

Area Tourism Partnership Meeting

MINUTE of MEETING of the SCOTTISH
BORDERS AREA TOURISM
PARTNERSHIP held at Traquair House,
Innerleithen on Wednesday 5th
December at 2pm.

PRESENT:

Pamela McMahon, VisitScotland Borders
Mrs Sue Beck, Self Catering Representative (Chair)
Cllr Ron Smith, Vice Chair
Chris Winson, Eating & Drinking Representative
Catherine Maxwell-Stuart, Attractions Representative
Marion Oates, Scottish Borders Council
Jim Renwick, Retail Representative
Colin Chisholm, Caravan & Camping Representative
Billy Hamilton, Hotels & Guest Houses Representative

IN ATTENDANCE:

Sandi Hellowell, Strategy & Partnership Executive, VisitScotland Borders
Helene Sinclair, Business Relationship Marketing Manager, VisitScotland Borders
Anne Rutherford, VisitScotland Borders

APOLOGIES:

Alan Elliott, Scottish Enterprise Borders
Nicola Watt, Scottish Enterprise Borders

1. Welcome and Introductions

Sue Beck welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Billy Hamilton from the Buccleuch Arms Hotel, St Boswells as the new Hotel and Guest House representative on the Partnership.

Sue asked if businesses could be informed as to what hotels/restaurants were open for meals over the festive season. TICs to get in touch with establishments and the information will be sent out to businesses in the mini e-bulletin and a paragraph will be in the national e-bulletin.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Alan Elliot and Nicola Watt, SEB.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 August were approved.

Matters Arising

- a. **Travelling Expenses** – Sandi had checked with other areas and it was agreed that as of today's meeting 25p per mile could be available for industry reps on the ATP for travelling expenses to and from ATP meetings. Expenses for any other trips must be approved by the Partnership in advance. Forms will be circulated when available.
- b. **Feedback on Visitor Attraction Autumn Campaign**

Catherine Maxwell Stuart circulated a report and gave feedback on a project for extending the season. The project involved producing a leaflet and poster detailing attractions that were open in the October – December period. 29 attractions took part at a cost of £50 each and Historic Houses Association, National Trust for Scotland and Historic Scotland each contributed an additional £50 per attraction in their organisation who took part.

Catherine commented that there had been a problem with distribution of the leaflet to TICs and Pamela agreed to look into this. **Action: PMcM**

4. ATP Trade/Group Representation

- a. A nomination had been received from Borders Sports and Leisure Trust for the Leisure and Recreation sector vacancy on the Partnership. Two reps were put forward, Keith Campbell and Duncan Sinclair as they thought that there could always be one of them able to attend. It was agreed that they be asked to join the Partnership. Letter to be sent confirming this and letters to other nominees. **Action: SB**
- b. The Chamber of Commerce have no resources to send someone to sit on the Partnership at the moment but Sue agreed to feedback to the Chamber anything of relevance to them.
- c. It was also felt important that we engage with other groups and suggested groups were: Berwickshire Dive Group, Peebles Retailers, Peebles Consortium, Ancestral Tourism, Creative Group, Borders Tourist Board. These to be invited to replace current representatives standing down. Pamela is meeting with Borders Tourist Board and will report back to the Partnership after this if they should be approached to sit on the Partnership. **Action: SB/MO/PMcM**
- d. The matter of confidentiality was discussed and Sandi said that Dumfries & Galloway ATP have a signed statement which works very well. It was felt that this should be considered for the Borders and Sandi agreed to get a form of words for the statement. **Action: SH**

5. Action Plan Progress

- a. The updated Action Plan had been circulated prior to the meeting and the following points were noted:
 - The new Essential Guide now features a cycling map of the Borders and includes: mountain biking, Borderloop, Tweed Cycleway and Coast and Castles.
 - The Uplift feasibility study is now half way through. This project has the potential to make a massive impact on the Tweed Valley.
 - Tweeddale Tourism Consortium will now be called Tweed Valley and boundaries will remain much the same as at present.
 - Taste of Scottish Borders – there won't be a leaflet at the moment but a new food and drink guide will be available next year.
 - Lifestyle Sports – there needs to be some event listing co-ordination. Marion to try to get information on events.
 - Weddings – there is now a wedding shop in Coldstream.

Sue thanked everyone for updating the Action Plan and stressed how important it was to keep it up to date.

- b. It was agreed that updates from the Action Plan and minutes from the ATP meetings could be used as an Annual Report. This could be linked to the annual event with a Press Release. On a quarterly basis the relative points should be extracted and communicated to the trade. Each champion should collate their area(s) and VisitScotland Borders would type up report. This has to be done by 6th February 2008 (the date of the next meeting). The Action Plan will be circulated with reduced columns for Champions to fill in with highlights of the year. The report should also be sent to stakeholders. There will be no quarterly report for the next meeting.
Action: All

6. Indicators and Measures

It was felt that the document needs to be reviewed and that we need to do something realistic to contribute to 50% growth. Marion, Pamela, Vicky and Sandi are meeting with VisitScotland Research, hopefully in mid January, and will come back to the Partnership at the next meeting with the findings.

Action: PMcM/SH

The trade should be encouraged to fill in occupancy figures to get a better idea of the Borders as opposed to Scotland-wide.

SBC are looking at a project to benchmark individual towns for their overall customer experience. SBC to advise of progress.

Action: MO

7. Scottish Borders Annual Event

The sub group set up to plan the Annual Event had met and a paper was circulated prior to the meeting. It was agreed that the title should be:
Tourism Xchange Networking for Success

The event was previously carried out on a shoestring budget and it was hoped to get in-kind support. Chris Winson will open a bank account and is happy to be treasurer with Sue Beck acting as Chairman. It was agreed that a £20 payment would be required for table space with a further £5 for electricity. VisitScotland Borders would contribute £500, Buccleuch Hotel £100, W heatsheaf Hotel £100 and Lochcarron £200.

It was agreed that Catherine would collect the money and pass to Chris.

A letter and invite will go out early January and there will be a meeting for the event on 16th January at VisitScotland Borders offices in Selkirk.

Action: AR - book room

8. Communications

- a. Sue Beck proposed the idea of sectoral meetings with their representative. Main purpose is to flag up Tourism Xchange event and gain feedback from sector. Catherine Maxwell Stuart already meets with the BVAF regularly and feels this would be duplication.

Sue also arranged SC day recently. Others will be contacted independently as appropriate Hotels – Billy will email (Ron will supply list of all Hotels from SBC, although no email addresses included). Sue will ask Anne Borthwick to contact BB sector. **Action: BH/SB**

- b. It was felt that when feedback from the Industry is requested this should be both positive and negative and where possible fed back in relation to the 50% growth/Tourism Prospectus key drivers .

Action: All industry Reps

9. Scottish Enterprise/VisitScotland Review Update

Alan Elliot unable to attend – no Enterprise Update
VisitScotland, Pamela McMahon indicated it is business as usual, VisitScotland is not changing what they do, but how they do it. Explained the 4 new directorates, being Visitor Facing/Industry Facing/Strategic Partnerships and Corporate Services. Catherine Maxwell Stuart asked how this would affect Borders Marketing, would it be South of Scotland – PMCM responded saying there will still be a presence in Borders, but unable to elaborate further at this point or on who will be doing what.

10. Any Other Business

Marion Oates circulated questions on Scottish Parliament's Tourism Revenue Growth Inquiry – SBC have been asked to respond with written submission by 19th Dec and they are keen to involve feedback form the industry. Marion will circulate questions via email next week. **Action: MO**

11. Meeting Dates and presentations 2008

- a. Homecoming 2009 – paper attached
Marion updated the group - SBC/VisitScotland/Forestry Commission are working on proposals to be able to bid in for funding by mid Feb. Proposals have to align under one of the 5 pillars. Most applicable to Borders are themed around, Clan/Family/Burns. In general encouraging ex-pats etc to “come home” for Homecoming should be underpinning activity. MO to continue to update the group.

Action: MO

2008 Meeting Dates:

6 th February 2008	Buccleuch Arms Hotel (Billy Confirmed)
7 th May 2008	
3 rd September 2008	
3 rd December 2008	