

MINUTE of Meeting of the BERWICKSHIRE
AREA PARTNERSHIP held via Microsoft
Team on Thursday, 3 December 2020 at 6.30
p.m.

Present:- Councillors J. Fullarton (Chairman), J. Greenwell, C. Hamilton, D. Moffat and M. Rowley together with 13 representatives from Partners, Community Organisations and Community Councils.

Apologies:- Councillor H. Laing; Mr J Anderson (Eyemouth Community Council).

In Attendance:- Service Director Customer & Communities, Communities and Partnerships Manager, Locality Development Co-ordinator (G. Jardine), Clerk to the Council.

1. WELCOME AND MEETING PROTOCOLS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Berwickshire Area Partnership held via Microsoft Teams and outlined how the meeting would be conducted and how those both in the meeting and watching via the Live Stream could take part.

2. FEEDBACK FROM MEETING ON 6 FEBRUARY 2020

The Minute of the meeting of the Berwickshire Area Partnership held on 6 February 2020 had been circulated and this was noted. With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute, on Transport update, a question was asked about whether the meetings had taken place with Hutton/Paxton communities regarding the Berwick/Hutton/Paxton bus service and with Reston Community Council regarding transport links for the re-opening of Reston Station. The Clerk to the Council advised that the Council's Passenger Transport Manager had now left the Council but she would check with his successor on the status of the meetings.

3. OTHER INFORMATION AND NEWS

3.1 Outstanding Community Fund Applications for 2019/20

The Chairman advised that the Outstanding Community Fund Applications for 2019/20 were dealt with in a report that went to Council on 27 August and this report also contained the evaluations of Localities Bid Fund 1 & 2 and Participatory Budgeting. For Berwickshire, 12 projects had been approved so far, totalling £46,132.53.

3.2 Berwickshire Community Fund 2021/20

It was noted that the Community Fund for 2020/21 was now open and guidance and the application form was available on the Council website. At the moment, around £25,000 was available in the Fund, with an item later on the agenda bringing forward some applications. It had to be noted that the Fund was currently over-subscribed.

3.3 Community Councils

It was noted that the grants to Community Councils were being paid as normal for 2020/21.

3.4 Festival Grant Scheme

It was noted that commitments were being met for public liability and insurance for 2020 and the Scheme was now closed for claims.

3.5 Federation of Village Halls

It was noted that grants were being paid out as normal for 2020/21.

3.6 **VE Celebration Fund**

It was noted that while the Fund was now closed, expenses were being met for any commitments made by organisers of planned events.

3.7 **Berwickshire Locality Plan and Action Plan**

It was noted that the Berwickshire Locality Plan and related Action Plan were now published on the Council website. These plans outlined the priorities for the Berwickshire area and could be the focus of a future Area Partnership meeting.

3.8 **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015**

It was noted that there were currently no formal Asset Transfer Requests for the Berwickshire area. There were five ongoing Participation Requests relating to the involvement of Eyemouth Community Council and Eyemouth Community Trust.

4. **FIT FOR 2024: REVIEW OF AREA PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY FUND**

4.1 There had been circulated summaries of the Council reports. Jenni Craig, Service Director Customer & Communities, gave a presentation on the review and outlined the actions and next steps. A series of questions of the future of the Area Partnership and how the Community Fund might work were shared to aid the discussion. The Chairman commented on the small number present at the meeting but asked if they would share their views.

4.2 The following points were made:-

- Workshop in October 2019 by SCDC was very good, with a lot of discussion, so it may be difficult to have an open meeting to get to the bottom of what were some quite complicated issues around the future working of the Area Partnership
- Not sure about the difference between having the Area Partnership as a Council committee or not, as much depended on the purpose of the Partnership
- It would be helpful to have a Sub-Group set up to look in more detail at the questions and tease out the differences between the previous forms of committee in Berwickshire
- There needed to be opportunities given to shape the agendas
- Was the Area Partnership the owner of the Locality Plan?
- Whatever format the future Area Partnership took, it had to be the owner of the Locality Plan. This would be really important going forward with regard to "Place" planning, South of Scotland Enterprise, etc.
- Meetings should be more representative of communities both in terms of membership and attendance, and should not just comprise SBC members and Community Councillors but other community group representation
- The purpose of the current Area Partnership was not clear and seemed to be dominated by the Council telling everyone in the community what was happening
- People of Berwickshire were not enthused by the current Area Partnership and buy in from the public was needed
- There was quite a mix in Berwickshire between larger towns and rural villages
- One size should not fit all across the Borders in terms of the future of Area Partnerships in the 5 localities
- As many people as possible needed to be involved
- Covid response in communities had brought people and communities together
- It would not be possible to have representatives from every community group but key members needed to be identified
- This was a partnership and so should have equal representation from the Council, Community Councils and the Third Sector, with the Council facilitating meetings
- The community had to be involved in the Partnership on an equal basis
- Community planning was important at a local level and someone had to monitor that

- The Area Partnership was too big to have a proper discussion and a Sub-Group should be formed to look at the way forward, with potentially themed Sub-Groups formed in the future to consider specific issues and report back to the main Partnership as there were too many issues to be covered in a single meeting. This would allow the real voices to be heard.
- Frustration of previous meetings has been trying to cover too much in the meeting
- People would be willing to join and attend meetings in future if there was clarity of purpose and they could see outcomes which could make a difference within communities
- Research should be undertaken to establish what worked elsewhere for comparative purposes
- The future of the Community Fund should also be included in the remit of the Sub-Group

AGREED:

- (a) that a Sub-Group would be set up of the Area Partnership, comprising 2 Councillors along with representatives from Community Councils and Community Groups to examine options for the future working of the Area Partnership and the Community Fund;**
- (b) to note that James Anderson (Eyemouth Community Council), Juliana Amaral (BAVS), and Jennie Sutton (Cockburnspath) had volunteered to be members of the Sub-Group;**
- (c) that officers would request expressions of interest from other Groups to be represented on the Sub-Group; and**
- (d) the Sub-Group would report its findings back to the Area Partnership.**

5. BERWICKSHIRE COMMUNITY FUND 2020/21

5.1 The Chairman reminded the members that the Fund was currently over-subscribed and there were six applications, totalling just over £41,000 for consideration at the meeting. The Chairman further advised that there were a further seven applications pending which were still to be assessed, and they added up to just under £81,000. As there may be other organisations who would also wish to submit applications, the meeting would need to consider how best to deal with the current applications and the others. Representatives from each of the applications were available to answer any questions about their projects. Gillian Jardine, SBC Locality Development Co-ordinator, gave details of the criteria used for the assessment of applications, those assessments having been circulated with the agenda for the meeting, and then presented each assessment. Ms Jardine further advised that there was £25,848.65 available in the Fund. The six applications were:

- a) Reston & Auchencrow Community Council – Play park improvements (£10,000)
- b) Cockburnspath Community Enterprise – Community Shop (£15,000)
- c) Duns PlayFest – Community Festival (£4,000)
- d) Abundant Borders – Community garden, Todlaw, Duns (£8,000)
- e) Coldstream Gateway Association – Floral display (£1,800)
- f) Ayton Heritage – Preservation of ruins of St Dionysius (£2,538)

5.2 The Chairman commented that all the applications seemed to be first class projects and thanked the communities for coming up with them, and also the officers for their work in assessing the projects against the Fund criteria. The applications were to be considered by the Area Partnership, with agreement on funding preferably reached by consensus (i.e. widespread agreement). Where consensus was not possible, then SBC Elected Members would make the final decision, with the Chairman of the Area Partnership having a casting vote if required, should there be an even split amongst the SBC Elected Members. Owing to the Fund being over-subscribed and not all applications being

assessed and therefore before the meeting, there followed considerable discussion on how to deal with matters. The following points were put forward:

- Projects should be considered on their own merits, with no % reduction to the amount to be granted applied across the board
- There were quite significant differences between the 6 projects, making it difficult to make a decision
- Match funding should be used as a criteria for assessment
- Match funding should not be used as a criteria for assessment
- Should impact and value to the community be taken into account
- Should decisions be deferred until all applications had been assessed
- Should the Fund have a closing date set and was a “fast track” application given priority
- Consideration should be given to those projects which were time limited due to the nature of the project, or had time limitations on match funding
- Should the Community Fund be released in tranches throughout the year with closing dates, and an assessment spreadsheet connected to the Fund criteria to allow a view to be formed
- It was difficult to compare such a disparate set of projects
- Scoring criteria and weighting should form part of future assessment
- All projects had merits but there was not enough funding for all of them
- The quality of each bid needed to be assessed
- The sustainability of each project could also be considered

5.3 Those attending the meeting considered various options to consider the applications but could not come to a consensus. The SBC Elected Members discussed whether to defer a decision until further information could be brought forward.

AGREED

- (a) **that a special meeting of the Berwickshire Area Partnership would be held on Thursday 17 December to consider the 6 assessed applications to the Community Fund; and**
- (b) **Officers would present to that meeting a matrix which would include details of those projects which were time limited, in regard to the nature of the project, and/or whether there were other funding consequences for those projects with match funding.**

6. NEXT MEETING - 4 MARCH 2021

It was noted that after the special meeting of the Area Partnership on 17 December 2020, the next meeting was scheduled for 4 March 2021.

7. ANY OTHER FORMAL BUSINESS

No items were raised.

8. OPEN FORUM

No items were raised.

The meeting concluded at 9.00 pm