

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL BERWICKSHIRE AREA PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES of Meeting of the BERWICKSHIRE
AREA PARTNERSHIP held Via MS Teams on
Thursday, 2 September 2021 at 6.30 pm

- Present:- SBC Councillors: J. A. Fullarton (Chairman), J. Greenwell, H. Laing, D. Moffat and M. Rowley.
Other organisations attendees: Ms J. Amaral (BAVS), Mr J. Anderson (Eyemouth & District CC), Ms L. Anderson (Eyemouth & District CC), Mr A. Cockerill (Cockburnspath Community Shop), Mr J. Brown (Swinton & Ladykirk CC), Mr K. Dickinson (Gavinton, Fogo & Polwarth CC), Mr L. Inglis (Reston CC), Ms K. Lerpiniere (Parent Space), Ms A. McIntosh (Allanton Village Hall), Ms A. McNeill (A Heart for Duns), Mr D. McNeill (Fire & Rescue Service), Mr A. Mitchell (Duns CC), Mr D. Paterson (BHA), Ms H. Richards (Parent Space), Ms J. Sutton (Cockburnspath Community).
- Apologies:- Councillor C. Hamilton.
- In Attendance:- Service Director Customer & Communities, Locality Development Co-ordinator, Communities and Partnership Manager, Portfolio Manager, Clerk to the Council, Democratic Services Officer (W. Mohieddeen).
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1. WELCOME AND MEETING PROTOCOLS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Berwickshire Area Partnership. The meeting was held via Microsoft Teams and the Chairman 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 OF 1 JULY

The Minute of the meeting of the Berwickshire Area Partnership held on 1 July 2021 had been circulated and was noted. There had been no evaluations completed after the last meeting so feedback from that evening's meeting was encouraged, with details on how to provide feedback on the agenda.

3. PLACE-MAKING UPDATE

- 3.1 With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute of 1 July 2021, SBC Service Director Customer & Communities, Mrs Jenni Craig, and SBC Portfolio Manager, Mr James Lamb, were in attendance to present an update on Place Making. Mr Lamb summarised the progress of the previous Place Making workshop held with Diarmaid Lawlor of Scottish Futures Trust where key issues and success factors had been identified. The output from all workshops held with Area Partnerships were included in a report considered by Scottish Borders Council in August 2021. The main purpose of Place Making was to develop joint working by Scottish Borders Council, partner organisations, and communities, to build on existing work and to learn from experiences related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Place Making would be a multi-year project that would see communities developing local plans suited to each community. As part of the presentation, feedback was requested on the project's principles, framework, resources and plan. The meeting was asked for agreement on the project principles, criteria for identifying communities to be prioritised, affirming Place Making

governance, and to agree next steps. It was noted that Scottish Borders Council had agreed on the draft principles to develop place-making and that seven had been suggested by stakeholders, with a further six added that Scottish Borders Council felt was important to include. It was hoped that the Area Partnership would form a Locality Programme Board to have oversight of the Locality Plan and prioritise communities' activities in Place making. Mrs Craig emphasised that an inclusive and collective approach should be pursued to ensure equality between rural and urban communities; locality plans were owned by the Area Partnerships which were to be built on community plans, and that the project should be taken forward with mutual trust. The aspiration was that every community would be supported to develop its own plan but this would take time and could not all be done at once. The project had a short-term plan to take forward to early 2022 so that actions could be agreed and communities could observe changes and feed back to the Area Partnership.

- 3.2 Mr Mitchell enquired as to the status of Duns in the report and whether towns that did not have completed plans would get assistance, whether each Area Partnership would set their own framework and what timescale there was to have locality plans produced. Ms McNeill expressed concern that the project seemed not to be community-led as the additional posts were employed by Scottish Borders Council with no direct community capacity building; Duns did not fall within any of the indices referred to in the report while Eyemouth did; and was disappointed that the initial focus was on those towns which already had plans. Mrs Craig responded that Duns and a number of other places in Berwickshire were referred to in the report and that town centre index was not the only measurement of need. Work on the expansion of the indices was required to reflect smaller settlements to allow Area Partnerships to prioritise. It was noted that the framework was a draft and that feedback on alternatives was welcome. With reference to common frameworks, it was noted that the preference was for a common framework to be in place across all the Area Partnerships using a model recognised by Scottish Futures Trust and place-based investment programmes. It was confirmed that the purpose of the staff resources was to be focussed on communities to support locality plan development.
- 3.3 Ms Amaral enquired whether the framework was to be taken to community councils for confirmation and whether there was flexibility for community council boundaries to capture other interested groups. It was good to see officers' time would be spent in developing capacity in communities but it would also be helpful to have budgets going directly to communities to do things for themselves. Mr Dickinson referred to agreement on the principles, priorities and framework by 7 September and if so, that timescale was too rushed. Councillor Rowley noted that having nine staff funded was positive for the Place Making project in the Borders. In terms of each of the 69 Community Councils across the Borders having their own plan, perhaps consideration could be given to Community Councils working together. There may also be cross-community themes which could work in a themed plan rather than in geographic plans. Councillor Rowley suggested some of the larger settlements may consider working with the hinterland and not just with community councils but include other community groups as well. The criteria in the Council report had been a first draft and areas identified where it was thought benefits could be achieved quickly. There were a number of funds available to communities from Scottish Government, Borderlands, etc. and it was necessary to have projects worked up enough to get funding released, and it was recognised that some communities would need assistance to get to this stage. Communities working together either formally or informally was to be welcomed, and the idea of using a Community Council boundary for a plan was the smallest area and a matter for local discussion and agreement.

DECISION

NOTED that feedback on the Place making proposals should be sent to Mr Lamb, SBC Portfolio Manager, by 30 September 2021.

4 **PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING UPDATE**

The Locality Development Co-ordinator gave a verbal update on Participatory Budgeting. Scottish Borders Council was to upgrade the play park in John's Road, Eyemouth. A budget of £50-60,000 had been identified for the community to participate in how the upgrade budget should be used, with the selection of play equipment prioritised before suppliers would be sought. The Locality Development Co-ordinator would be contacting community groups directly to participate in this exercise and it was hoped to come back to the Area Partnership in December for a decision on the model and equipment.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

5 **SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

5.1 Mr MacNeil of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service delivered a verbal update of activities being undertaken by the Service. With regard to operational responses:

- Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) had adapted and amended operations to reflect COVID-19 measures;
- FRS facilities were not accepting non-essential visitors;
- There had been a moratorium on safety visits and community engagement, but that was now starting to relax;
- There had been a priority on outdoor safety reflective on recent incidents in Scotland regarding water safety. Mr MacNeil informed the committee that water safety information had been posted on social media and popular swimming sites and water safety awareness had been delivered on location in Kelso;
- Home fire safety had been affected by the pandemic and was to be restarted once COVID-19 restrictions were lifted.
- Fire stations across the Scottish Borders were being used as asymptomatic COVID-19 testing centres which had previously been carried out by the military, with PCR testing being carried out by the NHS.
- New smoke detection standards for domestic housing would come into effect from February 2022. Domestic properties would require one smoke alarm in the room most frequently used during the day, a smoke alarm in a place with most air circulation, one smoke alarm in each level, a smoke alarm and heat alarm in the kitchen and for alarms to have interlinked connectivity. Mr MacNeil advised that if a homeowner was considered high risk, the Service would fit smoke alarms with wi-fi connectivity free of charge.

5.2 Councillor Greenwell asked whether the fire brigade deliver a defibrillator service and Mr MacNeil explained that fire engines carried defibrillators as part of emergency response but would not routinely mobilise unless an ambulance was delayed. In response to a question from Councillor Rowley, Mr MacNeil advised that information on the criteria for vulnerable people getting help would be made available and added that unregulated companies had targeted vulnerable people with leaflets causing concerns regarding costs and scams. Mr MacNeil confirmed that COP26 preparations were affecting the FRS across Scotland. Recruitment was underway in Eyemouth and Duns for retained fire fighters and anyone interested in this should contact him for further information.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

6 **AREA PARTNERSHIP CONSULTATION UPDATE**

The Chair advised that the consultation closed on 1 August and officers were in the process of forming a paper to go to Scottish Borders Council later in the year with recommendations

for the development of the Area Partnerships based on the outcomes of the consultation. It was noted that an update would be provided at the next meeting of the Berwickshire Area Partnership on 2 December 2021.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

7 COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE HUB UPDATE

The Locality Development Co-ordinator, Ms Jardine, advised that the Community Assistance Hub was continuing to respond to individuals' requests for support. Community meetings were continuing fortnightly and were focusing on the Whole Systems Approach, which was running in Eyemouth, and on transport in Berwickshire. A more detailed update would be provided to the December meeting of the Area Partnership.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

8 BERWICKSHIRE COMMUNITY FUND 2020-21 EVALUATION FROM COCKBURNSPATH COMMUNITY SHOP

Mr Alex Cockerill of Cockburnspath Community Shop presented an update on the progress of the Cockburnspath Community Shop since receiving funding from the Berwickshire Community Fund. Since opening in June 2021, the shop had made 9,000 transactions in two months and they estimated to have saved 235,000 kilometres in shopping journeys elsewhere. They had recruited 20 volunteers from the community. Having received feedback from walkers, they found that the shop was a focal point for the end of the Southern Upland Way after many visited the shop for provisions and refreshments. Feedback from the community was that people felt the shop's presence aided community resilience; there was greater social interaction in the community through the shop; volunteers were having fun; and there was appreciation for the delivery service for housebound individuals. The community shop had learnt the importance of regulations and legislation to comply with such as food hygiene, alcohol licensing, and allergen labelling, and also that having a team with the right attitude and skills helped with these challenges. It was explained that the shop was open for 64 hours a week and that there were two paid, part-time staff working a total of 40 hours alongside the shop volunteers. It was noted that community engagement was essential and that Cockburnspath Community Shop was working hard, through conduction surveys, to ensure that it was not just the loudest voices that were being heard. Councillor Fullarton praised the Cockburnspath Community Shop noting it was a fantastic story, congratulating the volunteers, and noting that the shop served not just the residents of Cockburnspath but the hinterland as well. He hoped that others who had received funding from the Community Fund had just as much success with their projects.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

9 FUNDING TABLE OVERVIEW

The Locality Development Co-ordinator, Ms Jardine, presented the table of available funds in the Berwickshire area. It was highlighted that in the Community Fund £17,249.61 was being assessed at the meeting and if approved there would be £40,010.39 funds available. The opening balance of the Build Back a Better Borders fund was £87,783, that £1,065 had been awarded and there were £16,405.60 funds being assessed at the meeting which if approved would leave £70,312.40 funding available. It was noted that across all grant funds available in Berwickshire, there was an approximate total of £160,000 available.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

10 **BERWICKSHIRE COMMUNITY FUND CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ASSESSMENT PANEL MEMBERS**

Keith Dickinson presented the Code of Conduct for the Assessment Panel which was a good practice guide which the Panel had been working to throughout the process.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the Code of Conduct to be followed by members of the Berwickshire Community Fund Assessment Panel.

11 **COMMUNITY FUND PROCESS AND APPLICATIONS**

The Chair of the Community Fund Assessment Panel, Mr Keith Dickinson, updated the meeting on the Community Fund process. Mr Dickinson thanked all those that had been involved in the development of the process and advised that a fair, robust and transparent grant system was now in place. He described the process used by the Assessment Panel which consisted of five voting members from the community and three Scottish Borders Councillors with non-voting membership. Four applications had received for assessment and these had been blind-marked by each member of the Panel, with scores tabulated and returned to officers prior to a meeting of the Panel. Mr Dickinson explained that while the level of marks had differed between members of the Panel, the order of marks was consistent from each individual. There was consensus on the recommendations for each application and no votes were needed.

(a) **Allanton Village Hall - £3,150 for repair of retaining wall**

The Panel noted that there was clear information on the aims of the project, the definition of need, the problem the group faced and the financial justification. The Panel also noted that the application proposed a solution to their problem with advice sought from a structural engineer. The Panel recommended funding the applicant the full amount.

(b) **Parent Space - £4,977.61 for childhood stages courses**

The Panel reported that the application did not appear clearly focused on Berwickshire, the demand for the project work had not been quantified, and there was an absence of detail as to what work would take place and where it would be delivered. Furthermore, the Panel noted that there was an absence of detail on the potential impact of the project and evidence of impact from past work. Mr Dickinson added that there was support for the group, however the Panel was led by criteria which had not been met in the application. The Panel did not recommend funding the current application, but advised that they would welcome another application that addressed the feedback.

(c) **Cockburnspath Allotment Association - £5,000**

The Panel was supportive of the overall aims of the project however had a number of questions related to the application. The Panel had concern related to the scale of the project including a significant sum to hire a gardener and allotment developer and recommended instead that the applicants connect with Abundant Borders. The Panel further noted that the applicants had significant reserves and could have done more to clearly define their financial commitments. The Panel recommended that the applicants were funded £5,000 specifically for the polytunnel with the caveat that the polytunnel has not been included as part of another grant application or award.

(d) **BAVS - £4,122 for a community e-bike pilot study**

The Panel was supportive of the aim of the project and while expressing some concern that the application for two bikes may be too small, noted that it may be appropriate for

a pilot. The Panel considered it would be important for the applicants to gauge demand for e-bikes, that dissemination of the pilot study findings were critical and it would be valuable to extend the pilot to other Berwickshire towns in due course. The Panel recommended that £4122 be awarded for the project with the requirement that the e-bikes would be passed on to another community if the Duns pilot study proves unsuccessful.

Councillor Fullarton congratulated the assessment panel on their progress.

DECISION

AGREED to the following in relation to the Berwickshire Community Fund:

- (a) to award Allanton Village Hall the sum of £3,150 as a contribution towards the costs of repairing a retaining wall;**
- (b) to make no award to Parent Space but to encourage a future submission that contained more detail and was clearly focussed on the criteria for the Fund;**
- (c) to award Cockburnspath Allotment Association the sum of £5,000 specifically for the purchase of a Polytunnel, with the funding being released once it had been confirmed by the Allotment Association that the Polytunnel had not been included in any other grant application or award; and**
- (d) to award Berwickshire Association of Voluntary Services the sum of £4,122 for a Community E-bike pilot study, on the condition that the bikes would be passed to another community should the pilot study in Duns prove unsuccessful.**

12. BUILD BACK A BETTER BORDERS RECOVERY FUND APPLICATIONS

The Locality Development Co-ordinator, Ms Jardine, presented the summary of applications to the Build Back a Better Borders Recovery Fund:

- (a) Roxburgh & Berwickshire Citizens Advice Bureau**
An application had been received for £4,395.60 to recruit a Citizens Advice Bureau Champion to work across Berwickshire on a six-month contract to promote volunteering opportunities. It was noted that the Citizens Advice Bureau requested the Champion to cover their full geographic reach and were requesting that costs were shared with Berwickshire, Cheviot and Teviot & Liddesdale Build Back a Better Borders funds. The application was assessed as high as it met a number of fund criteria.

DECISION

AGREED to award the sum of £4,395.60, subject to the following conditions:

- (i) the applicant must follow Scottish Government Covid19 guidance; and**
 - (ii) the rate of pay given to the Volunteer Co-ordinator must meet the National Living Wage.**
- (b) Eyemouth Enhancement Group**
An application had been received for £11,200 to fund the purchase of a lawn tractor mower to manage current pathways and increase the number of pathways the group were responsible for and to maintain the BMX track on behalf of Eyemouth Community Council. The Locality Development Co-ordinator, Ms Jardine, noted that the insurance costs were an estimate and not confirmed, and recommended that if insurance costs were less than the estimate, the grant should be adjusted to reflect the difference, or if the insurance costs were greater than the estimate, then the applicant would meet the

difference. It was noted that the application was assessed with a high score, meeting several criteria requirements.

DECISION

AGREED to award the sum of up to £11,200, with the final amount depending on confirmation of the actual insurance costs and subject to the following:

- (iii) the applicant must follow Scottish Government Covid19 guidance;**
- (iv) the equipment must be made available for use by other community based organisations;**
- (v) appropriate insurance cover must be in place to cover all users; and**
- (vi) permissions and risk assessments must be in place.**

(c) A Heart for Duns

An application had been received for £11,521 to provide opportunities for social contact through a programme of cultural and educational events. It was noted that the application scored high against assessment criteria due to focusing on socially isolated people, events catered for older people, events would be free and would enable organisational recovery.

DECISION

AGREED to award the sum of £11,521, subject to the applicant following Scottish Government Covid-19 guidance for events.

13. COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP FUNDING

The Chair advised that the Community Ownership Fund was part of the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund. Funding was available for community groups looking to take over community assets which provided a community need and which were at risk of being lost to the community. It was stressed that community groups needed a well-developed business plan and were able to evidence community need. The Chair informed the meeting that the Scottish Borders Council Communities and Partnerships team were available to support any group interested in applying and information was available via a link in the additional information document circulated with the meeting agenda.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

14. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR NOTING

The Chair highlighted additional information included with the agenda including links to the Area Partnership's information pack and the Community Empowerment Act which were available on the Scottish Borders Council website. Members were reminded that if they had any suggestions for additions to this information to contact the Locality Development Co-ordinator, Ms Jardine.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

15. NEXT AREA PARTNERSHIP MEETING

It was noted that the next Berwickshire Area Partnership meeting would take place on 2 December 2021. The Chair advised that if there were any agenda items that members wished to add to contact their appropriate Councillor or to contact the Locality Development Co-ordinator, Gillian Jardine, or another member of the Communities & Partnerships Team.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

16. **ANY OTHER FORMAL BUSINESS**

- 16.1 Mr Keith Dickinson advised that there were still three vacancies on the Berwickshire Community Fund Assessment Panel and that anyone who was interested in joining was to contact the Locality Development Co-ordinator, Gillian Jardine.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

- 16.2 Mr Andrew Mitchell asked if there were plans to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The Clerk to the Council advised that the Convener of the Council was due to hold a meeting with the 3 Lord Lieutenants in the area after which announcements should be made about a Jubilee Fund which would allow communities to make arrangements to mark the occasion.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

17. **FUTURE MEETING DATES**

The future meeting dates of the Berwickshire Area Partnership were noted as:

- 2 December 2021
- 3 February 2022
- 3 March 2022
- 9 June 2022

The meeting concluded at 8:30pm.