

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL **TWEEDDALE AREA FORUM**

MINUTE of the MEETING of the TWEEDDALE AREA
FORUM held in The Memorial Hall, Leithen Road,
Innerleithen on 6 March 2013 at 6.30 p.m.

Present:- Councillors W. Archibald, S. Bell, C. Bhatia, N. Buckingham, G. Garvie, G. Logan.
Community Councillors C. Lewin, B. McCrow, S. Horsburgh, W. Raine, A. Stewart, J.
Taylor, G. Tulloch.
In Attendance:- Clerk to the Council, Democratic Services Officer (K. Mason).
Members of the Public:- Approximately 60.

MINUTE

1. There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 26 November 2012.

DECISION NOTED.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT

2. With reference to paragraph 16 of the Minute of 26 November 2012, Community Councillor Lewin referred to bus services in the Broughton area and explained that there were problems with lack of connection and timings and asked if this problem was experienced by other Community Councils in the adjoining areas. Councillor Archibald advised that he had received, from the Council's Passenger Transport Manager, a note of a meeting which had taken place recently, which he had attended together with representatives from West Linton, Lamancha, Skirling, and Carllops Community Councils. No representative from Upper Tweed Community Council had been present. A note from the Passenger Transport Manager suggested that a meeting be arranged between Mr Lewin and the community transport organisation in Peebles. Mr Lewin explained that a meeting had to have a wider scope in particular to cover extended timetables. Mr Tulloch advised that the recent meeting with the Passenger Transport Manager had been one of a positive nature when connection routes to Peebles, Dumfries and Edinburgh had been discussed in length, but the Broughton/Upper Tweed area had not been discussed in detail.

DECISION

AGREED that Mr Lewin liaise with other Community Councils in the area and revert to the Tweeddale West Members who would then liaise with the Passenger Transport Manager to take forward the issues raised.

3. Community Councillor McCrow in referring to the "Gap Site", High Street, Innerleithen advised that he was pleased that the Chief Executive of Eildon Housing Association was considering building three 1 bedroom flats there. He hoped the proposals would receive support.

DECISION NOTED.

4. Community Councillor McCrow in referring to Dirt Pot Corner said he thought funding was in the budget and it would be good to keep the funding secure. Councillor Bell was supportive of this, indicating it was important to solve the problem and funding remained in the Council's Capital Budget for work at Dirt Pot Corner.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

OPEN QUESTIONS

5. Mr P. Faris referred to the book bug sessions which were no longer running in Innerleithen Library. There had been a complaint made to the Community Council, and he had raised this with Ian Brown the Council's Cultural Services Manager. Mr Faris advised he was disappointed to note that a decision had been made and nothing could be done about it. Councillor Garvie explained that Innerleithen Library would be closed for 9 weeks for refurbishment. St Ronan's Primary School had offered to facilitate the book bug sessions and this was being explored by the Cultural Services Manager and Councillor V. Davidson, Portfolio holder.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

6. Ms Annela McKenna, Secretary of Tweeddale Access Panel, expressed concerns at the problems encountered by disabled people in Peebles High Street. She referred to potholes and problems experienced by blind people because of the hazards of shop furniture sited on pavements. She advised that the Council had been supportive and J. Hedley, SB Local Area Manager, Tweeddale, had agreed to monitor the situation regularly. Councillor Bhatia was a member of the Tweeddale Access Panel and explained that local Members would be spending a day using wheelchairs and wearing visual impairment glasses to understand the experiences of disabled people. Although appreciative of the need for shopkeepers to place "A" boards etc. on the pavements, she hoped that both people with a disability and shopkeepers could be accommodated in an appropriate manner. Councillor Bell suggested that discussions take place with the SB Local Area Manager to examine the problems in Peebles and also in Innerleithen and West Linton. Community Councillor Stewart advised that Peebles Community Council had made representations to both the Local Authority and the Police about the problem; the Police were reluctant to approach shopkeepers about street furniture; he considered that the matter needed to be seriously addressed and he would be happy to chair a meeting and would liaise with the SB Local Area Manager.

DECISION

NOTED that Community Councillor Stewart would liaise with the SB Local Area Manager to take forward the issues raised.

7. A member of the public referred to the new walkway between Innerleithen and Peebles and the access to all arrangements. As horse riders also had access to the walkway problems were being experienced with horse manure which was getting worse. Cyclists, young people and wheelchair users were experiencing difficulties when using the path. Community Councillor McCrow explained there were teething problems and the British Horse Society had been contacted for guidance. It was proposed to build mounting blocks along the pathway to enable riders to dismount to clear manure off the walkway. Councillor Bhatia explained she had been involved with the walkway project since its inception and the proposal had always been for the walkway to be of multi-use. She explained there was no legislation for horse riders to clean up manure and suggested a round the table discussion take place with all users. Councillor Garvie referred to powers which could be undertaken by Council Management Rules and the Civic Government Scotland Act but suggested the most appropriate way forward would be for the community to decide on how to manage the walkway. Councillor Logan suggested that the Tweeddale East Councillors together with Community Councillor McCrow meet to discuss the position.

DECISION

AGREED that the Tweeddale East Councillors together with Community Councillor McCrow meet to discuss the position.

POLICE REPORT

8. The Chairman advised there would be no Police report as Inspector Wynne had been called away and had to give his apology for the meeting.

DECISION NOTED.

BUDGET 2013/14

9. The Chief Financial Officer, David Robertson, was in attendance to give a presentation on the Scottish Borders Council Budget 2013/18. Handouts were circulated and Mr Robertson outlined the main headlines of the financial strategy which formed the 5 year revenue and 10 year capital plan. The Council would continue to invest in business transformation, service reviews and efficiency projects to deliver long term financial and service benefits. There would be investment in infrastructure with a £191m capital programme. The Council would maximise income while keeping fees and charges to service users at an affordable level and Council tax would be frozen at 2007/08 levels for the sixth successive year. Unallocated reserves of £5.6m for 2013/14 would be maintained in line with the assessed risk register. The presentation went on to look at the Council's funding, the highest proportion of which was Revenue Support Grant from the government. However the number of households at January 2013 had increase by over 300 giving an increase in the income from Council Tax. With regard to the Revenue Budget proposals Mr Robertson outlined the budget pressures and how it was proposed these would be funded, further details being given about the Council's transformation projects, business efficiencies and rationalisations. The presentation then moved on to look at the Capital Budget Proposals 2013/23 where the Council had approved a programme of £191m over the next 10 years. Mr Robertson summarised the proposed capital projects, details of which were included in the document circulated.

DECISION NOTED the presentation.

AIMUP, INNERLEITHEN

10. Mr Gordon Donald was in attendance to give a presentation on Action for the Innerleithen Mechanical Uplift (AIMUp). The remit of AIMUp was to sustain and develop the community from growing off-road cycling and tourism by building an uplift and activity and education centre at Innerleithen for the benefit of the local community. He referred to options appraisal and project planning and advised that an NFLS community ballot had taken place in 2012 with a 66% turnout and with 91.2% in favour of the proposals. Phase 1 was now complete. He advised that AIMUp's application to lease part of Traquair and Elibank Forest had been agreed in principle by the Director of Forestry Commission Scotland. The site layout incorporated footpaths, bike trails, new habitat – ponds, toboggan ride, uplift system, and additional planning. The base station would consist of a café, retail, toilets, showers, children's play area and parking for cars, disabled and coaches. Mr Donald answered questions relating to the benefits the project would have for Innerleithen and advised that the plans incorporated a path link to the town. He further advised that a Transport Consultant had been involved in the project, in particular in relation to the roads infrastructure. Councillor Bell noted that the Group needed help to secure "anchor" funding from the Government in 2013 and the formation of a Project Team to take matters forward.

DECISION NOTED and THANKED Mr Donald for his interesting and informative presentation.

DOVECOT COURT, PEEBLES

11. The Director of Social Work – Mr Andrew Lowe, Jane Robertson - Project Manager - Social Work, Mr N. Istephan - Chief Executive and Fiona Rowan of Eildon Housing Association were in attendance to give a presentation on the new extra care housing development at Dovecot Court, Peebles. In presenting background information, it was noted that a decision had been taken to

replace Dunwhinny Lodge, the residential care home in Peebles which had opened in the 1960's, with a specially designed extra care housing development at Dovecot Road, Peebles because Dunwhinny Lodge was no longer fit for purpose. The extra care housing development was built by Eildon Housing Association and it encompassed specialist housing with care service which had been developed in partnership with the Council. Residents and staff from Dunwhinny Lodge had now moved into the development. The extra care housing offered self contained flats specially designed to support older people to live as independently as possible in their own homes and support was provided by an on-site staff team who were available 24 hours a day. The key principles of the housing development covered (a) the promotion of independence allowing older people to live as independently as possible, (b) empowering older people to have access to care and support services without having to move into a care home; and (c) allowing older people to have access to specially designed accommodation which facilitated access to high levels of care and support. The development comprised a four storey building with two internal lifts, secure access to the front and rear of the building, 37 self contained, wheelchair accessible, two bedroom flats each with living room, kitchen and bathroom with level access shower. In response to a question raised about occupancy levels it was noted that 32 units were currently occupied and it was anticipated that occupancy of the remaining five would be taken up soon. The Director of Social Work, in answering a question about the costs associated with living in the development, referred to care packages which were in place, explaining these were sometimes cheaper than other options available. It was noted that arrangements would be made for an official opening of the development

DECISION

NOTED and THANKED the Director of Social Work, Jane Robertson, Project Manager - Social Work, Mr N. Istephan, Chief Executive and Fiona Rowan of Eildon Housing Association for their interesting and informative presentation.

AMENDMENTS TO PEEBLES TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER

12. There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure outlining various options available to amend the existing Pay Parking Controls in Peebles together with proposals for a way forward to review the controls. In light of recently published town centre footfall surveys, Tweeddale Ward Members had requested a review of the parking controls in Peebles car parks and in particular those currently controlled by the Pay and Display Parking Scheme. As a consequence, the Director of Environment and Infrastructure had been asked to prepare the report outlining the available options and to recommend a way forward. Councillor Garvie advised that previously car parking charges in Peebles were unsuccessful and the present arrangements seemed to work well, and following representations received he had concluded there was no need for any change to the current arrangements. Mr McGrath and Mr MacDonald, shopkeepers in Peebles, were present at the meeting and explained their reasons for being against the recommendations in the report. Councillor Bell considered that the long term parking issues had to be dealt with, and although he had not seen evidence that increasing charges would drive people away, he was aware that increased charges might mean that more people would park in the side streets.

VOTE

Councillor Garvie, seconded by Councillor Buckingham, moved that no further action be taken.

Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Logan, moved as an amendment that the recommendations in the report be approved.

On a show of hands Members voted as follows:-

Motion - 3 votes

Amendment - 3 votes

The Chairman then exercised his casting vote in favour of the amendment which was accordingly carried.

13. The forum considered membership of the Sub-Group of the Tweeddale Area Forum and agreed that Councillors Bell, Buckingham, Logan and Community Councillor Stewart be appointed to form a Sub-Group.

DECISION

(a) **NOTED** the various options available to control off-street parking.

(b) **DECIDED:-**

(i) to continue investigation by undertaking a parking survey; and

(ii) to form a sub-group of the Tweeddale Area Forum and, in light of the findings of a parking survey, discuss the various options and recommend a preferred option at a later meeting of the Tweeddale Area Forum.

(c) **AGREED** that Councillors Bell, Buckingham, Logan and Community Councillor Stewart be appointed to form the Sub-Group.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

14. The next meeting was scheduled to be held on Wednesday, 6 May 2013, venue to be confirmed.

DECISION

AGREED that the next meeting of the Tweeddale Area Forum would be held on Wednesday 8 May 2013.

URGENT BUSINESS

15. Under Section 50B(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the Chairman was of the opinion that the items dealt with in the following paragraphs should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency, in view of the need to keep Members informed.

SCOTTISH BORDERS WALKING FESTIVAL

16. The Chairman advised that Innerleithen, Walkerburn and Clovenfords would be home to the 19th Annual Scottish Borders Walking Festival, taking place in the first week of September 2013.

DECISION

NOTED.

SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE

17. The Chairman advised that Scottish Natural Heritage was holding a reception at the MacDonald Cardrona Hotel on 20 March 2013 from 6.00 p.m. until 8.00 p.m. This would give Members an opportunity to have informal discussions with Scottish Natural Heritage staff on areas of mutual interest.

DECISION

NOTED.

The meeting concluded at 8.35 pm.