



BURNing Issues



www.walkerburn.com

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WELCOME TO 2025

'Burning Issues' is back after a short Winter break and we wish everyone in Walkerburn all the very best in the coming year.

We reached the grand age of 21 last year, and in June this year we will reach another special landmark. It will be the 250th Edition!

We would like give a special 'Thank You' to all our team who edit, produce and distribute each new edition of the newsletter by hand or email or via the Walkerburn.com website.

PEEBLESHIRE FOODBANK COFFEE CLUB

27th February and 13th March 9.00am to 12 noon and every 2nd Thursday.

Please come along and support this very worthwhile asset to our community and bring a friend or family if you wish. At the Coffee Club you can get **free** hot drinks and cakes and enjoy meeting others in a warm and friendly environment.

Also, the Peebles and District Citizens Advice Bureau will be on hand to offer help and advice if needed.

Contacts: Citizens Advice Bureau: Tel 01721 721722, Peeblesshire Foodbank: Tel 01721 588654.

PROBUS CLUB MEETINGS

Tuesday February 18th talk by Terry Brag: "Sailing in Tall Ships".

Probus Club of Innerleithen, Walkerburn and Traquair is always ready to welcome new members.

Any retired person living in Peeblesshire who is interested in attending a wide variety of stimulating talks is welcome to come to our meetings at the Vale Club in Innerleithen.

The meetings are held on the first and third Tuesday mornings of the month between October and April. Doors open at 9.45 am for a 10.30 start.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the Club Secretary at probus.sec@gmail.com or by phone on 01896 830 166. The Club's website can also be accessed at www.probusborders.org.

WALKERBURN BOWLING & PETANQUE CLUB

We still keep busy throughout the winter with the regular Friday afternoon Petanque sessions and the Tuesday and Friday morning coffee mornings. You are all welcome to drop-in.

David Adamson will be hosting another of the popular "Quingo" quiz evening at 7.00pm Friday 7th March. All welcome. Prizes – Raffle-Snacks!

Bill Nicholson still has few vacant places in the twice-monthly 'Bonus Ball' competition. Please contact any member, or see our Facebook page if you would like to enter. Congratulations to the more fortunate among our members who have been lucky enough to win! Please continue to support us.

The recent 'Burns Celebration' Petanque 'Melee' was another success. Many thanks to all who helped!

Unless there is really adverse weather, the weekly informal Friday afternoon 'drop-in' Petanque sessions will continue at 1.00pm. Petanque is becoming increasingly popular and new members have commented on how pleasant it is to play at Walkerburn.

Please come along and meet the 'Petanquers' each Friday afternoon and enjoy tea, coffee and biscuits afterwards. Members also have access to the club every day to practice or to play with friends.

Details of the new Bowls season will be available next month and fixtures will be confirmed after the Peeblesshire Bowls AGM on February 9th.

For more details, please see the Walkerburn Bowls 'Facebook' pages, or contact George Thornton on either 01896-870251 or e-mail geoles2@tiscali.co.uk.



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WALKERBURN AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the Meeting Held on 15th January 2025

Present: Mr Kerr (Chairman), Ms Daykin, Mrs Horsburgh, Mr Leslie, Ms Sedgwick, Mrs Thornton, Mr Waller, Mr Wilcox, Mrs Purves (Secretary), Cllr Douglas, Cllr Pirone.

Apologies and Notices. Apologies had been received from Cllr Tatler, Ms Jones and Mr Thornton. No notices.

Open Questions from Members of the Public. None.

Police Business. The Police Report for December had been circulated and Members agreed that the revised format was helpful. Cllr Pirone reported that a second Community Officer had started work and she believed a third officer would be arriving soon. This was welcomed by everyone and members commented that they continued to be impressed by the work undertaken by the team.

December Minutes and Matters Arising. Mr Waller proposed approval of the December minutes, seconded by Mr Leslie. The Minutes were passed.

Item 5. The Chairman had made arrangements with the OAP Association for them to pay for the replacement of the plaque in Alexandra Park. A decision on how best to deal with the planting around the plaque would be agreed with Parks.

Item 13c. Cllr Tatler has spoken to Mr Wilkinson, the SBC tree expert, about the possibly dangerous trees beside the steps to High Cottages. However, since the land in question is definitely not owned by SBC no action had been taken. All agreed that Cllr Tatler should be asked to go back to Mr Wilkinson to seek advice on how to move forward since the trees looked dangerous to a lay eye. WDCC can contact a landowner if one can be identified but it would be useful to have Mr Wilkinson's professional opinion as to whether the trees are actually dangerous before we do this.

November Minutes

Item 12. Concerns were expressed by the very slow payment action for the small schemes grant to replace the fence at the Playing Field. WDCC were told that payment was going through at the end of November and paid the contractor but no payment appeared in the bank and there are now no funds to pay other bills which would soon be outstanding. Cllr Pirone undertook to chase this payment.

(Afternote: Action has been taken by SBC to expedite payment).

Correspondence. List circulated to Members. Items requiring action were on the agenda, but 2 matters were highlighted: the planning delivery programme and the response to Cllr Douglas's question to the Executive on the 50mph trial on a number of roads. The latter was discussed fully later in the meeting, but members thanked Cllr Douglas for his excellent questioning of an issue which had taken everyone by surprise, including the Tweeddale Councillors, since there had been no consultation. Cllr Pirone drew members attention to the very important SBC Budget consultation which closes on 2nd February and expressed a hope that individuals would be encouraged to make comments.

Planning.

Mr Thornton reported via Mrs Thornton that there was one planning application for members to discuss. This was for new windows in Sunnybrae Lodge (listed building consent required). The 'twin' lodge opposite had already benefitted from new windows and members agreed to support the application for Sunnybrae Lodge.

Wind Farms. Mr Wilcox reported that there was still no sign of the revised Environmental Impact Statement for Scawd Law. He reported that the Wull Muir application had been granted permission at the third time of asking. The grounds for the appeal being granted are of some concern since the reporter agreed with the assessment that there would be significant adverse landscape and visual effects but suggested that this was to be expected for this type of proposal. The only conclusion we can draw at present is that the reporter felt the adverse effects were localised rather than widespread. However, there is a pattern at present of wind farm appeals being successful thus matching both the UK and Scottish government insistence that the country needs more onshore wind farms, though there is no evidence produced for this assertion. Mr Wilcox went on to say that the Greystone Knowe appeal would be of greater interest in terms of the Scawd Law application and added that there was a strong case for the SBC Planning Committee to object to Scawd Law, though the application was unlikely to come before the Committee in the timeframe March/April given the developer delays.

Cross Border Connection. Mr Wilcox reported on the formation of a Borders group to monitor and oppose elements of the current SPEN proposal. He proposed that WDCC formally join the group, and this was agreed unanimously. There had been a great deal of work carried out by the residents of Thornielee and other areas directly impacted by the current proposals and members agreed that efforts should be made to encourage someone from Thornielee to join WDCC as soon as possible. The secretary will continue to gather reports and summarise what is happening and circulate a report to members soon.

50 mph Trial. Mr Wilcox noted that a number of concerns had been voiced by residents about the validity and sense of the 50mph trial to improve motorcycle road safety, particularly on the Moffat to Selkirk road. There was a

lively discussion focusing on the apparent ignorance about an earlier trial already run by the Scottish Government on motorcycle safety which conclusively showed that special road markings had the most effect on speed and safety. Members again expressed their thanks to Cllr Douglas for bringing this issue up at SBC, even though the reply he had received was of little use, and all agreed that it would be helpful if Cllr Douglas brought to the appropriate officers' and members' attention the previous trial report. Mr Wilcox provided Cllr Douglas with a copy of this report. If Cllr Douglas does not receive satisfactory answers as to why this report appears to have been ignored, then WDCC would take up the option of requesting a Scrutiny Committee review of the decision-making process.

Update on Public Consultation Event Saturday 22nd February

The secretary reported that the Hall had been booked for Saturday 22nd February. There was a brief discussion about how best to run the event and it was agreed that all members would circulate ideas for naming the event and how best to utilise the opportunity by the end of January. The Chairman warned everyone that ideas were cheap but that they must be sent in complete with details as to how they could be implemented – practical ideas only not a list of 'bright' thoughts. The secretary noted that there was already some enthusiasm amongst other agencies to take part and she would circulate a list of those wishing to participate all of whom would have to provide their own staff. She also pointed out that this would be a good opportunity to encourage residents to join WDCC. Mr Smith had agreed to run the catering and tea/coffee/biscuits/sandwiches/soup etc would be provided as required throughout the day. Mrs Thornton and Ms Sedgwick would, hopefully, be able to help in the kitchen and serve at tables. Mr Leslie agreed to run a table-based system of collating views on different issues with residents encouraged to write down thoughts on stickies which would be provided at coffee tables and in the centre of the Hall. He will work out how best to proceed.

The Chairman had already spoken to the Head Teacher about a visit to WDCC in February and would confirm with him whether or not the school or parents would like to participate in some form. Cllr Pirone suggested contacting Hannah Lacon at SBC to see if something could be arranged to offer advice on fund raising and on applying for Pension Credit. (Secretary to action)

Ms Daykin and Mr Leslie will coordinate publicity which must include a notice in Burning Issues, paper notices at all village venues (shop, café, Hall, HB Club, Bowling Club), Facebook pages, including Innerleithen, and Peeblesshire with, ideally, articles before and after. Cllr Pirone felt that the local reporter could offer advice on what could be included.

Finally, it was agreed that a planning meeting would be held on Wednesday 5th February at 7pm in the Hall if available – secretary will check and confirm with members as soon as possible.

Reports by Members.

- a.) Recent flooding in Tweedholm Ave had been caused by blocked drains. These were now being repaired.
- b.) The Xmas tree had been removed/disposed of after some difficulty in getting volunteers.
- c.) The potholes and mess at the entrance to the old Glendinning's Yard, caused by the PMK works were still causing concerns. The Chairman will chase SBC again but the whole of that section of road from the bridge to Bold Brae needs repair and it is unlikely to happen soon.
- d.) There is growing frustration about the muddy roads caused by the PMK works but the weather has not helped PMK's attempts to clean up. The Chairman will liaise with the Foreman to encourage road sweeping when the weather allows.
- e.) There are complaints about the traffic light sequencing for the PMK works, especially at the nest. It was accepted that the areas where the lights are 3 or 4-way controlled are limited and members felt that PMK oversight remained good with a worker always monitoring lights. The plan was agreed in advance by SBC and changes at this stage in the contract are unlikely. Any resident who is seriously concerned should use the SBC contact form to register comments.
- f.) A fence post and railings on the multi-use path have been damaged. The Chairman will report this to the Parks Foreman and seek advice.
- g.) There is some frustration amongst other users that the Rugby Club has still not removed rubbish from the Playing Field. The secretary explained that there were some difficulties partly because of the nature of some of the rubbish and partly because the container could probably not be lifted out on a forklift. The Chairman reported that

he had spoken to the Club President and had offered to collect the gate key for the Club when they were ready to move the rubbish. All agreed that this was a health and safety issue which had to be resolved.

h.) Complaints about the resurfacing being carried out by SPEN had been acknowledged by SBC and some work will have to be redone. Peebles Road remains on the list of resurfacing work but may be delayed until 2026.

i.) The broken wall at the entrance to the old mill on the A72 was beginning to raise concerns that it might collapse onto the pavement or the A72. The Secretary will report it to SBC as a possible health and safety hazard.

j.) There have been a number of requests for an extra dog bin beyond the fishing hut on the multi-use path. Residents should be advised to fill in the SBC contact form since there is more chance of this being provided if a number of individuals make the same request.

k.) Complaints about the broken steps on the wooden walkway will be taken up with the Parks Foreman and his advice sought by Mrs Thornton.

l.) A number of residents have expressed frustration at not being able to report loose horses to the Stables at Haughhead and others have found it difficult to report dog worrying incidents or loose animals to local farmers because they do not know who to contact. There have also been comments on the growing number of people allowing their dogs to run loose in fields with livestock and the difficulty of contacting the appropriate farmer/shepherd. It was suggested that it might be appropriate for WDCC to produce a map showing land ownership in the area and, where landowners agree, publishing contact details.

The Chairman asked the secretary to start this process.

m.) There has been an excellent reception to the changes at the Post Office shop but members agreed that they should continue to urge residents to support the business and urge the owners to keep WDCC advised of any proposed changes. It was suggested that community engagement day might present an opportunity for a simple survey of residents' views of what they want from a shop.

n.) A complaint was made about wheelie bins on Park Avenue not being taken in by residents. The complainant will be advised that a polite request to neighbours is the only way to deal with this problem, taking into account that elderly people or people working away from home may not be able to immediately remove their bins when they have been emptied.

o.) There were some complaints that pavements are not gritted quickly enough. This is a common complaint everywhere, but the main school routes are gritted as quickly as weather conditions and manpower allow. One problem which everyone forgets is that there are bins of grit and people must be prepared to help in dangerous area – it would also help if people did not take the grit intended for public paths for use on private paths. Members felt SBC had acted as quickly as possible during the recent cold snap.

Reports from SBC Councillors.

i. Cllr Pirone reminded members of the budget consultation and explained that a consultation on non-statutory school holidays was about to start for parents. She had no news to report on the provision of flood gates for the primary school but was continuing to press for this.

ii. Cllr Douglas reminded everyone that the next Area Partnership Meeting on-line would be on 4th February, and he would remind SBC officers that joining details went out promptly. He ran through the very full agenda.

Date of Next Meeting Wednesday 19th February 2025 at 7pm in the Public Hall.

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WHAT'S ON IN THE HALL: February/March

Anyone interested in booking the hall, please note new contact: enquiries@walkerburnvillagehall.co.uk

Date	Event	Time
Mondays	Mindful Yoga For more info, please tel. Sue Cotterill on 07983 167075 or email reverendsusancotterill@gmail.com	6.00-9.00pm
Tuesdays	Youth Club – 18 th Feb, 4 th , 11 th and 18 th March	6.30-8.00pm
Wednesdays	Walkerburn and District Community Council Monthly Meeting 19 th February	7.00pm
Thursdays	Free Peeblesshire Foodbank Coffee Club and Citizens Advice Bureau – 13 th and 27 th February, 13 th March Pilates Classes with Meg Riley- 13 th and 20 th February	9.00am–12.00 noon 6.00 – 8.00pm
Saturday	Free Community Council Event – “Your Community, Your Voice” (See separate article)	10.00am – 4,00pm
Sundays	ITW Church Service –16 th February Table Tennis	2.00pm 6.00-9.00pm



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FEBRUARY WILDSIDE

While January had an exciting planetary alignment, February won't be outdone.

Seven planets will align in the night sky just after sunset on Feb. 28. When looking in the southern sky about 90 minutes after sunset, the planetary alignment will be visible almost everywhere in the Northern Hemisphere, weather permitting. We should be able to see Saturn, Mercury, Neptune, Venus, Uranus, Jupiter and Mars during the planetary parade. Saturn will be the most difficult to spot because of its position relative to the sun.

Coming back to Earth, February sees the beginning of the breeding season for some early nesters. The most obvious here will be the dippers on the Tweed. For the most part, the nesting season is March to August but many birds are paired up already. The Oystercatchers are back in the village so listen out for their calls near the river. We've also had some sightings of the little egret and we had a good selection of different bird species for the Garden Birdwatch at the end of January. After storm Eowyn some birds and wildlife will have been affected with damage to their roosts, nests and shelter.

One of the first indicators that birds are gearing up for nesting is when we notice more birdsong from around mid-January onwards. If you hear more song over the coming weeks, it means that your local birds are starting to attract mates and also mark out their chosen territories for nest building. Our neighbourhood blackbirds might begin serenading at dawn, a definite mood booster for early risers. Exactly when birds start to build their nests depends on a number of factors which the coming of spring enhances: The longer days causes a surge in the hormone prolactin which stimulates the desire to reproduce, and rising temperatures lead to more natural food being available in the form of tasty insects, caterpillars and grubs and new buds, essential for hungry chicks. Before all that, according to some forecasts, we are due another Arctic blast so it's a good idea to keep up the supplementary

feeding in your garden. You may well witness a flurry of bird activity first thing in the morning as they replenish energy lost overnight and last thing in the afternoon to prepare for the long night ahead. The greatest test for wild birds in winter is to find food and ensure they eat enough of it to build and maintain adequate fat supplies to store on the body and 'burn' for energy. The smallest birds, like Blue Tits and Goldcrests, have to effectively feed throughout the hours of daylight in winter and consume a vast quantity of food – as much as 30% of their body weight – to make sure they build the necessary fat reserves to get them through the long, cold nights.

Think of a Robin on a cold winter's day and many of us imagine a plump little ball with two stick legs! The reason for their round appearance is not an over-indulgence on fat balls at Christmas. Instead, Robins, like many other birds, fluff up their feathers when it's cold. Doing so increases the amount of air held against their bodies which in turn helps prevent heat loss. Birds also grow more downy feathers in the colder months, and these soft feathers found closest to the skin also help keep birds warm in winter. It's why we're told to 'layer up' in colder weather.

During a particularly cold spell, you will almost certainly notice more birds coming into your garden to seek sanctuary from the harsher environment in the countryside – particularly if you provide food on a regular basis. The variety of species may increase too and you may be lucky enough to attract more unusual visitors such as Blackcaps and Bramblings.

You can help birds by putting out food in a hanging feeder and providing fresh water. Drinking and bathing are vital parts of the daily routine of birds, so a fresh water supply is particularly important in colder weather when usual water sources could be frozen. Crucially, be sure to keep your feeders and bird baths clean by washing them at least once a week to help the birds stay.

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Burning Issues Contributors:

Please note: Remember to submit any articles, letters or other material for the March issue by the end of February.



Contact ***BURNing Issues*** at
walkerburnnews@hotmail.com

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

Borders Storm Helpline: Emergency 'phone: 01835-826549

SBC 0300-1001800 or **01896-752111** for out of hours emergency help

Electricity SPNetworks: 0800-0929290

Power Cuts: Call 105 Gas: 0800-111999

Scottish Water: 0800-077 8778 www.scottishwater.co.uk

MAK Locksmith (24 hours service) 07926-559296

Pollution Report Line: 0800-807060

Samaritans phone or text 116123 www.samaritans.org.uk

NHS 24: tel. 111 or 0845-242424 www.nhs24.com

St Ronan's Health Centre: 01896-830203

Floodline: 0845-988 1188 - www.sepa.org.uk/flooding

Scottish Borders Council: 0300-100 1800 - SB Alert www.sbalert.co.uk

Childline number is 0800-1111 ~ Citizens Advice Bureau, Peebles: Tel 01721-721722

Police non-emergency: 101 ~ Police emergency 999

Crime Stoppers: 0800-555111

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Community Action Policing Team

<https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/customer-communities>.

email: safercommunities@scotborders.gov.uk