



Community Council

of the

Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minutes of the 342nd Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 14 May 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 Wilson, K Guiney, M Marshall (Planning Convenor), P Maudsley (Chairman), S Coe, S Watson, Cllr Douglas, Cllr Pirone, Cllr Tatler, Cllr Thomson.

In attendance: K Peebles of The Peeblean; Callum Carson of the Peebleshire News, D Smallpeice of the Drill Hall, J Renwick and A Miller of Eildon Housing.

Members of the Public: J Shearer, L Birss, M Dunlop, T Dunlop, J Falla, R Hill, E Guiney

Apologies: M Bruce, J Holt Cabrera, S Mackay, Cllr Begg, Cllr Small.

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.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of April's meeting were approved by S Coe and seconded by G Ramsay.

Matters Arising: A Mackenzie discussed the community litter pick in conjunction with Campbell Johnstone. Members discussed possible dates and locations, noting that it may be beneficial to carry out the work before foliage growth increases. It was confirmed that litter pickers may be available from the hut and that C Johnstone could assist with supplies. Following discussion, members agreed that the litter pick would be postponed until September, with A Mackenzie to progress arrangements and bring forward further details in due course.

Baptist Church: PCC is still waiting for a response from the Baptist church for an update. Cllr Tatler has also followed up.

Gypsy Glen Hill Race. This is on Wednesday 27 May at 6pm. Volunteers are still needed. Cllr Tatler will send emails to those helping out.

Rose Park Wall will remain closed due to the poor condition of the wall and that Heras fencing has therefore been erected for public safety. An update will be provided once quotations have been received and contractors appointed to undertake the necessary works.

Police report: Police Scotland were not in attendance, but their report had been circulated. They had reported a continued focus on community engagement in Peebles during April, including high visibility patrols in local supermarkets in response to shoplifting concerns, resulting in a number of offenders

being charged. Officers also carried out engagement work with local businesses and youth groups, including visits to Peebles High Street and local Brownie groups to promote crime prevention and positive relationships.

In relation to incidents, Peebles experienced a number of assaults and anti-social behaviour reports, including disturbances, neighbour disputes, and street drinking across various locations such as Northgate, Old Town, and Glensax Road. There were also two recorded housebreakings, alongside a range of thefts and fraud-related incidents, including scams and opportunistic thefts across the town. Incidents of vandalism included damage to windows.

Police activity also highlighted ongoing work to protect vulnerable individuals, with mental health and missing person incidents attended locally, and wider enforcement activity tackling drug-related and organised crime, including warrants, vehicle stops, and recovery of controlled substances. Residents were additionally advised to remain vigilant regarding fraud, particularly ticket scams and online blackmail (“sextortion”), and to report concerns promptly.

Following consideration of the Police report, members noted concern at the level of anti-social behaviour in Peebles, with figures appearing higher than in previous reports. It was commented that incidents were increasingly involving adults rather than young people, representing a change in pattern. Concerns were also raised regarding shoplifting and the presence of unfamiliar individuals in the town, with Police understood to be aware of the situation. It was further noted that the presence of CCTV is having a positive impact in identifying offenders.

The Chair will contact local Police representative (PC Gary Beaumont) to raise concerns regarding anti-social behaviour and shoplifting.

Chairman’s report: The Chair advised that no formal Chair’s report had been prepared for the month due to there being limited additional matters to report. Members then discussed the use of glyphosate and weed control in public spaces, noting that there is now a significant amount of new information and differing views on Glyphosate’s listing as a probable carcinogen compared with previous years. Concerns were raised regarding verge weed control and the possible alternatives available.

It was agreed that M Marshall would undertake further research into the matter and bring recommendations back to a future meeting. Members also noted that SBC is currently undertaking a trial relating to weed management practices. It was suggested that SBC representatives, including Carol Cooke in relation to parks policy, be invited to provide information on current policy and practices. Concerns were also expressed regarding the use of Roundup in public spaces.

Members noted concerns raised by Craigerne residents regarding parking issues at Peebles High School. G. Macdonald recommended that representatives attend the school during the school day in order to witness the situation directly. Cllrs Pirone and Tatler advised that a meeting had been arranged with the project manager and that all interested parties, including PCC members, were invited to attend.

The meeting will take place at the new Peebles High School on 29 May from 1.30pm to 3.30pm, with attendees asked to meet in the reception area.

Members discussed the ongoing review of financial support to Community Councils by Scottish Borders Council. It was noted that SBC is seeking to appoint a principal representative and a depute to take the matter forward, with interest expressed by representatives from Peebles and West Linton. At the time of the meeting, no formal response or confirmation of appointments had been received.

Planning Report: The report had been circulated. The Planning Convener reported that the Caledonian Court development remains in progress, and that plans for the former Baptist Church building are being taken forward by the Tweed Valley Community Collective, with no update on the Victoria Park Centre. Ongoing concerns were noted regarding Scottish Borders Council's handling of planning matters, including compliance with Habitats Regulations, transparency in publishing objections, and delays in responding to correspondence; Cllrs Pirone and Tatler are continuing to pursue these issues. Reference was also made to the Convener's covering note highlighting that a recent Court of Session decision (Wull Muir Wind Farm) has significant implications for wind farm applications, with further environmental information now being required for schemes currently under consideration.

In terms of applications, Kingsmeadows (24/00247/FUL) remains under consideration, with the Community Council maintaining it should be refused in line with previous decisions. The Horsbrugh/Cardrona development has been taken over by a new developer, with works restarted and sales expected shortly. A new application for an MOT/service building at Peebles Autocentre was highlighted as potentially contentious, given its proximity to the Cuddy and the absence of flood risk and environmental assessments which appeared to be required.

Members discussed the planning application for the proposed MOT/service workshop at Peebles Autocentre. Concerns were raised regarding the site's proximity to the Cuddy and the River Tweed, and the apparent absence of a full Environmental Impact Assessment and flood risk assessment, particularly given the reported greater than 10% flood risk. Members highlighted the potential environmental implications, including the need for appropriate drainage and oil containment measures, noting that flooding could compromise such systems.

It was suggested that the Community Council engage constructively with SBC planning officers, who have indicated willingness to discuss the application. Options available to the Community Council were outlined as: support, object, take no action, or submit observations. There was general agreement that it would be prudent to seek clarification from relevant experts and submit formal observations highlighting the concerns discussed, while also recognising the importance of supporting local business where appropriate. Community Council to contact SBC planning officers to seek clarification on the application, including environmental assessments and flood risk considerations. Community Council to submit formal observations to the planning authority, raising concerns regarding flooding, environmental impact, and site mitigation measures.

It was noted that the petition for the right to buy Kingsmeadows woodland still needs 700 signatures.

A query was raised regarding the site at Ballantyne Place, specifically whether proposals may be brought forward for two houses rather than one. It was noted that the site has changed hands and that any proposal to increase the number of units would require a new planning application. Members were advised that, should such an application be submitted, there would be an opportunity for objections to be lodged, and it was agreed that the Community Council should ensure the matter is appropriately considered and responded to at that stage.

G Macdonald pointed out that works on the development at March Street Mills is scheduled to begin on 18 May.

Members noted that PCC's [Renewable Energy Survey](#) has now been circulated and confirmed that they were content with its contents. The survey will be promoted locally and kept open until early June to allow analysis ahead of the next meeting. It was further noted that a meeting with Belltown Power will take place following completion of the survey process. M Marshall advised that he is presenting to the

Foodbank and other local organisations 1pm Thu 21 May at the [Tackling Poverty Conference](#) to encourage completion of the survey and maximise community feedback.

Peebles Community Trust: A written report was submitted by M Bruce, who was unable to attend the meeting. Members noted that recent activity has focused on preparing Peebles Community Trust's new premises at 70 High Street for occupation. Works undertaken include removal of the former bank safes and counters, refurbishment and redecoration of the premises, and preparations for moving stock into the building. It is hoped that the premises may be ready in time to participate in the shopping event planned for the end of May. Members also noted that, as the building is listed, the Trust is in the process of obtaining the necessary permissions for signage and other works.

An update was also provided on the Railway Building project, where listed building requirements are continuing to affect progress and recent grant applications for refurbishment works had been unsuccessful. Despite this, the Trust remains committed to progressing the project. Members further noted that the Trust's AGM will take place on 16 May at the new High Street premises and that all umbrella groups were reported to be continuing to operate well.

Members noted that the Trust's AGM is due to take place on Saturday and that a quorum of 25 members is required. It was highlighted that membership can be taken up at the meeting, and the Chair confirmed that he will attend. Members encouraged wider participation and noted that Peebles Community Trust is open to all, with a further reminder that the Chambers Institution Trust is also seeking additional "Friends" and that membership is open to those wishing to support its work.

Cllrs Reports

Cllr Douglas advised that, following the recent period of election purdah, council activity is beginning to resume with an increase in meetings and engagement. He provided an update on the Ditcher Law windfarm situation, noting that a judicial review has been applied for at the Court of Session. Reference was made to a recent case in which a windfarm application was rejected due to lack of grid connection plans, and it was noted that similar concerns apply in the Ditcher Law case, which is now subject to judicial review. He also highlighted upcoming local activity including Tour de France-related sessions on 19 May in Innerleithen between 9.30am and 11.00am and confirmed that a walkabout with council officers is being rearranged due to weather disruption, with a further session planned to consider allocation of Small Schemes funding in Tweeddale East. It was also noted that a High School drop in session about the parking is scheduled for 29 May.

Cllr Pirone: She will also attend the school drop in session. The Burgh Hall will host the library service on Thursday and Friday. An update was provided on Live Borders, with a paper due to be considered by the Council, and it was noted that services are continuing to be maintained during the transition period. Cllr Pirone also advised that work is ongoing in relation to youth sport provision in Tweeddale, linked to the Gytes and Peebles Rovers, with a wider ambition to support additional sports activities. Members noted that relevant Council papers would need to be reviewed once published. It was also highlighted that a paper on weed control, including a proposed pilot scheme covering areas such as Melrose Road and Abbotsford Road in Galashiels, was due to be published on the Council website that evening.

Cllr Tatler: Cllr Tatler advised that a Council meeting is scheduled to consider the papers referenced by other councillors. He highlighted that a parking policy paper is due for discussion, following long-standing work on both on-street and off-street parking arrangements, including proposals relating to camper van parking and a move back towards consideration of on-street provision. He confirmed he has been involved in the relevant working group and that this is the first paper to be brought forward. He also advised that a planned walkaround had been postponed, although a list of issues had been submitted for

consideration. Concern was raised regarding the poor condition of the path on the south side of the river, which has been an ongoing issue for a few years. Discussions have taken place with Destination Tweed regarding potential improvements on both sides of the river, with hopes that progress can be made. Members discussed the proposed bus build-out and noted that no dedicated funding is currently available. It was advised that Cllr Tatler would require costings before any further progress could be made, although it was suggested that Small Schemes funding might offer limited support. Members noted that a response is awaited from Philippa Gilhooley. The Chair reminded Members that Cllr Tatler had previously indicated he would address the matter following Easter, and it was agreed that the issue would remain under review pending further information.

A member asked if there was any update on Kingsmeadows toilets. Cllr Thomson said it was on the Common Good agenda for the meeting 10 June.

Cllr Thomson: Cllr Thomson was asked about the fish fountain project. It was advised that discussions have taken place and contact has been made with Eastgate to establish requirements, noting that this is not an SBC led matter. The issue, along with other related items, will be considered further at the Common Good meeting on 10 June and was therefore left to be revisited at a future meeting. Cllr Thomson also confirmed that a walkaround had taken place and that a copy of the notes would be sent to the Chair. It was further noted that there is currently limited additional work required in this area, following significant input from the criminal justice team over the previous year. An update was also provided on wider matters including the 701 bus service, motorcycle signage, and the potential use of drones. Members noted that a review of Community Council funding is ongoing, with Cllr Thomson acting as the councillor representative, although limited information has emerged to date and no formal remit has yet been confirmed, with a report expected by the end of the year. The Chair is awaiting further discussion with W. Linton on items of mutual interest.

Finally, it was noted that at the forthcoming full Council meeting, a motion relating to Palestine is due to be considered. Members noted that correspondence has been received from members of the public expressing concern about a perceived lack of government action, and it was hoped that the motion would receive support from all councillors.

Chambers Institution Trust (CIT): S Coe gave a verbal update from the Chambers Institution Trust (CIT), noting that no formal written report was available. It was confirmed that the first phase of the project has now received formal planning consent, with the Stage 1 building warrant submitted. The project is in the the decant stage, after which main works will commence, including removal of the existing lift and other enabling works prior to the main contract. Members noted that CAB is now operational in Newby Court, with Go Tweed located in School Brae, and agreed to monitor progress as services transition. Phase 2 of the project has now reached consultation stage, with initial public engagement described as limited, although a further session is planned. Display boards will be circulated to PCC Members for review, and it was noted that the full business plan is extensive, although the executive summary was considered a helpful overview of the proposals.

Members expressed general support for the concept and acknowledged the strong work undertaken by the architects in developing space planning and visualisations. It was emphasised that the project must be financially viable and operate on a breakeven basis, with all elements of CIT working together effectively. It was also noted that efforts should be made to ensure wider public engagement, including making materials available in public spaces if attendance at consultation events remains low. Discussions also touched on a memorandum of understanding between the Trust and Friends group, longer term planning and capacity building, and the need to further develop networks to support the

project. Members noted that, while many questions remain, work is ongoing and further updates will be brought back to future meetings.

Peebles in Bloom: G Macdonald updated members regarding Peebles in Bloom. Thanks were recorded to the Secretary for her assistance with articles and publications. It was noted that the event was well attended last year, with over 100 participants, and a similar turnout is hoped for this year. The Peebles in Bloom evening will take place on 20 August in the Burgh Hall. Members were advised that helpers are required and that a team approach is essential to the success of the event. It was noted that approximately 10 judges will be involved and that the Community Council plays an important role in supporting the initiative. Judging dates were confirmed as 3 to 12 July, with flexibility offered where attendance within that period is not possible, and members were asked to advise G Macdonald or the Secretary if they are unavailable. It was also noted that biodiversity will be included as a category this year. Donations are requested for the raffle, with suggestions including gardening related items, chocolate, and wine, to be passed to Gill. It was noted that approximately £350 was raised from the raffle last year.

AOB

The Chair advised that he intends to write to MSPs regarding ongoing concerns about roads, noting that elected members are supportive of identifying solutions, although funding remains a significant constraint. He also confirmed that he will revisit the issue of the minor injuries clinic.

I Dempster noted an example from an English council where members of the public had been trained and authorised to assist with pothole repairs, describing this as an innovative approach.

D Ashmole highlighted a forthcoming film screening and panel discussion on climate and community resilience taking place at the Eastgate on Sunday at 7.30pm. The event will feature experts and climate scientists, is free to attend, and requires advance booking.

K Guiney raised concerns on behalf of High Street retailers, reporting low footfall and ongoing financial pressure on businesses, with some considering not renewing leases. She also highlighted repeated delays in the issuing of business rates letters and a lack of communication, and it was noted that Cllr Pirone will raise these issues with the Council.

A Mackenzie sought clarification regarding the planned demolition of the former Peebles High School science hall. Cllr Pirone advised that the cost of retaining or refurbishing the building would be prohibitive and confirmed that funding is not available, adding that issues such as bats relate to other parts of the site. Members expressed regret at the loss but acknowledged the practical constraints.

M Marshall drew attention to a [2 Mar 2026 IFS study](#) noting differential impacts of inflation on households, with lower income groups experiencing proportionally higher inflationary pressure (~35%), and commented on wider socio-economic implications, including for developments such as windfarms.

The meeting ended at 2050hrs.

The next meeting will be on 11 June 2026 in the Burgh Hall.

..... Chairman

..... Dated