV to monitor incidents. CCTV has been used numerous times and has proven effective in assisting the police. Vandalism and Issues: Toilets and vandalism in Victoria Park remain a significant issue, with mobile CCTV and four cameras in use, especially around the Old Town area. Dukehaugh: There had been reports of bogus callers, but these have been traced and found to be representatives from genuine businesses, and the public is urged to stay vigilant. Peebles Mini Mart Shop: There have been numerous complaints about the shop on the High Street. The appropriate bodies are investigating. Other Concerns: Anonymous complaints have been received regarding drug use in local pubs. Shoplifting: A noticeable increase in shoplifting has been reported, more than usual.

Chair's Actions: The Chair acknowledged the issues reported and agreed to write to the MSP regarding legislation and policies around illegal behaviour, including vapes.

Open Forum: Nothing.

Approval of the Minutes of 13 February 2025: The Minutes were approved (proposed by M Bruce and seconded by S Watson).

Matters arising from the Minutes:

Eastgate Theatre Update: A trustee of the Eastgate Theatre thanked the community for its support and aims to have a representative attend the PCC meetings monthly. The theatre has raised 78% of the funds needed to operate for the year but still requires more fundraising.

Street Signs & Community Issues: Cllr Thomson raised concerns about the removal of street signs and will look into seeing if it can be a condition of future projects to take down signage on completion.

Gold Post Box: The plaque on the gold post box should be installed this month.

Kingsmeadows Road Bin: The issue with the bin has been actioned.

Old Schoolhouse: The search for heirs of Andrew Stewart, who passed away without a clear will, is ongoing. A list of 16 potential beneficiaries has been identified. The next steps involve tracing relatives and reviewing the inheritance process, with further updates to follow from the SBC legal team.

Fish Fountain & Community Assets: Cllr Thomson reported that the Fish Fountain will not receive funding for maintenance from the Common Good. The Chair asked about the loan of £190k requested by the Common Good. There was discussion about the assets of the Common Good, particularly regarding land and investments. The decision was made to retain assets and borrow money at a better rate, though there were concerns about financial stability and the need for more clarity on income and expenditure. There was also discussion around CG's assets being used for affordable housing. Cllr Tatler said it would be a long and complex project. J Wilson asked about the offer from the McIvers to repair and maintain the Fish Fountain. Cllr Tatler clarified that the offer was to do work at a cost, which would then have to be maintained. It was agreed to return to this at the next meeting as there was no more time at this one. Councillor Thomson

suggested that the CC review the Common Good meeting minutes for details of the finances. [At the time of writing 03/04/25, they had not been seen].

Opening in Campbells Dyke: There will be an open consultation on this matter.

Bus Stop Build-Out: SBC has been working on plans for a bus stop build-out on the north side of the High Street.

SBC Charges for Use of CG Assets: Starting from 1 April 2025, SBC will begin charging for the use of CG assets, but these charges will only apply to commercial use.

Parking Fees: The review of parking fees is still ongoing, with a working group involved.

Planting in Haylodge Park: There is positive news regarding planting, with no costs involved, and further discussions will take place.

Sustrans Path Consultation: There will be a consultation on a Sustrans path that includes feedback on potential planting, where the community can comment.

Chairman's report: The Report had been circulated.

Tweeddale Area Partnership: Placing a moratorium on further grants this financial year and not running the balance forward into the next, weakens the TAP. However, the proposal to take a new approach whereby a reduced level of Council funding for the TAP will be used to bring in match funding from other sources to support local priorities and projects, will more seriously weaken it and consequently make it almost impossible to resurrect the SBCCN or indeed help to make a local Tweeddale working group.

Baptist Church: There is no update.

The Flood Prevention Group is in the process of receiving radios for improved communication.

Concerns about the handling of planning applications by SBC: The Chairman sent a letter to the SBC CEO and everyone has seen the response. It remains to be seen what happens in the future.

Planning Report: The report had been circulated.

Eagles and Scawd Law Windfarm Proposal: The planning report was reviewed regarding the proposed windfarm at Scawd Law, with a response deadline of April 11. PCC is generally supportive of windfarms so long as concerns from experts such as NatureScot and RSPB are heeded. The planning convenor emphasised the importance of protecting eagles, stating that he believed the South of Scotland Golden Eagles project would be objecting to the Scawd Law windfarm because its location on the highest and most remote hills in the region is incompatible with their habitat. The Chair agreed that while the windfarm may bring potential income, the protection of the eagles is important. A motion was proposed to support the position of defending the eagles, which was agreed by the majority, although G Mackie expressed disagreement, noting some in the community may prioritise the windfarm's benefits over protecting the eagles. The Chair noted that the community might not have the resources to hold a public meeting, but the issue should be discussed. Cllr Pirone raised concerns about the potential impact of the windfarm on houses downhill, suggesting a wider debate is needed. The Chair disagreed, asserting that the Peebles community council represents their own boundary. It was agreed to object on the basis of protecting eagles and to make a public announcement on FB to see if there were any strong opinions from the community. It was agreed that in future draft planning reports would be made publicly available prior to PCC meetings to give the public the opportunity to attend and express their opinions on planning issues.

Peebles Community Trust: The toilet building on School Brae faced incidents of vandalism and so the facility was closed down. PCT want to apply for a community asset transfer to repurpose the building. The consultation on this matter is live, and the community is encouraged to share their views. It was agreed the PCC would support this proposal.

East Station Office: The proposal for a 1-metre strip for services and maintenance around the East Station Office was discussed. It was agreed the PCC would support this proposal.

Town Plan: The group discussed the need for a professional town planner to take forward the town plan, a complex project that includes input from the community. It was emphasised that the plan requires legal backing and cannot be done by volunteers alone. The Chair stated that if SBC (Scottish Borders Council) believes the plan is important, it should support it. The cost of a town manager is estimated to be £60-£80k annually, and all the PC Councillors agreed that the role should be at least a 5-year appointment.

Banking Hub: The loss of banking services was noted as a concern, and the idea of establishing a banking hub in the area was discussed. Some had visited similar hubs in other locations.

Cllrs Reports

Cllr Douglas: A Health and Social Care Partnership event was held on 25 March at the Burgh Hall, focusing on dementia and family carers. The event was open to all attendees. A surgery was held on 14 March at Tesco. PHS Visit: All local councillors visited the new Peebles High School, and they were impressed by the activities and progress at the site. The next visit is scheduled for September or during the October holidays. The overall outlook is positive. The Tweeddale Area Partnership meeting is to take place on 26 March at the Burgh Hall.

Cllr Pirone: Live Borders Review: The group is working through a review of Live Borders, with a focus on the impact this may have on buildings and community centres. The review is due to be completed by the end of March. A decision on the future of Live Borders will be made afterwards. This is a significant issue affecting all of the Borders.

Cllr Tatler: CCTV Units. Four CCTV units have been purchased by SBC, and the way they are being directed is under review. Two units will be arriving in Peebles shortly. One will be placed at Kingsmeadows to keep an eye on the toilet issues; and one at Victoria Playpark. A small project on the corner of Caledonian Road and Tweed Bridge is underway which involves clearing the ground and fencing off an area around a gun emplacement. A plaque is to be placed at the site, which features a spigot mortar which supported an anti-tank gun in World War 2. Town Bus Service: The bus service in the town will be improved. Residents are encouraged to make use of it. Borders Buses did not receive the contract for this service; SBC will now take over the contract.

Cllr Thomson: Rose Park Wall: A solution for the Rose Park wall is being considered, but no specific details were provided. Peebles High School Youth Summit had been scheduled for Monday, where among other things actions regarding buses were discussed. Eastgate Theatre: Ongoing conversations with Eastgate Theatre have been taking place. A letter has been sent to inquire about what other services are funded and the expectations if funding is withdrawn. Awaiting responses regarding funding support. Parking Fund: Money has been raised through the parking fund, but there is a moratorium on spending. There are projects in the pipeline, and the group is waiting to see if funds can be accessed to get these projects done.

Treasurer's Report: The Report had been circulated. There was a balance of £11,500 in the bank account as at 8 February; however, not all this amount belongs to PCC. Payments: £5,400 is due for payment to Harper Macleod for the MOU advice (Memorandum of Understanding). £4,100 is allocated for the purchase of resilience radios for the Flood Group.

Chambers Institution Trust: The Report had been circulated. There is nothing new to report currently. Some things are happening, with plans being revised slightly. SBC is working on a response to meet tenants' needs, and they are taking the necessary time to get things right. Updates will be heard soon. A fundraising committee has been set up and is focusing on future planning. The Chair asked if everyone is comfortable with the direction things are going, and the response was affirmative.

A Mackenzie was asked about the Tourist Noticeboard, and he confirmed it will be mounted for Spring. Everyone congratulated A Mackenzie on becoming Chief Callant.

Community Council Elections: A reminder the following are up for election in April: P Maudsley, F Richardson, J Holt Cabrera, G Macdonald, J Wilson and H Young.

Bin the Litter: A suggestion was made not to continue with the Bin the Litter project this year. When the project was initially started, it was less burdensome, but as Peebles has grown, it has become more challenging. The Peebles In Bloom (PIB) project and other factors such as windfarms have increased the workload, making it harder to manage. The proposal to not continue with the project was put forward by A Snoddy and seconded by J Wilson. It was unanimously agreed not to do it this year. J Wilson mentioned that other community groups take on similar initiatives.

Peebles in Bloom: G Macdonald has agreed to lead this project again with support. Thanks go to G Macdonald.

Gypsy Glen Hill Race: This annual event is scheduled 14 May. Cllr Tatler will help. It brings in around £250 to PCC funds. J Holt Cabrera will endeavour to be the marshal at the top of the hill but may have exams.

Peebles High School Youth Summit: F Richardson attended on behalf of PCC. It was well organised and well attended. The young people have lots of views and the conversations were constructive. They were encouraged to speak to groups and service providers throughout the community to have their views heard. Their views are just as important as others' views. J McMordie had circulated the slide presentation.

Cllr Thomson: J Holt Cabrera and Cllr Thomson had discussed having a webpage that would list local clubs and groups information, so it was all in one place. Everyone agreed this to be a good idea. PCC would be happy to host it on their website.

G Ramsay: Are the trees on Tweed Green going to be lopped or trimmed ahead of Beltane? Cllr Tatler confirmed they would be.

A Mackenzie: There appears to be a lot of salt being distributed on the roads. Is there guidance available? Local garages have reported detrimental issues with vehicles due to the salt; and who is paying for all this salt? Cllr Tatler said he would follow this up.

J McMordie: 3 out of 5 electric vehicle chargers in Peebles are out of action. It is a major inconvenience for those who rely on them. There is one at the BP Garage, but it is very expensive.

J Wilson congratulated S Watson on becoming the new Vice Chair of the Callants

H Young raised concern from parents surrounding the library. Cllr Tatler confirmed he was not aware of any plans for cuts. In fact the plans for the refurbishment of the Chambers Institution Trust indicate that there will be increased library availability.

P Maudsley had spoken to the builders on Caledonian Road as the signage was confusing.

The meeting ended at 2117hrs.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 10 April 2025 in the Burgh Hall.

..... Chairman

..... Dated