



Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minutes of the 332nd Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 12 June 2025 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 Wilson, K Guiney, M Bruce, M Marshall (Planning Convenor), P Maudsley (Chairman), S Coe, Cllr Pirone, Cllr Tatler, Cllr Thomson

In attendance: K Peebles of The Peeblean

Members of the Public: None

Apologies: S Watson, A Mackenzie, D Ashmole, J Holt Cabrera, J McMordie, S Mackay, M Bruce, Cllr Douglas, Cllr Begg, Cllr Small, PC G Beaumont

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.

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

Open Forum: Nothing from the public.

Live Borders: Concerns Raised by Chair

The Chair referred to his previously published article on the Live Borders situation, noting many of its concerns still stand. He highlighted new issues arising from a consultants' report seen by many as flawed, based on incomplete data. The subsequent public consultation was described as biased and poorly designed, with feedback showing the questionnaire is skewed, discouraging completion.

The consultation frames the issue as either raising council tax or cutting services, without considering alternative solutions. It assumes previous operations were unsustainable, backed by findings of poor leadership, governance, and financial oversight. The Chair questioned how decisions can be made while such core issues remain unresolved.

He criticised the pressure on communities to consider asset transfers without sufficient data. The identical survey questions for both individuals and organisations were seen as unhelpful. Without full disclosure of income, costs, and maintenance needs, he argued, communities cannot make informed decisions. Using the Drill Hall as an example, he highlighted missing usage data and other errors in the consultants' work, concluding the consultation cannot be meaningful until these gaps are addressed. He called on the new CEO to investigate thoroughly.

M. Marshall reviewed public data and found serious concerns. His findings, on the PCC website, show SBC's payments to Live Borders have halved in real terms since 2010–11—nearly 49%—compared to a national average cut of 24%. Although overall government funding is up slightly, councils face more responsibilities

without matching funds. Consultants warned Live Borders risks exhausting its reserves within a year unless urgent changes are made.

Despite this, SBC's officer report in November 2023 downplayed the crisis and instead proposed a 12-month transformation plan. Several of the 26 recommendations were diluted before being accepted, and councillors followed officers' advice unchanged. A £1.5 million bailout followed, though the council warned it couldn't continue supporting Live Borders indefinitely.

S. Coe called the consultation process flawed, noting inaccuracies and omissions in the report and insufficient time to evaluate it properly. G. Mackie agreed, criticising the questionnaire's narrow tick-box format and lack of space to address real issues like income generation.

The Chair questioned whether outcomes had already been decided before consultation began. G. Macdonald said the new CEO faces a tough challenge. Cllr Tatler defended the process, stating that the survey is just one part of a wider engagement programme and praising M. Marshall's work. He acknowledged ongoing financial pressures but pointed to systemic constraints, like the council tax freeze and ringfenced funding.

The Chair accepted the funding challenges but questioned the process. Cllr Tatler said if no action is taken, further cuts will follow. He noted changes had been made to strengthen SBC's oversight of Live Borders. Cllr Thomson added that Live Borders was originally intended to attract external funding and achieve efficiencies, but has failed to do so.

J. Wilson reported that local groups feel excluded from the process. She cited poor service delivery, such as early library closures, and criticised Live Borders for not pursuing solutions. The Chair noted PCC had previously raised concerns about opening hours and highlighted the Drill Hall being wrongly described as having "no value."

Cllr Tatler referred to proposals in M. Marshall's report suggesting SBC should take over building repairs. Cllr Thomson gave an example of unreported faults and stressed other councils had similar concerns. She criticised the lack of clarity around next steps and stressed SBC's poor record on public engagement, particularly in rural areas.

Cllr Pirone acknowledged the cost of maintaining current services is unsustainable and questioned whether the current grouping of leisure, culture, and libraries is right. She urged people to email councillors and contribute to the consultation.

She raised concern that leisure services seem most at risk and emphasised the need for meaningful engagement. The Chair questioned what had changed since the 2023 report and asked whether the consultation should be paused until data issues are resolved. Cllr Pirone said decisions are needed now.

H. Young supported filling in the survey but said meetings lack proper records. She suggested a rethink of the consultation approach. Cllr Pirone assured attendees that group discussions would be documented. The Chair said residents felt the survey leads responses. A. Snoddy agreed, citing a loss of public confidence.

M. Marshall highlighted the unfairness of SBC's 50% spending cut, far more severe than other councils. He questioned whether data was being accurately reported, and said the community must be brought on board—something clearly not happening. He called for the consultation to be paused or fully justified with transparent data. Cuts, he argued, should be fairly spread across all services, not fall hardest on those most in need. Many Peebles Community Councillors agreed.

Approval of the Minutes of 8 May 2025: The minutes of 8 May 2025 were proposed for approval by S Coe, seconded by J Wilson. The motion was carried unanimously.

Matters Arising from the Minutes:

Bus stop build out in High Street: Cllr Tatler said that this had been dropped. If there is further demand it can be looked at again.

Planting of wildflowers in Haylodge Park: Cllr Thomson said that this would be discussed at a meeting September. She is awaiting an update regarding putting an opening in the dyke. S Coe asked if anyone has considered moving the traffic lights, rather than putting a hole in the wall? Cllr Tatler suggested the Secretary should write to P Gilhooley.

Food Punks: There was no further action required.

Parking Consultation: Cllr Tatler said it was ongoing. The Chair asked about the parking funds owed to the Common Good. Cllr Thomson confirmed a solution had been reached. There would be no retrospective payment. Going forward someone would be paid to empty the ticket box and check that vehicles were ticketed.

Moving the Bus Stop from outside the Post Office: The Secretary had written to the appropriate parties but there was no indication that the bus stop will be moved at this stage.

Police Report: The report had been circulated. The level of crime in Peebles is not high, however vandalism is still a concern. The Kingsmeadows toilets had been vandalised, and everyone was concerned that they would not be fixed before Beltane. It is a concern that Peebles may end up with no public lavatories. It was suggested looking at vandal-proof toilets to see what the costs are. Cllr Thomson is going to ask SBC. Cllr Tatler is urging the public to report the perpetrators if known to Police Scotland. The Pavilion on Tweedgreen is open and has been vandalised three times since it was opened. Closing the gates overnight may be the next step.

Chairman's Report. The report had been circulated.

The Baptist Church site: Cllr Tatler confirmed that things are moving and that everyone involved is working together get it resolved.

The Chair is concerned about the lack of follow-up for operations that are initiated by SBC. Cllr Tatler suggested he write to Caroline Cochrane at SBC with his concerns.

Placemaking – Town Action Plan: Fiona Dalglish is taking over the Chair from Peter Maudsley, Interim Chair.

Planning report: The report had been circulated.

Windfarms: A response was submitted to the Bowbeat windfarm proposal, following on from the previous collection of community views. The Community Council will wait to see what the outcome is. There was agreement to approach the Leithenwater windfarm collectively, in partnership with Eddleston and Innerleithen Community Councils.

G. Macdonald enquired about progress at the March Street Mills development. M. Marshall advised that he had not received any recent updates. G. Macdonald noted that there appeared to be no activity at the site.

At Horsbrugh Ford, the development plot is reportedly back on the market as the previous developer has run out of funding. It was agreed that M. Marshall will write to Eildon Housing Association to explore whether they might be interested in acquiring the site.

Cllrs Reports

Cllr Pirone: Several education matters were noted. Nurseries and Rural Schools: Ongoing discussions are taking place regarding provision and sustainability. Peebles High School, the HMI inspection report was positive, with much of the credit going to Mr. Ryalls and his team, who have worked hard, including over the summer period, to improve the school and integrate it more closely with the wider community. Parking Issues with on-site parking remain unresolved. The current plan involves continued work on-site through the summer, with no break, and a target completion date by the end of October. Senior Phase Learning: The Advanced Higher pilot is now live online. This programme, running across the Borders, is intended to offer a wider range of subject choices and more flexible learning opportunities, with the aim of engaging a broader range of pupils across the Borders. Pencil bollards and elephant mats have been installed to improve pedestrian and cycling safety, particularly for children walking and cycling to Priorsford school.

Cllr Thomson: Cllrs Begg and Small had done a walk around Peebles accompanied by the PCC Chair and have put a list in and SBC are going to action all of it. It includes cleaning some of the road signs; please submit any details of dirty or faded signs. The 3 Fishes Fountain repair and maintenance is going to be taken on by Ruaraig McIver, and the out-of-pocket expenses will be refunded by SBC. It is hoped it will remain on the site outside the Eastgate Theatre.

Cllr Tatler : Cllr Tatler reported that the new bus service has seen good uptake. While there have been some teething issues, these will be monitored and reported over a 12-week period. Early signs are encouraging. A list of works includes Kingsmeadows Road, where the sides of the road are in poor condition—patching works are planned and welcomed. At the end of Caledonian Road an area has been cleared and finished. The Civic Society is looking at information signage for the spigot mortar. The Common Good also discussed the number of signs and maps around the town. It was proposed that the matter be referred back to the Peebles Community Council to conduct a public survey about signage needs and priorities. The aim would be to return with clear community views and develop a coherent signage strategy. The Chair suggested PCC work with The Civic Society on this.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's Report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The Treasurer noted that the Bank of Scotland has begun applying charges to the account. He proposed a motion to transfer the account to RBS to avoid fees. The proposal was agreed unanimously by those present.

Old Schoolhouse on Tweedgreen: S Coe is in talks with the Council. There has been significant progress. Surveys will be going ahead.

Chambers Institution Trust: The report on the Chambers Institution Trust had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that a company has been set up to secure essential funding, and discussions are ongoing regarding the structure and inclusion of beneficiaries.

Cllr Tatler reported that they are going to refer back to the architects about a Changing Places toilet as it is not included within the current configuration.

Peebles in Bloom: G Macdonald reported that all is going to plan. Raffle donations are invited, and she suggested jigsaws, pens and notepaper with a floral theme. She is still waiting for a technical quote. G Ramsay and S Watson are going to do the refreshments. The Chair mentioned that Harbro stock Pentlands plants now so they may be able to donate jointly with Pentland Plants. G Macdonald agreed to speak to C Spray at Pentland and to Harbro. The blocks for nominating the gardens were distributed to the Councillors and G Macdonald reminded everyone that the presentation evening is on 21 August at 7pm. All Peebles Community Councillors are expected to attend.

AOB

A Snoddy asked where the bus timetables are available from? Bus shelters and the Post office.

Cllr Tatler asked if the sandbag store had been tidied up. The Chair confirmed it had not and agreed to email Cllr Tatler about it. Strategy plans are still going on in respect of the new cemetery.

A Snoddy followed up with Cllr Tatler about Christmas Lights Associations liaison. He reported that C Cochrane was going to come back to him but has not done so yet.

There had been confused messaging around the A703 Milkieston roadworks which was frustrating.

G Macdonald said that the dog waste bin on Glensax Road needs to be emptied. Neidpath Castle traffic lights site is looking clean and tidy. This may have been the Callants. G Macdonald said that residents had told her they are very happy having access to the Pavilion on Tweedgreen. Could it be painted inside by young people? Cllr Thomson said that some residents preferred the traditional look, because it was an historic building. G Macdonald said Blood Donors will be at the Drill Hall on 2 July.

K Guiney said the recent Community Festival had been a huge success. The streets needed a clean and some of the shop owners had power hosed the braes and vennels. She asked if this was something that SBC could look at because it made an enormous difference? Cllr Pirone said she would find out.

G Ramsay said it would be good to get the Kingsmeadows vandalised toilets operational for Beltane. Cllr Tatler said he was not sure it could be done, but they will do their very best.

The meeting ended at 2100hrs.

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

..... Chairman

..... Dated