



Community Council
of the
Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minutes of the 343rd Meeting of the Community Council which was held on Thursday 11 June 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 Ramsay, I Dempster, J Wilson, M Bruce, M Marshall (Vice Chairman and Planning Convenor), P Maudsley (Chairman), S Coe, Cllr Douglas, Cllr Pirone, Cllr Small, Cllr Tatler, Cllr Thomson

In attendance: K Peebles of The Peeblean; C Faulds of the Peebleshire News; PC Beaumont of Police Scotland.

Members of the Public: P Rimmer, L Davidson, Z Turner.

Apologies: G Macdonald (Treasurer), H Young, K Guiney, S Watson, Cllr Begg.

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/>

Police Report: The report was circulated in advance. PC Beaumont advised that reports will no longer include disposal information (persons arrested/charged), which has caused concern but is outwith local control. A systems issue is also affecting reporting, although more statistical data is expected in future. The Chair noted he had raised concerns regarding the removal of outcome data and its impact on understanding crime trends and police effectiveness. PC Beaumont offered to attend future meetings to address queries

PC Beaumont reported that shoplifting had been a significant issue over the past three months, with offenders travelling from Edinburgh and England; however, targeted policing, including overtime and a dedicated task force, has resulted in an 84% detection rate. Quad bikes have been introduced to tackle antisocial off-road biking, including in the Meldons area. Parking enforcement has taken place in Innerleithen and Peebles, with ongoing concerns around congestion at Peebles High School and longer-term solutions under discussion. A rise in thefts across the Borders was noted, and residents were encouraged to adopt preventative measures (e.g. Faraday pouches, CCTV, bollards). The possible future use of ANPR cameras in Peebles was discussed, subject to funding. Police Scotland will hold a Child Car Safety Day on 27 July at Edinburgh Road Car Park and continue engagement with local youth groups.

Open Forum: Ms Zoe Turner, a member of the public, raised concerns regarding SBC's continued use of glyphosate, questioning its use in light of environmental concerns and climate commitments, and suggesting alternative weed management methods be considered despite potential resource implications. Councillors acknowledged the concerns. Cllr Douglas highlighted practical challenges in maintaining public spaces, while Cllr Pirone confirmed SBC is undertaking a pilot in Galashiels to assess alternatives, with findings to be considered alongside existing research. It was noted that there are also public concerns about weeds, and any change would have resource implications.

Members discussed differing views on glyphosate and its environmental and health impacts, noting ongoing debate and review of evidence. Cllr Tatler recalled previous discussion of a Peebles pilot, and Ms Turner raised concerns about use in areas such as Victoria Park. Cllr Pirone agreed to obtain further information on the scope and timescale of the Galashiels pilot. It was also agreed that liaison with Cllr Begg and preparation of a briefing paper, including existing material, would support future discussion.

Approval of Minutes: S Coe requested an amendment to the minutes of the May meeting to clarify that attendance at the consultation events referred to under the Trust project update differed significantly between the two sessions, with approximately 7 to 8 attendees at the first session and around 55 attendees at the second session. Subject to this amendment, the minutes of the May meeting were approved by A Mackenzie and seconded by S Coe.

Matters arising: The Chair raised concerns, on behalf of G Macdonald, regarding the lack of a Minor Injuries Unit at Hay Lodge and the impact on residents requiring treatment for non-life-threatening injuries. It was noted that the absence of radiology facilities has been cited as a barrier, although some units elsewhere operate without on-site X-ray services using alternative arrangements. Concern was also expressed that patients may be attending A&E unnecessarily where a Minor Injuries Unit would be more appropriate.

Members acknowledged this as a wider issue across Scotland and noted the challenges for those without private transport in accessing Borders General Hospital. It was suggested the matter be raised with the local MSP. Cllr Tatler indicated his willingness to be involved in further discussions, including via the Integrated Joint Board. The Chair agreed to consider progressing the matter and to liaise with Cllr Tatler.

Gypsy Glen Hill Race: Members noted the success of the Gypsy Glen Hill Race, which attracted approximately 70 runners. A Mackenzie had assisted with marshalling duties at the top of the hill. Thanks were extended to all those who had helped organise and support the event. It was noted that the tally counters and high-visibility vests had now been returned. Members discussed the need for Peebles Community Council to identify a suitable storage location for event equipment, and it was reported that storage space may be available at the Drill Hall.

Chairman's report: The report covering May and June was circulated. No update was available on tourist signage. Concerns were noted regarding theft levels in May and the lack of detail in police reports on detections and charges. The Chair reported attendance at various meetings and events, including Town Team, consultations, Parliamentary Hustings, the PCT AGM and the Tackling Poverty Conference, and provided updates on Community Council working groups examining financial and non-financial support, with a Borders-wide questionnaire issued and findings to be reported to SBC.

The Parliamentary Hustings was noted as successful, and progress has been made on signage at Caledonian Court, with most issues resolved. There was no significant update on the Fish Fountain project, although discussions continue. The Chair commended local volunteers and organisations for their contributions to the town. Outstanding actions on road condition remain under consideration, with correspondence to MSPs to be progressed following the election

Planning Report: The report was circulated in advance. The Planning Convener provided updates on ongoing matters, including Kingsmeadows, environmental and habitat regulation issues, and correspondence with SBC regarding planning processes and Community Council representations. Concerns were noted in relation to application 26/00647/FUL at Peebles Autocentre, particularly flood risk, environmental impact and proximity to the Eddleston Water. Other local applications (retail, café, residential alterations, signage, tree works and EV infrastructure) were reviewed with no action required.

Updates were also provided on wind farm proposals at Leithenwater, Scawd Law and Cloich Forest, with ongoing concerns regarding landscape, biodiversity, golden eagle populations and environmental assessments, alongside implications of recent court decisions on renewable developments and grid connections. Previously reported applications were noted as approved, stalled, or removed, and it was confirmed that work has recommenced at Horsbrugh North, Cardrona under new ownership.

During discussion, S Coe raised concern that reference to the Unified Statement on renewable energy and comments by Callum Kerr MSP had not been formally agreed by PCC and should not be treated as an established position. While supporting some of the broader strategic issues raised, he considered the Statement flawed. Members discussed the complexities of renewable energy development, including grid capacity, storage and cumulative impacts. It was noted that survey feedback did not support signing the Unified Statement, although views remain divided and further discussion is required. M Marshall confirmed that planning reports represent the views of the community council once adopted at each meeting and hence the importance of review. The recommendation to endorse Callum Kerr MSP's statement will be removed from the current planning report.

Members agreed further dialogue would be beneficial. It was agreed to write to Callum Kerr MSP and invite him to a future meeting to discuss renewable energy policy and infrastructure, and to provide further information through a future Peebles Life article.

Peebles Community Trust: The report from M Bruce was circulated in advance. He noted that the AGM was quorate and successful, although members were unable to view the full premises at 70 High Street due to outstanding safety certification. Work continues on building matters, including gas certification and clarification of water supply arrangements, with Scottish Water due to inspect. New window signage has been installed, and assistance was requested to discourage unauthorised parking in the Cuddyside car park, which will be formally designated for staff and deliveries. Wider Trust and umbrella group activities continue to progress well, and board members were invited to raise queries at the next meeting.

M Bruce addressed a comment describing the premises as "just another junk shop", emphasising the need to recognise the Trust's wider work and impact. Key achievements for 2024/25 include approximately £65k income from the reuse hub and additional rental income, all reinvested locally, with around £100k committed to property development, including £80k for the new headquarters. Further activity includes regeneration of derelict sites and investment in woodland management (£30k), supporting long-term community benefit and future income generation. The report was positively received, with members acknowledging the Trust's significant contribution to the town.

Councillors' Reports: In **Cllr Begg's** absence, the Chair reported progress on local matters including referral of damage to the High Street BT payphone for repair and ongoing work with residents at Eliot's Park. Engagement has continued through councillor surgeries, with updates on the Rose Park wall and path. Recent community activity included the Peebles Community Festival and recognition of Bonnie Peebles' 20 years of volunteering. Positive use of the Eddleston Water path was noted, alongside updates on local organisations including the Eastgate Theatre (seeking volunteer ushers), the John Buchan Story Museum and the Drill Hall, which is preparing for its 125th anniversary.

Cllr Douglas reported a well-attended Drill Hall AGM and ongoing work regarding Live Borders. He highlighted concerns over an underspend of approximately £5.39m in the Affordable Housing Supply Programme and the need for improved planning and delivery. He also noted local developments including a successful Gaelic playgroup, delays in wider Gaelic provision, and ongoing wind farm activity, including grid and planning issues.

Cllr Pirone provided an update on parking and traffic issues at Peebles High School, confirming that concerns have been logged, contractor responses requested, and police enforcement involved. The parking plan is under review, with discussions ongoing while the site remains under construction. Communication with parents continues and further engagement with senior council officers is planned. She also noted progress on education support, resolution of a business rates query, and other local environmental and planning matters.

Cllr Small reported on Destination Tweed proposals at Haylodge Park, including tree removal with compensatory planting, and progress on the Neidpath Tunnel project. It is expected that the project lead will attend a future meeting to outline proposals.

Cllr Tatler highlighted progress on path works and landscaping at the Baptist Church site, along with forthcoming parking changes and potential funding for High Street bus stop improvements. He raised concerns regarding damage to sports pitches at Whitestone Park and confirmed discussions on alternative marking methods. He also noted the lack of a coordinated voice for sport locally and the intention to establish a SCIO, requiring an independent lead.

Cllr Thomson reported on grant funding, prioritisation of local projects and issues raised at a recent surgery, including parking and speeding in Rose Park, which she will follow up with Police. She noted discussions on access at Jedderfield Farm, the food growing strategy (including potential school sites), and ongoing work on the Tweedgreen pavilion. A proposal for Kingsmeadows toilets is under consideration, with a meeting to be arranged. Campervan provision is also under review. She confirmed that Common Good parking income arrangements have been resolved, with funds now correctly allocated going forward.

Treasurer's report: The Treasurer submitted apologies and no report was presented.

Chambers Institution Trust: The report had been circulated. The design team has completed RIBA Stage 4 technical design work, which is now being cost-checked ahead of preparation for tendering of the main works. Construction remains programmed to start on 26 November 2026, with completion expected by 15 December 2027. Enabling works have been agreed, including opening-up works and removal of the existing lift, and are due to commence shortly subject to acceptance of the SB Contracts tender. Further surveys, accessibility review work, and Stage 4 review sessions are ongoing to support progression to the next stage. Funding discussions continue, with Phase 1 match funding expected from South of Scotland Enterprise and the Heritage Lottery Fund, although securing match funding remains a key risk. The overall budget remains at £4.662m, with costs reported as currently within budget. Public consultation feedback for Phase 2 has been overwhelmingly positive. Finalisation of the feasibility study and business plan is underway to support future fundraising and development of Phase 2 proposals. The Friends of the Chambers Institution continue to grow membership, with an initial members' meeting expected in October and plans to appoint additional trustees in due course. They are actively seeking new members (Friends), with application forms available for those wishing to join. A specialist conservation consultant will be appointed to assess the War Memorial stonework and provide recommendations for repair and conservation. Key risks remain match funding, procurement timelines, and coordination of approvals and surveys, although the project remains on programme for main works to commence in November 2026.

Peebles in Bloom: The Secretary distributed block allocations and judging/valuation sheets to members. Members were asked to notify the Secretary or G Macdonald if they are unable to cover their allocated block. Thanks were recorded for raffle donations received.

AOB

Naming of Housing Development : Horsbrugh Ford. A vote was taken on proposed names for the new housing development at Horsbrugh Ford. It was noted that clarification is required on the correct spelling of “Horsbrugh/Horsburgh”, and the Secretary will confirm this.

The top three preferred names were: 1. Nether Horsbrugh Toll, 2. Horsbrugh Toll, 3. Castle Hill View

Christmas Tree Funding: It was noted that Scottish Borders Council will no longer fund Christmas trees for local towns, although they will continue to erect them. This change was reported as delivering savings of approximately £13,000.

A discussion took place regarding the implications for local communities, including the expectation that towns may now need to source and fund their own trees and coordinate arrangements locally. Concerns were raised about the availability of volunteers and the capacity required to take this on, alongside wider pressures on community organisations.

Alternative approaches were suggested, including community-led supply, potential use of living or planted trees for future years, and the use of artificial trees, although issues such as storage were noted. It was also acknowledged that some smaller communities already manage their own arrangements.

It was agreed that further consideration is needed as to how coordination and delivery will be managed locally going forward.

Microgrant Scheme – Drill Hall Application: A discussion took place regarding a request under the microgrant scheme funded through wind farm monies. It was noted that a £5,000 per year budget has been allocated for microgrants, with the scheme now ready to be launched following agreement of the application process and documentation with Foundation Scotland. The application form and guidance circulated by M Marshall for use by applicants was approved.

An application had been received from the Drill Hall seeking £500 towards a plaque marking its 125th anniversary. Members also noted that the microgrant scheme includes limits of up to £400 for individuals, with a maximum of £1,000 for groups.

It was agreed that grants should be awarded in advance rather than retrospectively. Following discussion, a vote was taken and a contribution of £300 was agreed, with one vote against. Additional comments were made regarding the limited value of the overall fund in relation to wider community demands.

D Ashmole reported that the “People’s Emergency Briefing” film was shown at the Eastgate Theatre last month and was well received. It will be made available online later this month, and members were encouraged to view it.

Cllr Thomson, as Chair of the Common Good Sub Committee, provided an update on the Common Good Sub Committee meeting held on 10 June 2026, with particular reference to matters relating to the Men’s Shed and the Depot lease.

It was reported that representatives from the Men’s Shed requested that a private business item be taken in public session; however, this was not possible under Standing Orders as it related to third-party financial information. Cllr Thomson confirmed a commitment to arrange either a separate meeting or an extraordinary meeting of the Sub Committee, and noted that officers have been asked to progress outstanding information and arrange a face-to-face meeting as soon as possible.

Cllr Thomson outlined the background to the ongoing situation, including delays in progressing the lease of the Depot, loss of anticipated income to the Common Good, and the original basis of the lease

agreement at below market rent reflecting the condition of the property. She also summarised the sequence of engagement to date, including planning application arrangements, temporary access agreements, survey work (including asbestos-related works), and subsequent discussions held with officers and the Men’s Shed regarding potential options, including purchase proposals which would require formal detail and wider consultation.

It was confirmed that the Common Good’s position remains to continue working with the Men’s Shed to seek a resolution and potential way forward, recognising the mutual benefits of reaching agreement.

A full copy of Cllr Thomson’s statement is available on the PCC website.

A Mackenzie raised concern regarding the proposed electricity pylons in the Borders and queried why PCC had not yet expressed a view. It was agreed that the matter would be placed on the agenda for the next meeting for further discussion.

M Bruce expressed significant frustration regarding the ongoing delays in resolving matters relating to the Depot and the Men’s Shed, referring to a prolonged period of approximately 2.5 years. He stated that, in his view, the matter should have been capable of resolution within a much shorter timeframe and raised concern about the nature of interactions between parties becoming increasingly adversarial.

He questioned the decision to consider aspects of the discussion in private session, noting that public consultation had previously taken place in relation to the future use of the Depot, with a reported majority in favour of use by the Men’s Shed. He further commented on perceived loss of potential rental income and suggested that the issue should be resolved in line with public views.

The Chair indicated uncertainty as to why the matter had been discussed in closed session.

I Dempster confirmed that the Guildry’s inaugural award for a young person has been awarded to Jess Mackenzie. Congratulations were extended to her on this achievement.

The meeting ended at 2115hrs.

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

..... Chairman

..... Dated