



# Community Council of the Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

## Minute of the 228th Monthly Meeting of the Community Council of the Royal Burgh of Peebles and District held in the Old Council Chamber, Chambers Institution, Peebles on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2016

Present: C. Carleton, C. Forsyth, S. Haslam, A. MacKenzie, G. Mackie, L. Hayworth, R. Tatler (Chairman), J. Shearer, E. Smith and A. Snoddy

In attendance: SBC Councillors W. Archibald, S. Bell, G. Garvie (until 8 pm) and K. Cockburn, L. Crichton (Minute Secretary), S. Dubé (interim Minute Secretary from February 2016), PC D. Sorrell and PS D. Marker

1. **Presentation:** S. Haslam of Peeblesshire Youth Trust, D. Hodson of Tweeddale Youth Action and G. White of Peebles CAN gave a presentation about these three charitable organisations. They each deal with a different age group of young people in the Peeblesshire area. For more information and how to get involved please contact the persons above.

The Chairman, R. Tatler thanked the representatives of the organisations for a very enlightening presentation and conveyed the community's gratitude for doing such an excellent and important job among the youth of the area. It was agreed that the Community Council will keep in touch with the organisations and R. Tatler offered them the use of the Community Council's social media as another avenue to inform the community of their activities if they so wished.

2. **Open Forum:** Ian Gordon, on behalf of the residents of Dean Park, raised the matter of an Indian restaurant and bar which is to replace a café at the corner of Dean Park and Northgate possibly in February. The residents strongly object to the restaurant opening in this conservation area, and are concerned there will be an increase in traffic and parking in the area, causing in general more disturbance and creating also potentially anti-social behaviour at nights.

The Community Councillors were not aware of such plans but C. Carleton commented that as the premises were already Class 3 category then they can change from café to restaurant without further planning permission. L. Hayworth suggested the residents contacted the Licensing Board to submit their objections as the new restaurant and bar would have to apply for licensing permits. C. Carleton encouraged the residents of Dean Park to communicate their basis of objection to Scottish Borders Council Planning Committee and also agreed to have a look at the matter at the Community Council Planning Committee's next meeting.

**ACTION: C. Carleton**

Cllr Archibald who is the Chairman of the Licensing Board commented that there were currently more licensing premises in Peebles North than anywhere in the Borders. He also noted that there would still be many stages for the restaurateur to go through before they got the go ahead and encouraged the residents to contact Jackie Wilson and Ian Tunnah at the Scottish Borders Council to get further advice.

The Chairman, R. Tatler thanked Ian Gordon for raising the issue and promised to come back to the matter at a later meeting.

3. **Apologies:** F. Dalgleish, J. Crawley, M. Durkin, L. Morrison, K. Rand, Cllrs C. Bhatia and G. Logan

4. **SBC Councillors:** The Chairman, R. Tatler invited Cllr Garvie to speak at this stage as Cllr Garvie had to leave before the end of the meeting.

Cllr Garvie read out an email he had received prior to the meeting about the distribution of the Scottish Government's grants for flood victims, the details of which were:

- A flat rate grant of £1,500 for all flood affected households, businesses, community groups (such as rugby clubs etc.), or charitable organisations in the local authority area.
- A flat rate grant of £3,000 (in addition to the £1,500 above) for businesses where there is evidence that their ability to trade has been severely impacted by flooding.

The flat rate grants above can be increased at the local authority's discretion if it is merited in individual cases, subject to ensuring that, for businesses, it does not breach State Aid Rules. Scottish Borders Council will issue a general press release on 15 January and open the claims pages on the SBC website which will allow the public to start claiming funds immediately.

R. Tatler requested the email to be passed on for the Community Council to put up on its social media pages and Cllr Garvie agreed to do so. **ACTION: Cllr Garvie**

5. **Changes in the Community Council Office Bearers:** The Chairman, R. Tatler thanked the resigning Minute Secretary L. Crichton for all her efforts. He introduced the new interim Minute Secretary Steve Dubé who was duly appointed to the post. R. Tatler also welcomed Chris Forsyth who was formally co-opted as a new Community Councillor.

6. **Minute of Meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015:** The acceptance of the minutes was proposed by E. Smith and seconded by L. Hayworth. The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman, R. Tatler.

7. **Flooding in Peebles and District on 30 December 2015:** The Chairman, R. Tatler noted that several Community Councillors had taken part in clearing up after the flooding along with many other volunteers. Water levels had risen very rapidly which is a great concern as nobody knew yet why. R. Tatler had written a letter to Peeblesshire News as the Chairman of the Community Council to thank everyone for their great support and efforts in the difficult circumstances. R. Tatler opened the floor for general discussion.

J. Shearer told of her experience of getting flooded and thanked everyone for the great help she had received. A. Snoddy commented that she and her family had been evacuated but thankfully her home was not flooded. Cllr Garvie felt that there were issues around Scottish Water's management of Talla and Fruid Reservoirs. Cllr Garvie said that he will check with SBC that Scottish water's only responsibility regarding the reservoirs is to provide drinking water for Edinburgh.

**ACTION: Cllr Garvie**

R. Tatler noted the letters Bill Elliot of Scottish Water had circulated providing reassurance that Scottish Water does not release any water from the reservoirs before or during heavy rainfalls. J. Shearer proposed to have the letters published in the Peeblesshire News. It was noted that these letters had not been circulated with the Tweeddale Councillors and it was agreed that A. Snoddy would send copies to the councillors.

**ACTION: A. Snoddy**

C. Carleton commented that unless something out of the ordinary was found out when data was being analysed to demonstrate what happened following the flooding it should be understood that Scottish Water did not release water during the extreme weather. Cllr Bell noted that some water from St Mary's Loch (which is managed by SBC and not Scottish Water) in the Yarrow Valley had been released slowly in the days preceding Storm Frank which increased its capacity to hold rain water when the storm arrived (under the Selkirk Flood Protection Scheme). He suggested that maybe the reporting of this had caused misunderstanding among residents in Peebles.

A Snoddy commented that there had been mixed messages in her housing estate where some householders were advised to move valuables upstairs while others were told to evacuate their property. Cllr Cockburn was very surprised to hear this as he felt that J. Fraser/Scottish Borders Council had co-ordinated the operations very well.

Overall it was stated that everyone had been very helpful around the exceptional circumstances and R. Tatler wished to record the community's appreciation towards the residents, local resilient group, rescue teams, SBC council workers and officers and everyone else who helped and supported during and after the flooding. R. Tatler noted that there was one resilience group in Peebles for Tweed Green but no other groups but that the Callants were looking into creating a new one. Cllr Garvie has thanked all council employees for their efforts during and after the event. A Snoddy agreed to let SBC Cllrs know as and when a debriefing meeting is held to discuss the flooding.

**ACTION: A Snoddy**

#### 8. Matters Arising:

- **Green Dog Walking Scheme – an update:** A. Snoddy reported that Kathleen Marshall had put out pledge sheets & bags in both vet practices in Peebles as well as in the library and the Bridge Office to encourage dog owners to sign up to clearing up after their dogs. She will also visit each school in Peebles. PC D. Sorrell inquired if the new scheme had been publicised and A. Snoddy promised to liaise with K. Marshall to do so.

**ACTION: A. Snoddy**

- **Borders Community Empowerment Conference 21 November 2015 – a report:** R. Tatler and L. Hayworth had attended the meeting about the new legislation passed in July 2015 to empower communities. They reported that although the legislation was in place the guidelines had still not been published, making it difficult to understand clearly how the legislation will be implemented. However, the new legislation is considered very encouraging and it will be interesting to see how it will impact Community Councils in the future.
- **Scottish Civic Trust Annual Conference 24 November 2015 – a report:** S. Haslam reported that her husband had unfortunately not managed to finish the report yet but it will be circulated by email later.

**ACTION: S. Haslam**

- **Digital Engagement Seminar 20 November 2015 – a report:** R. Tatler, L. Hayworth and A. Snoddy had attended but it had not been considered very productive although it did have an interesting tie-in with community empowerment. Peebles Community Council is ahead of many other Community Councils in the Scottish Borders in the matter of digital engagement with the local community.
- **Scottish Rural Parliament Event 24 November 2015:** No one had attended this from the Community Council so there was no report.
- **Torchlit Procession:** The event held on 31 December had been an uplifting experience despite the weather and the flooding the day before. S. Haslam noted that £700 had been raised for charities (Peeblesshire Youth Action, Round Table, Lothian 4x4 Response & Mountain Rescue) through the selling of the torches.
- **Tree roots affecting road round Cademuir:** This will be discussed at another meeting when Cllr Bhatia will be present.

9. **Police Report:** Circulated. The Police had worked very closely together with partner agencies around the flooding to make sure everyone was safe. The local officers continue to give attention to parking in the town and over the past month **17 parking tickets** had been issued, There had been **4 anti-social behaviours** and **1 drink driving incident**. PC D. Sorrell reported that a shop watch scheme would hopefully soon be up and running in Peebles (shop keepers would have contact numbers of other shop keepers in town to be able to quickly pass on messages in case of incidents/burglaries etc.). PC D. Sorrell highlighted the careful use of social media when identifying oneself around e.g. posting photos with mountain bikes etc. as this has been noted to have encouraged thefts in the area.

L. Hayworth inquired about the response times to incidents and PS D. Marker replied that although there had previously been problems due to manning levels these were currently much better. Cllr Archibald noted that underage drinking and littering was happening in Venlaw Woods. PC D. Sorrell commented that the Police were aware of this. Peebles Gutterbluids used to take care of tidying up there but do not do so any longer. S. Haslam proposed that D. Hodson/Tweeddale Youth Action be approached to ask if they were prepared to do so. This was agreed.

**ACTION: S. Haslam**

R. Tatler reported that the Police had responded to concerns about speeding at Neidpath Corner. A. Snoddy reported that PC D. Sorrell had given attention to speeding along Kingsmeadows Road and would continue to do so. Following an incident where a pupil had been knocked down by a vehicle near Peebles High School the police will be liaising with the school to remind pupils of road safety. Also a youth who had thrown eggs at a car had been caught and charged.

10. **Chairman's report:** The points the Chairman intended to raise would be covered by Agenda items.

11. **SBC Councillors** (continued from Item 4):

- **Cllr Cockburn** said we need to know how to mitigate flooding in the future, and requested any relevant information be passed on. He will liaise with A. Snoddy to provide the address to which the comments can be sent.

**ACTION: Cllr Cockburn**

Cllr Cockburn declared an interest in the 3G Pitch as he is a trustee of the Borders Sport and Leisure Trust.

- **Cllr Archibald** noted with gratitude the support given also by other emergency services from outwith the Borders at the time of the flooding.  
Cllr Archibald attended the opening of a new housing development at Standalane Way. He noted that there were 100 applicants for the 15 affordable houses in the development.  
Cllr Archibald commented that the council was currently considering the budget and that there are no plans to scrap the council tax freeze in the Borders.
- **Cllr Bell** commented that during the flooding water came up through the drains on Kingsmeadows Road and that the valving of the drains needed to be investigated.  
Cllr Bell reported on the discussion around the LDP at the last council meeting in December. Although in support of the revised draft LDP the council had agreed to write a letter to the Reporter expressing serious concern on the approach taken by the Reporter on renewable energy policy and housing land provision as well as on the time taken in evaluating the plan.

12. **Reports for approval:**

- **Treasurer's report:** Circulated. Nothing special to report.
- **Bonnie Peebles:** There had not been another meeting since December 2015.

13. **Planning Report:** A draft report had been circulated. The responses to planning applications had been put on the Community Council website. There being no adverse comments the recommendations as posted were approved.

- **Flooding:** The subject was covered in item 7 but C. Carleton added that for the future it was important to review the flood defences, preparations for possible flooding, the response mechanisms in place, how to deal with the flooding events themselves and with the aftermath of flooding events.
- **Local Development Plan (LDP):** The communities will have an opportunity to make further comments on the revised draft LDP. It is assumed the new LDP will come into force around March 2016.
- **Rosetta Holiday Park:** The applicant has now submitted costings and has stated that if they were required to build 25 % affordable housing it would result in loss of profit and the client would not proceed with the application. The application is expected to go in front of the council's Planning Committee possibly in March. The Community Council has written to the council objecting strongly to any weakening of the affordable housing condition. Cllr Cockburn commented that he will definitely attend the Planning Committee meeting on this matter and that it was important to retain the condition of affordable housing.
- **Chambers Institution:** The consultants will be attending the Open Forum event at the Burgh Hall on Saturday, 16 January 2016.

- **Open Forum Event 16 January 2016:** The draft Peebles Town Action Plan will be presented at the Open Forum and C. Carleton urged everyone to read and comment on it (can be downloaded from Peebles Community Trust website).
- **3G Pitch:** C. Carleton noted that the application was likely to go in front of council Planning Committee in February or March. R. Tatler commented that as the subject had attracted so much interest in the local community he would expect the Tweeddale Councillors to attend that meeting. Cllr Cockburn confirmed that he would be attending.
- **March Street Mill:** C. Carleton asked what could be done here to retain the site for economic use? Cllr Cockburn emphasised that it would be excellent if the site can be retained as employment land and C. Carleton noted that the Peebles Community Trust have written to the owners to discuss strategies going forward. Cllr Bell commented that it was designated as employment land and he did not see the council changing the use for the land.

R. Tatler noted that the former Halyrood school had gone to a closing date (26 January) and that it was important that this site was kept as an economic asset. It was agreed that the Community Council will write to that effect to the council.

**ACTION: R. Tatler**

R. Tatler noted that this matter will be kept on the agenda.

#### 14. Any Other Business:

- **Report from Community Cllr Eddie Smith:** E. Smith commented on the opening of Costa Coffee the following week but noted that there were still empty premises on the High Street. He also mentioned dog fouling issues in Victoria Park.
- **Community Council Achievements and Success:** A. Snoddy had checked with the council why trees had been felled behind Cocoa Black and had been told it was because the trees were diseased. She had reported a damaged pot-hole on Glen Road to Scottish Water but this has not yet been repaired. She had also replied to a letter from a resident in South Park and written to the Peeblesshire News to remind people of the comment boxes which are situated in the library, Post Office and Spar shop but this had unfortunately not been published. S. Haslam reported that the next Skate Park meeting would be held the following week and she would circulate the minutes.
- **Venlaw Community Woodland:** A. Snoddy and L. Hayworth will attend the meeting which will be held on 26 January and will circulate a report.
- **Peebles Community Trust:** The Trust has been manning a pop-up shop next to Veitch's since 9 January for a week to promote the Open Forum event on 16 January and the work of the Trust, as well as to canvas local opinion on issues affecting Peebles and to encourage membership of and active involvement in the work of the Trust.
- **Scottish Civic Trust My Place Award:** It was agreed to put forward two suggestions, the Mural and the Tweed Green, for the nominations of the My Place Award.

**ACTION: A. Snoddy**

12. **Date for next meeting:** Thursday 11th February 2016 at 7.30 pm at the Burgh Chambers.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm.