

Scottish Borders Tourism Partnership

MINUTE of MEETING of the
SCOTTISH BORDERS
TOURISM PARTNERSHIP held
at VisitScotland Borders,
Shepherds Mill, Whinfield Road,
Selkirk, TD7 5DT on Wednesday
1st November 2006 at 1pm.

PRESENT:

Fiona Drane, VisitScotland Borders
Catherine Tuff, Food and Drink Representative (Vice Chairman)
Sue Beck, Self Catering Representative
Catherine Maxwell-Stuart, Attractions Representative
Kevin Keenan, Dryburgh Abbey Hotel
John Sloggie, Hotel Representative
John Henderson, Activities Representative
Julie Hogg, Scottish Borders Council
Anne Borthwick, B&B Representative
Cllr B Smith (representing Cllr K McCartney)
Marion Oates, Scottish Borders Council (representing Bryan McGrath)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Sandi Hellowell, Strategy & Partnership Executive, VisitScotland Borders
Helene Sinclair, Business Relationship Marketing Manager, VisitScotland Borders
Paul Buchanan, Corporate Research Manager, VisitScotland
Anne Rutherford, Office Administrator, VisitScotland Borders

APOLOGIES:

Jeanette Thomson, Chamber of Commerce
Cllr John Elliot
John Hamilton
Jim Renwick

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Vice Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th August were approved subject to an amendment under the Information and Sales Review item regarding piloting the use of Essential Guides instead of Bedroom Packs.

Update on Area Director Position

Fiona Drane gave an update on the position of Area Director. She stated that the position had been advertised internally but there had been no candidates. The job will now be advertised nationally through an agency. Ben Carter, Area Director at VisitScotland Edinburgh will cover the Borders area one day per week during the interim period.

Fiona also gave an update on the Marketing Executive position which will also become vacant at the end of November. She stated that interviews would be held on Tuesday 7th November.

After discussion it was agreed that the Partnership write to VisitScotland voicing their concerns regarding the Area Director position only being covered for 1 day per week and requesting a meeting to discuss this and other issues including cutbacks.

It was agreed that a sub group be set made up of Catherine Maxwell-Stuart, John Sloggie, Cllr McCartney, John Elliot, Alan Elliott and a representative from Scottish Borders Council to go through the Tourism Plan and be clear what the partnership want in advance of the meeting. An email will be sent from the sub group to the partnership to keep them up to date and trade reps will be approached to give support.

Fiona Drane stated that there would be an opportunity for the Partnership to meet Ben Carter at the next Partnership meeting on 7th February 2007.

Update on Peebles TIC

Fiona Drane updated members on the position regarding Peebles TIC. The TIC will not now be relocating and she thanked everyone, especially John Sloggie, for lobbying the Council.

2. Update on Tourism Forums

Helene Sinclair circulated a draft of the programmes for the two Tourism Forums to be held on 28th November at Mellerstain House and 29th November at Eastgate Theatre in Peebles. Last year the biggest criticism was on timings and it was agreed that speakers should be asked to start and finish on time.

The new Challenge Fund leaflet and information will be available at both Forums. It was also agreed that Kevin Keenan would talk at the Forum on staff structure differences between the old Scottish Borders Tourist Board and the current VisitScotland Borders.

3. Presentation by Paul Buchanan

Paul Buchanan, Corporate Research Manager, VisitScotland gave a presentation on Demystifying Tourism Statistics followed by a discussion. It was agreed that Kevin Keenan would give the partners information at the Tourism Forum Meetings and encourage everyone to collect more information about their customers and share it with others.

4. Update on Food Learning Journey

Catherine Tuff updated members on the Food Learning Journey to Ayrshire and Arran at the end of September. The journey was aimed at pubs, bars and cafes who engage with VisitScotland. There were nine attendees and the aim of the trip was to discover how other areas linked with local producers. Feedback from participants was very positive and all were keen to work in partnership and with a wider group to brainstorm how they can work together. A second visit to Northumbria is scheduled for 07/08.

5. 50% Growth Exercise

Sandi Hellowell gave a presentation which had originally been given to Area Directors. It was thought that it would be a useful exercise to take to Area Tourism Partnerships. It was developed to communicate what the 50% growth means at ground level.

There then followed a discussion on how the 50% growth could be achieved.

It was agreed that the Partnership meet again specifically to discuss this based on the Tourism Action Plan. All members would be emailed the Action Plan and they should review it and send feedback to be collated for the meeting. The date was set for Monday 20th November at 9.30 pm at VisitScotland Borders offices in Selkirk.

6. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 7th February 2007 at a venue to be decided. Ben Carter will be attending this meeting. It was agreed that this would be a brainstorming meeting on where the partnership is going in the future.

7. Any other business

It was noted that the current members will have served two years on the Partnership in April 2006 and that the election of members should be discussed at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 4.15 pm.