

Scottish Borders Tourism Partnership

MINUTE of MEETING of the
SCOTTISH BORDERS
TOURISM PARTNERSHIP held
at Spinners Room, Ettrick
Riverside on Wednesday 7th
February 2007 at 2pm.

PRESENT:

Ben Carter, VisitScotland Borders
Catherine Tuff, Food and Drink Representative (Vice Chairman)
Sue Beck, Self Catering Representative
John Sloggie, Hotel Representative
John Henderson, Activities Representative
Marion Oates, Scottish Borders Council (representing Bryan McGrath)
Alan Elliott, Scottish Enterprise Borders
Jeanette Thomson, Chamber of Commerce

IN ATTENDANCE:

Sandi Hellowell, Strategy & Partnership Executive, VisitScotland Borders
Anne Rutherford, Office Administrator, VisitScotland Borders

APOLOGIES:

Cllr John Elliot
Kevin Keenan
Colin Chisholm
Julie Hogg

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Vice Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Ben Carter, Area Director for Edinburgh who is interim Area Director for the Borders.

2. Minutes of previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st November 2006 were approved.

Update on Area Director Position

Ben Carter gave an update on the Area Director Position. He said that there should be an announcement week commencing 12 February and that the Partnership would be informed. He intimated that during the handover period he would still come to the Borders and be on hand to help with any issues.

3. Area Tourism Partnership Forum Events

Ben gave an update on the feedback of the Area Tourism Partnership Forum events which took place in November 2006. There was also a paper circulated which gave details of numbers of attendees at each event. It was noted that although there were two venues numbers were down by 48 on last year.

There followed a discussion where John Sloggie felt that the Partnership Forum events should be open to a wider audience and that businesses who are not engaging with us at the moment be encouraged to attend. Various other ideas

for the event were discussed which included having a keynote speaker or sponsorship. It was also felt that it would be useful to survey those who didn't attend to find out why they didn't come. It was also felt that it would be better to revert back to one meeting.

It was agreed that a sub group be set up to look at the various options for the next Forum meeting which would consist of Sandi Hellowell, Jeanette Thomson, Catherine Tuff and Sue Beck. They will then come back to the Partnership with ideas and suggestions for future Forum Meetings.

4. How's Business Survey

The How's Business Survey Executive Summary had been circulated and Ben updated the Partnership on the report.

John Sloggie felt that the person who is doing the survey should be more knowledgeable about tourism and the Borders and that all questions should not be either yes or no answers. He also felt that questions should be worded differently and that the interviewer should be better prepared to enter dialogue. It was also decided that previous year's figures should be shown as a benchmark.

It was felt that the feedback from the survey was useful and that it may be re-commissioned but that the format may change.

5. Area Tourism Partnership Representation 2007-2009

As the current members of the Partnership will have served two years in April there was a discussion regarding the best way to recruit new representatives. It was agreed to ascertain whether the current members would be prepared to stand again or if they would be standing down. It was also agreed that the purpose of the group should be reviewed and that this should be conveyed to people who engage with us. They should also be reminded who their rep is.

At the Area Tourism Partnership Forum meetings nominations were requested from the industry. It was noted that two people who attended the Peebles event showed an interest in standing for election but no-one at the Mellerstain event volunteered.

It was agreed that the same group which will look at the Forum meetings should look at the make up and review the remit of the Partnership and report to the next meeting. It was noted that SBC will not have an elected member representative until after the local elections in May. In the meantime, it was agreed that current industry representatives would continue in the Partnership until November 2007.

6. VisitScotland Borders Update

Ben updated members on VisitScotland Borders activity. He informed members that Gayle Skelly is now in post after taking over from Fiona MacKinnon. He was asked if Gayle would be attending future meetings and said this would be the case if the content was relevant.

Publications

Copies of the new Spring into Summer 07 Breaks Guide, Essential Guide and Golfing Breaks 07 Guide are all now being distributed and copies were circulated at the meeting.

Green Tourism

It was reported that there are now 28 Green Tourism businesses in the Borders and that Dryburgh was recently upgraded to Gold.

Sue Beck stated that there was no search for Green Tourism businesses on www.visitscotland.com and Ben said that he would check this out and get back to her.

A new entry level will be introduced leading to Bronze, Silver and Gold which will be upgraded to include different elements.

One North East

Fiona Drane and Riddell Graham had met with One North East. It was agreed to wait until the changes in the Partnership membership have taken place and then to get together with various groups in One North East.

Bedroom Packs

John Sloggie referred to discussions which took place previously regarding replacing the Bedroom Packs with the Essential Guide. It was stated that the How's Business Survey had shown that there was some interest in using the Essential Guide and that these people should be approached and asked if they would be interested in taking the essential guide as a trial. It was agreed that costs should be obtained for the next meeting.

7. Action Plan Update

Julie Hogg, Sandi Hellowell and Sue Beck had met and updated the Action Plan.

The Priority 1 actions were discussed and it was agreed that these would be updated and circulated to members prior to the next meeting. It was also agreed that the information needs to be co-ordinated to go out as a communication to the industry.

8. Any other Business

Press Releases/Planning Applications

John Sloggie raised concerns that VisitScotland were unable to respond to a recent press enquiry. It was agreed that, where a tourism viewpoint is required, VisitScotland would normally provide comment.

Breaks and Essential Guides

Ben informed members that in 2008 the Borders would revert back to one calendar year Breaks and one calendar year Essential Guide. This has been decided on the basis that on calendar year guide would better reflect the more

year round nature of tourism in the Borders. Providers will still be able to include short breaks offers.

New Ways Awards

There will be a table at the New Ways Awards for the Area Tourism partnership and members were invited to take part.

9. Dates of Future Meetings

The dates of the meetings for 2007 are:

Wednesday 6th June

Wednesday 29th August

Wednesday 10th October

Wednesday 5th December

The meeting closed at 5.05 pm.