

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL TWEEDDALE AREA PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES of Meeting of the TWEEDDALE
AREA PARTNERSHIP held Via Microsoft
Teams on Tuesday, 23 August 2022 at 7.00
pm

Present:- Councillors M. Douglas (Chairman), D. Begg, J. Pirone, E. Small, R. Tatler, and V. Thomson.

Also present:- Peter Maudsley (Peebles Community Council), Gordon Daly (Innerleithen Community Council), Joe Fernand (Renew Crew), Chris Lewin (Upper Tweed Community Council), Elizabeth Johnson (Tweeddale Assessment Panel), Lorna McCullough (The Bridge), Crick Carleton (Chair of the Tweeddale Area Partnership Place Making Working Group), Frank Drummond (Tweeddale Access Panel), Les Turnbull (Peebles Community Council), and Esther Daborn (Skirling Community Council).

In Attendance:- Community Co-ordinator (K. Harrow), Community Engagement Officer (H. Lacon), Principal Transport Officer (G. Grant) Democratic Services Officer (D. Hall)

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Tweeddale Area Partnership being 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 27 JUNE 2022**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Tweeddale Area Partnership meeting held on 27 June 2022 were noted. Those in attendance requested that the attendance of future meetings listed attendee's names on the Minute, this was unanimously agreed. Councillor Pirone requested that any attendee who wished for their name to be included on the Minute included their name and organisation in the chat function of the meeting.

3. **UPDATE FROM PINGO PILOT IN BERWICKSHIRE**

3.1 The Chairman welcomed Mr Gordon Grant of Scottish Borders Council to the meeting. Mr Grant explained that he is the Principal Transport Officer, and has responsibility for local bus services and community transport. Regarding the PINGO service, a bid had been to the Community Renewal Fund to carry out a Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) trial across the region, the application was unsuccessful. Scottish Borders Council had then funded a DRT solely in the Berwickshire locality which had been named PINGO. The aim of the trial was to ascertain the effectiveness and operational realities of operating a DRT service within the Scottish Borders. The PINGO service consisted of two mini buses that did not operate on a fixed bus route schedule, instead users would book via app or telephone the service, with a route being plotted following the receipt of bookings. The feedback of the trial had been positive, with a steady increase in the number of under 22s that had used the service. Mr Grant explained that a key aim of the service was to allow people to travel from areas that were not on the passenger transport network to somewhere they could then pursue onward travel on public transport. The feedback and results of the trial would be fed into the major passenger transport network review.

3.2 In response to a question regarding the licences which drivers needed to operate the bus, Mr Grant explained that the buses were operated by Borders Buses, and that the licence to operate the bus was similar to the normal licence required to operate a mini bus. Regarding the replacement of printed timetables at bus stops across the region with QR codes to scan, Mr Grant explained that throughout Covid there had been huge, ongoing

changes to bus services across the region. Weekly changes to the timings of services had rendered printed timetables obsolete on a regular basis, and the decision had been made to use a QR code service to cater to the approximate 1000 bus stops in order to avoid continual confusion and resource deployment. Regarding funding for the trial, Mr Grant confirmed that Scottish Borders Council funded the pilot, and that because Reston Station was due to begin operation the decision was made to carry out the trial in Berwickshire. In light of the comments regarding the use of QR codes for bus timetable access, the Community Co-ordinator, Mr Kenny Harrow, invited anyone to get in contact with the Communities and Partnerships team if they were struggling with issues regarding digital access. In response to a question regarding whether communities could operate their own mini bus to tie in with the Network, Mr Grant explained that it would be challenging for a community to set themselves up as an operator. Their buses would require a ticket machine and would have to operate as a registered service. Particular focus of the ongoing transport network review was on future proofing, and the need to provide a holistic network that was fit for purpose rather than individual solutions to problems facing the network. Regarding meeting with user groups and communities in Tweeddale to discuss the transport network, Mr Grant stated that he was happy to meet those groups in order to help gain an understanding of users' needs and requirements, and was happy to allow groups to contact him via email or through the Communities and Partnerships team. In response to a question regarding the 101/102 bus service, Mr Grant explained that the contract to provide that service had gone to tender, and that the cost had risen significantly beyond what had been expected. The DRT pilot ongoing, and DRT in general, was not a viable solution to the ongoing issues related to the 101/102 service.

4. **PLACE MAKING UPDATE**

Mr Crick Carleton, Chair of the Tweeddale Area Partnership was present at the meeting to provide an update. The Group had held 2 face-to-face meetings since the last meeting of the Area Partnership. Mr Carleton advised that there were now 9 communities that had expressed interest in participating in the place making programme. The meeting held in Walkerburn was well attended, with representatives from the 4 communities in Tweeddale East present. With regard to the meeting held in West Linton, which covered communities based in Tweeddale West, representatives from all but 2 of the relevant communities had attended. The meetings had provided an opportunity for communities to understand what place-making and place plans were. Followed by a presentation to help understand where communities stood, understand their capacity and the issues that they faced. Mr Carleton explained that a key part of the meetings had been to explain to communities where place plans fit into the planning sector, and to manage the expectations and realities inherent to the area. It was hoped that as communities and the Working Group developed they would be able to present their evidenced needs and wishes to planning partners and Scottish Borders Council. Different communities were at different stages of place making, and the ability to consult with other communities and different organisations would be key to the development of plans. The communities involved in place-making could generally be categories into 3 different sizes based on their population. The 3 larger communities had a population over 1000; 3 were mid-sized with a population between 500 and 1000; and 3 were smaller, with a population less than 500. Through the use of share-point, a database of materials had begun to take shape, with a range of reports, files, and guidance related to place-making available to the communities. The files had also been compressed and sent to those without access to share-point. Those in attendance expressed their thanks for the update from Mr Carleton and recognised that through the work undertaken by the Working Group, communities had gained a better understanding of the place making landscape. Councillor Tatler expressed an interest in joining the Working Group, which was unanimously agreed.

5. **FUNDING TABLE OVERVIEW**

The Community Engagement Officer, Ms Hannah Lacon provided an overview of the funds that were able in the Tweeddale locality. The initial balance of the Neighbourhood Support Fund (NSF) was £93,357. Prior to the meeting a total of 6 applications had been

awarded funding, which had totalled £19,638.38. There were 4 NSF applications that were assessed and awaited decision, which totalled £14,347.30.

6. **NEIGHBOURHOOD SUPPORT FUND**

6.1 There had been circulated copies of the Tweeddale Assessment Panel Recommendations from 27 June 2022 with the agenda. Ms Esther Daborn of the Tweeddale Assessment Panel provided an overview of the applications and other business related to the Panel. Ms Daborn explained that 2 members of the Panel had left the Panel, and that 2 replacements had been identified following a recruitment process. It was unanimously agreed to appoint Elizabeth Johnstone and Sheila Turnbull to the Tweeddale Assessment Panel.

6.2 **Walkerburn Community Craft Club**

The application from West Linton Community Craft Club was for £4,500 towards a £5,000 project aimed to expand the group and publicise what they were doing. The funding would be used to acquire 2 sewing machines and equipment haberdashery, pay for tutor costs and the hiring of a hall. Ms Daborn explained the Panel had recommended to fund the application despite a lack of information and some uncertainty around group size and the necessity of purchasing industrial sewing machines as they felt that the group was a good cause and liked their ideas. Those in attendance highlighted that previous applications had been refused due to lack information and requested that applications be considered on a consistent basis. The Elected Members in attendance spoke highly of the Group and their application, highlighting that they were extremely well organised, produced high quality goods, supported a unique social cohort and that they had not previously sought funding. Ms Lacon explained that, following discussions with the group, the industrial style sewing machines were for more experienced members of the group, and that they would allow higher quality products to be created. Members unanimously agreed to provide £4,500, subject to the Group exploring the viability of purchasing second hand equipment.

6.3 **Interest Link Borders**

Interest Link Borders had applied for £7,000 as part of a larger £60k+ project. The group had been active since 1990, with 4 branches across the Scottish Borders. The application was for activities, rent and tutor fees. The group was noted as running befriending projects for children aged 8 and above with learning disabilities. Ms Daborn explained that the Neighbourhood Support Fund criteria stipulated that applications for sums exceeding £5k had to evidence that project funding had been sought from other sources. In this instance as funding had not been sourced from other funding providers, the maximum value that the Panel could recommend was £5,000. Members unanimously agreed to provide £5,000.

6.4 **West Linton Enterprise Group**

The application from the West Linton Enterprise Group was for £1,500 to improve a building that they used by installing loft insulation, flooring and an access ladder. The building in question was used as a community shop, named 'The Knot'. The application had stipulated that there was a long term plan for the community to purchase the building that they used. Ms Daborn explained that as the building was owned by a private individual, with no long term lease in place, the Panel was uncomfortable approving funding for the application and had recommended not to fund. Mr Ian Reid, one of the committee members of the Group was in attendance, and was welcomed by the Chairman to provide his insight into the application. Mr Reid clarified that the shop which operated in the building was a community conceived, community run shop. The money raised by the shop was invested back into the community. The building had been listed for sale by the Red Cross, and was purchased by a local member of the community with a view to selling the building to the community once the requisite funds had been raised. Mr Reid explained that the current owner of the shop did not wish to profit from the sale, and that the Group was confident that the necessary funds would be raised within one year following work in conjunction with the Scottish Land Fund. Members in attendance

expressed that whilst what the Group sought to do had merit and deserved to be funded, the concerns raised due to the uncertainty inherent to the building being owned by a private individual needed to be addressed. It was therefore unanimously agreed by the Members in attendance to defer the application to allow the Group to seek an appropriate letter of comfort that would provide assurance regarding the occupancy of the building.

6.5 **Peebles Biodiversity and Ecology Group**

The application from the Peebles Biodiversity and Ecology Group was for £1347.30 to fund the purchase of a commercial strimmer with battery and charger for a recently planted wild flower meadow. Members unanimously agreed to fund the application in full.

7. **GROUP EVALUATION AND COST OF LIVING INPUT - PEEBLESSHIRE FOODBANK**

7.1 Fiona Dalgleish of the Peeblesshire Foodbank was welcomed to the meeting to provide a project evaluation and an insight into the work that the Foodbank was engaged in. The Foodbank had received £11,000 to purchase a van to assist in their distribution of food parcels. The van was significantly more effective when compared to an individual using their own private car. The van was capable of holding 6 double food boxes in one journey. Ms Dalgleish explained that the number of people using the services of the Foodbank had increased, with record numbers receiving packages. The Foodbank had given out more than double the amount of food than they had received. The rise in the number of people using the Foodbank, and concurrent drop in donations, was a very worrying trend and was attributed to the ongoing cost of living crisis.

7.2 The Foodbank planned to work with Foodpunks on the low and slow pilot project, which would provide some of the most vulnerable families in the area with a slow cooker, ingredients and recipe cards as well as training on how to produce delicious, nutritious food using the slow cooker. The Foodbank had also provided meals to some of the most vulnerable families over the summer holidays, with a total of more than 3,000 meals delivered. The Group planned to carry out a similar project across the October school holiday. Those in attendance expressed their gratitude for the work of the Foodbank, congratulated Ms Dalgleish on her excellent work in trying times and encouraged her to engage with the Community and Partnership team to apply to the Neighbourhood Support Fund if required. In response to a question regarding whether planned breakfast clubs had begun, Ms Dalgleish explained that the breakfast club at Kingsland Primary School had started, and that Halyrude and Walkerburn were planned to start soon. The clubs had made a positive impact and had considerably reduced lateness. In response to a question regarding a newly recruited member of staff, Ms Dalgleish explained that the new member of staff would be involved in campaigns to help raise awareness of food poverty and action to try and reduce it.

8. **OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr Ian Reid explained that he was impressed by the constructive tone of the Area Partnership, however he was concerned that the wider public was unaware of the forum. The Chairman explained that the agenda for the meeting was published publicly and made available to Community Councils and any interested party. Mr Harrow explained that work was ongoing with the Communications and Marketing team to examine different ways in which the Area Partnership could be publicised and encouraged all attendees to share and publicise the content of the meeting. The Community and Partnerships team welcomed hints and suggestions that could help increase the profile of the Area Partnership meetings. Mr Turnbull suggested that the structural makeup of the Area Partnership, chaired by the Elected Members, was not conducive to attracting and keeping attendees. Councillor Tatler suggested that a Public Forum item on the agenda was added as a standing item, which was unanimously agreed. In response to the issue of attendance numbers, the Chairman agreed to explore the potential for holding meetings in public in the future.

9. **MEETING EVALUATION VIA MENTI**

Ms Lacon carried out a survey of the meeting using the interactive Menti tool.

10. **NEXT AREA PARTNERSHIP 1 NOVEMBER. AGENDA ISSUED 18 OCTOBER.**
The next full meeting of the Area Partnership was scheduled for 1 November 2022. The Chairman suggested that given the ongoing cost of living crisis, a standard agenda item should be placed on the agenda to discuss such matters. Any other suggestions for agenda items could be sent to the Communities and Partnerships team.

The meeting concluded at 8.45 pm