



Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minutes of the 333rd Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 10 July 2025 at 7pm in the Burgh Hall, Peebles. The meeting was recorded for the purposes of Minuting and Reporting.

Present: A Snoddy (Secretary), D Ashmole, F Richardson, G MacDonald, G Mackie (Vice Chairman and Treasurer), G Ramsay, J Holt Cabrera, P Maudsley (Chairman), S Coe, S Watson, Cllr Begg, Cllr Small.

In attendance: K Peebles of The Peeblean.

Members of the Public: None

Apologies: M Bruce, M Marshall, J Wilson, J McMordie, S Mackay, K Guiney, H Young, A Mackenzie, Cllr Tatler, Cllr Pirone, Cllr Douglas, Cllr Thomson, PC Gary 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.

Approval of the Minutes of 12 June 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2025 were approved, subject to the following amendment: The out-of-pocket expenses for the 3 Fishes will be met via SBC, not the Common Good Fund. With this amendment, the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record proposed by S Coe and seconded by G Ramsay.

Matters Arising from the Minutes:

Maps and signs: carried forward to next month.

Regular Hosing of the Vennels

Cllr Pirone reported that she had spoken to Campbell Johnson of SBC, who confirmed that the vennels are hosed twice a month.

Public Toilets – Vandalism and CCTV

PC Gary Beaumont has spoken with the Chair regarding vandalism in the Kingsmeadows car park toilets. While CCTV is in place, he is not satisfied with the current signage. Although he asked SBC to improve the signage, this was declined, so he will install his own signs.

He also raised ongoing issues with vandalism of toilet roll holders, which cost approximately £40 each to replace. SBC is unable to fund replacements, so PC Beaumont is seeking alternative quotes, including welded vandal-proof options.

SBC has removed CCTV from Victoria Park due to tree branches obstructing the cameras' views. Although branch-cutting was suggested, SBC has declined. PC Beaumont is continuing to manage the situation as best he can.

In Edinburgh, police use a central CCTV database to review footage near incidents. Peebles does not have a fixed CCTV system or database, only a mobile unit. PC Beaumont has been approaching local businesses with CCTV to ask them to sign up to a database, which could provide better coverage and assist with future incidents.

He is also working on initiatives with the high school, engaging young people identified as potentially at risk. Some of these young people may volunteer to help tidy the shelters in Hay Lodge Park. Local businesses have offered support by donating items such as paint.

Sandbags store on Caledonian Road: This has been reported again to Cllr Tatler.

Spigot Mortar Site

A new fence has been installed at the spigot mortar site. A gate is to be added, and steps will also be needed to address a trip hazard. The Chair will inform Cllr Tatler. Access is only required for maintenance purposes.

Tweeddale Trail and Access Route Discussion

S Coe raised concerns about a lack of joined up thinking regarding the opening in the wall, which was originally planned to accommodate the Tweed Trail route through the park. However, Philippa Gilhooley of SBC had advised that there is no issue with the trail exiting via the western gate and continuing to the traffic lights, as it is a short distance along a wide path. If the trail must cross the road directly, the lights would need to be moved rather than creating a new opening in the wall. P Gilhooley is not involved in the Tweed Trail itself but is responsible for Safer Routes to School, which is why the lights were positioned where they are.

S Coe agreed to respond to the relevant email and copy in both Marina Piper of Destination Tweed and Philippa Gilhooley.

Cllr Begg explained that the decisions were taken in response to public feedback, particularly from work undertaken by C Carleton. Cllr Begg added that the Tweed Trail is a wider route from Moffat to the coast, and that the proposed link to Kingsland Primary School, including the new opening, is to be removed from the current project. While it could be considered as a separate project in the future, it is no longer part of the current Tweed Trail plans. S Coe suggested that the proposal should be modified rather than removed entirely.

S. Coe asked for an update on the proposal for four-metre-wide paths through Hay Lodge Park, which had raised concerns during the consultation. He noted that the route as proposed was not practical, and that creating a wide route with separate pedestrian and cycle paths was not appropriate for the park. Instead, he felt the path should remain narrow and better suited to the setting.

Cllr Begg confirmed that the consultation feedback had been taken on board and that the proposed path widths would be reduced. S Coe also commented that the route through the park should be reconsidered entirely.

Cllr Begg added that any new path proposal would now be treated as a separate project. The Chair suggested that S Coe emails Cllr Begg to forward to Marina Piper.

Tourist board sign: No update.

Christmas Lights Liaison: Still waiting.

Veitch's Fountain: Cllr Thomson is looking into this.

Live Borders survey.

A public drop-in session will be held at the Burgh Hall on 12 August from 2pm to 7pm. All are welcome to attend; however, places must be booked for children.

PCC noted that its position remains that the original consultant's report is seriously flawed in several key areas. One of the most significant concerns is the recommendation to close the Drill Hall, despite the report stating it could not find any data to support this.

It was previously discussed that the associated questionnaire received largely negative feedback, with many people finding it difficult to complete. PCC expressed concern that future policy and planning may be based on a flawed consultant's report and the questionnaire that lacks credibility.

Cllr Small agreed, stating that the concerns extend beyond just the Drill Hall and that further clarity is needed, particularly regarding the figures used. Cllr Drummond added that a useful way to approach decision-making is to imagine it involves one's own money and property: what would you want to know before deciding? In his view, this process does not meet that standard. He emphasised the importance of looking at liabilities and revenue in simple terms, and ensuring the right information is available to make informed decisions.

It was also noted that other councils have closed venues without proper consultation, and that the current level of detail is not sufficient to support confident decision-making.

M. Marshall had raised an important point regarding the reduction in the management fee paid by SBC to Live Borders. When Live Borders was originally established, the fee was approximately £6 million. The most recent management fee was £4 million; had inflation been applied, it would be closer to £8 million. This represents a significantly greater reduction in funding than that experienced by similar organisations in other council areas.

The Chair noted that he had compiled a report highlighting issues with the original consultant's report, including comparative data from other regions. However, he is still awaiting data on the Gytes and unfortunately has no information on the Gytes. His intention is to compile a comprehensive, alternative report that would effectively serve the role of a consultancy report.

The Chair also expressed concern that the situation is not limited to Peebles but affects the entire Borders area. While PCC is in a relatively strong position to advocate for its community, many smaller community councils do not have the same capacity to defend their interests, which he described as iniquitous.

A new CEO has been appointed to lead Live Borders, reportedly at significant expense. The Chair expressed concern that the process appears to be a *fait accompli*, and that instead, the new leadership should have been given a six-month period to gather accurate data and develop a viable business plan.

S. Coe commented that the overall approach has been overly negative, with a focus on closures. He called for a more positive strategy that explores potential for improvement, business expansion, and the introduction of new activities. This, he said, should be the focus for the new CEO.

G. MacDonald added that there is currently a lack of accountability and structure within Live Borders.

It was agreed that the Chair would prepare a response to address these concerns.

Planning report: The report had been circulated. M. Marshall had highlighted a key concern regarding section 1.1.9 of the Draft Local Development Plan, which is scheduled for approval by SBC in March 2028, one year

before the public consultation ends in March 2029. He expressed concern that this gives the impression the plan will be finalised before public input is considered, undermining the validity of the consultation process.

S Coe clarified that the plan would remain in draft form until it is formally approved and should therefore remain open to change until the final date. However, if approval effectively takes place a year in advance, this would be unacceptable.

The Chair noted that M Marshall wished it to be minuted that, subject to the group's approval of his written report which includes a recommendation to submit a formal complaint to SBC, he would proceed accordingly. The motion was put forward and unanimously agreed.

It was noted that discussions regarding community benefit and related matters will be deferred to the next meeting.

Library and Museum Refurbishment – Future Planning and Community Involvement

A question was raised regarding what will happen to the books when the library building is refurbished. It was confirmed that no final decision has been made, but the matter is under discussion. S Coe stated that the project is in hand, with decanting to be arranged over the next seven months and a plan to be developed.

The Chair asked S Coe to confirm that a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) is to be established. Its main purpose would be to serve as a vehicle for accessing public funding, open to community bodies. The SCIO would operate as a management body to support the project. Although approved by the CIT, it has not yet been formally set up.

Cllr Begg noted that the level of detail provided will help demonstrate whether such a body can be funded. It may need to operate under a name such as "Friends of..." to function similarly to existing trusts.

S Coe explained that the structure of the SCIO is still being considered. It could include a board or a full membership. A board-only structure may risk disengagement, so a model involving full community participation is preferred. The aim is to ensure people across Tweeddale feel included. Trustees will be drawn from the local community, but the SCIO will also need an executive board to support the trustees in managing the process and overseeing future activities.

The Chair shared that he has been asked to become a trustee and is willing to do so to help get the SCIO off the ground. However, he acknowledged that many questions remain, and a significant amount of work is still needed. Once the SCIO is formally established, a meeting involving all interested parties, including potential volunteers, will be necessary, as those who volunteer will carry much of the responsibility.

The Chair also noted that the current trustees of the buildings are SBC councillors, who hold overall responsibility. He believes there must be a dedicated elected councillor trustee to represent the wider interests of SBC. Key stakeholders such as the library and museum should also have representation, along with potentially other groups such as the Guildry.

S Coe added that the structure remains flexible and can be changed as needed once established. The Heritage Lottery Fund is already expressing interest and is awaiting confirmation of an eligible organisation. The SCIO is not intended to replace the existing trust but to complement it, particularly by allowing representation from organisations such as Live Borders, who currently cannot sit on the trust.

S Coe confirmed that decisions regarding tenant relocations are still ongoing and are expected to be finalised by the end of the year. The full refurbishment is anticipated to be completed by spring 2027.

S. Watson noted that certain items from the museum, such as those belonging to the Beltane, will require specific access arrangements. S Coe confirmed that such matters will be taken into account.

The Chair encouraged anyone with questions to contact S Coe directly.

Peebles in Bloom – Update and Volunteer Requests

G Macdonald confirmed that everyone has received their allocated blocks for nominating gardens. Donations are still needed for the hampers: please deliver any contributions to the Secretary. The Secretary will circulate a list of remaining hamper items. A volunteer is needed to drive the judges on 31 July. Anyone available is asked to come forward. For 21 August, a volunteer is also needed to assist G. Ramsay in the kitchen. It was agreed that A. Mackenzie and J. Holt Cabrera will help.

The Chair noted that *Peebles in Bloom* is the most important event of the year for PCC. He expressed admiration for the work carried out by G. MacDonald, A. Snoddy, and the rest of the team, recognising the enormous effort involved. Although the event often runs short of funds, it is well supported and enjoyed by residents. Please ensure that all nominations for Secret Gardens are submitted to the Secretary by the end of July.

AOB

Horsburgh Ford Development A meeting is to be held with Scottish Borders Council regarding the stalled development at Horsburgh Ford. It is unclear whether the meeting will produce any concrete outcomes.

Non-Financial Support Project and Community Council Engagement

At the last meeting, the Chair had expressed concern that the non-financial support project within SBC appeared to have stalled. Since then, SBC has reached out again, showing some renewed interest.

However, a significant issue remains the lack of engagement from other community councils, particularly in relation to the Live Borders issue. The Chair contacted all 69 community councils to explain the position PCC is taking, but only a few, such as West Linton and Selkirk have responded. The majority have shown little or no interest in collaborating.

It was noted that if the community council network were still active and had proper representation from across the Borders, the collective voice and influence of 69 community councils could be powerful. The current lack of coordination, however, limits the potential for unified action.

D. Ashmole reported that he had recently attended an event in London focused on climate resilience, energising communities to respond to climate change locally. He offered to circulate a link to the event for anyone interested. The Chair agreed to forward the link to the local resilience teams.

Cllr Small reported that concerns were raised at a recent Access Panel meeting regarding vehicles parking on dropped kerbs. PC Beaumont will attend a future meeting to provide advice and, where possible, speak directly with drivers. PC Beaumont was commended for his ongoing work in the community. Improvements to tourist information signage within the town was also discussed.

G. Mackie reported that the Golf Club had recently hosted the Scottish Under-16 Championships, which was open to participants from around the world. The event attracted 140+ entries from 16 different countries. The influx of families and visitors had a positive economic impact on the town, bringing in valuable income for local businesses.

F Richardson wanted it noted how magnificent the hanging baskets in the town are looking, and to thank those who look after them. She also mentioned that Tweedvale Walking Football is always open to new members and encouraged anyone interested to get in touch with them. Details available at www.walkingfootballscotland.org.

G Macdonald said it was good to see the water point on Tweed Green being used and how nice the Pavilion is looking as it has been painted.

The meeting ended at 2004 hrs.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 14 August 2025 in the Burgh Hall.

..... Chairman

..... Dated