

MINUTE of Meeting of the EILDON AREA PARTNERSHIP held in Earlston Primary School on Thursday, 27 February 2020 at 5.30 pm

Present:- Councillors G. Edgar (Chairman), S. Aitchison, A. Anderson, D. Parker, H. Scott and E. Thornton-Nicol
35 Partner representatives, Community Councillors, officers and members of the public.

Apologies:- Councillors K. Drum and E. Jardine

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Eildon Area Partnership and thanked Community Councillors, Partners and representatives of local organisations for their attendance.

2. **FEEDBACK FROM MEETING ON 14 NOVEMBER 2019**

The Minute of the meeting of the Eildon Area Partnership held on 14 November 2019 had been circulated. A summary of the discussion on 'Health, Care and Well-Being: Social Isolation and Loneliness' was attached as an appendix to the Minute.

3. **TRANSPORT UPDATE**

With reference to his presentation to Eildon Area Partnership in September 2019, Passenger Transport Manager Timothy Stephenson gave an update. Mr Stephenson referred to the four local bus services within the Eildon area, identified at that meeting as being under review: Service Number 61 Galashiels-Earlston (Sat, Sun am); 61/67 Galashiels – Earlston and St Boswells (Sat Evening); 66 Earlston – Stichill and Kelso; and 964 the Border Weaver. Following consultation and listening to views of passengers the 61 (Sat, Sun am) has not been altered; with regard to services 61/67 (evening and weekend versions) their review had been extended to October 2020 and it was hoped to promote these and increase patronage during the interim; 66 would be cancelled from 6 April although Mr Stephenson stressed that the school journeys remained as they did across the Borders. With regard to the 964 Border Weaver, Councillors had voted to retain the service. However it was not being used enough and would have to be used in the future or it would be lost. The Council was listening and open to suggestions about changes or ways by which use of the Border Weaver service could be encouraged. A representative from Bowden Village Committee present at the meeting offered to take this issue back to the village to discuss how the Border Weaver could be made more convenient and popular. In response to a question about community transport which appeared to be overstretched, Mr Stephenson advised that there had been about 32,000 journeys by volunteers the previous year. As part of promotion of social cars and how these could be accessed he added that fridge magnets containing information on community transport were being distributed. The Chairman thanked Mr Stephenson for his update.

4. **JIM CLARK RALLY 2020 PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS**

- 4.1 There had been circulated copies of a joint report by the Executive Director and Service Director Assets & Infrastructure, providing the Area Partnership and local community with an opportunity to consider and comment on the proposals submitted by event organisers of the Jim Clark Rally to hold a rally on closed roads in the Scottish Borders on Saturday 30 and Sunday 31 May 2020. Infrastructure Manager, Brian Young, was in attendance to highlight the main points of the report and to give a visual presentation of the proposed routes for the rally. Also in attendance and representing the rally organisers were Chairman Professor Dan Wright, MBE, and PR Manager Frances Renton. Mr Young explained that revised legislation was introduced in 2019 to allow motor sports events to take place on closed public roads. These regulations introduced a two stage procedure where organisers must first successfully apply to an “authorised body” for a permit before applying to the local roads authority for a Motor Sports Order. In determining whether to make a Motor Sports Order Scottish Borders Council, as local roads authority, must consider a number of factors that were laid out in the regulations. This report outlined those factors and provided an opportunity to, in particular, examine the proposals submitted by the rally organisers in respect of the routes and timings for the rally on 30 and 31 May 2020. The event organisers had, prior to submitting the application, been in consultation with representatives of Scottish Borders Council and Police Scotland through the established Safety Advisory Group (SAG) system that was in place at the Council. In order to satisfy the requirements to allow the views of the local community to be taken into account and that adequate arrangements had been made to involve local residents, the Council had launched a public consultation available online via <https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/>. The online consultation would run for 6 weeks. In addition to this, Council officers, along with representatives of the Jim Clark Rally, were attending meetings of the relevant Area Partnerships to discuss the event plan, including the proposed routes and timings. As for previous events the organisers of the Jim Clark Rally would be contacting separately those residents who were directly impacted by the routes. This would include individual visits to all properties in addition to letter drops. Organisers had also indicated that they would consult with / inform the Community Councils affected by the rally through meeting with them face to face. The intention of the Jim Clark Rally organisers was to be based in Duns and to run a total of 8 rally stages (over 4 different routes) on the Saturday and 6 rally stages (over 3 different routes) on the Sunday. Within the Eildon area, Scott’s View, was one of the four routes being followed on the Saturday, with the loop being completed on two occasions during the day. The Jim Clark Rally was recognised as a major sporting event that brought significant economic benefit to the Scottish Borders. It attracted a high number of spectators, supporters, staff and competitors to the area; many of whom stayed a number of nights. Previous studies had estimated that the event contributed over £2.5 Million to the local economy.
- 4.2 In the discussion that followed the economic benefit of the Jim Clark Rally was noted. In response to questions about the environmental impact of holding the rally, Professor Wright emphasised that the rally complied with all policies and regulations as set out by the governing body, Motorsport UK. All information could be found on the Motorsport UK website where it was stated there was commitment to creating a sustainable and responsible model, primarily achieved through regulation. Consequently, in addition to compliance with the Road Traffic Act, technological features of the competitive cars were subject to a higher level of control than that required for other vehicles on the road. With regard to the options to use electric cars, Motorsport UK regulations did allow for the development of vehicles powered by alternative fuels but it was not possible to run rally cars at the moment without carbon fuel. Professor Wright added that he himself was involved in the development of high energy density batteries but in reality the technology was a long way away from the aspirations for widespread conversion to electric vehicles. In terms of the carbon footprint of vehicles used by visitors and spectators it was pointed out that this could not be controlled by rally organisers and was in fact a consideration for any major sporting event. It was noted that the Scottish Government and Scottish Borders Council were extremely supportive of the rally in recognition of the economic contribution to the area.

DECISION

NOTED:-

- (a) the introduction of the new legislation and the application by organisers of the Jim Clark Rally to run an event on 30 and 31 May 2020; and**
- (b) that comments on the proposal to run the event could be submitted through the public consultation available on the Scottish Borders Council website.**

5. EILDON LOCALITY ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Locality Development Co-ordinator, Kenny Harrow, drew attention to the Eildon Locality Plan and the Action Plan Update which had been circulated by email with the agenda, two weeks prior to the meeting. Copies were also available on the tables at the meeting. The Locality Plan outlined the priorities identified within the Eildon area and the action plan gave an update on planned activities and progress for each priority area. Mr Harrow stressed that the action plan was a working document which would be updated and reviewed regularly. The Communities team were looking at the best ways possible to feed back this information at Area Partnerships.

6. EILDON LOCALITY PLAN: ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE

6.1 Greener Melrose

The Chairman welcomed Mr Donald McPhillimy to the meeting to give a presentation about the organisation Greener Melrose. Mr McPhillimy explained that the membership of Greener Melrose came from villages around Melrose as well as from the town itself. Melrose was part of the Transition Town movement which started in Ireland and was a network of communities working to increase self-sufficiency, reduce dependency on fossil fuels and to reduce the potential effects of climate instability. Initiatives included a community orchard and practical site at Drygrange, approximately 10 allotments and community woodland where open days were held. The food group produced different kinds of food and supported local producers. Mr McPhillimy was pleased to see, at the meeting, young representatives from Earlston High School's eco group, which met every Thursday lunchtime and was supported by Greener Melrose. Other activities taking place related to:

- Waste & Recycling – Greener Melrose was part of Plastic Free Borders and a leaflet promoting avoidance of single use plastic was distributed at the meeting. Members also took part in local clean-ups and Melrose-in-bloom activities;
- Repair café group – items in need of repair could be brought along to be fixed rather than putting them in landfill – working towards a circular economy;
- Outreach to influence other people and encourage new groups – including winter talks, café conversations, film nights, green fair;
- Borders Book Festival – engagement to encourage speakers with green theme – phase out use of disposable plastics;
- Transport – embryonic group looking at low carbon transport initiatives; and
- Lobbying –Eildon Area Partnership, Scottish Borders Council, MSPs & MPs.

Mr McPhillimy welcomed the recent launch of the Council's new Sustainable Development Committee and looked forward to future initiatives.

6.2 Café ReCharge CIC

Amy, a representative from Café ReCharge, drew attention to this new proposal in Galashiels. A crowdfunding campaign had met its initial target in raising money towards opening a Pay What You Can Café in Galashiels using unsold supermarket produce. Surplus supermarket produce would be turned into good quality, healthy food to provide inexpensive family-friendly meals. The café would be based in the Focus Centre and operate 3 times per week from mid-March. Full details would be on the Café recharge Facebook page.

6.3 **Weigh Greener**

A welcome was given to Charlotte Aitchison to give a presentation on the new initiative Weigh Greener, a Zero Waste Refill shop for Lauder. The presentation highlighted that supermarkets did not give much choice but to buy unnecessary packaging and so much of what was sold was wrapped in unrecyclable single use plastics. A Zero Waste Refill shop was an alternative way of purchasing certain goods and Ms Aitchison explained how this worked. Customers would take their own containers, or bags to fill up – the container would be weighed, filled with the amount required, re-weighed, labelled and payment made. When market research was carried out about the idea in the local community the response was overwhelmingly positive. A crowdfunding campaign was launched in November 2019 for the Weigh Greener initiative which was set up as a Community Interest Company, meaning that the profits would be re-invested into the local community supporting environmental projects. The campaign was marketed by hosting lots of different workshops and by promotion at community events. An application was also made to Royal Bank of Scotland 'Back her Business fund' for match funding with criteria linked to the crowdfunding campaign. The response was overwhelming and with match funding of £5,000, a total of £12,400 was raised in 28 days. Weigh Greener was expected to be the Scottish Borders first dedicated Zero Waste Refill shop, offering volunteering and future employment opportunities as well as raising awareness of environmental issues. Once premises were secured it was hoped that the shop would open within the next few months. In response to questions Ms Aitchison confirmed that they would be linking with local suppliers for good quality local produce to stock the shop but that this would not include fresh products at present. Any unsold products would be given to schemes such as the Café Recharge. In terms of assistance provided Ms Aitchison explained that Business Gateway had been very helpful and had put her in touch with other useful contacts. It was noted that in future there may be financial help available for Community Interest Companies from the Community Fund.

6.4 Councillor Aitchison, Chairman of the recently launched Sustainable Development Group, expressed his thanks for the above presentations and welcomed the initiatives to which they referred. He was impressed by the ideas and schemes already in place and looked forward to working with communities in taking forward the challenges presented.

7. **EILDON COMMUNITY FUND UPDATE**

7.1 Community Fund information sheets had been circulated and were available at the meeting. The sheets showed grant applications awarded, those under assessment and those under consideration by the Area Partnership, in addition to funding commitments to Community Councils, Village Halls and Local Festivals. The total outstanding amount available in February in the Eildon Interim Community Fund was £155,252. There were four grant applications to be considered at the meeting as referred to below. Assessment forms and recommendations for these had been circulated and the Chairman allowed time for these to be discussed prior to decisions being made.

7.2 **Nurture the Borders**

Community Interest Company, Nurture the Borders, was requesting £9,800 to support continuing delivery of 'The Village' in Selkirk. This was a dedicated space in Dunsdale Road, Selkirk, to support Mums and families during the perinatal period (pregnancy, birth and post natal). The Village provided a safe space with access to support, education and therapies as well as a range of activities. The application met the criteria of the Community Fund. It was recommended that if successful Nurture the Borders be requested to evaluate the impact of their project either on conclusion of the project or a year after receipt of their grant funding whichever came first.

DECISION

AGREED to grant £9,800 to Nurture the Borders subject to the terms and conditions set out on the Community Fund Assessment Form.

7.3 **Energise Galashiels**

Energise Galashiels Trust was applying for a grant of £7,020 to purchase a trishaw from the 'Cycling Without Age' (CWA) programme for use in Galashiels. CWA was a social enterprise based in Copenhagen founded in 2012. The organisation's purpose was to offer recreational mobility to seniors in the form of volunteer-piloted trishaw rides. The purchase cost included the first year's insurance and training from CWA. A pre-determined cycle route had been scoped out in Galashiels, on a route which was cycle accessible and would take in various nature points. Six people had committed to volunteering for the project with a further seven expressing an interest. The application met the criteria of the Community Fund.

DECISION

AGREED to grant £7,020 to Energise Galashiels Trust for the purchase of a trishaw, subject to the terms and conditions set out on the Community Fund Assessment Form.

7.4 **Macfie Hall**

Macfie Hall Committee Ltd had requested a contribution of £10,000 towards the Macfie Hall refurbishment project which aimed to improve the lives of residents in Heriot by improving the Hall to provide flexible, fit for purpose community facilities that met modern standards and expectations. The Community Fund award would be used to improve the external terracing for outdoor events. The application met the criteria of the Community Fund.

DECISION

AGREED to grant £10,000 to the Macfie Hall Committee Ltd towards the Macfie Hall refurbishment project subject to the terms and conditions set out on the Community Fund Assessment Form.

7.5 **Maroon'd**

Gala Rugby was requesting funding of £10,000 towards the cost of equipment and associated resources to run Maroon'd@Gala. This was a multi-generational free sporting and community event to be held at Netherdale, Galashiels on 18 April, 2020. Working together with all the primary, junior, semi-junior, girls, and senior rugby clubs, Gala Fairydean FC and the Galavangers running club, this would be a free to access all day sporting and entertainment event. The total expenditure was expected to be £24,682.

DECISION

AGREED to grant £10,000 to Gala Rugby towards the cost of running the Maroon'd@Gala event subject to the terms and conditions set out on the Community Fund Assessment Form.

7.6 **75th Anniversary VE Celebration Fund**

The Chairman drew attention to the report which had been circulated about the creation of the VE Celebration Fund. This fund had been set up to enable non profit-making communities/voluntary groups, schools and churches to apply for funding to undertake special celebratory projects to mark VE day on 8 May 2020. It was proposed that each Area Partnership would contribute from their Community Fund on a per-head of population basis to enable the fund of £60,000 to be created. Awards up to a maximum of £2,500 would be processed on a fast track basis. In response to a question it was confirmed that any surplus money would go back into the Community Fund.

8. **COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT ACT UPDATE**

Circulated with the agenda were summary updates of participation requests and asset transfer requests received in the Eildon area under the terms of the Community Empowerment Act. There had been five participation requests, two were ongoing and three refused. There had been seven asset transfer requests received with three being agreed.

9. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Suggestions for future agenda items could be sent to the Locality Development co-ordinator at kenny.harrowscotborders.gov.uk .

10. **OPEN FORUM**

There were no questions for elected Members.

11. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be on Thursday 30 April 2020. The venue would be confirmed in due course.

CHAIRMAN

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 8.00 pm