



Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minutes of the 340th Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 12 March 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), F Richardson, G MacDonald, G Mackie (Vice Chairman and Treasurer), G Ramsay, H Young, I Dempster, J Wilson, K Guiney, M Bruce, M Marshall (Planning Convenor), P Maudsley (Chairman), S Coe, Cllr Begg, Cllr Douglas, Cllr Tatler, Cllr Thomson

In attendance: K Peebles of The Peeblean; L Wood, Reporter from Peeblesshire News

Members of the Public: None

Apologies: J Holt Cabrera, S Watson, D Ashmole, S Mackay, Cllr Pirone; Cllr Small, Police Scotland.

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/>

PC Councillor Malcolm Bruce was named the 2026 Tweeddale Citizen of the Year in recognition of his extensive voluntary work with local organisations, including the Peebles Community Trust, Peebles and District Men's Shed, and the Royal Burgh of Peebles Callants Club. All members congratulated him, noting his enthusiasm and dedication in supporting the community. Describing himself as "humbled," M Bruce welcomed the award on behalf of the voluntary groups he supports.

Open Forum: Nothing.

Approval of the Minutes of 12 February 2026: It was noted that I Dempster had been incorrectly recorded as being in attendance at the meeting held on 12 February 2026 and that he was not present. The record has been amended accordingly. The minutes of the 12 February 2026 meeting were approved retrospectively, with the approval proposed by M. Marshall and seconded by G. Mackie.

Police Report: PCs Beaumont and Shiell were unable to attend the meeting but had sent an email. Members were informed of notable incidents during February, including a police presence on the High Street on 10–11 February following a reported incident, multiple charges for theft and housebreaking across March Street, Kingsmuir, and North Vennel, and an assault in Northgate on 22 February with enquiries ongoing. Reports of youths throwing eggs at properties and vehicles were addressed, and no further incidents have occurred. Counterfeit cigarettes were seized from a premises in Peebles, and a plain clothes initiative on 6 March resulted in the seizure of small amounts of cocaine, ecstasy, cannabis, and offensive weapons.

Matters arising from the Minutes:

Caledonian Court signage: The Chair had walked the site with the manager, highlighted previous signage issues, and was assured they would be addressed.

Bus Buildout: A Snoddy had undertaken a two-hour survey on the bus regarding the proposed bus build-out; of 26 passengers, 17 were supportive, 7 indifferent, and 2 against. Two Tweeddale Access Panel members will gather more survey data. Members agreed unanimously to support the proposal, recognising benefits for those with disabilities or prams, and a letter of support would be sent to SBC.

Flu vaccination appointment attendance in Peebles remained in line with the wider Border area with 12% of appointments missed.

Regarding road maintenance and the Tour de France, members noted ongoing concerns with road conditions, utility repairs, and prioritisation, and the Chair would write to MSPs and had circulated an article. Logging lorries on the Dawyck road was discussed, with concerns over road damage and community compensation.

Gates on Tweed Green were reviewed; the decision to open and close them daily remained, with vandalism and financial considerations noted, and the matter would be raised at the Common Good meeting. Cllr Thomson agreed to update the website so that it is clear to the public how they can attend the meetings.

No update was available regarding the plaque for the stained-glass window at Peebles High School.

The Baptist Church sale was ongoing, with SBC providing cost estimates by the end of the week, with demolition possibly completed in April or May.

Kingsmeadows toilets were reported as having high excess costs, with external insurance limited, and a report on costs was awaited.

The Rose Park wall issue was being progressed by Cllr Thomson, with contractors being chased, residents satisfied with the agreed plan, and a response from the contractors awaited.

Chairman's report.

The report, which had been circulated in advance and is available on the PCC website, provided updates on a range of matters. Meetings attended since the last PCC meeting included the February PCC meeting, interviews on flooding, Town Team and Place Making support meetings, Foundation Scotland, SBC non-financial support discussions, and various community events. On Place Making, M Marshall continued to act as a catalyst for momentum, with a meeting held with Roddy Martin of SBC to explore support and potential grant funding.

Progress continued on windfarm-related disbursements, with advertising for the Bowbeat grant oversight panel and community grant availability planned to run concurrently, aiming for the first grants in August.

The Chair noted the ongoing management of the Great Polish Map of Scotland by the local Polish community, ensuring its preservation as a remarkable historical link between Scotland and Poland.

Live Borders: A member of the public had reported a potential threat to the Drill Hall from Live Borders. The Chair met with C Swann to discuss the matter and noted that the most pressing issue was the planned withdrawal of management support by 1 April. Members expressed concern that the proposed deadline was too short, giving insufficient time for the committee to put management systems in place, and described the situation as potentially unfair. It was emphasised that the Drill Hall carries significant responsibilities beyond a typical village hall, including safeguarding and compliance, and that liability issues could arise if management support was withdrawn abruptly. Cllr Douglas noted that a three-year transition period had previously been envisaged and would take the matter forward to clarify

arrangements. Cllr Tatler suggested that the PCC should publicise the need for more volunteers to join the Drill Hall board.

Planning Report: M Marshall, Planning Convener, presented the Planning Report, highlighting ongoing and new planning matters affecting Peebles. The report noted concerns regarding the handling of applications at Kingsmeadows, including potential breaches of the Habitats Regulations and issues with Section 42 renewals. Multiple objections had been submitted by the Community Council, ERCS, and NatureScot. Renewal based on amended Condition 2 was refused by SBC's Planning Committee 9 Dec 2024 and renewal based on amended Condition 7 was refused by SBC's Local Review Body 23 Feb 2026. Re the third application seeking renewal based on changes to both conditions, M Marshall drafted a letter requesting planners refuse the application, which members approved. It was also noted that two separate solicitors had advised it would not be legal to approve these applications – on two separate grounds. Cllr Tatler is awaiting SBC's response to PCC's complaint before arranging a meeting.

The report recorded ongoing monitoring of stalled developments, including Edderston Farm and land west of Horsbrugh Ford, and provided updates on minor residential alterations, tree works, and Certificates of Lawful Use. Wind farm proposals at Leithenwater, Scawd Law, and Cloich Forest were reviewed, with particular attention to biodiversity, golden eagle protection, and community benefit issues.

M Marshall also reported on attendance at a workshop in Nairn where the Unified Statement was discussed. This statement, originally created by community councils in the Highlands and adapted by North East Scotland, recognises the impact of climate change and calls for the protection of rural communities from unnecessary industrialisation. It urges elected members to support communities at a national level, requests a Planning Inquiry Commission to assess the cumulative impact of major renewable energy developments, and calls for a pause on major applications until a national energy policy and economic impact assessment are in place. The statement has been endorsed by 50 Highland councils, 85 North East councils, and an increasing number locally. M Marshall encouraged the Community Council to consider supporting the statement with amended wording and noted that a further convention would allow councils to formally sign up and decide next steps.

In addition, M Marshall will attend another conference in the Borders, and the Town Team plans to consult the local community on windfarm issues. J McMordie had engaged with students at Peebles High School to gather their views. Members discussed proposals for a national wealth fund, seeded from a 9% levy on generator revenue, to ensure wider distribution of benefits. The [Community Wealth Building \(Scotland\) Bill](#) has passed and awaits Royal Assent.

The report concluded that PCC continues to advocate for proper planning assessment, environmental protection, and community involvement in decision-making. Full details of the report are available on the PCC website.

Peebles Community Trust: M Bruce reported on the unused public toilet block on School Brae. The Trust had initially offered to operate it as a public facility with a £30,000 grant from Scottish Borders Council, but costs relating to cleaning, vandalism, and unpaid usage made this financially unviable. The Trust then proposed acquiring the building through Community Asset Transfer for use as storage for ReUse Hub donations, but this proposal was initially rejected. While awaiting a decision, the Trust successfully focused on acquiring the Bank of Scotland building, which will alter how donations are managed and may affect the need for the toilet block. The Trust has now appealed the decision regarding the toilet block and queried why it is not being sold if it is not going to be used as a public facility. M Bruce emphasised that Scottish Borders Council should actively support community organisations in

accessing unused buildings in line with the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. He concluded by noting that all other Trust activities are proceeding well.

Members discussed the situation further. M Bruce noted that engagement with SBC felt adversarial. Cllr Thomson confirmed that the application is being appealed. Members discussed the Community Asset Transfer process and the commercial sales. G Macdonald queried the Hay Lodge depot, highlighting the need for the Men's Shed. The Chair noted that all bids should be submitted in writing and considered on their merits. Cllr Thomson clarified that the issue had not been raised at the Common Good meeting. Members agreed that a ten-year lease would be too short for an investment of £50,000.

Cllrs Reports:

Cllr Begg's Report: Cllr Begg reported that the recent surgery had been well attended. He highlighted ongoing issues with sewage and flood resilience, noting the involvement of the Tweed Forum, SEPA, and Scottish Water. The challenges are significant due to Victorian drainage systems and mixed drainage infrastructure, which affect all water management in the area. Cllr Begg emphasised the need for more porous surfaces to help address these problems.

He also raised concerns about dogs not being kept under control during the lambing season. Dog owners were reminded that failure to control their animals can lead to fines of up to £40,000 or imprisonment for up to one year. Uncontrolled dogs pose risks of physical harm and distress to people and livestock. Cllr Begg encouraged responsible dog ownership, including keeping dogs on a lead and addressing behavioural issues.

Cllr Douglas's Report: Cllr Douglas reported that budget discussions had taken up a significant amount of time. He reminded residents of the need to register to vote in the upcoming elections by 20 April and noted ongoing liaison with Peebles High School regarding student entitlement to vote.

He provided an update on licensing of premises for the World Cup, confirming that home nation matches may remain open for televised coverage for up to half an hour after the match. Premises may also use televisions even if not currently licensed, and public areas may hold screenings, subject to individual licence applications.

Cllr Douglas also noted that Catriona McAllister, CEO of Live Borders, had emailed regarding the Drill Hall. He reminded members of the upcoming surgery with Christine Graham, scheduled for the following day.

Cllr Tatler's Report: Cllr Tatler reminded residents to take care with dogs during nesting season. He noted that bollards have been installed in Victoria Park to prevent parking and highlighted ongoing concerns about tree maintenance. He has met with some factors and residents, acknowledging that it took a year to establish the current arrangements. Cllr Tatler emphasised the need to trust tree experts and confirmed that the Council's tree officer will attend to any issues. Residents were encouraged to contact their councillors if concerns arise.

A Snoddy raised the condition of the path on the south side of the Tweed. Improvements are being considered, with costs being assessed and the worst defects prioritised for repair.

Cllr Thomson's Report: Cllr Thomson reported on the recent flood prevention drop-in events, noting that they were well attended. She encouraged residents to participate in SEPA's Phase 1 Flood Risk Management consultation, which is available on their website.

She provided an update on the parking fund, explaining that although £90,000 was initially difficult to trace, £40,000 has been allocated to projects within the town, including support for floral groups and

CCTV at Greenside. A working group has been established to oversee the fund and review its use across the Borders, but progress has been slower than expected. Decisions by the administration have sometimes contradicted full council agreements, and access to part of the fund was recently lost. Future arrangements will need to be renegotiated.

Cllr Thomson also discussed Greenside Car Park fees, noting that the current arrangements will be reconsidered from 1 April. Any funds from empty meters are intended to go into the Common Good Fund, although further discussion and scrutiny are required. Residents and councillors were encouraged to engage with the process, and she confirmed that correspondence can be sent to the relevant scrutiny committee for clarification.

Treasurer's Report: The report had been circulated. The Treasurer reported on a Teams meeting held at the end of February regarding the Scottish Government's Local Governance Review, which is examining the future of community councils. He noted that the same issues persist across the country, including difficulties with recruitment, limited funding, and increasing workloads due to planning applications and windfarm proposals. He highlighted that Peebles Community Council is fortunate to have councillors who regularly attend meetings, unlike some councils where cynicism and pessimism are more evident.

The review process began in 2004 and was formally restarted in 2017 to gather views from community councils. The committee aims to publish proposals before the end of the current parliamentary session. The Treasurer noted that all councils face similar challenges and that the PCC will await the forthcoming proposals with interest.

Chambers Institution Trust: S Coe had circulated an update on the Chambers Institution project. Phase 1 is progressing through RIBA Stage 4 design, on programme to conclude by 28 April 2026, with construction scheduled to start in December 2026 and forecast completion in January 2028, although the team aims to finish earlier if possible. Planning permission and Listed Building Consents have been submitted, with Historic Environment Scotland and Peebles Civic Society supportive. Preparations for decanting tenants to temporary accommodation are underway for early April, and enabling works, including lift trial pits and selective opening of the vault, will be carried out before main works. The Friends of the Chambers Institution has now been confirmed as a registered SCIO and will work with the Trust on governance and fundraising. Key project achievements include completion of Stage 3 coordinated design, fire engineer appointment, and securing decant accommodation. Risks remain around decant complexities, statutory consents, and historic building constraints, but mitigation strategies are in place and costs remain within budget. Full details are available on the PCC website.

Thanks were given to K Peebles for her reporting in The Peeblean regarding decanting arrangements. I Dempster asked about ongoing repairs and their funding; Cllr Tatler explained that reports and cost assessments are awaited before applying for funding. G Macdonald raised concerns about public access to computers, and it was noted that from 1 April laptops will be available in the Burgh Hall, with Cllr Tatler confirming that this would be publicised.

Peebles in Bloom

Members were reminded that the Peebles in Bloom presentation night will take place on 20 August. PC councillors will be asked to walk their nominated patches between 3 and 12 July. Members were encouraged to note these dates in their diaries.

G Macdonald raised concerns regarding fire risks associated with lithium batteries in vapes, particularly in vape shops. Members noted that lithium batteries combined with vapes present an increased fire hazard. Cllr Pirone had undertaken to take the matter forward. Cllr Douglas clarified that the issue falls

under central government rather than SBC, while the Chair noted it is an HSE matter. Cllr Begg advised that used batteries should not be disposed of in general waste and should be recycled appropriately.

Any Other Business

H Young raised concerns regarding the Kingsmeadows car park toilet block that was damaged by fire, asking what would happen if it were not repaired. Cllr Thomson advised that the matter will be included in a future Common Good report and confirmed she has requested this for the June meeting. The Chair suggested that, if repaired, the facility could include waste disposal for camper vans as an opportunity to enhance provision. H Young noted that the insurance excess was very high and queried whether this issue affects other assets. Cllr Thomson confirmed that a group is currently reviewing insurance arrangements. Members agreed this is a critical issue if buildings cannot be repaired, with Cllr Begg noting similar concerns following the fire at Peebles High School. The Chair said, when an organisation self-insures or part insures with a large deductible then it is normal practice to set aside a sinking fund which grows with interest to provide for emergency needs. Self insurance is still insurance and not an excuse to do nothing.

G Macdonald commented that the floral displays around Peebles are looking very good.

K Guiney reported on a recent meeting with local retailers, noting that 47 businesses are now part of the Association. The community festival will take place on Saturday 30 May and is expected to be larger than previous years. Concern was expressed that recent Borders bus branding promotes sporting facilities but does not reference local shops, cafés or hotels, which was seen as a missed opportunity. Cllr Tatler agreed to raise this and link with the BID to encourage wider involvement.

J Wilson raised concerns about the lack of toilet provision at Kingsmeadows in advance of the Beltane Festival, particularly given the expected attendance of 500 to 600 children. It was confirmed that the toilets will not be ready in time. Members discussed alternative options, including applying for funding and providing additional temporary facilities, although concerns were raised about the suitability of portable toilets. The Chair emphasised the need to identify a solution, potentially through SBC or windfarm funding.

A Mackenzie asked about the former Della's Takeaway premises and was advised that it is part of the Chambers Institution Trust and will be incorporated into the redevelopment works.

I Dempster reported that the Guildry plans to introduce an inaugural medal recognising outstanding community contribution by a young person aged 12 to 21 within the Peebles High School catchment area. PCC members were invited to submit nominations. He also raised concern about a serious dog attack near the high school which had not been followed up by the police, noting that this should be pursued.

Cllr Douglas advised that river levels were rising and flooding may be possible later that evening.

M Marshall highlighted the need to nominate one or two individuals to assist with administering windfarm funds and encouraged interested members to come forward.

The meeting ended at 2108hrs.

The next meeting will be on 9 April 2026 in the Burgh Hall.

..... Chairman

..... Dated

DRAFT