

MINUTE of Meeting of the EILDON AREA PARTNERSHIP held at Eildon Housing Association Headquarters, Selkirk on Thursday, 7 September 2023 at 6.00 pm

Present:- Councillors E. Thornton-Nicol (Chair), C. Cochrane, J. Linehan, N. Mackinnon, D. Parker, J. PatonDay, and F. Sinclair together with 15 representatives of Partner Organisations, Community Councils, and members of the public.

Apologies:- Councillors L. Douglas, E. Jardine, and H. Steel

In Attendance:- Community Engagement Officer (E. Coltman), Democratic Services Officer (D. Hall)

1. **WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Eildon Area Partnership held in person at Eildon Housing Association Headquarters. The Chair expressed her thanks to Mr Nile Istephen, Chief Executive of Eildon Housing Association, for hosting the meeting. Mr Istephen welcomed attendees and explained that future meetings of the Area Partnership could be held at Eildon Housing Headquarters.

2. **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION DOCUMENT**

There had been circulated copies of an additional information document with the agenda.

3. **FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION FROM MEETING OF 22 JUNE 2023**

The Minute of the meeting of the Eildon Area Partnership held on 22 June 2023 had been circulated and was noted.

4. **SPEED INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair explained that attendees were invited to undertake a 10-minute speed introduction session. Attendees introduced themselves, discussed the capacity in which they were attending the meeting. Following the session, attendees shared one interesting fact they had learned about another attendee, which ranged from an interest in learning Italian to having written a TV series.

5. **BORDERS COMMUNITY ACTION**

5.1 The Chair welcomed Ms Juliana Amaral to the meeting to provide a presentation on the work of Borders Community Action (BCA). BCA were a newly formed organisation that was focused on co-ordinating the work of third sector partners in the Scottish Borders. A draft strategy which had been prepared was being consulted upon, the results of which would form a 3-year plan. Ms Amaral explained that third sector interfaces were commissioned by the Scottish Government and there were 32 across Scotland. Work was focused on grass roots positive changes, empowering communities to deliver projects by providing leadership and representation at local and strategic level. The National Outcomes Framework set by the Scottish Government stipulated what third sector interfaces such as BCA had to fulfil. Particular focus was on the capacity in the sector and fostering connections across the whole of the third sector. The regional shared outcomes, such as reducing poverty were linked in with Scottish Borders Council priorities. The 3-year plan had been presented to Scottish Government in June and was currently in its engagement phase. From January 2024 to March 2024 feedback would be captured and then the Plan presented in April 2024. Ms Amaral acknowledged that since

Covid-19 there had been a drop in the number of people volunteering, and that new ways of connecting with people needed to be put in place. It was important to acknowledge that people were the most important part of volunteering, and that respect and recognition underpinned all actions taken. Given the resource challenges it was key that work in the sector was not duplicated, and the efforts of BCA were focused on filling a gap. BCA were focused on capturing quantitative and qualitative data to assist them in their plans.

- 5.2 Attendees thanked Ms Amaral for her presentation. In response to a question regarding effective communication, Ms Amaral acknowledged that some communications may have been going straight to junk email folders and encouraged people to check if previous emails had not been received as a result. Ms Amaral confirmed that current staffing levels were 6 full-time equivalent staff members, and that a grant was received from the Scottish Government. In response to a question regarding how BCA would operate in what was a potentially cluttered landscape, Ms Amaral explained that conversations with SOSE were ongoing to try and avoid the duplication of work. Attendees expressed some concern that SBC and other organisations were yet to fully empower communities to take real action and derive real benefits. Concerns were expressed regarding the number of volunteers in communities, and Ms Amaral highlighted that it would be very important to engage young people to ensure that people continued to volunteer. The Chair highlighted that volunteers needed to be treated with respect and that those responsible for managing volunteers needed to be properly trained. Attendees thanked Ms Amaral for her presentation.

#### **MEMBER**

Councillor Linehan left the meeting during the discussion below.

#### **6. THE EILDON MAP**

The Chair explained that copies of a map of the Eildon locality were present in the room. Attendees were placed into groups and asked to identify third sector organisations that they were aware of that operated in the locality. Attendees were particularly encouraged to share the names of organisations that were not expected to be members of the Borders Community Action network. Following the task, the papers were collected by Mr Coltman and would be used to help and support BCA register groups across the locality.

#### **7. EILDON FUNDING TABLE 2023/24**

There had been circulated copies of the Eildon Funding Table 2023/24 with the agenda.

#### **7. NEIGHBOURHOOD SUPPORT FUND**

- 7.1 There had been circulated copies of the Eildon Assessment Panel's recommendations with the agenda. The Chair welcomed Ms Jenny Mushlin of the Eildon Assessment Panel to provide an overview of each of the recommendations.

#### **7.2 Lauderdale Youth Football Club**

Lauderdale Youth Football Club had applied for £10k of funding to help upgrade the existing natural grass main pitches and training pitches. The pitches were in poor condition. The land was owned by the Lauder Common Good. Ms Mushlin explained that the Panel had expressed concerns regarding the use of community funding to deliver the project due to the need to renovate the pitches in 10 years' time. There also needed to be more community engagement for the project evidenced. The panel had recommended that Lauderdale YFC continued to seek alternative funding and had recommended not to fund the project. It was unanimously agreed not to fund the project.

#### **7.3 Selkirk Bowling Club**

The application from Selkirk Bowling Club had been for £9,024 which would be used to repair the roof of the club building. The repairs were essential so that the club continue to offer a safe space of members and volunteers. The Panel had felt that they were unsure whether the NSF was the most appropriate Fund for a project of this type. It had been recommended that the group consider exploring energy efficient upgrades to the roof

rather than undertake the planned repairs. The Panel had recommended not to fund the project and recommended that the Club consider submitting an enquiry to the CARES fund administered by Local Energy Scotland. Attendees discussed the application, unanimously agreed with the recommendation of the Panel not to fund and encouraged the Club to contact Local Energy Scotland.

#### **7.4 Interest Link Borders**

An application of £10k had been received from Interest Link Borders. The grant applied for would allow Interest Link to deliver 12 1:1 sessions for its members. There would be ten befriending groups which would benefit a large group of people with learning disabilities across a range of ages. The Panel acknowledged the efforts to secure funding for the whole project and had recommended to fund the project in full. Attendees welcomed the application, and it was unanimously approved.

#### **7.5 Lauderdale Community and Leisure centre**

Lauderdale Community and Leisure Centre (LCLC) had applied for £7985.54 to cover all regular and one-off costs during lower income periods so that it could remain open during winter when usage was higher. Significant steps had been taken to reduce monthly costs however significantly increased utility costs remained a problem. The Panel considered that the application aligned with the criteria of the NSF and would support an organisation whose future was at serious risk. Extensive discussions regarding the risk associated with providing the level of funding applied for had taken place, and the Panel had recommended to approve the application in full. It was agreed that should the application be granted that LCLC be required to speak to Borders Community Action regarding implementing a different management model. Attendees unanimously agreed to approve the application in full.

#### **7.6 Lauderdale Initiative**

The application from Lauder Initiative was for £10k to increase the number of lights installed alongside the A68 lampposts, to enhance the visual impact of festival lighting by filling the gaps in existing lighting. They would also purchase a marquee to be used for craft stalls, food and drink vendors and community groups to attend the annual switch on community event. The Panel was appreciative of the consultation work that had asked the community of Lauder what they would like to see in their town. The funding applied for would benefit the whole of Lauder and would increase the level of community engage and the sense of pride in Lauder. Concerns had been expressed regarding the purchase of a marquee as there had been a significant number of gazebos purchased using community funds in the past. The Panel recommended to fund the application in full. Attendees discussed the application, highlighting the importance of insuring the marquee. Any community group using the marquee would be able to do so free of charge but must assume responsibility for ensuring that no damages occurred in its use. It was unanimously agreed to fund the application in full. The award letter would stipulate that the marquee must be made available to Community Groups throughout the Scottish Borders for no charge.

#### **7.7 TD1 Youth Hub**

TD1 Youth Hub had applied for £9360 which would be used to provide a range of weekly activities for young people. The activities would be focused on improving mental health and well-being, primarily for those aged between 10-14 years old. The Panel had considered the application, and whilst they acknowledged the important work undertaken by TD1 Youth Hub, had recommended not to fund the application and recommend that the group consider exploring other funding sources. The Panel had noted that since 2019/20 the group had been in receipt of support from SBC community funds totalling £30,233. A document providing supplementary information had been circulated with the agenda. Douglas Ormston of TD1 Youth Hub was present at the meeting and was invited to provide a brief presentation on the work of his group. Mr Ormston acknowledged the difficult decisions being made by the Assessment Panel and explained that the two organisations suggested as other sources of funding were not available. It was

acknowledged that the group had received previous community funding in the past, however no community fund applications had been granted in the previous two years. The group has been in receipt of one-off funding from the Build Back a Better Borders Fund. Mr Ormston explained that there were ongoing concerns regarding anti-social behaviour at the transport interchange in Galashiels, and that the planned activities would be focused on trying to engage with local young people and improve that situation. Attendees discussed the application and whilst there was some apprehension regarding approving the application it was unanimously agreed to approve it in full. In response to a question regarding the number of days a week the activities would take place, Mr Ormston confirmed that the plans were in place for Friday and one other evening during the week. The Chair expressed her thanks to the Panel for their important work.

8. **MEETING EVALUATION VIA MENTI**

The link to the Menti evaluation of the meeting was provided on screen. The Chair encouraged attendees to share potential themes for future meetings of the Area Partnership.

9. **TWEEDBANK CARE VILLAGE – DROP-IN MEETING**

The Chair explained that plans for the Tweedbank Care Village were progressing, and that the proposed plans were groundbreaking and forward thinking. Drop-in sessions were being held, and attendees were encouraged to visit them if possible.

10. **NEXT AREA PARTNERSHIP – 16 November 2023**

The Chair advised that the next meeting would be held via Microsoft Teams.

*The meeting concluded at 7.50 p.m.*