

Scottish Borders Community Councils' Network

Meeting of SBCCN Core Group

Held SBC HQ, Newtown St Boswells on 10th July 2014 at 7.00pm

Attendance: Logan Inglis (LI, Chair), Barrie Forrest (BF), Clare Malster (CM), Raymond du Bois (RduB), Frank Connelly (FC), Trevor Jackson (TJ), James Macfarlane (JMcF), John Williams (JW), Fiona Drewery (FD), Simon Moore (SM), Gwen Crew (GC), Chris Nicol (CN), Anne Snoddy (AS), Keith Cull (KC), French Wight (FW), Colin McGrath (CMcG)

Guest speaker: Hugh Williams (HW) SBC Economic Development

1 **Welcome** LI welcomed delegates, introductions around the table.

2 **Apologies:** Marion Short (MS, Treasurer), Martin Brimms (MB), Pauline Hood (PH), Lammermuir CC, Eyemouth Town CC, Burnmouth CC

3 **Order of Business** As agenda.

4 **Approval of minutes from 15th May** Minutes approved.

5 **Presentation on LEADER and EMFF Funds**

HW outlined past support given to projects and enterprises across the Scottish Borders under the Rural Economic Development (LEADER) and European Maritime & Fisheries Fund (EMFF). For example, past projects included funding a bridge linking Newcastleton with the 7stanes cycle trail aimed at bringing more visitors into the village centre. SBC is currently consulting on the strategy for a new round of funding to run from 2014-2020. Help with writing a business plan is available through SBC's Business Gateway. More information about past funding and the future strategy consultation can be found on the SBC website. HW encouraged all community groups to contact him directly with questions about how they can apply for grants and the types of projects which might qualify by emailing him at Hugh.Williams@scotborders.gov.uk.

LI thanked HW for his presentation which will be of interest to CCs throughout the region.

6 **Treasurer's report**

Report provided by MS shows balance of £1590.92. However, the true balance after allowing for cheques not yet presented is £1149.29 and MS has requested people to take their expenses cheques to the bank.

7 **Tweeddale rep nominations**

Only one nomination has so far been received - James Macfarlane from Clovenfords & District CC (CDCC). Meeting duly elected JMcF to the SBCCN Core Group and LI asked CCs in the Tweeddale area to consider further nominations.

8 **Role of SBCCN including Constitution**

CMcG reported the meeting he attended at which Derek Mackay, Scottish

Government Minister for Local Government & Planning, outlined how the government was very keen to devolve power to the local level BUT appeared to have overlooked the role CCs can play. In answer to a question, the Minister had asked CMcG to send him a paper on the role of CCs. Meeting agreed that he should do so and that changes to the SBCCN constitution would wait until after a response from the Scottish Government.

9 Network, media and Community Councils

LI explained that SBC would like all CCs to have an on-line presence and he would encourage those that do not yet to discuss having a website or at least a page on a local-interest website. Meeting agreed that there is a potential problem keeping a website up-to-date and topical. FC pointed out that the aim is to keep residents informed but in rural areas such as Heriot where broadband is not available the village noticeboard remains the main way of communicating. Meeting also agreed that social media, for example Facebook, bring problems such as the danger of CCs being found liable for misuse. CM agreed to forward SBC's social media policy to the Core Group. **Action CM**

GC asked about set-up costs for a website – there are ways to do this for free or for very small outlay. JMCF will lead a workshop showing CCs how they can develop an on-line presence at the SBCCN seminar on 1st October.

10 Annual Conference – update and progress

10.1 CM confirmed that Susan Hunter, SBC's Youth Participation Officer, has agreed to be the main speaker and will talk about involving young people and indeed encouraging them to join CCs.

10.2 Meeting agreed to the program proposed at an informal meeting on 31st May. The workshop on Windfarms will be re-titled Community Response to Windfarms. The workshop on Community Engagement will focus in particular on Planning and ensuring that CC responses to planning applications reflect the opinions of local residents and are cogent in terms of planning authority strategy.

10.3 Meeting agreed to the marketplace participants and Core Group members will make approaches to those parties. **Action Core Group**

11 Community Council Training Requirements

11.1 LI gave an update on the concise handbook for Community Councillors he and FC have put together. He will circulate a draft and invite suggestions for additional guidance for new Community Councillors. **Action LI**

12 Community Council Scheme review

12.1 CM reported that the full SBC has accepted all the recommended changes to the Scheme. These include lowering the age at which people can join their CC to 16 and a waiver of the need to be on the local Electors Register in cases where a person is resident but has a valid reason not to be on the register. These changes may entail some CCs changing their constitution and CM which should be done before the end of 2014.

12.2 Full Council also agreed to the formation of two new CCs and to a boundary change between Newtown and StBoswells to reflect development plans.

13 Community Council Questions

- 13.1 Clovenfords & District CC has raised the question of CCs being unincorporated associations, a legal status which prevents them from owning property or taking on debts. Meeting agreed that in most cases, CCs will start Community Interest Companies (CICs) to own property such as a village hall or to take out a loan or run an enterprise.
- 13.1 Ettrick & Yarrow CC has asked about election of area reps on the SBCCN core group – how can CCs be expected to vote for people if no information is given about the candidates? Meeting agreed that candidates at the AGM should make a brief statement prior to being elected and for elections by email should provide a brief pen-portrait so that CCs have a better idea of whom they are being asked to vote for.

14 Rural Parliament

Meeting agreed that LI should continue to forward the Rural Parliament newsletter to CCs. More information can be found online.

15 Any Other Business

JW from Borders Network Conservation Groups gave the numbers of wind turbines already in place, those approved and further applications already submitted (which far exceed the Scottish Government 'target') and put forward the plea for a moratorium on windfarms in the Scottish Borders. Meeting agreed that SBCC should forward this to all CCs and ask for a response on whether the network would lend support.

Date of next meeting

Annual Seminar, 1st October, 5 - 8:30 pm

LI thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.