



Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minutes of the 334th Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 14 August 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 McMordie, K Guiney, M Bruce, M Marshall (Planning Convenor), P Maudsley (Chairman), S Coe, Cllr Douglas, Cllr Pirone, Cllr Small, Cllr Tatler.

In attendance: K Peebles of The Peeblean; P Spence from Peebles Resilient Community, PC G Beaumont of Police Scotland.

Members of the Public: None

Apologies: A Mackenzie, J Wilson, J Holt Cabrera, S Mackay, S Watson, Cllr Begg, Cllr Thomson

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 10 July 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record proposed by S Coe and seconded by D Ashmole.

Police Report: The report had been circulated, and PC Beaumont was present to give an update from the report and take any questions.

Not many complaints overall. Vandalism: the main issue reported was vandalism at Kingsmeadows public toilets. Toilets described as dark and poorly lit with limited visibility. Current camera system not effective: network down, only provides still images rather than video. Quote obtained from a welding company for an indestructible toilet roll holder to be welded to the wall, a simple design, but no funding currently available. Council does not wish to close the toilets; further survey planned before decisions made. G Ramsay suggested putting CCTV on roof. M Bruce raised the issue of the delay between images. P Spence from Peebles Resilient Committee asked if there were any local government Scottish grants available. There are not. A Snoddy said that £10m funding is available for Changing Places toilets for disabled users, but queried provision for everyone else. Cllr Thomson had discussed the issue of vandal proof toilets with Cllr Tatler; and they are looking into repositioning the solar cameras. PC Beaumont noted that low-cost CCTV options do exist and can work effectively. The Chair commented that the police report indicated that things are not too bad overall. PC Beaumont said shoplifting is still an issue, but police intervention is resource dependent. Tweeddale Youth Action (TYA) painted a shelter at Haylodge, 15 young people involved over three days; looks much improved. Funding options for further projects being explored. Chair suggested some of the windfarm funds (£150k per

year from Bowbeat) may be available in future. Another police officer is expected to start in September to support current staffing. Tweed Green: the gates to the pavilion may be reinstalled because benches inside were broken and rubbish and litter levels remain high and need attention. The Chair noted that the kids of their nature jump on things and that the design of the benches gave leverage that led to failure. More design problem than vandalism. However, the littering is sad to see.

Matters Arising from the Minutes:

Cllr Begg confirmed the path link project in Haylodge Park has been amended; there will be no hole in the wall and the overall width of the path will be reduced. S Coe said there is no update at present. A suggestion is to use the available funds to adapt the opening to make it safer and more accessible for all users, rather than closing it off completely. Barriers on the road may also be added to improve safety. Funding for these changes could potentially come from the Sustrans fund and the Active Travel Group, as the project aligns with their aims.

Dirty road signs are still outstanding, with trees obstructing visibility, and the sandbag store by the fire station is still unresolved despite follow-up emails from Cllr Tatler and P Spence from the Peebles Resilient Community.

The Spigot Mortar project is progressing, with liaison taking place with the museum and a site meeting already held. The Civic Society has agreed to develop the interpretative text. Public safety remains a key concern, and suggestions have been made to allow controlled access, including the possibility of opening part of the fence for cleaning and safe viewing. Cllr Tatler will review the options.

Chairman's Report: This had been circulated.

There has been no update from SBC on the working group for the SBCCN, which appears to have stalled completely, the last communication being a meeting note issued in November 2023. In contrast, the working party on non-financial support has had some movement, with SBC indicating that a meeting may finally take place at the end of August 2025 15 months after the project was initiated in May 2024, when communities were first asked to gather information for discussion, a process expected to take no more than two months. A report published on 5 September 2024 on the SBC website claims that a review of non-financial support, including the SBCCN, is underway, but in reality, the two processes have so far been entirely separate, with the SBCCN review effectively frozen and no information collected from community councils despite the report's statement to the contrary. The lack of progress has led to disengagement from communities, which then risks SBC incorrectly suggesting that there is little or no interest in the work.

Planning Report: The report had been circulated.

Regarding Kingsmeadows, following the Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland solicitor's letter on Habitat Regulations (HRA), SBC consulted both NatureScot and an ecologist, and responses confirmed that construction of the flats is likely to have a significant effect on the Tweed, meaning an HRA is required, and Condition 7 must be met. For the Ballantyne Place Play Area, two legal issues have been identified: SBC may lack the power to grant or even consider the application. A summary of steps taken to understand the legal position (no budget for legal advice) is available at <https://ccrbpeebles.co.uk/Reports/Planning/Reports/BallantynePlaceLegal20250806.pdf>. It is recommended that PCC first clarify these legal issues with SBC Legal and planners, then object on policy grounds in line with the previous application 20/00691/FUL and the reporter's dismissal of the appeal. Finally, the Fiona Henderson School of Dance seeks a change of use to operate from Cavalry Park, with 47 supportive comments and no

objections on the portal; PCC is recommended to submit a letter of support endorsing the reasoning in FHSD's planning statement in full.

Regarding windfarm funds, Bowbeat will be contributing, with the money shared among three community councils being Eddleston, Innerleithen, and PCC. Discussions are ongoing about how the fund should be split and how it should be spent, with general agreement on the principles but no agreement on how funds will be split. IDDC suggests population be taken into account to make per capita allocations even. A board will be established with representatives from all three councils to award funding to applicants. The Chair noted that different models are possible, and further debate is needed. G. Mackie explained how Foundation Scotland could administer the fund, which D. Ashmole confirmed is a good platform that works well. The group is still awaiting clarification from Leithenwater, though G. Mackie advised that Leithenwater has not been approved and no contributions are expected from them for several years.

Peebles Community Trust: The report had been circulated.

M Bruce's report highlighted that the organisation is at risk of folding, with seven directors on record but only four elected and residing in Peebles, leaving the board not quorate and in desperate need of volunteers. A Snoddy asked how this is being communicated to the people of Peebles; M Bruce confirmed outreach via Facebook and community grassroots networks under the PCT umbrella, but despite these efforts no one has come forward. M Bruce noted the urgency, stressing that at least one director is needed, ideally three more, committing just a couple of hours once a month, with March Street Mills cited as a good example of community activity. G Macdonald suggested that the current presentation is a deterrent, requiring significant knowledge, and recommended it be made more accessible to laypeople; M Bruce agreed to reflect on this. S Coe and others emphasised the need to reach beyond the same group of people and get the message out, with K Guiney suggesting broadcasting a video and Cllr Douglas suggesting using Facebook for sharing. The Chair asked whether SBC could help; Cllr Pirone noted they would not publish directly but would raise the issue with Jenni Craig at SBC, while M Bruce will speak to K Peebles of The Peeblean. D Ashmole suggested using Facebook ads at minimal cost.

SBC Councillors' Reports

Cllr Douglas: Cllr Douglas reported on Live Borders, noting the ongoing consultation. A meeting at the Burgh Hall was well attended with over 100 people engaged. In September, focus group meetings are planned with Live Borders, SBC, community councils, trusts, and other organisations, targeting management committees rather than user groups. At the end of August or early September, the Live Borders Finance Committee will review plans for the year ahead, with decisions expected in October and November once reports are received. Cllr Douglas emphasised that the new executive and management team are businesslike and focused on reality, and that the consultation process can deliver what communities want if clear about needs and sustainable options. M Marshall confirmed he will attend the board in the Chair's absence. Public consultation, including the October visit of councillors to Galashiels, is ongoing. While the report for Live Borders was generally seen as poor and some felt the questionnaire biased, Cllr Douglas noted that feedback from people through the survey and focus groups forms the basis for discussion; the report will serve as a starting point rather than be fully accepted. The 12 August exercise was well received. Cllr Pirone highlighted the importance of focus groups, especially for younger people, noting last year's survey was framed in a way that limited youth engagement. J McMordie will organise school-based focus groups, and Cllr Pirone will raise youth engagement again. Cllr Small confirmed children were involved, and the Secretary will coordinate with Cllr Pirone about the 12–18-year-olds. J McMordie noted no one had requested Burgh Hall usage dates, and the Chair has compiled many documents to prepare a report collating all the data.

Cllr Pirone:

Cllr Pirone reported that the new Peebles High School is looking fantastic and highlighted the spectacular achievements of the young people in town, including excellent exam results that make the town proud. Vocational results will be out in September. Cllr Pirone also mentioned the Street Pastors in Innerleithen, noting that young people know them and appreciate being treated as adults, though those aged 15–17 often feel isolated and spend time in playparks, highlighting a sense of alienation and the need for further support. J McMordie noted that the Oor Space Youthy facility was voted to close in May, but members aged 17–18 have been taken on and are being given guidance. The Chair echoed that qualifications are important but there are other paths, Cllr Pirone agreed that there is no single “right path” for young people.

Cllr Small: Cllr Small reported that Cllr Thomson had arranged bells for shops to allow those with accessibility needs the ability to ring a bell from the street if they required assistance from a retailer to allow them to shop. Most are completed although some declined. K Guiney confirmed the bells are already being used. Cllr Thomson would like an update from PCC regarding the signage project.

Cllr Tatler: Cllr Tatler welcomed the signage plans and confirmed funding is available from the parking fees fund to support promotion. He reported on the town bus review, which ran for 12 weeks and received positive feedback with phenomenal take-up and praise for the drivers, though some issues with the steps were noted. The new Hamilton Estate route has been less popular and may be reduced from three routes to two. Cllr Tatler is keen to work with retailers to promote the rest of the town, possibly with a map, and Borders Buses will provide an update and apply to the commissioner for a timetable, which can still be adjusted. He also suggested adopting the green and grey utility boxes around the town, as is done in Ireland, by painting them to brighten up the town; TYA and the Brownies are interested, though permission from the owners is needed. The Baptist Church project is ongoing. Finally, a discussion has resumed on the bus build-out on the High Street near the Bank of Scotland, and he would like the PCC to run a consultation on the proposal.

Cllr Thomson had reported back to the Chair that Veitch’s fountain could not be repaired to be a functioning fountain and that the advice from Heritage Scotland is that it should not be cleaned as it may get damaged.

Treasurer’s Report: This had been circulated.

Old Schoolhouse on Tweed Green. S Coe confirmed that a valuation and structural survey had been instructed and there had been collaboration with SBC. They await the reports.

Chambers Institution Trust: The report had been circulated, and there were no questions. A new group will determine how to proceed going forward, with the trustees making a good contribution. Cllr Tatler noted that more involvement is needed to keep momentum going. Cllr Tatler confirmed that Phase 2 will begin with a meeting on 29 August.

Peebles in Bloom: G Macdonald reminded everyone that the presentation evening is on 21 August. Volunteers are needed and everyone is asked to wear floral attire. Attendance is expected to be around 100. A couple of changes have been made from last year, with judges set to speak more, and thanks were extended to everyone involved.

PCC had been approached by a representative of Take to the Water advocating wild swimming and inviting the residents of Peebles to take part in an event on the River Tweed in October. Anyone who is interested in the details should contact The Secretary.

AOB

G Macdonald said that she had seen the Tweed Green pavilion being used, as it should be, by young people.

K Guiney confirmed some of the retailers are taking part in the NHS Borders' Creating Hope Awards to recognise organisations, including retailers, that provide supportive environments for individuals experiencing mental health challenges, particularly those contemplating suicide. To qualify, establishments must designate Mental Health and Wellbeing Advocates, create Safe Spaces where individuals can access Time, Space, and Compassion, and appoint Suicide Prevention Champions trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST). They are also expected to commit to mental health best practices, fostering inclusive, non-judgmental environments that challenge stigma and promote well-being. Participation in the initiative enhances community mental health and positions retailers as proactive supporters of suicide prevention. Participating retailers display a specific logo or sticker to indicate their involvement. Staff members are trained to offer a welcoming environment, assist in contacting appropriate support services, or simply provide a moment of calm for those in need.

M Bruce said the gold post box plaque has the wrong wording on it. Cllr Pirone will deal with it. M Bruce also made a plea for more volunteers for the Christmas Lights Association. The 2025 starting event is on 21 October. There are lots of skills for a young person to learn.

J McMordie said that all the lights on Tweed Bridge were out. He also wanted to highlight dangerous parking of cars on the bridge. People are blatantly parking on double yellow lines. The Secretary will email PC Beaumont.

The meeting ended at 2100 hrs.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 11 September 2025 in the Burgh Hall.

..... Michael Marshall, Planning Convenor, on behalf of the Chairman.

..... Dated