



Community Council of the Royal Burgh of Peebles and District

Minute of the 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 2010

Present: W. Barrett, J. Calder, J. Key, A. Kubie, A. MacKenzie, D. Pye (Secretary), G. Rennie, W. Sandland, A. Stewart, J. Swanson, L. Smith, I. Wilson (Chairman), D. Wright, SBC Cllrs: W. Archibald (from 7.30 pm.), C. Bhatia, G. Logan. In attendance: Mr P. Frankland and two other officers from SBC, plus several members of the public.

160.1 **Presentation:** Mr Paul Frankland, Civil Engineering Design Manager with Scottish Borders Council discussed the effects produced by the island in the Tweed just west of Tweed Bridge, Peebles. After the presentation the Chairman invited questions from community councillors:-

- Will the island increase over time? – The gravel source will continue to feed the island, but it is likely that the island will increase in height, but not in width.
- Any work on the island will be carried out before spring. When is spring? – the end of February is probably the deadline. A mammal survey had been carried out at the request of Scottish National Heritage (SNH). This revealed that otters use the island as a temporary base but they do not breed or live on the island so permission has been given for the bushy vegetation and poor quality trees to be removed. There will be no thinning of the canopy.
- The vegetation spoils the view west from the bridge and this diminishes the quality of the experience of visitors to the town. – SNH do not base their decisions on aesthetics.
- The gravel beds in the past were regularly removed by the town council and it has only been allowed to develop into an eyesore with the demise of the town council. Surely its value as a habitat is limited and should the island's growth not be monitored? – the last measurement was done in 2005. Aerial photography will be used to monitor its growth. There is little to be gained by total removal of the island as this will cause instability further downstream and it will just reform over time.

Questions were then invited from the public:-

- The aesthetic value of the area is much diminished by the island in its current state. If the banks can be managed, why can't the island? Regular deposits of stones and sand will encourage more plant growth and the south bank needs active management to prevent flood erosion. – SNH wish the large trunk at the west end to be retained, but some flood debris can be removed.
- Will the bridge be constantly monitored as it would be devastating for the town if the same thing happened as happened in Cumbria last year? – All bridges are regularly inspected by SBC. If the island is removed it could expose the bridge to scour.
- Will a residents' group be organised to help in times of flood? – SBC will support any self-help group in Peebles with training and equipment. The Community Council had a presentation from the Scottish Flood Forum in January and wish to take the formation of a self-help group further.

The chairman concluded by stating that options for pursuing this further would now be considered.

This part of the meeting closed at 7.40 pm.

- 160.2 **Apologies:** J. Pace, N. Scott, R. Tatler, D. Tawse, J. Waldie, SBC Cllrs: N. Calvert, G. Garvie, W. Herd, and WPC V. Hamilton.
- 160.3 **Open Forum:**
- Is there to be an increase in the parking charges in the Edinburgh Road carpark? Cllr. Bhatia replied that charging will remain on Saturdays, but as at present no other days will be charged. All monies collected will be used within the town.
 - Why have SBC stopped issuing free dog poo bags? Cllr. Bhatia said that the council are moving to a zero tolerance attitude towards dog fouling and the funds previously spent on bags would now be spent on wardens and the responsibility for providing bags would rest with the dog owners.
- 160.4 **Minute of Meeting of 14th January 2010:** Acceptance proposed by W. Barrett and seconded by G. Rennie. Approved and signed by the chairman, I. Wilson.
- 160.5 **Police Report:** There was no police presence at the meeting but the monthly newsletter had been circulated and a report had been submitted which the chairman read to the meeting. W. Sandland asked if the reported crime figures were in line with the national average. **Action – I. Wilson**
- 160.6 **Matters arising:**
- 160.6.1 **Pedestrian Crossing in Old Town:** J. Swanson handed round new plans produced by Mr Elliot. Castle Warehouse have been consulted and have no concerns. No parking spaces will be lost, there will no traffic island but there will be 'buildouts'. The chairman requested that the SBC councillors progress this, so that the crossing can be made safe as soon as possible.
- 160.6.2 **Toilet Facilities in Peebles:** Work on the School Brae facilities has now started and the Haylodge Park toilets will be discussed at the next Peebles Common Good Working Group.
- 160.6.3 **Community Council Coffee Morning:** G. Rennie said that there will be a bookstall and tombola, for which items are requested. Helpers to be at Peebles Rugby Club from 9.00 am, 20th February and doors open at 9.30 am.
- 160.6.4 **Kingsmeadows Carpark:** The secretary asked if members had ideas on how to get information to the police sooner than happens at the moment. J. Calder said that the police were now driving past every two hours and that further improvements could be made by installing CCTV cameras and lights. The chairman asked councillors if the redundant lights from Edinburgh Road could be installed in the carpark. Cllr Logan agreed to investigate. **Action – Cllr Logan**
- 160.7 **SBC Councillor Reports:**
- 160.7.1 Cllr Archibald: He had been impressed with how all the SBC staff had responded during the crisis of the bad weather and thought the CC should commend all departments for keeping the Borders working. Not all CC members agreed with this. J. Calder said that no buses ran for three days although the taxis drove without a break, and some ploughs drove down roads without gritting. Cllr. Bhatia said that sometimes the roads had to be ploughed several times before they were clear enough to salt.
- 160.7.2 Cllr Logan: Small businesses could apply for grants with funding up to £4,000.00 on application.
- 160.7.3 Cllr. Bhatia: The new Kingsland School will be opening on 22nd February. Members of the community will be able to have a look around once they have settled in and the CC could hold a meeting there. The chairman had been invited to join the opening parade.

There is to be a re-launch of the SBC dog fouling initiative. Members of the public are asked to report offenders or parts of the town which are persistently fouled to the council. IW said Venlaw Community Woodland is in a very bad state. D. Pye said the SBC wardens are to attend future meetings of the CC.

D. Wright asked if the bollard at the new Kingsland entrance would cause problems for traffic on the main road. No, it will not as it is a long way from the road. The new bollards on the A72 are reflective and when the new street lighting is in operation these will not be a hazard either.

Planning - Venlaw Hill site was now still being challenged in the courts.

- 160.8 **Planning and Development:** Report previously circulated.
- 160.9 **Treasurer's Report:** Current balance is £959.00 but some expenses may be recovered. The yearend projected balance is £400.00. Donald Swanson was approved as independent auditor.
- 160.10 **Committee Reports:**
- 160.10.1 **Bonnie Peebles:** Recent collections, fundraising and donations had raised about £700.00.
- 160.10.2 **Community Projects:** Activity week is scheduled for 16th to 23rd May. An application for lottery funding has been submitted. A decision on whether to run the Peebles in Bloom competition this year has to be made. A car boot sale will probably be held on 25th April.
- 160.10.3 **Common Good:** A report on the meeting with Cllr N. Calvert and Mrs A. Isles has been circulated. Members of the committee attended a meeting in Selkirk, which discussed actions that Selkirk CC had taken to reassign assets to Common Good. A. Kubie had spoken to Cllr. Garvie to request that the CC be permitted to voice an opinion at meetings of the Common Good Working Group, should it feel it necessary. Cllr. Garvie thought that there would be no problem, provided that any opinion expressed was that of the residents of the town and not that of individual council members. A. Kubie had written to Mrs Isles asking her to put this request to the Working Group. A meeting has been arranged, 18th February, between the Peebles Civic Society and the Common Good committee to explore if the two can work together. The Civic Society have a lot of experience and done much research into common good and it would be valuable to share this and pointless to duplicate any work that has been done. Amanda Clydesdale has offered her help in identifying and locating moveable assets of common good.
- 160.10.4 **Positively Peebles:** Report circulated. W. Sandland said that the response was excellent and that a steering group would be presenting a business plan to the business community. The group are in the process of establishing a company limited by guarantee and the CC could step back from this initiative in due course.
- 160.10.5 **Focus on Health:** J. Pace had issued a written update.
- 160.11 **Reports from other organisations:**
None
- 160.12 **Other Items:**
- 160.12.1 **Community Council 'How we do things in 2010':** G. Rennie thought it was best to take forward two things from his presentation at each meeting. The first is to form a strategy for specific items for the CC to tackle in 2010. GR to gather ideas on these. The second is to get speakers in to the next five to ten meetings to inform the CC. The CC also needs to discuss how it communicates with people, makes members more accessible and how it raises its profile within the community. G. Rennie to contact individual members. **Action – G. Rennie**
- 160.12.2 **Town Gateway Signage:** The secretary said that this issue had been raised last year but no progress seemed to have been made. The town gateways create a very important first impression of a town, and the current signage now needs some attention. Cllrs Bhatia and Archibald said that some discussions had been held, however no real progress had been made. After much discussion the consensus was that there were too many signs and that they were in the wrong places at the gateways and that all the signs within the town should be reviewed. The chairman asked CC members to go and look at the signs and to put their ideas on paper and bring them to the next meeting. **Action – All**
- 160.12.3 **Leadburn Junction:** J. Swanson reported that three Community Councillors and Cllr. Archibald had attended the meeting in Midlothian. W. Sandland said that the junction appeared to be fiftieth on the Midlothian priority list. Cllr. Logan said that Cllr. Calvert had put forward a motion to SBC that the time has come for action to be taken and the junction should be corrected. Cllr. Bhatia said that much of the problem lay with the fact that most of Midlothian residents were unaffected by the junction although it affects many of those in the Borders.
- 160.12.4 **Lothian and Borders Police Custody Visiting Scheme:** This scheme is to be re-launched and the police are seeking volunteers to be custody visitors. Anyone who is interested should contact directly.

- 160.12.5 **Arrangements for Peebles Community Council elections 2010:** Notice circulated. Cllrs. Calvert and Herd had agreed to act as returning officers. All other arrangements were agreed.
- 160.12.6 **Chambers Institution:** The chair said that elderly residents were very concerned about how and where they should pay their council tax as they could not get to Rosetta Road. J. Calder asked if the town bus could go to the council offices and Cllr. Bhatia agreed to look into it.
Action – Cllr Bhatia
- 160.12.7 **Peebles Springclean:** Date agreed as Sunday 28th March 2010.
- 160.12.8 **Town Service Buses:** The change to 'sprinter' buses has made it difficult for the elderly or people with many shopping bags to get on or off the bus because of the narrow doors.
Action – Cllr. Bhatia
- A McKenzie asked when or if the bus depot is to be built at Eshiels? At the moment buses are being parked in Dovcote Road. Cllr Bhatia said that this option was still under review.
- J Key asked if buses could stop at Tesco as there is no scheduled stop near the supermarket.
Action – Cllr. Bhatia
- 160.13 **Miscellaneous Correspondence:**
- 160.13.1 Community Council Response to The Peebles Forum: The meeting agreed to the response written by the secretary.
- 160.13.2 **Elder Voice open day** - 25th April 2010: Cllr Archibald said that Elder Voice operated from an office in Galashiels but that it was concerned with elderly people across the Borders. The open day is part of an initiative to raise its profile in Peebles.
- 160.14 **Any Other Item which the Chairman Decides is Urgent**
- 160.14.1 Fotheringham Bridge: A Kubie said that access ramps to the bridge had been closed since the floods in November. The secretary had chased this up and been advised that SBC estates department has been charged with the repair.

The chairman thanked all for attending.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday, 11 March 2010 at 7.30 p.m

Meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

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