

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL TWEEDDALE AREA PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES of Meeting of the TWEEDDALE
AREA PARTNERSHIP held in Burgh Hall,
High Street, Peebles, EH45 8AG on
Tuesday, 13 June 2023 at 7.00 pm

- Present:- Councillors M. Douglas (Chairman), R. Tatler and V. Thomson and V. Thomson
- Apologies:- Councillors D. Begg, J. Pirone, E. Small, E. Daborn (Tweeddale Assessment Panel), V. Carsley (Police Scotland)
- In Attendance:- Community Engagement Officer (H. Lacon), Participation Officer (C. Malster), Democratic Services Officer (L. Cuerden).
- Also in Attendance:- Peter Maudsley (Chair, Peebles Community Council), Chris Lewin (Upper Tweed Community Council), Lorna McCullough (Borders Community Action), Crick Carleton (Chair, Tweeddale Area Partnership Place Making Working Group), George Thornton, Edward Shoote (SOSE), Charlotte Rankin (Buglife), N. MacIntyre (Biodiversity & Ecological Group), S. Meikle (Innerleithen & District Community Council), A. Snoddy, C. Snoddy (Peebles Christmas Lights Association), F. Colton, E. Jackson (Live Borders) L. Denham (SOSE).

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Tweeddale Area Partnership and outlined how the meeting would be conducted.

2. **FEEDBACK FROM MEETING ON 28 MARCH 2023**

There had been circulated copies of the Menti feedback and the Minute of the Meeting held on 28 March 2023. Iain Gibson from Peebles Action for Young People reported on the formation of Peebles Youth Voice and had worked in partnership with a number of local organisations, SBC and Police Scotland to promote the engagement with and involvement of local youth in the community. Gordie Campbell, Network Coordinator of the Scottish Borders Climate Action Network presented on their goal to support and build capacity in climate action, to promote membership of the Network and inform of the plan to establish a Scottish Borders Hub. SBC were to collaborate closely as part of the Place Making initiative.

DECISION

AGREED the Minute and Action Tracker

3. **CHARLOTTE RANKIN - BUGS LIFE/ POLLINATORS ALONG THE TWEED**

Charlotte Rankin, Conservation Officer with Buglife (Invertebrate Conservation Trust) presented information on the Pollinators Along the Tweed project. Part of the Destination Tweed initiative, its purpose was to reverse pollinator decline along the River Tweed by increasing and connecting areas of wildflower-rich habitat and with partner agencies, provide pollinator-themed events and training to raise awareness, knowledge and inspire action. The project area was to extend from Biggar and Tweedsmuir in the west along the course of the river to Berwick-upon-Tweed. There was to be a mapped network of 3km wide corridors (B-Lines) which was to incorporate 40 hectares of wildflower rich habitat across 50 sites. Advice was to be provided via workshops on the addition of a further 40

hectares. There was to be grassland enhancement with the reintroduction of yellow rattle, wildflower planting and changes in the land management practices. Tweeddale was home to eight biodiversity areas: King George V Field, Broughton; Haylodge and Victoria Parks and Kingsway, Peebles; Damside, Innerleithen; Alexandra Park and Tweedholm Playing Field, Walkerburn; and the Clovenfords Playing Field. Projects were already underway at Peebles Golf Club and The Crook Inn at Tweedsmuir. Workshops and events had taken place at Greener Peebles Community Garden and Citizen Science training at Traquair in May 2023. There were further opportunities for the public to get involved in the mapping of existing pollinator projects. More information was to be found at www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/. Ms Rankin was keen to establish links with local beekeepers. The Pollinators project was to run until May 2027. Any further enquires or suggestions for potential sites were to be directed to Charlotte.Rankin@buglife.org.uk.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

4. EDWARD SHOOTE - ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST - SOUTH OF SCOTLAND ENTERPRISE MOUNTAIN BIKE INNOVATION CENTRE

Ed Shoote from South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) presented information on the proposed Mountain Bike Innovation Centre, Adventure Bike Park and Trail Lab at Caerlee Mill, Innerleithen. The £19m Borderlands funded project, in collaboration with Napier University, aimed to renovate the derelict Caerlee Mill following an approach from Ross McGinn of Innerleithen Community Trust. There was a need for more commercial space locally and job creation to reverse the trend of working in Edinburgh since the mill closed. Napier University and Borders College were to deliver skills training following a move from Glentress to Innerleithen on completion. The project was also to deliver a mountain biking research and development innovation centre. The mill site had been purchased in November 2022 with planning and listed building consent awarded in May 2023. July 2023 was to see the beginning of work to clean up the site with main construction by a local contractor to begin from October 2023. The build was scheduled for completion by December 2024. The project planned to deliver many community opportunities: hot desking and short and long term office space; café and studio/events spaces; tender to local contractors; and use of services, expertise and machinery to make products and offer new services locally. A heritage group had been set up to facilitate artwork and interactive displays with the appointed design contractor, alongside plans with Napier University to reuse the mill lade. For the Adventure Bike Park, there had been undertaken an open competitive grant award process of up to £5m. The grant funding of around 30% of capital costs was to be matched with private sector funding and on condition that the £5m was to be spent on infrastructure that directly benefitted the public; roads, trails, car parking etc. The Bike Park was expected to deliver the following: new signature trails and features which complemented existing bike and walking trails; accessibility by design for all riders; progression from children to elite riders; host World class events; sustainable trail maintenance; and robust financial model and long term investment case. The Trail Lab was to provide a lab trail with associated indoor laboratory space and digital facilities to gather 5G real time performance data on bikes riding the trail, a process that was currently undertaken in Portugal or Spain. Mr Shoote confirmed that the Caerlee Mill project was intended to complement existing provision in the area rather than compete, with the aim that more visitors stayed for longer. There was to be innovative, sustainable elements in the building and restoration work to contribute to Net Zero. The build cost was estimated at £14m, with £2.5m earmarked for specialist equipment to deliver innovation, and £2.5m to further support the Bike Park operator once the grant was awarded. Any further enquires were to be directed to Edward.shoote@sose.scot.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

5. REFRESHED COMMUNITY PLAN PRIORITIES- CONSULTATION

Clare Malster, Participation Officer, presented information on Community Planning and the online consultation exercise. A brief overview of Community Planning was provided and highlighted the partnership of public bodies, businesses and community groups to plan and deliver better services in the Scottish Borders. It was the responsibility of Scottish Borders Council, NHS, South of Scotland Enterprise, Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue (in conjunction with the Third Sector, Housing Associations, External Providers and the Scottish Community Council Network) to develop a ten year plan. The 10 year plan was to undergo a review twice in its duration. Previous work on the Tweeddale Locality Plan and further consultation had identified 16 draft priorities under 5 themes: 1) Enough money to live on; 2) Economy, skills and learning; 3) Enjoying good health and wellbeing; 4) A good place to live, grow up and enjoy a full life; and 5) Community empowerment. There had been planned a series of meetings with Place Making groups in early July 2023, the outcome of which was to feed into the Draft Community Plan. The online consultation was to close on 16 July 2023 and could be found at <https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/> . Paper copies were to be obtained from the Communities and Partnership Team on 0300 100 1800 or communityplanning@scotborders.gov.uk. The new Community Plan was to be presented to the Community Planning Strategic Board on 7 September 2023. Concern was expressed about the limited timescale and lack of opportunity for debate and discussion within communities. It was stressed that the 16 priorities were open to review and the importance of avoiding duplication of services and a focus on providing new offerings was highlighted. In response to a question about sources of funds and new economic activities to be brought to the area, it was confirmed that SBC were in consultation with SOSE around plans for economic regeneration, thus avoiding duplication. Any further enquires were to be directed to CMalster@scotborders.gov.uk .

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

6. DRAFT LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2023- 2028 FORMAL CONSULTATION

The consultation on the Draft Local Housing Strategy 2023-28 was available online and could be accessed via [Local housing strategy 2023-28 | Scottish Borders Council \(scotborders.gov.uk\)](#) The consultation was to conclude on 21 July 2023.

DECISION

NOTED

7. YOUTH UPDATE

Hannah Lacon reported that work was ongoing in Tweeddale particularly in hosting youth conversations. Peebles Youth Voice had been formed and local youths and Police Scotland had attended monthly meetings in Costa Coffee on High Street, Peebles. The youth demographic wanted input to the Place Making conversations and there followed a brief discussion on how best to achieve this engagement. It was suggested that there be a standing item on the Area Partnership agenda to allow discussion on youth issues with local youths present. It was considered important to demonstrate that their voice had a place and could effect positive change and was not just a tick box exercise. Cheviot Area Partnership had implemented a trial period of appointing a youth member to the Assessment Panel. There was a suggestion that Pam Rigby, Youth Engagement Officer, might share meeting agendas with local youths and collate their input. There was a suggestion that Elected Members visited secondary schools again as they did pre-Covid to talk about the Scottish Parliament; this could be linked to promoting youth involvement in their own communities.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

8. PLACE MAKING UPDATE

Crick Carleton, Chair of Place Making Working Group provided an update of progress to date. The programme was progressing well. In addressing the idea of the development of a community action plan, groups from 8 communities had been brought together and advanced particular projects, separate from the action plan itself. Five communities (Skirling, West Linton, Eddleston, Peebles and Walkerburn) had been able to form action plan steering groups and had advanced to surveying community opinion with a focus on using the Place Standard Tool in one form or another. The focus of community engagement continued to be on identifying and evidencing those priority developments that could be expected to support a community's resilience and sustainability. The SBC Place Making team continued to provide valuable support and guidance to communities and money was available for hall hire and posters etc. Information gathered from community engagement could be used to promote priority projects and contribute to the formation of the Scottish Borders Community Plan that was currently in the process of being updated, for which an online consultation exercise was underway until 16 July. There had been a number of seminars/workshops on Place Planning organised by Community Land Scotland and Development Trusts Association Scotland. These workshops drew on examples from a number of communities across Scotland and links to their webpages were included in Appendix 1 to this minute. It was increasingly evident that those communities with a paid coordinator/development officer were much better placed to progress development of community actions. Some communities had struggled to achieve community engagement in Placemaking and were interested in securing more hands-on support and facilitation. There was merit to smaller communities banding together to progress their initial scoping consultation e.g. using the same online and paper-based survey. Response rates achieved by other communities were to be noted: Peebles – 285 households (7%); West Linton – 200+ households so far (22%); and Walkerburn – 80+ households so far (18%). The Tweeddale communities still required an easily accessible document sharing platform to exchange experiences and access reports and guidelines. It was suggested that contact was made with Amy Alcorn for guidance on using Sharepoint, which was currently being used by the Community Growing Project.

DECISION

NOTED the update

9. FUNDING TABLE OVERVIEW

There had been circulated copies of the Tweeddale Funding Table which showed available funds in the Tweeddale area. Hannah Lacon reported that there was an opening balance of £51,199 at 1 April 2023, which along with an underspend of £8,939.77 from the Neighbourhood Support Fund gave a total available balance of £60,138.77. Were all applications under consideration to be successful, there would be £44,108.77 left.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

10. NEIGHBOURHOOD SUPPORT FUND

- 10.1 St Ronans Bowling Club had requested £1780 for 3 re-cycled picnic benches. The group had recently increased facilities and wished to buy more picnic tables to match those already in place. The cost of project was £1,980. Given that the Club had £10,278.43 in their bank account, an award of £1200 was suggested.

DECISION:

AGREED to fund £1200 to St Ronans Bowling Club towards the cost of three recycled picnic benches.

- 10.2 Eastgate Theatre & Arts Centre had requested £6,750 for Creating New Arts Activities for ages 12-16 years. Eastgate was expanding its outreach to this age group not currently catered for by offering skills training and creative opportunities. They were working with other youth groups and recruiting through the High School and their Social Media. The pilot 2023 Summer School Holiday events included 4 daylong workshops x 3 weeks in

creative combat skills, voice, film/tv skills, choir/movement and dance. If the pilot was successful, participants were to be charged in subsequent sessions.

The panel was supportive of activities for this age group but had some reservations:

a) The workshops should be offered to ALL in that age group. There was no guarantee that youth involved in ASB would apply for these workshops.

b) The maximum award possible was £5,000 as other funding sources had not been approached. Since the funding pot was smaller this year, the panel had asked the applicant if it would be possible to run the pilot with £3,000. This was achievable if the combat skills workshops were omitted.

DECISION:

AGREED to fund £3000 to Eastgate Theatre & Arts Centre towards its Summer Holiday events programme.

- 10.3 The Peebles Christmas Lights Association had requested £7500 to purchase a Santa's Sleigh and Reindeers illuminated display to be sited at the Eastgate Theatre. The total cost was £10,000 with a 1 year guarantee. In the absence of the Treasurer, Mr. Colin Snoddy spoke on behalf of the Association. The Association had £11,375.33 in the bank, of which £10,000 was ring-fenced for maintenance costs. There was also £13,000 held in a bond. Mr Snoddy explained that the bond investment was made in September 2022 to ensure future financial stability of the Association and to avoid bankruptcy. He explained that previous years' fund raising had covered running costs only (electricity and insurance) and this was anticipated to increase in 2023 given the cost of energy. The festive season provided the best opportunity to fund raise via public donations with an annual turnout of over 4000 people to the Christmas Lights Switch On event. Further quotes were not possible as there was a limited market for such specialised manufacturers and the Fife based supplier had been used previously. Members were mindful of the many other town and village displays across Tweeddale and agreed to partially fund the request, with an expectation that the shortfall would be met from other funding sources available in Peebles.

DECISION:

AGREED to award £2000 to Peebles Christmas Lights Association towards the purchase of a Christmas lighting installation at the Eastgate Theatre.

- 10.4 Chris Lewin read out a message received from Esther Daborn who was to step down from her role on the Tweeddale Assessment Panel. Ms Daborn thanked everyone in the Community Engagement team, the Tweeddale Area Partnership and all volunteers and staff with whom she had worked over the years. The Chair thanked Ms Daborn for her dedication and contribution over the years.

11. OPEN FORUM

- 11.1 PC Vivienne Carsley was not in attendance. Matters of concern had been sent via email prior to this meeting. There was an enquiry about Scottish Borders Council's response to Police Scotland's decision not to police local festivals this year and the general reduction in Tweeddale community policing. The Chair reported that there was to be a meeting of Councillors and Police Scotland representatives in a few weeks and the Police Community Action Team (PCAT) was under review. The PCAT was currently working at full strength and on the occasion where PCAT officers were temporarily reassigned for operational reasons, a commensurate refund was paid to Scottish Borders Council. There was agreement to add an item to the next agenda of the Tweeddale Area Partnership to discuss the relationship between Community Councils and Police Scotland in the hope that Police Scotland would be able to attend in future.
- 11.2 The official opening of the Eddleston Water Path was scheduled for the morning of Saturday 17 June 2023. There was to be a procession from Station Road with a ribbon cutting ceremony. It was reported that a further £600k had been awarded for the path to be extended.

- 11.3 There was a request for the next meeting to be in-person with Eddleston suggested as a possible venue. The need for a BSL interpreter at every meeting was no longer essential. There was a request for less presentations and more discussion. Live Borders were congratulated on their stewardship of the Burgh Hall renovations.
12. **MEETING EVALUATION VIA MENTI**
Ms Lacon encouraged attendees to complete meeting evaluation forms via the link sent via email and to submit any items for a future agenda.
13. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
The next meeting of the Tweeddale Area Partnership was scheduled for 22 August 2023 and was to be in-person. The venue was to be confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 9.00 pm