

Scottish Borders Community Councils' Network

Meeting of SBCCN Core Group

Held SBC HQ, Newtown St Boswells on 27th March 2014 at 7.00pm

Attendance: Logan Inglis (LI, Chair), Colin McGrath (CMcG) Raymond du Bois (RduB), Clare Malster (CM), Barrie Forrest (BF), Frank Connelly (FC), Shirley Passmore (SP), Gwen Crew (GC), Jane Cox (JC), Shona Smith (SS), Mark Rowley (MR)

- 1 **Welcome** LI welcomed delegates, introductions around the table. LI noted meeting was not quorate due to insufficient Core Group delegates.
- 2 **Apologies:** Marion Short (MS, Treasurer), Ann Affleck (AA), Trevor Jackson (TJ), Rob Brydon (RB), Rhona Goldie (RG), Pauline Hood (PH), Lyne Craighead (LC), Carlops CC, Hutton & Paxton CC
- 3 **Order of Business** As agenda.
- 4 **Declarations of Interests** None. It was agreed to drop this item from future agendas, although delegates will still be required to declare an interest if this arises.
- 5 **Approval of minutes from 30th January** Minutes approved with correction of minor typos – STQR*.
- 6 **Matters Arising not on the agenda** CMcG confirmed he has submitted SBCCN response to the Scottish Government consultation on the Community Empowerment (Scotland) bill.
- 7 **Treasurer's report** Report provided by MS shows balance of £1656.98
- 8 **COSLA Strengthening Local Democracy**
 - 8.1 FC reported on his attendance at this conference at the COSLA HQ in Edinburgh. 35 community organisations had been present and FC was impressed with the workshop format which had allowed discussion, Q&A and suggestions on local democracy – problems, views, vision and the need for accountability, confidence and inclusiveness. A major focus on inclusiveness was how to involve young people in the democratic process. A report has been produced and FC will make this available to SBCCN.
 - 8.2 The meeting considered the impending withdrawal of seven Local Authorities from COSLA.
- 9 **Role of SBCCN including Constitution** CMcG felt it would be premature to discuss further until Scottish Government proposals become clearer. Ongoing.
- 10 **Annual Conference – update and progress**
 - 10.1 The meeting discussed possible main speaker and topic, suggestions included:
 - Dr Escovar, 'Engaging with Young People'
 - Derek Mackay 'Future of Community Councils'.

* STQR – subject to quorate ratification at a later meeting

- 10.2 The meeting discussed possible workshop topics. Denholm CC would like to see a workshop on engaging with windfarm developers – they have become aware of the many issues which affect CCs more broadly than those where windfarms are to be sited. Another suggestion was for a workshop on use of Petitions to present community opinion.
- 11 **New Community Council Liaison Officer Role** SS outlined the new management structure at SBC, to show where CM's new role as Strategic Community Engagement Officer fits within the council's strategic policy area. Funding has not been agreed for a new CC Liaison Officer but five democratic services officers will fulfill that role as part of their expanded role supporting the Area Forums. Meeting wished CM success in her new job.
- 12 **Community Council Training Requirements**
- 12.1 LI noted that SBC's Consultation on the SB CC Scheme forms a good basis for SBCCN to write a Handbook for new Community Councillors. FC agreed to work with LI in adapting the document which will then be published and given to all new Community Councillors.
- 12.2 Meeting agreed that a handbook would be of great value but there is also a need for Induction training for all new Community Councillors. This could be by visiting CC meetings or presented at a central location.
- 12.3 Meeting urged that CCs are encouraged to adopt all routes such as social media to share experiences and best practice. Also, CCs need to embrace all routes for consulting with and feedback from their communities. Residents should be encouraged to use email and social media to make suggestions and raise concerns to CCs.
- 13 **Community Council Scheme review** CM has received about 20 responses to the review consultation, mostly regarding the proposal to limit office bearers to two terms. This proposal is widely seen as a problem. *(Is there any action about this?)*
- 14 **Community Council Questions** LI dealt with a few questions which had been submitted by CCs. Barbara Harrison, Etrick & Yarrow CC, had asked for Core Group nominees to be asked to make a short presentation at the AGM or to circulate a note to give some idea of their background, experience and approach to the role. However, LI felt that this would be necessary only if the network faced contested elections for the Core Group and office bearers.
- 15 **Rural Parliament** LI has circulated the Introduction and will continue to send out the RP newsletter. So far, no SBCCN delegate has attended the RP.

Any Other Business

MR brought forward his proposal for a wind farm moratorium, which would be helpful to all parties, giving the Scottish Government time to assess the policy implications of the new Scotland's Wild Places land designation and the ending of the Eskdalemuir 50km radius windfarm exclusion area. Both changes can be expected to have major implications for the level of new windfarm planning applications across southern Scotland. Meeting agreed that MR will circulate a draft among the Core Group before sending an invitation to all CCs to join his lobby for the moratorium.

14 **Date of meetings for 2014**

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

LI thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.