

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL BERWICKSHIRE AREA FORUM

MINUTES of Meeting of the
BERWICKSHIRE AREA FORUM held in
Council Offices, Newtown Street, Duns on
Thursday, 2 June 2016, at 6.30 pm

Present:- Councillors M. J. Cook (Chairman), J. Campbell, J. Greenwell, D. Moffat, and F. Renton.

Community Councils:- Coldingham – Rhona Goldie; Duns – Anne Affleck; Edrom, Allanton & Whitsome – Trixie Collin; Foulden, Mordington and Lamberton – Howard Doherty; Gavinton, Fogo and Polwarth – Keith Dickinson; Gordon & Westruther – Trevor Jones; Grantshouse – Kym Bannerman; Lammermuir – Mark Rowley; Reston and Auchencrow – David Torr; Swinton and Ladykirk – Bill Purvis.

Apologies:- Councillor J. A. Fullarton.

Community Councils:- Burnmouth; Cockburnspath; Coldstream and District; Greenlaw & Hume; Hutton and Paxton.

In Attendance:- Sergeant J McGuigan, Police Scotland; Station Manager M Acton, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service; D Silcock, SB Local Area Manager; Democratic Services Officer (P Bolton).

Members of the Public:- 1

1. **WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

2. **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The Chairman varied the order of business as shown on the Agenda and the Minute reflects the order in which the items were considered at the meeting.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

3. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 3 March 2016.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute for signature by the Chairman.

4. **PENMANSHIEL COMPENSATORY PLANTING SCHEME 4.1** The Chairman introduced Mr Andy Tharme, Ecology Officer at SBC and Mr Steven Adlard, Woodland Consultant with the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC Consultants) who were present to update Members on the Penmanshiel Compensatory Replanting Scheme. Mr Tharme explained the background to this Scheme, the Scottish Government/Forestry Commission Policy in relation to the Control of Woodland Removal and the need to compensate for the loss of woodland by the developer. This Scheme was as a direct result of the development of the Penmanshiel Windfarm and required that the area of woodland lost was replaced by the same area of replanting, ie 1ha for 1ha. Agreement was reached by SBC and the developer RES, with SBC leading the implementation of the Scheme under a Section 69 Planning Agreement. The target area was set at 110.1ha and would extend as far as 20ha around Penmanshiel, with areas for the replanting of different species of tree being specified. The Scheme would be in place for 15 years, with planting taking place during years 1 - 5 and benefits would include biodiversity, water quality, flood protection, access, recreation, landscape and community engagement.

- 4.2 The Scheme was put out to tender in July 2015 and SAC Consulting was appointed and the Scheme was initiated in November of the same year. Community groups, landowners, tenants and organisations could make application to the tree planting grant scheme and assistance to complete their applications was available from SAC. There were criteria to be met to qualify for a grant and contract conditions applied to any agreement. Mr Tharme explained that a key decision was awaited in respect of the Basic Payment Scheme and this had necessitated a delay in the launch and publication of full details of the Scheme. Up to date information was available online and further publicity had been/would be delivered via road shows at Duns Show, Kelso Show and workshops across the area.
- 4.3 Mr Tharme and Mr Adlard answered a number of questions in relation to planting and fencing of individual schemes. With regard to connecting a number of different amenity areas, Mr Adlard advised that joined up schemes were more likely to score points in the recreational/community benefit category. Small schemes of 0.25ha would be considered under the Scheme however fencing costs for such areas were likely to be higher in comparison to the size of the scheme. It was noted that a particular challenge existed in evidencing that the present scheme delivered benefit additional to that deliverable through existing forestry schemes. Officers would reflect on this. After further discussion, it was agreed that an update presentation would be brought to the Forum in due course.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

5. **POLICE SCOTLAND**

Sergeant J McQuigan attended the meeting to present the Police Scotland report for Berwickshire for the period up to 25 May 2016. The report detailed the Ward Plan Priorities for East Berwickshire, namely Road Safety; Misuse of Drugs; Rural Thefts; and Antisocial Behaviour. For Mid Berwickshire the priorities were Road Safety; Inconsiderate Driver Behaviour; and Antisocial Behaviour. In terms of road safety and inconsiderate driver behaviour, the report indicated an increase in the number of drink driving detections in rural locations during this reporting period. An event for young drivers took place at Charterhall on 21 and 22 May with about 90 young people attending to experience and develop driving skills under the supervision of the emergency services. The Skills for Life programme, which had been reported to the Forum previously, was being delivered throughout May and June in Duns and currently seven young drivers were taking part. There had been 11 drugs-related offences detected in Berwickshire during the reporting period with one significant operation taking place in and around Duns. The report provided information about new legislation for air weapons which would come into effect on 1 July 2016 and which would require anyone who possessed an air weapon to hold a valid certificate of possession. An amnesty would be in place from 23 May until 12 June 2016 whereby people would be able to surrender their weapons at a nominated police station if they did no longer required or used them. People who already held a valid firearms licence were not required to re-licence their air weapon. However, they would be expected to include details of any air weapons they possessed within any future application. Further information was available at www.scotland.police.uk The report advised that during 2016, the public consultation by Police Scotland on identifying priorities for policing in local communities would be available online during and would be open for the whole year. The consultation could be accessed at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/8LMB9WX Members were advised that Wardens were now in place and would visit areas only where there was dog fouling had been reported. Members' questions were answered in relation to fly tipping and the procedure for Police reports being presented to the local Community Councils. The Chairman thanked Sergeant McQuigan for attending the meeting.

**DECISION
NOTED the report.**

6. **DOG FOULING**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Craig Blackie, SBC's Neighbourhood Area Manager to the meeting to provide an update on how the Council was working to decrease dog fouling in the area. 3GS was a private company now employed by SBC for a trial period of one year to reduce dog fouling. Two wardens were now in post and would operate on an intelligence-led basis, ie would respond to complaints of dog fouling at specific locations. A full report would be submitted to Council at the end of the trial. Mr Blackie explained how the wardens would operate and the facilities which were available to them. Problem with littering could also be dealt with by the wardens, again on an intelligence-led basis. Mr Blackie explained that a Green Dog Walker campaign was currently running in Newtown St Boswells. The project, which encouraged dog walkers to clean up where dog fouling had been left by others, had been successful so far and further information was available on the Council website. It was noted that clean up bags were not provided by SBC. Mrs Bannerman, who currently co-ordinated the Woofs Campaign in Berwickshire, asked whether funding could be provided to cover the cost of bags for Woofs for one year only to allow the payment system for subscribers to become fully operational. Mr Blackie advised that there was no budget within Neighbourhood Services however he suggested that there might be another option and Mrs Bannerman agreed to contact Mr Blackie directly to discuss this matter further. Discussion followed and a number of questions were answered by officers. The wardens' role in the trial year was to revitalise enforcement and identify the culprits. Depending on the outcome of the trial, there were other duties such as checking dogs for chipping which could be added to their remit. Mr Blackie confirmed that there was an on the spot fine of £80 for the dog owner for each offence. The costs for running the warden service would be covered by any fines and SBC and 3GS would receive an equal share of any remaining profit. The Chairman thanked Mr Blackie for attending the meeting.

DECISION NOTED.

7. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) informing the Forum of SFRS activity since 3 March 2016. The report explained that there had been 4 occurrences of fires in houses/buildings which had resulted in 2 casualties; 8 open fire incidents with no casualties; 10 Special Service incidents giving rise to 2 casualties; and 18 non-deliberate unwanted fire alarm signals. Station Manager Matt Acton went on to inform Members activity currently taking place in Berwickshire. In addition to free home safety visits throughout the year, Members were advised that, as part of the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership's Reducing Equalities Strategy, SFRS along with the Scottish Borders Safer Communities team would be jointly leading on the "Keeping People Safe" theme. Within the theme, it had been identified that older people were more likely to suffer a fall in the home which resulted in admission to hospital and of those, a high percentage were in the 75+ age group. A collaborative approach with other Community Partners would enable a more generic role to be adopted by SFRS and would allow officers to assess all aspects of risk within the home. This approach was being piloted in Cheviot area and further information would be provided in due course. Other work being progressed in Berwickshire included Firesharp; implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure for Protection of Children and Adults at Risk of Harm; development of a partnership with the local Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service and involvement with the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC); delivery of road safety awareness sessions in secondary schools; participation in the event for Young Drivers in May; and fire safety audits. An update on the partnership with the British Heart Foundation was provided and Station Manager Acton advised that all 356 of SFRS stations across the country were now equipped with training kit and would act as the base for local people to learn CPR skills. The Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest national trial was currently running at three stations within SBC area, one of which was in Coldstream. Further updates would be provided in due course. The summer Thematic Action Plan would focus on: Wildfire; rubbish and refuse fires; and outdoor safety and the Ward Plans for Berwickshire were available on the SFRS website. The Chairman thanked Station Manager Acton for his attendance.

**DECISION
NOTED the report.**

8. OPEN QUESTIONS

There were no Open Questions raised at the meeting.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Items for future Agendas were proposed as follows:-

- (a) Public Health Issues in Berwickshire – the Chairman would contact Mr Tim Patterson, Joint Director of Public Health.
- (b) Broadband Provision in Berwickshire – following a wide ranging discussion, it was agreed that a separate meeting dedicated to this issue be arranged for June 2016.

**DECISION
AGREED.**

10. COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

No items were raised at the meeting.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

11. BERWICKSHIRE FLAG

11.1 There had been circulated copies of a Briefing Paper by the Clerk to the Council advising of the options available in respect of flying a Berwickshire Flag on the north side of the Scotland/England border at Lamberton Toll. The Briefing Note explained the background to this item and the Chairman detailed the Coats of Arms which might be considered for use on a Berwickshire Flag, namely:

- (i) that no further action was taken in respect of a Berwickshire flag;
- (ii) the existing Berwickshire Coat of Arms and whether this should be the original County Arms or those of the District Council, bearing in mind that the old County Arms did not relate to the same boundaries as those of the existing Wards of East and Mid Berwickshire of Scottish Borders Council. It would be possible for Scottish Borders Council or another entity, such as the Berwickshire Civic Society, to petition for either of these.
- (iii) a new, non-heraldic flag (ie one with no heraldic symbols), with the final design being approved by the Lord Lyon, who would ensure that the design and colours were not in conflict with other flags and that the design also was a suitable representation of the area. Care would need to be taken to ensure that that all the communities within Berwickshire were supportive of such a flag. In designing a new flag, consideration would need to be given to simplicity, the use of meaningful symbols and colours, and how the flag would look either when flying from a flag pole in strong wind or conversely when hanging in windless conditions.

Further details were included in the Briefing Note in respect of what would be required to further progress a Berwickshire flag and the associated costs.

11.2 During the discussion that followed, Mr Silcock confirmed that consideration could be given to funding being granted from the Quality of Life Fund to cover costs associated with this project. The Chairman summarised the options for consideration. Community Council representatives were given the opportunity to air their views. However, the Chairman advised that they were non-voting members of the Forum. On this basis, Elected Members considered the following:

- (a) that no further action be taken in respect of a Berwickshire flag;
- (b) that a community consultation be carried out to ascertain the views of all Berwickshire residents prior to any decision being made ; and
- (c) that work be carried out to develop a Berwickshire Flag which would subsequently be flown alongside the Saltire and the Union Flag on the North side of the Scotland/England border at Lamberton Toll.

Councillor Moffat, seconded by Councillor Campbell, moved that a community consultation be carried out to ascertain the views of all Berwickshire residents prior to any decision being made.

- 11.3 Councillor Renton, seconded by Councillor Greenwell, moved as an amendment that work be carried out to develop a Berwickshire Flag which would subsequently be flown alongside the Saltire and the Union Flag on the North side of the Scotland/England border at Lamberton Toll.

VOTE

Motion: 2 votes.

Amendment: 3 votes.

The motion was accordingly carried.

DECISION

AGREED that work be carried out to develop a Berwickshire Flag and that Transport Scotland be approached for permission for the Berwickshire Flag to be flown alongside the Saltire and the Union Flag on the North side of the Scotland/England border at Lamberton Toll.

17. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Future meetings of the Berwickshire Area Forum were scheduled for:-

1 September 2016;

1 December 2016;

2 March 2017;

15 June 2017.

DECISION

NOTED.

The meeting concluded at 9.10pm.