

## Scottish Borders Community Councils' Network

### Meeting of SBCCN Core Group

Held SBC HQ, Newtown St Boswells on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2014 at 7.00pm

**Attendance:** Logan Inglis (LI, Chair), Barrie Forrest (BF), Clare Malster (CM), Raymond du Bois (RduB), Frank Connelly (FC), Bob Francombe (BF), Lew Godfrey (LG), Pauline Hood (PH), Charlie Robertson (CR), Trevor Jackson (TJ), James Macfarlane (JMcf), Ann Affleck (AA)

**Guest speaker:** Ian Angus (IA) SESplan

- 1 **Welcome** LI welcomed delegates, introductions around the table.
- 2 **Apologies:** Marion Short (MS, Treasurer), Rob Brydon (RB), Colin McGrath (CMcG), Rhona Goldie (RG), Coldstream & Dist. CC, Eyemouth CC, Carlops CC, Floors, Makerstoun, Nenthorn & Smailholm CC
- 3 **Order of Business** As agenda.
- 4 **Approval of minutes from 27<sup>th</sup> March** Minutes approved. The minutes of 30<sup>th</sup> January, previously accepted STQR\*, were also approved.
- 5 **Matters Arising not on the agenda** None.
- 6 **Treasurer's report** Report provided by MS shows balance of £1593.44
- 7 **SESplan update presentation** IA explained the steps in producing the second Strategic Development Plan (SDP<sup>2</sup>) for the SE Scotland area, following approval of the first plan in June 2013. Due to the mandatory 5-year land supply requirement, SDP<sup>2</sup> needs to be in place by 2018 and so will be finalised and placed before Scottish Ministers by June 2017. SDP<sup>2</sup> principles are for the plan to be Simple, Accessible and Deliverable. SE Scotland should be:
  - a place to do business
  - a place for communities
  - a better-connected place.IA explained how the planners include strategic aims for development to be low CO<sub>2</sub>, sustainable and high quality. A questionnaire on the Main Issues Report (MIR), which informs the content of SDP<sup>2</sup>, is currently out for consultation – go to [sesplan.gov.uk](http://sesplan.gov.uk) to find out how to respond.

IA took questions from the meeting. Transport planning is handled by SEStran, but the two bodies work together closely. In planning terms, high quality means aiming for developments to be sensitive to the existing built and natural environments, with a good fit to how people live and work and with good architecture and design which incorporates local traditions. However, the planners can only influence, not direct, the developers. Likewise, local planning authorities (LPAs) decide on provision of amenities and services – SESplan can only lay out the best guidance. Housing land supply is determined from national population projections, but LPAs determine local housing needs.

LI thanked IA for his presentation and asked for all CCs which have not done so to go online and engage with SESplan. Website <http://www.sesplan.gov.uk/>

\* STQR – subject to quorate ratification at a later meeting

**8**      **Role of SBCCN including Constitution**      Ongoing.

**9**      **CC engagement with communities and councils**      LI explained that CCs contacting SBC should now approach the Area Officer for their Area Forum who now provides the support previously given by CM.

LI noted that of 67 CCs in the Scottish Borders, only about 20 have a website. SBC encourages CCs to have a greater online presence. The meeting discussed what form this should take. CCs with a Facebook page have had mixed experiences and, at worst, local disagreements have got out of hand with insults, bigotry and racism being expressed through CC Facebook pages. Concern was expressed that as owners of these pages, CCs might face liability for views expressed and it was agreed that a small voluntary group is not able to control online social media. CM will clarify the liability question. **Action CM**

The meeting agreed that SBCCN should encourage all CCs to have a website within a year. Support is available from a number of sources including Online Borders.

Regarding social media and blogs, SBCCN does not yet make any recommendation. JMcf runs Clovenfords Magazine which has been very successful and he will give advice to other CCs wishing to increase their online presence. LI suggested involving schools which might be willing to run community social media with the additional benefit of showing the students what CCs do and how grassroots democracy operates.

**10**      **Annual Conference – update and progress**

10.1      Date for seminar set as 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014 at SBC HQ.

10.2      The meeting discussed main speaker and topic and agreed to approach Susan Hunter, SBC's Youth Participation Officer. **Action CM**

10.3      The meeting discussed workshop topics. SBCCN will consider approaching Mark Rowley from Longformacus to lead a workshop on engaging with windfarm developers. A second workshop on community engagement might cover topics including petitions to local and national government and also canvassing residents' opinions on planning. JMcf kindly agreed to lead a third workshop on the Possibilities, Potentials and Pitfalls of social media and community websites.

**11**      **Community Council Training Requirements**

11.1      FC and LI have collaborated on a concise handbook for Community Councillors giving the basics in layman's terms; what to do, whom to contact and so forth. This will go alongside the updated SBC CC Scheme, which is expected to be approved on 26<sup>th</sup> June. The handbook is expected to be available to CCs for the seminar.

11.2      The meeting agreed that newly formed CCs should be invited to ask for SBCCN to provide someone to come along to an early meeting to give guidance if this was felt to be useful. **Action LI**

11.3      JMcf noted that Tweeddale CC chairs hold a pre-meeting to discuss matters of

mutual interest ahead of Tweeddale Area Forums. This is something CCs in other areas might consider.

**12 Community Council Scheme review** CM reported that the committee has accepted all the recommended changes to the Scheme except for the limit to tenure of office holders. This matter will be discussed by the full SBC. Changes with financial implications will be debated by the full SBC and include formation of two new CCs and a boundary change between NECC and StBCC.

**13 Community Council Questions** Questions received had already been covered.

**14 Rural Parliament**

14.1 LI will write to all CCs to encourage them to register with the Rural Parliament.  
**Action LI**

14.2 The Rural Parliament will meet at Oban, 6-8<sup>th</sup> November 2014. Rural CCs from across Scotland will attend. More details can be found online.

**15 Any Other Business**

With Ruth Kerr's resignation from the SBCCN Core Group, there are now no representatives from the Tweeddale Area. CCs in that area will be asked to put forward nominations.  
**Action LI, RduB**

**Date of next meeting**

Thursday, 10/07/2014, SBC HQ, 7pm

LI thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.