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Scottish Borders Community Councils' Network

Meeting of SBCCN Core Group

Held SBC HQ, Newtown St Boswells on 30th January 2014 at 7.00pm

Attendance: Logan Inglis (LI, Chair), Marion Short (MS, Treasurer), Ann Affleck (AA, Vice Chair), Raymond du Bois (RduB), Clare Malster (CM), Trevor Jackson (TJ), Rob Brydon (RB), Barrie Forrest (BF), Frank Connelly (FC), Rhona Goldie (RG), Graham Easton (GE), David Morrison (DM), Pauline Hood (PH), June McGreggor (JMcG), Jill Freshwater (JW)

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

2 **Apologies:** Colin McGrath (CMcG), Ruth Kerr, Martin Brims, Lamancha, Newlands & Kirkurd CC, St Abbs CC, Carlops CC, Peebles & District CC,

3 **Order of Business** As agenda.

4 **Declarations of Interests** None.

5 **Local Development Plan**

Charles Johnston, Principal Planning Officer at SBC, gave a presentation on the Local Development Plan, showing how the plan linked to the strategic SESplan jointly developed by Edinburgh, Fife, the Lothians and Scottish Borders councils. He described the structure and contents of the LDP and also the procedures and timescales involved in formulating and consulting on the plan. Afterwards, Mr Johnston kindly took questions from the floor. LI thanked him for a well-received and interesting presentation.

6 **Approval of minutes from 21st November** Approved.

7 **Matters Arising not on the agenda**

7.1 CM had sent an email on behalf of RduB asking for nominations for a second Tweeddale representative for the SBCN Core Group. No nominations had been received to date.

7.2 MS noted the invitation Hawick CC had received to join the Rural Network The meeting discussed the relevance of the forum to CCs in the Scottish Borders and it was decided that SBCCN should register an interest in participating.

Action LI

7.3 FC noted the increasing number of emails regarding consultations and the increasing size of the attached documents. CCs were in danger of being overwhelmed. CM pointed out that documents often have an executive summary of the main points. The meeting felt that CCs need to find their own ways of being selective about which consultations they can respond to.

8 **Treasurer's report**

MS reported that difficulties arising from moving the bank account now appear to be resolved. SBCN has a working balance of £1,966 but she asked CM to make checks regarding the person who had received an expenses cheque for £31 not yet presented.

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9 Role of SBCCN including Constitution

9.1 The meeting considered the draft response to the Scottish Government consultation on the Community Empowerment (Scotland) bill. LI will ask CMcG to submit points 1 & 2 but not point 3 of his draft. **Action LI**

9.2 Meeting agreed to ask CMcG, deputised by FC, to accept nomination to represent SBCCN on the COSLA Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy. The delegates must report back to SBCCN on the proceedings. **Action CM**

10 Annual Conference – the way forward

The meeting agreed that the evening format for the 2013 Annual Conference had been a success. However, a packed agenda had made the time available too short so the rough outline for the 2014 Conference would be:

- one main speaker, topic to be decided but of interest to a majority of CCs
- three workshops, with slightly more time
- joint session to receive feedback from the workshops
- an extended open forum.

Detail will be added to the program at the next SBCCN meeting, so that invitations to presenters and CCs can go out well ahead of the event.

11 New Community Council Liaison Officer Role

CM reported that structural changes are being made at SBC but it has been agreed look at how support is delivered to community councils. This will strengthen the links between the local authority and CCs as her role at present is not fully dedicated to working with CCs.

12 Community Council Training Requirements

Training remains an important role of SBCCN and the meeting discussed how best to identify the training needs of Community Councillors. The suggestion of a Core Group delegate seeking invitation to speak to each new CC is to be on the agenda for the next meeting along with the need for a community council handbook.

13 Community Council Scheme review

CM reported the main findings of the scheme review, approved by SBC earlier today to go out for consultation. These include restrictions on eligibility to serve as a Community Councillor, a reduction of the abeyance period if a CC fails to attract sufficient nominations, changes to the name and scope of the Community Council scheme and the establishment of two new CCs. In addition, there is a proposed limit of two terms for office bearers. The meeting expressed concern about this last proposal because of differing terms in different CCs. Also, the meeting was worried about the potential for not being able to find people willing to serve as Chair or Secretary.

It was therefore agreed to take steps to encourage all CCs to respond to the consultation. **Action LI**

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14 Date of meetings for 2014

Thursday, 27/03/2014, SBC HQ, 7pm

Thursday, 15/05/2014, SBC HQ, 7pm

LI thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.