



Community Council of the Royal Burgh of Peebles & District

Minutes of the 229th 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 11th February, 2016

Present: C. Carleton, J. Crawley, C. Forsyth, G. Mackie, L. Hayworth, K. Rand, R. Tatler (Chairman), J. Shearer, E. Smith and A. Snoddy.

In attendance: SBC Councillors W. Archibald, C. Bhatia, and G. Logan, S. Dubé (interim Minute Secretary) and PC D. Sorrell.

- 1. Presentation:** Neil Dalgleish of Hillside Agency gave a summary of the Tour o' the Borders cycling events of 2015 including the TweedLove festival. There was increased interest in the area and this year the events calendar begins with the Endura Whyte Vallejajah challenge on March 26 and 27. There are 30 events over nine days in the TweedLove Scotland festival from May 14 to 30, including an international-level Enduro race. The Tour o' the Borders takes place on August 7 and the Whyte Endura Scottish Open Championship takes place on August 20 and 21. A new event this year is the Gran Fonduro on September 10, a mixture of road and country cycling. TweedLove is now the biggest bike festival and the Tweed Valley is "the best cycling destination" in the UK. Mr Dalgleish said TweedLove added £1.1 million to the local economy and Tour o' the Borders added £500,000. An online survey of riders showed 95.4% rated the organisation of the TweedLove festival as good or better and 88.4% planned to return to the area as a direct result of the event. There was just one complaint about road closures. A new sponsor for 2016 is Shimano, one of the world's biggest bike companies, who would bring their cars and service vehicles to TweedLove this year. There were no negative responses from Peebles businesses and three positive ones. Arrangements would be similar this year with slightly less road closures. G. Mackie asked about contraflow working towards Whitehaugh and Kittlegarry. Mr Dalgleish said Kingsmeadows Road would be one-way traffic with manned signals or traffic lights, but would always remain open. Mr Dalgleish said they were working to solve issues. He accepted there would be inconvenience for some people but some people don't want to accommodate the event at all. Councillor Archibald said he had heard of some people threatening to demonstrate and shut the road. The police would be present and would prevent any nonsense. Councillor Bhatia said one of the main concerns is the time of year TweedLove takes place and asked whether it would be moved. Mr Starkey said they would consider this. He would work with the roads department and events unit of SBC to improve matters, but any time of year presented problems. The Chairman R. Tatler thanked Mr Dalgleish and remarked that the events were extremely important economically.
- 2. Apologies for Absence:** S. Haslam, F. Dalgleish, M. Durkin, A. Mackenzie, L. Morrison, SBC Cllrs K. Cockburn, G Garvie and S. Bell.
- 3. Minutes of the Meeting of Thursday 14th January 2016:** Acceptance was proposed by G. Mackie and seconded by C. Forsyth. The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.
- 4. Matters Arising from the Minutes:**

Secretary: Mrs Anne Snoddy

c/o The Bridge Tweeddale, School Brae, High Street, PEEBLES, EH45 8AL

Tel: 01721 722882 email: secretary@ccrbpeebles.co.uk

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- **Flooding:** Councillor Archibald gave notice that the issue will be discussed at the Tweeddale Area Forum at the Council Offices in Rosetta Road at 6.30pm on 2nd March. Prior to that meeting the SBC Councillors will visit Talla Reservoir. J. Shearer said she had attended a meeting for affected residents this week and would attend the forum. Peebles Community Council have invited John Swanson of Peebles Resilience Group to speak to us about the flooding on 30th December at our meeting on 10th March.
 - **Green Dog Walking Scheme:** This is in hand.
 - **Scottish Civic Trust Annual Conference:** No report to hand
 - **Tree roots affecting roads around Cademuir:** Councillor C. Bhatia said she would chase this matter up with Jason Hedley of SBC, although she was not sure what could be done short of felling the trees. L. Hayworth said 150 metres of road would have to be stripped and re-laid.
 - **Venlaw Community Woodland Extraordinary Meeting to dissolve the group 26th January 2016:** The report has been circulated. The money left over in VCW's bank account has been transferred to Peebles Community Council with the stipulation that it is used for 'environmental' projects only.
 - **Scottish Civic Trust My Place Awards:** Chairman R. Tatler said an application had been made to have the new Peebles Mural considered but it had not been shortlisted.
5. **SBC Councillors:**
- **Cllr Archibald** said Jason Hedley would produce a comprehensive report on the **March Street Mill** area.
He referred to the **SBC Budget** that had been approved that day. Local taxes would not increase and he pointed out that Scottish Borders had the 4th lowest Council Tax in mainland Scotland. An additional £500,000 was available to spend on roads, "which should deal with quite a lot of potholes". There was £400,000 for flood defences, mostly in Hawick. A final solution for Dirtpot Corner was included in the budget. The Great Tapestry project was approved by 21 votes to 10.
First Bus had approached the council asking for space for their buses. The company cooperated by extending the X62 route to Borders General Hospital but they wanted space to set down and pick up passengers. He suggested they could use the Edinburgh Road car park. Something needed to be done because of the congestion caused at the bus stop outside the Post Office.
 - **Cllr Logan** said the SBC Conservative group was opposed to the Great Tapestry project. It might bring some economic benefit to some places, but not to Peebles. He noted that the main A72 road would be closed at Dirtpot Corner on Sunday February 14 when some trees would be removed.
 - **Cllr Bhatia** drew attention to some items in the SBC budget including the 10-year £309m capital budget, the £52m in 2016-17 for social care and health and the additional funding for 3G pitches in Hawick and Peebles.
Cllr Bhatia had visited staff of **Peebles Nursing Home** after their move to Waverley, Melrose, following the flooding. They are being moved again to Tweedbank and she had met with families and residents of the home. There is assistance available from Scottish Borders Council for anyone who has difficulty visiting friends and relatives in their new location.
She said the **Community Grant Scheme** for Tweeddale is again underspent, as also happened last year. Grants of up to £5,000 are available through a simple process and she could not believe there were no worthy projects in Peebles. The contact at SBC for more information is Jean Robertson. Cllr Bhatia suggested that the Community Council publicise the scheme on their website.
- Action: A. Snoddy**
- There had been a meeting about private water supplies. Cllr Logan said many problems arose from the effects of wind farms. A planning officer was investigating.
Cllr Bhatia drew attention to grants of £1000 available from **Foundation Scotland** for community work.

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She had talked to primary 6 and primary 7 classes at Kingsland Primary School and referred to a High Street survey undertaken by the children about a second bridge. Two years ago most people were against it but now most were in favour, perhaps because of the recent flooding and the reliance of Peebles on one bridge in the town. L. Hayworth noted that direct payment rates for carers were to increase by £2 an hour. Most people working as carers could now see a living wage as a minimum expectation.

J. Crawley raised the issue of a dispute over a high hedge at Venlaw View. He was astonished that SBC charged a fee of £400 for organising a forum to settle the dispute and asked where the money went. Cllr Bhatia said the rate would have been set by the Scottish Government, as are fees for planning applications. Cllr Archibald said it was a mediation service. It was a private site and would take hours of time and be very expensive to reach agreement any other way.

The Chairman R. Tatler and the treasurer G. Mackie had attended the SBC Budget Briefing, and R. Tatler said he thought SBC was doing a fantastic job with the budget given the tight resources available.

6. **Police Report:** PC Diana Sorrell, attending while off duty, reported further bike thefts, one from the High Street on 31st January and £6000 worth of high value mountain bikes from Glentress on 1st February. She warned against proud youngsters taking photos of themselves beside their bikes and effectively advertising them by posting the pictures on social media.

There had been a disturbance reported in Northgate at 1.30am on 23rd January, which officers attended within ten minutes of the call but they found nothing when they arrived.

There had been a theft of the registration plates of a car parked overnight in the Eastgate car park.

PC Sorrell also reported a couple of break-ins, one at West Linton over two nights on 29th and 31st January when thieves smashed a rear conservatory window and stole jewellery; and one in Innerleithen overnight on 19th and 20th January when a patio window was smashed and jewellery taken.

She said police are trying to deal with the parking issue and speeding. E. Smith said speeding was a constant problem that could result in children being knocked down. PD Sorrell advised him to note the vehicle's registration number if possible.

Police were also trying to address the issue of parents parking at school times. Cllr Bhatia requested that police give extra attention to people parking in the bus stop at Eastgate. PC Sorrell said she was aware of the problem. C Forsyth said there was also a problem of cars parking on Tweed Bridge up to the pub and A. Snoddy said cars sometimes parked on the pavement outside the parish church, forcing people to step off and into the road. E. Smith said he saw a similar thing outside Wetherpoons in Northgate. J. Shearer asked if and when cars are allowed to park in School Brae, and PC Sorrell agreed to check.

R. Tatler asked about the progress of the Shopwatch scheme. PC Sorrell said it was up and running, with nearly every trader on board.

7. **Chairman's Report:** R. Tatler referred to the budget briefing of 4th February and again congratulated the SBC Councillors. The annual Bin The Litter day will take place on 20 or 27 March and he asked for volunteers to take charge on the day. K. Rand and C. Forsyth agreed to do so. The Peebles Gypsy Glen Hill Race will take place this year on 18th May.

Action: K. Rand and C. Forsyth

R Tatler visited Halyrude Primary School and years 6 and 7 at Kingsland Primary School to speak about the new Peebles Mural and to hand out information leaflets. The children were very interested, and the Chairman plans to address 2 assemblies about the project at Peebles High School. During discussions with Campbell Wilson, the Rector, R. Tatler raised the issue of litter round the school. They have a Bin It and Win It scheme which rewards pupils who pick up litter with a disc: a number of

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discs can be exchanged for a reward. Mr Wilson will encourage pupils to take part in the Community Council's Bin the Litter project.

8. Reports for Approval

- **Treasurer's report:** Report circulated. G. Mackie reported a small profit from the Mural project. R. Tatler would like to have some more explanatory leaflets printed.

Action: R.Tatler

- **Bonnie Peebles:** Report circulated: The Chairman noted that a planning application has been submitted for the sculpture project to commemorate Olympic champion Scott Brash. It would be made from recycled horseshoes. It may be the case that the four horseshoes worn by the horse when the gold medal was won might be available. The Chairman congratulated the committee for their initiative. He wondered whether Leader funding could be obtained for the project.

9. **Planning Report:** Report circulated. Details of planning applications, including plans, and council and community representations, can be accessed on the SBC eplanning website – <http://eplanning.scotborders.gov.uk/online-applications/>. C. Carlton said only four members had attended the planning committee on 4th February and therefore it was not quorate.

- **Flooding:** It is still planned that a review of the December / January floods, response, aftermath will take place, but no dates fixed as yet. Future flooding and how we deal with it remains a key strategic issue for Peebles.

Review of Scottish Planning: The government has appointed a review panel to undertake a root and branch review of the Scottish planning system. The review has received 390 written submissions, and is now calling for oral evidence. In addition, they are seeking further input via a discussion board on the following topics of interest: 1. Development planning; 2. Housing delivery; 3. Planning for infrastructure; 4. Development management; 5. Leadership, Resourcing and Skills; 6. Community engagement.

Peebles Community Council is preparing short inputs to this debate under a number of the above headings.

Action: Planning Sub Committee

- **Local Development Plan:** The revised draft LDP is progressing through its approvals process. Arising from this, however, is a requirement on SBC to accommodate future land provision for construction of 900+ new houses across the Borders. We are preparing a submission indicating that in our view Peebles has accommodated more than its fair share of new and future housing provision – in the context of the extent of development in Peebles since 2000, and the disproportionate amount of “infill” / “windfall” development that has been consented in recent years.
- **Rosetta Holiday Park:** No further developments to report on this planning application.
- **Glentress Master Plan SPG:** No further information.
- **Chambers Institution:** The consultants are due to report to the Board of the Chambers Institution and to the Tweeddale Area Forum in April.
- **Peebles Community Trust:** Following a successful pop-up shop (125+ visitors) and Open Forum event (100 visitors across the day) in mid-January, feedback has now been incorporated into a slightly re-edited Town Action Plan – available for download at <http://www.peeblescommunity.org/document-type/misc-resource-docs>. The next Open Forum event takes place on Saturday 13th February at the Burgh Hall, with a focus on further development of the Peebles Whole Town Development Framework. The event is open to all, from 10am to 4pm.

Building works

- **3G pitch:** No further developments.
- **March Street Mill:** Discussion with senior management of the owning company indicates that work is currently underway to explore future options for the breakup of the site. Nothing is on or off the table with regard to the site, and they would welcome any proposals the community or community council might wish to submit.

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Given that we are already aware of a number of private and social enterprises looking for premises, there may be an opportunity to package this sort of demand with a community purchase of some of the site.

Peebles is in dire need of further local employment opportunities. This site represents a major development opportunity, but it would be catastrophic if it was simply sold off for conversion to housing. Considerable effort has been made by the owners of this site to sell the businesses as going concerns on this site – but with no success. It is argued that the Peebles community now needs to step in to ensure that the site is retained for economic use, and that the loss of the last of our working woollen mills does not go without some town recognition. It is feasible that all or part of this site could be acquired by the community – for both community and business purposes, but to do so would require considerable commitment and effort from community representatives.

- **Hag Law, Cloich Forest & Kilrubie Windfarms:** No further news on the first two. The Application from Kilrubie Windfarm has been rejected by SBC Planning, and an appeal has now been lodged. L Hayworth said the appeal was because of non-determination, not rejection by SBC, because the application had not been determined within the required timescale. He said the company had an open event in the Barony and said they would not take any action until after the Cloich Forest decision. But they had not moved on Cloich and gone against their statement at the forum, which indicated the kind of company they were. A very strong objection had been submitted by Eddleston Community Council.
- **Edston Quarry:** When the quarry is extended they will start planting trees on terraces with a lake at the bottom. We don't have any issues with that.
- **Hydro Hotel:** Application is for a road in front of the Hydro to service 30 residential units. We have discussed traffic calming and cars parked on the entrance to the Hydro nearest Peebles.
- **Kingsmeadows Steading:** Upgraded into seven cottages and up for sale. New application for two 2-storey houses. Concern from people living in bungalows in Kingsmeadows Gardens about additional traffic in an area where parents drop off children.
- **Mature trees cut down:** We note that trees have been cut down along the Cuddy and in Kingsmeadows Road and will query what authority was in place.
Action: A.Snoddy
- **Indian Restaurant, Northgate:** R. Tatler thought we should raise this matter following the presentation at last month's meeting on behalf of residents of Dean Park, although no planning application is needed. He thanked those who attended last month.
Action: C. Carleton

10. Any Other Business

E. Smith said lights were not working on one side of the bridge. They had been repaired but failed again. He wondered whether the flooding was responsible. Market traders had complained about cars parked in the Edinburgh Road car park all day and they could not get their stalls in. He also expressed concern about shops closing in the High Street. C. Carleton said he had every confidence that the shops will be occupied within six weeks. E. Smith drew attention to the need to provide new backing for the community council notice board.

Action re notice board: A.Snoddy will contact A. Mackenzie

Street Names: A. Snoddy said the Community Council was not required to submit street names for the Violet Bank housing scheme after all.

Pothole outside Spar shop in Springhill Road: A. Snoddy said this had been repaired but only after Scottish Water went there three times before deciding it was not their responsibility. It was repaired by SBC within 24 hours of Scottish Water referring it to them.

Community Council Elections: These take place in May. A. Snoddy said C. Carleton is standing down. There is space for four additional members and the

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Community Council will advertise this.

Action: A.Snoddy

Hustings: R. Tatler said Tim Clancy wanted to organise hustings before the Scottish Parliament election and had asked if the council would chair the event. After a discussion it was decided by seven votes to two with two abstentions to chair the event providing SBC confirms it does not go against any rules.

Action: A. Snoddy

11. **Date for next meeting:** Thursday 10th March at 7.30pm at the Burgh Chambers.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm.