

January 2017 Peebles Community Trust Report

We have a busy programme ahead for 2017, with a focus on advancing the purchase and development of the March Street Mill site, securing a funded position to take forward the Peebles Town Team, and financing completion of the Peebles Whole Town Master Plan.

March Street Mill site

Consultants (SKS Scotland in association with John Gilbert architects) have been contracted to undertake the feasibility of acquiring part of the March Street Mill site for development as a Community / Enterprise Hub, and are on the job. Their findings are due to be delivered in early March.

The owners of the former March Street Mill site are preparing an application for outline planning permission – expected to be lodged shortly.

In recent communications the owners are less enthusiastic of the community initiative than hitherto as they seek to arrive at a development formula that serves their best interests. Their concern is that they need someone to take on the site as a whole, and not just bits of it – and see the community proposals as unhelpful in this regard.

This is not new to us, and in response we have for some months been working to bring together a number of parties to explore the possibility of raising a combined bid for the site. To this end we are meeting Hub SE, SBC Capital Projects team and the Scottish Borders Housing Association to take forward Hub SE's proposal to undertake a Master Planning and Viability Study for the site as a whole, preparatory to packaging a bid for the site. The first of these meetings is scheduled for next week.

Fund raising and expanding community support

We continue to explore a range of routes to securing support and funding to take forward the Peebles Town Action Plan, and particularly the establishment of the Peebles Town Team. Amongst these efforts are representation of the town at conferences and workshops, development and submission of funding applications to various schemes, and working with the CAN DO Places project.

In the latter context, we are looking to update the short video developed on the work of the PCT and its efforts to develop a Community / Enterprise Hub, and to raise the profile of the particular development pressures faced by Peebles through a focused CAN DO Places conference (watch this space).

Peebles Community Trust looking to recruit new talent

As part of our strategy to spread the load as our activities step up a gear, we are looking to fill a number of key posts – membership secretary, webmaster, communications secretary, treasurer. These are volunteer positions, with expected inputs ranging from a few hours a month to commitments of two or three afternoons or evenings per month.

They come at a time when we are re-vamping and simplifying our website (in progress), and regularising our communications (Facebook, email and website – underway):

- The post of membership secretary is just that – keeping the address lists up to date and organising members of the board to collect annual subscriptions (£1).
- Webmaster does not require knowledge of websites, but rather involves making sure that news items, communications and relevant electronic items are made available for posting to the website. We already have a web design wizard that does all the tricky stuff.

- The communications secretary is to administer and coordinate PCT communications – a mix of identifying what needs to be done, when it needs to be done, and who is to produce material.
- The position of treasurer is not overly onerous (PCT activities involve relatively few transactions, though this is likely to increase over time), but does require a basic familiarity with accounting; our secretary currently undertakes the treasurer's function and is there to train in the new treasurer.

If you would like to talk through any of these positions, please contact our secretary on myriam@PeeblesCommunity.org, or phone 01721 729839.