

The Peebles Community Trust

*A sustainable Peebles – strengthening
and improving the community's
physical, economic, social and cultural
infrastructure.*

Things that make Peebles special

- high quality of life of residents
- proximity to Edinburgh
 - very attractive to commuters
 - very attractive for day visitors
- setting – hills and rivers
- intact built heritage at centre of town
- Glentress mountain biking
- walks & refreshments
- Beltane festival
- Common Riding
- Theatre
- independent retailers
- visitor attractions

Peebles has many things going for it

- great natural and locational assets
- very active business community
- innovative and pro-active tourism industry
- very active community of volunteer organisations

- but poor joined-upness – islands of passion, but weak coordinating structures
- and sometimes appears that Peebles is invisible – affluent, and doesn't need to the same support that other less affluent towns need – but this is simply not true

Social & economic backdrop

- SBC and central government funding are going to be ham-strung for the next 10 years, with increasing cutbacks in basic service provision
- communities will necessarily need to take greater responsibility for maintenance of standards and services within their communities
 - long-term provision for the aged and vulnerable is not clear or assured
 - there are real issues concerning expansion of the built footprint of Peebles
 - it is projected that a smaller proportion of retail spend will be directed through town High Streets (<40 per cent) – Peebles businesses will need to fight to maintain a vibrant, attractive and profitable High Street
- Development Trust model well established and recognised conduit for public sector and charitable funders
- but cannot depend on public funding – need to rely instead on mobilising voluntary support and sustainable independent income
- this needs joined up planning and local initiative
- government direct investment in communities reducing, but alternate funding routes on the increase – climate challenge, big lottery, people & communities, LEADER II, sustainable communities, heritage and market towns initiatives, renewables

Examples of what others have done

– over 200 Development Trusts already in operation in Scotland

Innerleithen (2004)

- *Future Innerleithen community action plan*
- *establishment of theme teams*
- *community website*
- *What's On leaflet*
- *town trails leaflet*
- *maintenance of woodland walkways*
- *history of Innerleithen booklet*
- *photographic community archive*

Huntly (2009)

- *Sustainability Plan*
- *feasibility studies on the Huntly Hub, and Retail improvement*
- *Social Needs Assessment*
- *Traffic Management Review*
- *Walking Festival*
- *community renewables - wind turbine, and a microhydro scheme*
- *hosting of North Atlantic Fiddle Convention*

Dunblane (2003)

- *Community Development Plan*
- *Dunblane planning conference and planning survey*
- *community use of Braeport Centre*
- *move for community buy-out of Braeport Centre from Council*
- *community project fund – from windfarm “community benefit”*
- *improving public facilities*
- *improving public spaces*

Needs / wants

bearing in mind that funds and programmes already exist for all of these – just not available now, or here

- core / accelerated funding to establish community focal hub (planning and coordinating town planning and funding)
- core / accelerated funding to establish creative sector coordinator (focus on festivals, but also other visitor-related events)
- the settlement of Peebles is bulging at the seams, with some thorny economic, social and physical planning issues – move Peebles up the list for prioritisation of Town Masterplan / Charrette initiative
- need some programme to help tourism sector upgrade / invest at time when business conditions are against this
- need potential for council to reduce rates on high street premises – at least temporarily
- strengthens capacity to access available funding and **reduces time to get up and running**
- **provides an immediate filip** to visitor / tourism related marketing and events planning
- this gets the ball rolling for **joined-upness**
- tourism related investment programme **improves quality**
- initiate / trigger some form of selective rates relief – **keeps high street vital**

Peebles Community Trust – our local Development Trust

- **owned and managed by the community for the benefit of the community**
- **board elected by and answerable to members**
- **management using open and transparent systems**
- **the idea is not to duplicate but support the activities of other organisations**

Peebles Community Trust – our local Development Trust

- **Board of Trustees**
 - **David Pye (Chair)**
 - **Myriam Baete (Sec)**
 - **John Swanson**
 - **Joe Wilton**
 - **Robin Tatler**

- **Volunteer coordinator**
 - **Crick Carleton**

Immediate priority initiatives

- development of an interactive **website** that will allow residents to input to and debate town developments, set town priorities, and share information
- facilitation of neighbourhood meetings on needs and aspirations, leading to drafting of a **Town Action Plan**
- exploration of how the community might finance the taking into **community ownership of buildings and land** – high street premises, community woodland, allotments, housing land
- Support for development of a **Whole Town Master Plan**, including community engagement and a planning Charrette.

Outputs of earlier workshops

The role of the Community Trust

key function of the Trust
is to champion
community initiatives



Business

Encourage more niche / specialist shops

Raise / obtain funds to purchase empty retail properties – starter units for small businesses with mentor

Empty High St premises

Employment

Jobs for youth

Help fund apprenticeship schemes

Manage parks to improve facilities

Asset Management

Chewing gum and weeds in town centre

Access routes at risk – 3 out of 6 in poor state / closed / at risk of closure

Old Manor Brig falling down

Services / amenities

Improve quality of sports, leisure, playing surfaces

Not enough activities for young people

Community transport

Poor public transport

Tourism

Poor quality local news coverage

Promote visitors / tourists to the town

Better promotion outside Peebles of its festivals

There is no coordinating events officer

Identify projects / initiatives that will enhance the attractiveness of Peebles to visitors

Strategic planning

No plan for development of community infrastructure

Development of Peebles as a tourism hub

Investigate organisation of better local resources – for example tourism, farming, hospitality, heritage

Not making sufficient use of local skills and knowledge – skills audit?

No vehicle for managing community assets / benefit

More house building but infrastructure not increased to match

No community development plan – lack of direction

Finance

Assist fund raising for replacement scout hut

Managing community benefit from green energy – generate local energy

Ownership of community assets

activity
focus
outputs

Externalities

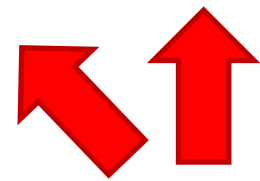
Local needs / priorities overruled by planners

Vulnerable to fuel crisis

High rates and rents

Weak local economy

Reduced council services



Strengths

Focus / function / purpose

community identifies well with groups

strong brand recognition by community

clear statement of purpose

wide public appeal / public interest

strong membership – roll call

strength in numbers – capacity to act

committed committee

good technical knowledge / skills

evident contribution to public good

good website

contribute to civic pride & attract visitors

Form / structure

strong local support

good relationship with funding agencies

clear definition of objectives

Weaknesses

trying to do too much

difficulty communicating with members

poor communication between members

difficulty recruiting younger members

increasing age of officers / members

weak and fragile finances

difficulty adapting to changed conditions

same old faces

narrow volunteer base / population

much of membership may not be active

difficulty recruiting members to board

not enough young people involved

protocol / process not adequately defined

small committee constrains fund-raising

Advice for PCT

ensure not to overlap with existing groups

work with existing groups, not compete

existing groups are good at what they do

groups are only mandated to do so much

there is room for complementary activity

**lessons
learnt from
other
organisations**

be clear about structure and form

be clear about process/protocols

need continuous engagement processes

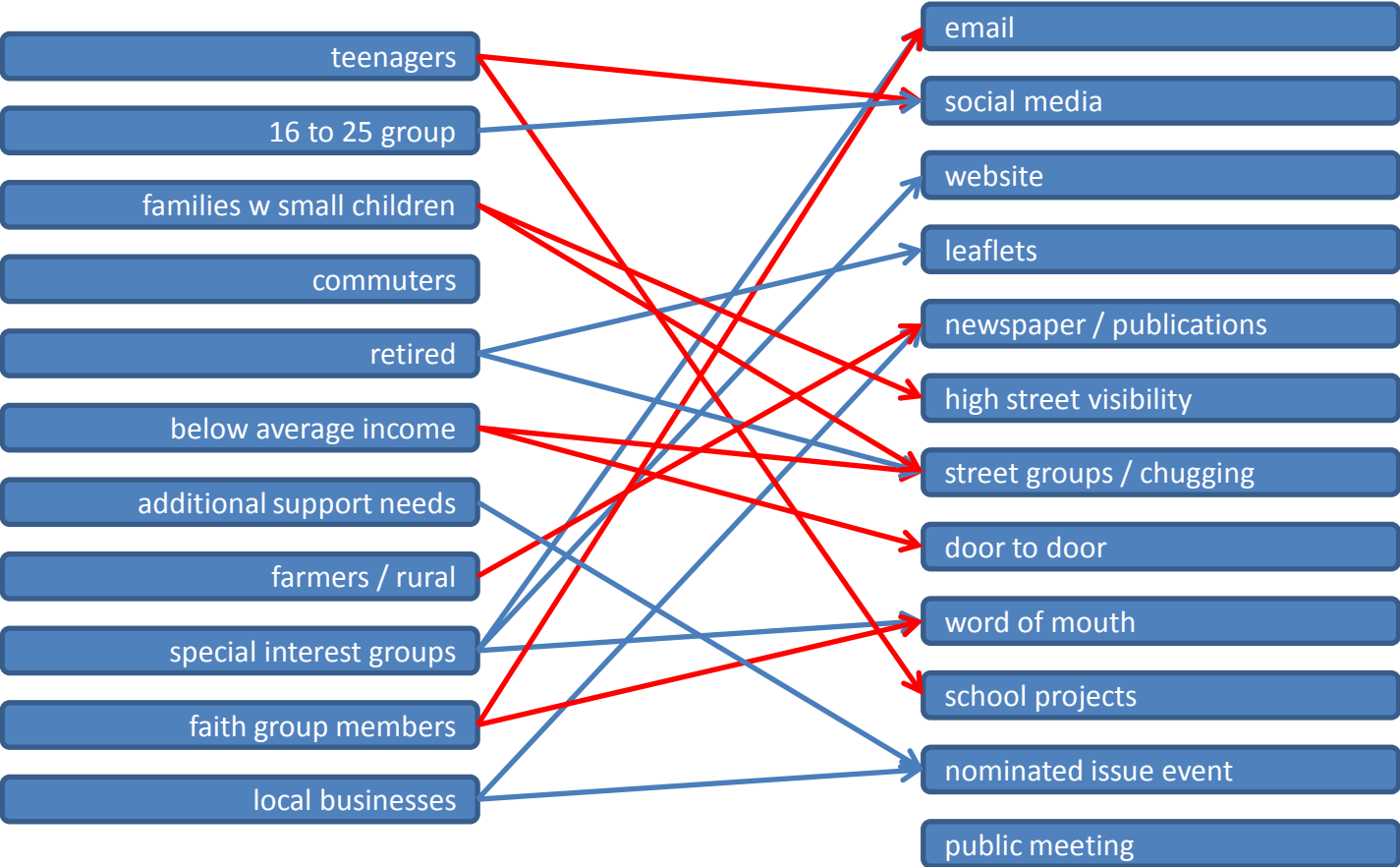
securing funding can always be a problem

target group covered in Peebles (e.g. elderly, youth, different socioeconomic groups, different geographical groups)

link method to target group

feasible methods / ways to get people engaged in the Peebles Community Trust

Engagement outputs



keeping members informed

building membership

participation