



Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minutes of the 339th Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 12 February 2026 at 7pm in the Burgh Hall, Peebles. The meeting was recorded for the purposes of Minuting and Reporting.

Present: A Mackenzie, A Snoddy (Secretary), D Ashmole, F Richardson, G MacDonald, G Mackie (Vice Chairman and Treasurer), G Ramsay, I Dempster, J Holt Cabrera, J Wilson, M Bruce, M Marshall (Planning Convenor), P Maudsley (Chairman), S Mackay, S Coe, S Watson, Cllr Pirone, Cllr Small, Cllr Tatler

In attendance: K Peebles of The Peeblean; Chris Faulks, Editor, Peeblesshire News; PC R Sheill, PC G Beaumont of Police Scotland; D Smallpiece of Drill Hall.

Members of the Public: S O'Neill, C O'Neill, C McKay.

Apologies: J McMordie, K Guiney, Cllr Begg, Cllr Douglas, 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/>

Presentation from Peebles Cricket Club

David Thompson attended to outline plans to upgrade the club's facilities to support increased participation and wider community use. The club, established in 1857, requires investment and intends to apply for available grant funding. He explained that cricket complements rather than competes with other local sports as it is primarily a summer sport and attracts a different player base, including those who play later in life, but participation has declined over the past six years, and investment is needed to encourage growth. The club promotes inclusivity, providing training for men, women and children, including beginners, with Friday sessions and food provided to reduce barriers, and all kit and equipment supplied. Current limitations include lack of suitable training space and grass facilities, and funding is sought for practice nets, grass covers, a roller, screens and batting lines. There are also plans to develop the pavilion into a more flexible community space with improved accessibility, as there is currently no disabled access, and to support wider shared use with other groups while continuing outreach with local schools to encourage participation. The Chair advised that windfarm grant funding may be available later in the year. Cllr Tatler noted the project aligns with the Place Plan and the town's commitment to improving sport in Peebles, and M Marshall invited further contact and agreed to liaise with D Thompson. A Snoddy asked about costs, and D Thompson provided indicative figures including batting lines at around £2,500, a second-hand grass roller at around £6,000, and covers and screens at around £4,000, and will provide detailed costings to the Community Council by email.

Open Forum: There was nothing for the open forum.

Approval of the Minutes of 8 January 2026: The minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2026 were approved. Proposed by S Coe and seconded by J Wilson.

Matters arising from Minutes:

Caledonian Court Ramp: It will not be re-opened until the building works have been completed in the summer. The placement of diversion signs was due to have been reviewed on 27 January; however, no update has been received. A Snoddy will follow this up. The Chair expressed frustration at the lack of progress and agreed to take photographs.

Bus build-out on High Street: PCC noted that the project remains at an impasse. Cllr Tatler shared the results of the survey and advised that feedback had also been received from a member of the access panel, with a desire expressed to see the proposal progressed. It was noted that consultation responses were broadly split 50-50. Discussion took place regarding issuing a questionnaire to bus users, with A Snoddy offering to progress this. A Snoddy will write to Cllr Tatler seeking permission to distribute questionnaires on buses. M Bruce suggested the possibility of a combined bus stop and loading bay. S Watson raised concerns about the potential loss of further parking on the High Street. It was noted that some retailers park all day, limiting availability of spaces. Officers from Police Scotland advised that spaces are used roughly equally by business owners and the public and confirmed they have received complaints and issued five parking tickets this month, noting that while it is not possible to please everyone, enforcement remains their responsibility.

Pavement between Whitestone Park and the Hydro: The issue has been reported.

Flu vaccination appointments at Haylodge: A Snoddy reported that the query regarding missed appointments has now been referred to NHS. A response is awaited.

Parking provision at Peebles High School: A Snoddy advised she has written to Scottish Borders Council planning regarding parking spaces at the new high school and has not yet received a response.

Analysis of funding of Live Borders by SBC: PCC noted that the Scottish Borders Council (SBC) Chief Financial Officer (CFO) has provided data showing that funding for Live Borders (LB) has fallen by 45% in real terms since 2016. Even after the inclusion of £6m of so-called “additional funding,” this still represents a real-terms reduction of 25%. The figures highlight that while nominal payments may appear higher, when adjusted for inflation, the management fee has steadily decreased, with only one year since 2016 showing any real-terms increase. The CFO has commented that SBC has not provided a disproportionate reduction, and that recent additional funding has been significant, though the baseline management fee is now 55% of the 2016 figure in real terms.

PCC noted that this follows previous SBC reports considered at SBC meetings on 29 October and 20 November 2025, which outlined LB’s financial position and sustainability, including one-off payments and loans. The report on LB’s future, including considerations of Community Asset Transfers (CATs), was approved with amendments by Cllrs Tatler and Pirone.

In discussion, PCC noted that double-checking the figures confirms a 45% real-terms reduction, with the overall picture unchanged. The CFO’s claim of more recent funding is only true if inflation is ignored. PCC noted that a £1m sum included in the reported “additional funding” was a loan, highlighting the need to consider the real data. PCC observed that the justification for recent funding levels is not borne out by the facts and that the public does not always appreciate information that is oversimplified or unclear. The Chair noted that SBC may be moving towards service closures, including in library services, and stressed the importance of understanding the true figures. It was agreed that PCC should seek direct engagement with Live Borders’ leadership. Cllr Pirone suggested inviting the new CEO to speak to PCC, and A Snoddy will extend the invitation.

M Bruce has liaised with Bob Reid regarding the installation of information boards by the proposed new pathway; he has provided a sample of wording, sourced funding, and will work with B Reid on the project.

Police Report: PC Beaumont and PC Sheill presented the monthly police report for Peebles. The Chair noted that recent reports had shown low crime rates compared with the national average, reflecting well on local policing. Two recent hotel robberies resulted in charges, neither involving local residents. PC Sheill highlighted the successful bike-marking event of 87 bikes, with spare kits sent to Kelso and Jedburgh, and plans for further events. Engagement with street pastors, local youth groups, and elderly residents continues, including crime prevention and scam awareness. Youth disorder remains low, although concerns were raised about cyclists and e-bikes on the roads, particularly those without lights, with PC Sheill advising members to report incidents with names and details.

Other points included parking enforcement on the High Street, which remains challenging, and recent fires at the old Haylodge building, now contained and secured. Supermarket thefts are being monitored, with CCTV and AMPR cameras considered effective, and suggestions were made for additional cameras, particularly at the Edinburgh Road/High Street. Cllr Tatler agreed to ask if another camera could be provided or one of the existing ones re-configured to be at a better angle. PC Beaumont discussed police engagement with local groups such as Brownies, Boys Brigade, and Crucial Crew for Primary 7 pupils, which provides safety and crime prevention education. Reporting of speeding and non-emergency issues was discussed, with PC Beaumont saying that emailing the police can be just as effective as phoning 101 and the information also feeds into statistics.

Chairman's report: The report had been circulated. The Chair reported that there is no new information regarding tourist signs. Meetings attended since October include various PCC, SBC, Town Team, and community engagement sessions, including discussions on replacement arrangements for the Scottish Borders Community Councils Network (SBCCN) and non-financial support for community councils. A programme of future meetings is now in place for March, April, and June, with SBC officers expected to produce a report for Council thereafter. While progress has been limited, some positive actions have been taken, particularly regarding youth participation, though recognition of volunteers' limited capacity remains a concern. A suggestion for twice-yearly mass meetings of community councils with SBC senior management was supported.

Place Making/Town Team: The current Chairperson F Dalglish's workload remains heavy, with Planning Convener M Marshall assisting on specific issues such as windfarms and Kingsmeadows woodland, though a long-term solution is needed. The meetings are at 6pm, every second Tuesday of every second month in the Rugby Club. Charities working in Peebles & District are invited to join. If any resident has something they want to discuss, please come along.

Road Maintenance: Roads and pavements in Peebles and the wider Borders remain in poor condition. The High Street and surrounding areas require resurfacing, with expected work unlikely before 2028. The funding shortfall is largely attributed to the Scottish Government's per-capita allocation, leaving SBC under-resourced compared to urban authorities. Concerns were raised regarding safety for residents and the impression for tourists. The Chair will draft a letter to go to all politicians.

Hustings: A husting has been arranged for the evening of 16 April at the Burgh Hall. All candidates have agreed to attend except one, and Tony Lappin, a local parish priest, will chair the event.

Windfarms – Unified Statement: Members were briefed on the Unified Statement regarding renewable energy developments in rural Scotland and the request from the 17 Jan 2026 convention on wind farms to adopt it. The statement recognises climate change but opposes unnecessary and unjust industrialisation of rural areas and calls for a national planning policy and a pause on major applications. Discussion

highlighted concerns over a lack of long-term strategic control, with applications prioritised by private and foreign enterprises rather than following a coordinated national plan, contrasting with examples such as Norway. Members noted the community impact of unregulated developments, while acknowledging the environmental importance of renewable energy.

It was agreed that the Chair and MM would liaise with other community councils in the Borders seeking changes that better reflect the environmental urgency. The option to write directly to ministers was noted. Members agreed to consider signing the statement once wording concerns were clarified, with some expressing caution about committing before fully understanding the implications for planning and community involvement.

Windfarm Disbursements: Updates were provided on Bowbeat windfarm community funds, with £104K available for Peebles and Eddleston. Agreement on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is needed to establish procedures for grant applications. Once advertised, funds will be distributed via panels including PCC members and the public. Two funding streams will operate: a main fund (£80K) and a microgrant fund (£5K in the first year). Foundation Scotland will hold the funds and assist with administration, including reviewing applications and advising on process.

Planning report: This had been circulated. Ongoing developments include Caledonian Court, the Baptist Church building, and Victoria Park Centre. PCC continues to raise concerns about SBC's compliance with Habitats Regulations and the Planning Act, particularly regarding South Parks, Kingsmeadows, and Ballantyne Place. Legal advice from Harper Macleod and the Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland (ERCS) indicates potential breaches, including risks of judicial review, but responses from SBC Legal Services remain outstanding.

Three applications to renew expired Planning Permissions in Principle at Kingsmeadows House (Granton Homes) remain under scrutiny. PCC objects to all on several grounds including lack of proper Habitats Regulations Appraisal, flood risk, tree and ecology loss, and inconsistency with housing policy. Appeals are underway, with the Local Review Board and outstanding decisions pending.

New applications include minor residential extensions, tree works, and installation of an InPost parcel locker. PCC has generally recommended no action or no objection where appropriate, although the parcel locker application is opposed. One application lacks sufficient information for recommendation. S Coe said the Civic Society opposes the parcel locker and PCC will echo that opposition. The locker is a good idea, simply in the wrong place.

For windfarm developments, PCC has supported Leithenwater subject to ecological guidance but maintains objections to Scawd Law and Cloich Forest projects, citing potential harm to golden eagles, landscape, and peatland. Decisions for these projects remain pending, with the Scawd Law deadline extended to 3 March 2026. Stalled developments such as Edderston Farm and Land West of Horsburgh Ford remain under review, with some indication of resumption. Several previous applications, including heritage and holiday accommodation projects, have been removed from ongoing interest.

Kingsmeadows Planning Issue: Dr C McKay, a member of the public, attended the meeting to raise serious concerns about documents relating to the Kingsmeadows planning applications that had not been published on the SBC planning portal. Cllrs Pirone and Tatler had previously met with senior planning and legal staff at SBC to discuss transparency and procedural issues.

It was emphasised by the Chair that large and significant planning applications must follow the letter of the law without exception. Concerns were raised by Dr McKay that SBC had failed to publish critical documents, including legal advice from ERCS specialist lawyers, potentially amounting to a breach of

strong environmental and planning legislation. Dr McKay noted that this lack of transparency and withholding of information had undermined public trust and suggested that SBC might be deliberately hiding material from the public. It was highlighted that all comments in the portal from developers are normally published, but in this case legal advice had been withheld, which was described as “obscene” and “outrageous” by members of PCC.

It was noted that the application had been delayed for over two years and that critical information, including flood risk assessments and environmental reports, was still not fully available to the public. There were also concerns that SBC officers might proceed to make recommendations without all necessary documentation, in contravention of the law, raising the risk of irreversible damage to the woodland and surrounding environment. The Chair and M Marshall confirmed that ERCS had advised that approval would provide grounds for judicial review.

PCC members discussed the importance of protecting the community’s interests and agreed unanimously to provide full support to the Kingsmeadows SCIO in pursuing judicial review if necessary. PCC agreed that transparency must be enforced, legal requirements strictly followed, and that any further attempts by SBC to suppress documents or legal advice would be challenged. The meeting concluded with a clear statement that PCC regards SBC’s handling of Kingsmeadows as a serious procedural failure and a breach of public trust, with potentially unlawful consequences.

Peebles Community Trust: The report had been circulated. M Bruce provided an update on current projects. Negotiations continue for the transfer of title of the March Street Allotments to the Trust. Other umbrella groups supported by PCT continue to operate successfully under their own management, with PCT providing insurance, banking, and administrative support for an annual fee, which will be reviewed in line with rising costs.

The Railway Building is being considered for the name “East Station,” depending on its final use. PCT is open to enquiries from local individuals or businesses for rental space, with refurbishment tailored as needed. In the meantime, minor works including tidying, improved lighting and power, and installation of a WC will proceed using PCT reserves, while external funding applications are pending.

The School Brae Toilet Block’s Community Asset Transfer application was declined due to the Trust’s plans changing after acquiring the High Street building which is disappointing. Discussions with SBC continue to determine whether a fresh application could be considered, or if the building will be disposed of commercially, with PCT keen to prevent it being left to deteriorate.

The Bank of Scotland building acquisition is nearly complete, giving PCT ownership of the ground and lower floors, rear land, car park, and riverbank. Refurbishment plans include minor works, possible adaptation of the bank strongroom for secure storage, and accessibility improvements such as a street-level WC and potential lift.

The School Brae Hub remains in PCT ownership with no outstanding loans. Current tenants include the Men’s Shed and the Peace Group. Maintenance costs remain high due to poor heating and windows, though significant improvements have been made, including a new roof, accessible entrance, working toilets, and a kitchen area. Future options for the building, including potential heating upgrades, are under consideration.

PCT emphasised its ongoing commitment to bringing all buildings into active community use as quickly and effectively as possible.

SBC Councillor reports

In **Cllr Begg's** absence, the Chair provided an update on his behalf. This included an explanation of roads costs (details included in the Chair's report), an email regarding bin provision at Cuddyside, and matters relating to the Rose Park wall. He also reported on Kingsland Primary School initiatives to reduce waste, including the introduction of food caddies, and on the school's energy performance and Green Flag status.

Cllr Pirone: Cllr Pirone reported that proposals are being prepared for the draft SBC budget. The budget will be presented for approval in the next week. She noted that this year's process is particularly challenging and encouraged everyone to read the proposals themselves. Key priorities include education, children's and adult services, and protecting as many services as possible despite reduced funding. Surveys and consultations have informed the budget.

Cllr Small: Cllr Small reported that he is speaking with Philippa Gilhooly regarding the installation of a handrail on Usher's Wynd, expected in April. He also noted that the mobility signage on the bridge at Brown Brothers has been removed and replacements are being arranged. In addition, he advised that Bank of Scotland branches in Penicuik and Kelso are closing.

Cllr Tatler: Cllr Tatler reported that he had a positive meeting with clubs and groups at Peebles High School that use the 3G pitch. A user group is being established to ensure those using the facility are charged appropriately. He also advised that, following several months of requests, Greenbelt will meet with various residents in Peebles regarding tree issues, although a date has not yet been confirmed. Everyone was asked to note that the Gypsy Glen Hill Race will take place on 27 May and to diarise accordingly.

The Chair in Cllr Thomson's absence: The parking fund is currently frozen. The Three Fishes project is still ongoing. The Peebles War Memorial, which falls under the Chambers Institution Trust, still requires attention. Costs will be obtained and funding applications will be submitted.

Treasurer's report. The report had been circulated. The financial statement to 31 January was noted, including two receipts during the month: the new annual support grant of £1,501.50 and a further £2,520 grant from Scottish Borders Council to fund cinema nights at the Eastgate Theatre, with the Community Council holding these funds until required. It was noted that Graham Mackie will stand down as Treasurer at the AGM in May. The Community Council formally thanks him for his dedication, diligence, and service in managing the finances. Gill Macdonald has agreed to step into the role and take on the responsibilities of Treasurer going forward.

PCC has received a request from Kevin Banks, a local micro-market gardener, seeking approval to hold a small plant sale in Peebles on a Friday afternoon in late April or May. He confirmed he would obtain a temporary street trading licence from Scottish Borders Council and notify Road Works Scotland and was keen to ensure the sale aligned with community expectations. PCC welcomed his approach and agreed that he may proceed with his proposal, noting the importance of following the correct licensing procedures.

G Macdonald asked why the gates were reinstated at TweedGreen Pavilion; Cllr Tatler explained it was due to vandalism, and the Community Council should speak to Cllr Thomson as the decision was made by the Common Good.

Chambers Institution Trust: The Chairman reported that he had been approached by a library employee concerned about recent redundancies and the impact on services once work begins, emphasising that decisions should not be left to the last minute. He reminded members that the library is part of the

benefits endowed by William Chambers and that responsibility rests with the Trustees, suggesting the matter be raised with Live Borders and that the CEO be invited to comment. S. Coe noted that only a few staff currently run the entire building and that reductions are concerning, stressing the need to hear from the CEO on plans. Phase one of the project is progressing, including the business plan, visuals, and final report, with a consultation scheduled for 14 March in the Burgh Hall. SCIO has received feedback from OSCR on governance forms, which will be addressed before discussing next steps. S. Coe confirmed that a mobile library is planned and that services will remain under control, but acknowledged communication has been poor. The Chairman and members expressed concern that staff layoffs could affect community support services, including IT skills and library use. Cllr Tatler emphasised that services must continue in accordance with the Trust’s obligations and that better communication of plans is essential.

AOB

G Macdonald asked for an update on the Baptist Church. Cllr Tatler said he would speak to J Dalrymple.

It was reported that SBC are withdrawing bag provision for food waste bins, leaving residents dismayed and confused, as the suggested alternatives, one being using plastic bags, appears to contradict the purpose of compostable recycling.

S. Watson asked whether the Kingsmeadows toilets will be reopened in time for Beltane noting that Beltane is running at a loss again this year and high toilet costs would be problematic. Cllr Tatler will raise this at the Common Good meeting on Wednesday 25 February at 5 pm.

A Mackenzie noted that there is a stained-glass window in Peebles High School with no accompanying explanatory wall plaque or documentation; PHS is not currently allowed to display attach anything to the new walls. Cllr Pirone will raise the matter with the Education Department.

The meeting ended at 2112hrs.

The next meeting will be on 12 March 2026 in the Burgh Hall.

..... Chairman

..... Dated