

**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**  
**BERWICKSHIRE AREA FORUM**

MINUTE of the MEETING of the BERWICKSHIRE  
 AREA FORUM held in the Chamber, Newtown  
 Street, Duns on 4 December 2015 at 6.30pm.

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- Present:- Councillors M. Cook (Chairman), J Fullarton, D. Moffat, F Renton.  
 Community Councillors:- Ayton – J Slater, Cocksburnpath – Pauline Hood, Coldstream  
 and District – Martin Brims, Duns – A Affleck, Edrom, Allanton & Whitsome – Trixie  
 Collin, Eyemouth – N McMurdo, Foulden, Mordington and Lamberton – H Doherty,  
 Hutton and Paxton – J McGregor, Lammermuir – Mark Rowley, Reston and  
 Auchencrow – B Forrest.  
 Berwickshire Civic Society – J Torrance.
- Apologies:- Councillors J Campbell, J Greenwell.  
 Community Councils: Abbey St Bathans, Bonkyl and Preston; Burnmouth; Coldingham;  
 Grantshouse; St Abbs; Swinton and Ladykirk.
- In Attendance:- Acting Inspector Keith Dougal – Police Scotland, Station Manager Scott Forbes –  
 Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, D Silcock (Neighbourhood Area Manager  
 Berwickshire), Democratic Services Officer (P Bolson).

Members of the Public:- 5

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**WELCOME**

1. The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

**MINUTE**

2. There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 4 September 2014.

**DECISION**

**APPROVED the Minute for signature by the Chairman.**

**PRESENTATIONS**

**STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PROJECT**

3. The Chairman welcomed Ms Helen Forsyth and Mr Andrew Medley from the Strategic Transport Project (STB) who were present at the meeting to inform the Forum of the remit of the Strategic Transport Board and to discuss transport issues in the Scottish Borders and concerns within the Berwickshire area. Ms Forsyth explained that a review of transport in the Scottish Borders had taken place early in 2014 and, following consultation with people across the region, this had highlighted a number of concerns such as travel generally, cost and travel to health appointments, co-ordination of sources of travel etc. In order to better manage the resources required to provide an effective and efficient transport resource, the Strategic Transport Board was set up in May 2014 and its remit included the integration of community and other transport facilities into a "Hub" which everyone would be able to access. Ms Forsyth advised Members that the Hub would include representation from NHS Borders, Berwickshire Wheels (representing all voluntary organisations in Berwickshire), Borders College, Royal Voluntary Service (RVS), Red Cross, Ambulance Service and Scottish Borders Council (SBC). STB were also looking at other areas across the country to identify Best Practice and Ms Forsyth added that this was very much a work in progress. Local communities had regularly shown interest and raised concerns in respect of transport issues across Berwickshire and would therefore be the ideal pilot area for the development of the Hub. Ms Forsyth emphasised the importance of understanding the needs of local communities and of ascertaining what facilities are already available. The STB wanted to hear about ideas that people had for better partnership working and emphasised that Community Councils were key to successful communication. Ms Forsyth indicated other key aspects of the project, such as increasing the involvement of the Third Sector, the prospect of a new Reston Station and the Transport Procurement Framework (a collective agreement which would allow the acquisition of

better services. Ms Forsyth thanked the Forum for its interest and participation in the Strategic Transport Project and looked forward to working with its members in the future.

### **Berwickshire Wheels**

4. The Chairman welcomed Mr Allister Hart to the meeting. Mr Hart was a member of the STB and was in attendance to give a presentation on the work of Berwickshire Wheels. In this regard, he told the story of Alice, a lady who lived in Cockburnspath and who had received a hip replacement two years previously. Following the operation, Alice's mobility was limited and the need to use a walking frame along with increased difficulty accessing a normal car meant that she would have been unable to leave her home without the assistance of Berwickshire Wheels and their specially adapted vehicles. Mr Hart gave an example of a typical week in Alice's life, demonstrating how important the volunteers working with Berwickshire Wheels were and emphasising that their role often went beyond being a routine driver. Mr Hart explained that there were about another 500 clients like Alice with similar needs across Berwickshire and went on to describe the administrative and financial arrangements for his organisation. Berwickshire Wheels operated six vehicles and that in the six months from May to October 2014, they had covered 28,700 miles over 3,969 journeys. Journeys were charged at 25p per mile and fuel and maintenance amounted to £9,400 per annum. Berwickshire Wheels received a community transport grant of £10,450 from SBC and an allowance of 14.4p per kilometre for conveying people under the Scottish Government's bus service operators' grant scheme. Berwickshire Wheels had, however operated at a deficit of £6,000 in the previous financial year. Although other sources of funding were available, applications were not always successful. Recently, Mr Hart had successfully secured funding from the Armed Forces Community Covenant of £30,000 and £10,000 each from Abbey St Bathans, Bonkyl and Preston Community Council, Lammermuir Community Council and Black Hill Wind Farm which had helped provide wheelchair accessible vehicles. Mr Hart concluded by offering information leaflets to the Forum for distribution to the wider community.
5. Discussion followed and Ms Forsyth asked the Forum to highlight any issues which would help provide the Strategic Transport Project with an overall picture for Berwickshire. A number of points were raised and these included the need for bus timetable connections between Reston and Berwick; availability of SBC-owned vehicles for use by the Local Access Group in Duns; integrated transport arrangements as part of Reston Station development; use of Royal Mail Postal Buses; car clubs; school buses; participation by bus operators on the STB; and access to hospital and clinic services, including out of hours. In terms of moving the project forward, Ms Forsyth emphasised the need to increase communication between the STB and local communities and that this might best be done via the Berwickshire Community Council Forum and attendance at Community Council meetings. The Chairman then summarised the discussion and thanked Ms Forsyth, Mr Medley and Mr Hart for their presentations.

### **DECISION**

**(a) NOTED the presentations.**

**(b) AGREED to continue to support the work of the Strategic Transport Project.**

### **SBLOCAL SMALL SCHEMES**

6. There had been circulated copies of a report by the Service Director for Neighbourhood Services on proposed new SB Local Small Schemes. Appendix 1 (Neighbourhood Small Schemes) and Appendix 2 (Quality of Life Schemes) to the report detailed all projects previously approved during 2014/15 financial year. The report advised that £48,197 was available for small schemes within the Berwickshire Area during 2014/15 financial year and that an additional £20,000 was available for Quality of Life schemes, bringing the total to £68,197. The report explained that the following schemes had been requested for consideration by the Berwickshire Members and local Community Councils: install a slot to fit a Christmas tree, Burnmouth; purchase bulbs for Hume Cemetery; paint the Mordington Cemetery gates; purchase trees for play park in Reston; erect tourist sign on A1/Eyemouth junction; removal of beech tree at the public park in Duns; repair benches at the Bantry in Eyemouth install additional parking spaces at The Glebe, Duns; install five new benches in Chirnside village; install handrail at Blackadder Crescent in Greenlaw; patching work at Marine Parade, Eyemouth.

## DECISION

### (a) AGREED:-

#### (i) to approve the following small schemes:-

(a)	Install a slot to fit a Christmas tree, Burnmouth	£ 460
(b)	Purchase bulbs for the cemetery, Hume	£ 130
(c)	Paint gates at the cemetery, Mordington	£ 240
(d)	Purchase trees for play park, Reston	£ 85
(e)	Erect tourist sign on A1/Eyemouth junction	£1700
(f)	Removal of beech tree at the public park, Duns	£ 435
(g)	Repair benches at The Bantry, Eyemouth	£ 425
(h)	Install additional parking spaces at The Glebe, Duns	£9000
(j)	Install 5 new benches, Chirnside village	£ 500
(k)	Install handrail at Blackadder Crescent, Greenlaw	£ 600
(l)	Patching work at Marine Parade, Eyemouth	£2500

#### (ii) to delegate authority to the Service Director Neighbourhood Services to allocate the remaining funds for the current financial year to the Neighbourhood Quality of Life budget, subject to consultation with and approval by all six Elected Members of the Berwickshire Area Forum.

### (b) NOTED that the above spend would leave a balance of £12,755 in the Small Schemes and Quality of Life budgets for Berwickshire.

## POLICE SCOTLAND UPDATE

7. The Chairman welcomed Acting Inspector Keith Dougal to his first meeting of the Berwickshire Area Forum. Inspector Dougal then presented the Police Scotland report for the East and Mid Berwickshire Wards in terms of performance, activities and issues up to 31 August 2014. The report advised that in East Berwickshire, the number of recorded crimes in the period was 134 compared to 164 recorded crimes during the same period last year and in Mid Berwickshire, 94 crimes had been recorded in comparison to 132 recorded during the previous year to date. These figures showed that the Berwickshire Wards recorded a 23% decrease in reported crime compared to the same period last year with a 9% decrease in solvency over the same timescale for East Berwickshire and the same solvency for Mid Berwickshire. The report noted that an increase in social events, shopping and family gatherings during the festive period resulted in higher alcohol consumption, gatherings of diverse groups at social functions, higher volumes of people within licensed premises, and increased traffic on the roads at a time when inclement weather conditions could prove hazardous. The report went on to explain that this year's Festive Initiative which commenced on 1 December would see additional Officers working with partners across the Scottish Borders to target issues such as Domestic Abuse, Antisocial Behaviour/Disorder, Crimes of Violence, Road Safety, Acquisitive Crime and Liquor Licensing/Alcohol Related Crime. Inspector Dougal also noted the change in the drink driving laws that were due to come into effect on 5 December 2015. This would reduce the drink drive limit in Scotland from 35 microgrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of breath to 22 microgrammes, however Inspector Dougal reiterated that there was no safe drink drive limit.
8. The report went on to detail the Ward Priorities within East Berwickshire. In terms of speeding vehicles, 62 drivers were stopped and charged with speeding between 1 September and 1 December 2014. Drugs Misuse covered concerns about the availability and supply of drugs and the report advised that the Police targeted drug dealers at every opportunity and worked closely with partners to offer support and advice to people addicted to drugs. During this report period 69 people (in comparison to 34 in the previous period) were stopped and searched for drugs in Berwickshire with approximately 25% being positive searches. A number of houses were also targeted by Police Scotland's Pro-Active Unit. Further advice on substance misuse was available at <http://www.scotland.police.uk/keep-safe/safety-advice/personal-safety/substance-misuse>. Youth Antisocial Behaviour and Alcohol ASB was a priority in East and Mid Berwickshire and the following statistics covered both Berwickshire Wards. Police Scotland continued to work with partners in the ASB Unit, Victim Support, Housing and the general public to report such matters so

that all known hotspots where youths congregate could be targeted. The report advised that Police Scotland also delivered Party House letters to premises where parties had taken place and pro-actively targeted these premises. During the current reporting period, 12 tickets had been issued in Berwickshire compared with 7 in the previous period and 11 youths were searched for alcohol compared with 49 in the previous period. It was noted that 14 premises were in advanced stages of being issued with ASBOs and further premises were being monitored. Advice on Antisocial Behaviour was available at <http://www.scotland.police.uk/keep-safe/safety-advice/personal-safety/antisocial-behaviour/>. Inspector Dougal advised that rural thefts continued to be an issue within the Scottish Borders and that Police Scotland's Crime Investigation Unit and CID were working alongside response Officers to detect such crimes and educate local communities on home security and crime prevention. The report advised that home security surveys might be available if certain criteria were met and that these could be requested by contacting Safer Communities. Further advice was available at <http://www.scotland.police.uk/whats-happening/news/2014/january/207172>.

9. The priorities in Mid Berwickshire included Indiscriminate Parking and the report noted that 10 parking tickets had been issued during the current reporting period with a further 18 motorists being warned regarding this issue compared to 10 tickets and 20 warnings over the previous reporting period. Mid Berwickshire also listed Dog Fouling as a priority and it was noted that no incidents of this nature had been reported to the Police during the current period. Inspector Dougal advised that Police Scotland would continue to respond to any reports of dog fouling and that WOOFs dog bags were still available free of charge.
10. Inspector Dougal advised the Forum that public consultation was in progress with regard to setting the Multi Member Ward (MMW) priorities for next year and the results would be published in due course. He also advised that the local MMW Plans for both East and Mid Berwickshire were available on the Police Scotland website at:-  
[http://www.scotland.police.uk/assets/pdf/142349/LothiansBorders/216181/east\\_berwickshire\\_MM\\_WP\\_Apr\\_2014.pdf?view=Standard](http://www.scotland.police.uk/assets/pdf/142349/LothiansBorders/216181/east_berwickshire_MM_WP_Apr_2014.pdf?view=Standard) and  
[http://www.scotland.police.uk/assets/pdf/142349/LothiansBorders/216181/mid\\_berwickshire\\_MMW\\_P\\_Apr\\_2014.pdf?view=Standard](http://www.scotland.police.uk/assets/pdf/142349/LothiansBorders/216181/mid_berwickshire_MMW_P_Apr_2014.pdf?view=Standard)
11. Discussion followed and Inspector Dougal responded to requests for clarification. Concern was raised regarding the time it could take for a "101" call to be answered. Members were advised that the "teething problems" encountered when the new call system was introduced had been resolved and that he was not aware of any continued difficulties. With regard to parking beyond the time limits in the Square in Duns, Members were advised that it was unlikely that this problem could be monitored on a regular basis due to limited resources and time restrictions. Concern was raised regarding the incidence of rural thefts and in one case, a fire related to such a theft. Members were advised that these thefts were usually organised and the perpetrators were often equipped with drop-sided vehicles; the fire, however, was considered to be a one-off occurrence. In response to a request for advice relating to cold calling, Inspector Dougal suggested that the public could access further information on the SB Alert website at <http://www.sbalert.co.uk/> The Chairman thanked Inspector Dougal for his report.

## **DECISION**

**NOTED the report.**

## **SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE UPDATE**

12. The Chairman welcomed Station Manager (SM) Scott Forbes to his first meeting of the Berwickshire Area Forum. SM Forbes then presented the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) report for the East and Mid Berwickshire Wards in terms of SFRS activity for the months of September, October and November 2014. The report explained that 5 priorities had been identified and under these headings, there had been 9 House Fires, 13 Open Fires, 16 Special Service call-outs and 31 Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals. A further breakdown of these figures was contained in the report and Members noted that the next report by SFRS would also include comparators for

information. The report advised that the SFRS continued with the delivery of its Home Safety Visit Policy and in its expansion of partnership working with Police Scotland, Health, Social Care and Housing Agencies in order to focus on members of the community at High Risk of fire. SFRS used an online tool called CSET to record referrals, actions etc and the SM Forbes advised that CSET could be accessed by agencies and others wishing to make a request or referral. Discussion followed and it was agreed that consideration be given to a demonstration of CSET at a future meeting of the Forum.

13. Members were informed that a number of initiatives and schemes continued or had been introduced by SFRS. All year round Home Fire Safety Visits were provided which focussed on identifying and reducing the risk of fire in the home and supplied free smoke detectors as part of this service; delivery of Firesharp to Primary 6 pupils continued, providing face to face education on matters of fire risk and prevention; Fire Safety Audits were carried out on business premises to ensure that fire safety was being managed appropriately and that staff were aware of relevant fire safety measures; measures to reduce Unwanted Fire Signals continued, with the introduction of new legislation and an Enforcement Policy and Procedure on 1 December 2014; policies introduced in April 2014 continued to contribute to the support and protection of Higher Risk members within the community; and an extremely successful Crucial Crew event in September 2014 saw 1180 Primary 7 children from across the Scottish Borders participate in interactive workshops and real life scenarios relating to fire safety. SM Forbes advised Members that the Local Fire and Rescue Plan 2014 - 17 for the Scottish Borders had now been approved and that the Ward Plan for Berwickshire would be published in the New Year. Recruitment of firefighters continued to be a challenge but SM Forbes reported some success and advised that interviews for posts in Coldstream and Duns had been held earlier that day. Discussion took place in relation to retained firefighter recruitment and Members were advised that this was a national issue across SFRS. It was also noted that station staffing was below the requirement in some cases and SM Forbes went on to explain the procedure for the movement of resources and vehicles within areas to cover such shortages. The Chairman thanked SM Forbes for his report.

#### **DECISION**

**NOTED the report.**

#### **OPEN QUESTIONS**

14. **Flags at Lamberton Toll** – The Chairman informed the Forum that he had received a question from Foulden, Mordington and Lamberton Community Council regarding flag flying at the national Scottish/English Border at Lamberton Toll. The question related to how the Border was recognised and the choice of flags on the northbound side of the road at the Border, in particular that there were three Saltires whilst on the other side of the road, the Union flag, Northumberland flag and St George's Cross were normally flown. By way of background, the Chairman explained that although historically Scottish Borders Council had been responsible for the northbound layby at Lamberton and Northumberland County Council for the southbound side, the remit for the northbound layby at the Border now sat with Transport Scotland through the trunk road maintenance contractor. Discussion followed and a number of points were raised, including signage at the Border, the choice of flags to be flown and financial resources available to take any proposals forward. With regard to signage, suggestions from those present included a "Welcome to Scotland" sign with a second sign for "Welcome to Berwickshire". It was also suggested that the Small Schemes budget might be an option for funding any such signage and that this should be investigated further. In terms of flag flying, it was suggested that three flags might be appropriate and that they could be the Saltire and the Union flag, with a new flag incorporating the Berwickshire Coat of Arms as the third. It was acknowledged that no such flag existed at the moment and that further information would be required from the Court of the Lord Lyon in this regard before any decision could be made. It would also be necessary to contact Transport Scotland in order to identify the appropriate authority and present any proposal for discussion. The Chairman summarised the discussion and thanked everyone for their contribution.

#### **DECISION**

**AGREED that:-**

- (a) the Chairman write to the Scottish Government/Transport Scotland to sound out the attitude of Scottish Government/Transport Scotland to the flying of flags in addition to the Saltire at the Scottish/English Border at Lamberton Toll on the A1;
  - (b) the potential of additional signage highlighting 'Berwickshire' be explored and the Small Schemes budget be considered as an option to fund such additional signage at the Scottish/English Border at Lamberton Toll on the A1;
  - (c) subject to the views of Scottish Government/Transport Scotland, the potential use of the Berwickshire Coat of Arms within a 'Berwickshire flag' be explored with the Court of the Lord Lyon and others, as appropriate.
15. **Closure of Polling Places** – With reference to paragraph 12 of the Minute of 4 September 2014, Mr Rowley, Lammermuir Community Council, advised that Scottish Borders Council had agreed at its meeting on 20 November 2014 that Abbey St Bathans be removed from the Council's Review of Polling Places as its electorate had now increased to above the 100 voters criteria. In respect of Cranshaws, the Council had agreed not to proceed with the permanent closure of the Polling Place. Mr Rowley thanked everyone for their support on this issue.

**DECISION  
NOTED.**

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

16. Discussion took place regarding subjects for consideration at future meetings and it was agreed that the following items be considered for inclusion on future Agendas:-
- (i) Closure of the Knoll Hospital, Duns. (This was in response to a number of concerns raised by the Forum relating to a proposal by NHS Borders and highlighted the importance of a representative from NHS Borders attending Berwickshire Area Forum meetings as part of Community Planning Partnership working);
  - (ii) Presentation on Scottish Borders Council Budget;
  - (iii) Presentation on Arms Length External Organisations (ALEOs);
  - (iv) Presentation to update the Forum on Reston Station;
  - (v) A1 dualling and A1 Action Group.

**DECISION  
AGREED that the above items be included on future Agendas for Berwickshire Area Forum.**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

17. The next meeting of the Berwickshire Area Forum will be held on Thursday, 5 March 2015 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Newtown Street, Duns.

**DECISION  
NOTED.**

*The meeting concluded at 9.25pm.*