

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
TEVIOT AND LIDDESDALE AREA FORUM

MINUTE of the MEETING of the TEVIOT
AND LIDDESDALE AREA FORUM held in the
TOWER MILL, HAWICK on 18 March 2014 at
6.30 p.m.

Present:- Councillors G. Turnbull, (Chairman), A. Cranston, D. Paterson, R. Smith.
Community Councillors Mr R. Knight (Burnfoot Community Council), Mr Levell
(Hobkirk Community Council). Ms Passmore (Denholm Community Council) Mrs
M. Short (Hawick Community Council)
In Attendance:- Neighbourhood Area Manager (A. Finnie), (Democratic Services
Officer (J. Turnbull).

Members of the Public:- 7 in attendance.

MINUTE

1. There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 4 March 2014. With reference to paragraph 18 it was reported that the sessions were being held at Bonchester Bridge.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the Minute, subject to the amendment above.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTE

2. With regard to paragraph 14 of the Minute relating to the Heart of Hawick destination sign, the Chairman reported they were still awaiting costings and would report back at the next meeting.

DECISION

NOTED.

ALCHEMY FILM FESTIVAL

3. Ms S Taylor, Heart of Hawick's Marketing and Operations Manager, was in attendance and introduced Mr Ashrowan the Creative Director, Alchemy Film and Moving Image Festival. The Festival would be held between Thursday, 3 April and Sunday, 6 April 2014. Over 30 filmmakers had confirmed their attendance, all would be staying in Hawick, this along with the visitors to the Festival, would have a significant economic impact which fitted well with the regeneration of Hawick.
4. Mr R Ashrowan, thanked Heart of Hawick, Borders Arts Trust and Scottish Borders Council for the support given to the Film Festival. He had received 750 films for consideration, 76% of which were from outside the UK, which highlighted the international reach the Festival had. The Festival was now considered a hub for filmmakers, such as Gareth Evans, Duncan Reekie and Jennifer Armitage. There would be 100 films and 85 premiers at the Festival. Moving image installations would also be located around Hawick in disused spaces and even a travelling horsebox gallery. Wherever possible local artists were invited to participate, last year Corrine Taylor produced a film about Hawick Common Riding, this year Esther Johnson would explore the notion of independence through her film – 'The Sun is but a Morning Star', in which she worked with the residents of Hawick. The Festival was not just a regional festival but was now of international significance and was growing. The Chairman thanked Ms Taylor and Mr Ashrowan for their informative presentation.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

STREET LIGHTING ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROJECT (SLEEP)

5. Mr D Richardson, Asset Manager, and Mr A Young, Street Lighting Team Leader, were in attendance and gave a presentation on the Street Lighting Energy Efficiency Project (SLEEP). Mr Richardson explained that the principal components of the street lighting asset were: lighting column, luminaire, lamp and internal wiring, underground cabling, distribution pillar, connection to electricity providers. Scottish Borders Council had currently 19,000 street lights across its network with three types of street lights: 77% were low and high pressure sodium lamps, with a life of four years; 22.7% were 'white lights' with a four year life; 0.3% were LED's with an expected lamp life of 20 years. SLEEP involved fitting 13,500 new LED lights to existing street lights between April 2014 and March 2020. This would reduce energy costs of £100k each year (saving £20m over 20 years), carbon tax costs and maintenance costs. Initial condition surveys were being carried out in Hawick and additional staff resources had been secured to ensure the delivery of the Project. Mr Young then demonstrated the difference in light quality with three street lights, the LED light produced a crisper, clearer light with higher definition of colour. At the conclusion of the presentation, Mr Richardson answered questions. He explained that they had tested 4,000 columns and only 30 to 40 would need replaced. It was planned to fit 20 new lights per day – 100 a week. Wall mounted lights would also be replaced. The Chairman thanked Mr Richardson and Mr Young for an illuminating presentation.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

EMPTY HOUSES TO HAPPY HOMES

6. Ms Lesley Conroy, Housing Manager with Coast to Country Housing Association was in attendance and gave a presentation on the Empty Houses to Happy Homes project. The project was based in the North East of England and refurbished empty properties in the Redcar and Cleveland, Tees Valley, Newcastle and Durham areas, some of which had been empty for up to 40 years. The project began in 2010 when they were awarded a grant of £250,000 which allowed 10 empty properties to be renovated and brought back into use. There was a high rate of youth unemployment in the area and the Project also provided training and employment opportunities for young people, many of whom rented the properties they had renovated. The project had been so successful that by the end of 2015 they would have renovated 351 empty properties back into use. Grants were no longer available but owners now paid back the refurbishment costs through rental income. Ms Conroy then circulated before and after photographs of properties that had been refurbished.
7. At the conclusion of the presentation Ms Conroy answered questions. She explained that the Association was a not for profit making organisation, they offered tenants 5 – 10 year leases, once the lease expired the tenant was offered an option to renew. The project had no experience of renovating empty commercial premises but she considered that this would be possible. The Chairman thanked Ms Conroy for the very informative presentation.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

SB LOCAL SMALL SCHEMES

8. There had been circulated Appendix A with the Agenda, from the Neighbourhood Area Manager, he reported that the location had been agreed for Spetchman's Haugh picnic table and benches and they would be installed this month. The five benches at Holm Hill had been refurbished. The notice board at Moat Park would be erected next week. The Fisher Avenue footpath had now been completed. It was hoped to carry out the drainage and maintenance works to Hermitage Hall Car Park this week. Councillor Paterson expressed his thanks for the crown reduction works to the trees in Cheviot Road.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

OPEN QUESTIONS

9. The Chairman advised that the lights on the A7 at Martin's Bridge were in place to allow for improvements to the junction. The survey work on Parkdaill embankment (The Dunk) was to investigate drainage problems. He would investigate removal of the lights.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

10. Members were asked why there were no diversion signs for the closure of the B6399. It was explained that to set up a diversion the road had to be of equivalent classification. The road in question was not of equivalent classification so there was no diversion to that route. However, it was assumed the local residents would be aware of the alternative route.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

11. A member of the public commended local artists for the exhibitions in local shops.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

12. A member of the public asked Members to note that £2.5m had been spent on severance packages for 430 employees. However the numbers were not commensurate with the number of employees leaving the Council and the staffing levels were the same as in 2003. Were the public receiving value for money? Councillor Paterson responded that there had been a large number of staff lost as well as cuts to services, such a green waste.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

COMMUNITY COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT

13. Mr Levell from Hobkirk Community Council reported that there would be a public meeting to discuss windfarms on 7 April 2014 at Bonchester Bridge. He reported that public attendance at these meetings had been poor and he urged people to attend to give their views on the proposals.
14. Ms Passmore from Denholm Community Council asked why a section of the new footpath, in front of the Cross Keys, had not been replaced. The Neighbourhood Services Manager explained that the footpath had all been replaced but that the section referred to had been replaced using recycled paving slabs, the quality was equivalent to the new slabs although the colour was slightly different. While the majority of the recycled paving had been laid during phase I of the works, a relatively shorter section was continued to coincide with the existing build-out.
15. Ms Passmore advised that the defibulator had now been attached to church wall and that shop owners had the code to be able to access the equipment if required.
16. Mr Knight from Burnfoot Community Council advised that there was a problem with potholes and road markings fading. The Neighbourhood Services Manager responded that he would arrange for a survey to be carried out and works would be prioritised.
17. The Chairman reported that the resurfacing works on the Lower Mansfield Road flat kerb stones appeared to be cracked, the Neighbourhood Services Manager would investigate and report back to ward Members.
18. Mrs Short from Hawick Community Council advised that they had negotiated a price for the delivery of the resilience leaflets with the June edition of the Hawick Life. They were delighted that they had been able to secure the services of John Inglis for the Hawick in Bloom group.

19. Councillor Paterson enquired why Members were not asked to sit with Community Councillors at the Hawick Community Council meetings. Mrs Short responded that it was not their intention to exclude people but that with 12 community councillors and 6 members the table would be too large.

DECISION

NOTED the reports.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

20. Agreed that the next meeting be held on 22 April 2014 at 6.30 pm in the Lesser Hall, Hawick.

The meeting concluded at 8.20 pm.