

## MINUTES OF THE DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY TOURISM PARTNERSHIP HELD ON 4 JULY 2005

<b>Present</b>	Mr Tony Fitzpatrick Mr John Shearer Mr Rob Souter Lynn Walker Allison McColl Mr John Denerley Mr Mark Hannay Mr Gordon Hood Councillor Joan Mitchell Councillor Jock Purdie Mr Jim Smith Ms Margaret Burton Mr Roger Grant	Dumfries & Galloway Council Selkirk Arms Hotel Forestry Commission Scotland Scottish Natural Heritage Scottish Enterprise Dumfries & Galloway Galloway Wildlife Park Cardoness Estate Wallamhill B&B Dumfries & Galloway Council Dumfries & Galloway Council Scottish Enterprise Dumfries & Galloway Chamber of Commerce Dumfries & Galloway Council
<b>In Attendance</b>	Mrs Delia Holland Ms Karen Wilson Mr Martin Cornforth Mr Riddell Graham Ms Lindsay MacGillivray Ms Kath Ellwood Ms Fiona Adair Ms Lorraine Brown	Area Director Marketing Executive VisitScotland VisitScotland External Relations Executive Industry Development Officer Interpreter Interpreter
<b>Apologies</b>	Ms Jane Howe	Redcastle Cottages

### 1. WELCOME

Delia Holland welcomed all in attendance and gave a brief overview of the objectives of the meeting.

### 2. PRESENTATIONS BY RIDDELL GRAHAM AND DELIA HOLLAND

Riddell Graham, Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Communications for VisitScotland gave a presentation on the national context for the Area Tourism Partnership and Plans. This was followed by a presentation by Delia Holland, Area Director of the VisitScotland Dumfries & Galloway Network Office, which set the local context for the Partnership and Plan.

Joan Mitchell commented that there seemed to be disengagement between Dumfries & Galloway and the national scene, which is a sensitive issue. She then asked how the Area Tourism Partnership could address this and why there is no South of Scotland representation on the Chairman's groups. Mr Graham responded by saying that the partnership was right to challenge the perceived lack of representation and the D&G Area Tourism Partnership needed to act as a lobbying body for Dumfries & Galloway. He did confirm that Catherine Tuft from the Borders was on the Chairman's group, but representation was not geographical. Mr Graham also commented that the Scottish Tourism Forum was the official lobbying body for the tourism industry and the Partnership need to ensure that there was a Dumfries & Galloway element in all national groups. Mrs Holland commented that she would actively encourage Dumfries & Galloway representatives to apply for the VisitScotland Board positions that were available. Mr Graham agreed and

stated that if there were any feelings that D&G people were being excluded, the partnership should let him know.

Mrs Holland also confirmed that she hoped to ensure that images of Dumfries & Galloway were included in the Scottish Village at future events.

Margaret Burton of the Chamber of Commerce said the comment of Riddell Graham that the Borders were worst hit by Foot and Mouth irked her and she was concerned that most marketing materials had images of the central belt upwards. Mr Graham responded by urging the partnership to look forwards not backwards.

Tony Fitzpatrick expressed his concern that there seemed to be a growing centralist tendency, with a simplistic view of Scotland. Mr Graham responded by saying that staff in VisitScotland had not been centralised, with 4 of the 6 Directors based out with Edinburgh and 86% of staff based out with Edinburgh.

John Shearer asked if Mr Graham felt there should be a dedicated Minister for Tourism and said he felt that funding should be given to tourism businesses in the form of interest free loans. Mr Graham stated that the interest free grant system of the past was not sustainable and he suspected it would never return.

Mr Shearer then went on to ask why Tourist Information Centres spent so much time giving information to visitors rather than sending people to a visitor attraction or booking them into accommodation. He also commented that the local office seemed to be playing down the local marketing and enquired what would happen if there was no local industry buy in. Mrs Holland responded by saying that she had no intention of playing down the importance of marketing. She went on to say that the TICs in D&G were of a very high quality and that there were so many examples of good practice in the area. Mrs Holland stated that the aims of the organisation were to keep visitors in the area, to provide a high quality visitor experience and to encourage visitors to spend more whilst here. A balance needed to be struck between information provision and income generation. Mrs Holland finished by saying that the D&G Network Office was third in Scotland for Business Opportunity Package returns. In her view membership had been restrictive, and there was now the opportunity to work with a broader base of tourism businesses such as transport, retail, etc.

John Denerley commented that there seemed to have been a lot of changes in the local office and there needed to be time taken out to take stock of the changes. Mr Denerley also said that he felt the region needed to have a higher profile in the media. He also felt that WildScotland had focused on the Highlands too much and the South of Scotland had been discriminated against. Mr Graham said that he was quite surprised that Mr Denerley felt that there was a lack of media coverage of the region as Dumfries & Galloway had the greatest coverage in the press cuttings twice in the previous week. Mrs Holland also pointed out that the marketing team based locally would be working closely with the national consumer PR team on promoting the region.

Mark Hannay stated that 80% of bed nights in the Stewartry were in Caravans and he was concerned that they could lose out if the marketing focus was to attract the international market. Mr Graham reassured Mr Hannay by stating that the vast majority of the spend on marketing was focussed on the UK markets.

### **3. ELECTION OF THE CHAIR**

Mr Denerley wished to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Chair and the group before nominations. Mr Shearer stated that most of the information was laid out in the document detailing the role of the group and he suggested that they proceeded with the election of a Chair.

Jock Purdie nominated John Shearer and Rob Souter seconded the nomination.

Joan Mitchell nominated Gordon Hood and Mark Hannay seconded the nomination.

A ballot was held and Gordon Hood was elected as Chairman of the Dumfries & Galloway Area Tourism Partnership.

### **4. ELECTION OF A VICE CHAIR**

Gordon Hood took over the Chair of the meeting at this point.

Gordon Hood nominated Joan Mitchell and Delia Holland seconded the nomination.

John Denerley nominated Mark Hannay and John Shearer seconded the nomination.

A ballot was held and Joan Mitchell was elected as Vice Chairman of the Dumfries & Galloway Area Tourism Partnership.

### **5. ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION**

Everyone read through the first draft of the constitution and the following suggestions were made:

- (Rob Souter) Change 1.1 to read 'To develop a tourism strategy and action plan for Dumfries and Galloway, seeking synergy with neighbouring areas'
- (Delia Holland) Suggested that some clause be put in to allow for substitutes where appropriate – 3.4 to be amended to include 'or their nominated substitute where appropriate'
- (Lynn Walker/Alison McColl) There was concern that public bodies should not be seen as part of a lobbying body as stated in 1.4. It was agreed 1.4 should be changed to read 'To make representations to appropriate bodies to further tourism interests in the area.'
- It was agreed that 3.1 should be amended to read 'The Partnership will initially comprise of 16 individual members drawn from the industry and from partner organisations and may include representatives from other bodies in the future'.
- Delia Holland raised the question of agreed confidentiality of any discussions held within the meetings of the Partnership. John Shearer suggested a summary of agreed points would be circulated and taken back to local groups. Joan Mitchell felt it was unnecessary to state anything about confidentiality in the constitution. Tony Fitzpatrick agreed.
- (John Denerley) suggested a clause should be added in as 3.5 to state that the Chairman and Vice Chairman serve a two year term
- Amend 5.1 to include 'or ad-hoc as required'
- 1.1 to be amended to read 'To develop an action plan for Dumfries & Galloway in line with the strategic objectives'.
- Add in a new clause 5.6 to state that sub committees of the group can be formed as appropriate

It was agreed that the constitution was to be redrafted by Martin Cornforth and a new version would be circulated for comment at a later stage. It was also agreed that the discussion on the format, roles and responsibilities at meetings would be discussed at a future meeting.

## **6. PRESENTATION BY ALISON McCOLL, SEDG**

Alison McColl of Scottish Enterprise Dumfries & Galloway gave a presentation on the tourism activity of the organisation. Joan Mitchell asked if there was a conflict between VisitScotland and Scottish Enterprise on whether it was best to carry out 'Destination' marketing or Niche marketing. Alison McCall defined 'Destination' marketing as looking at putting together several attractions packaged as one destination. Karen Wilson suggested that this was very similar to the Product Development and Marketing plans developed in the Area Tourism Strategy and it was just the terminology that differed.

## **7. PRESENTATION BY TONY FITZPATRICK, DGC**

Tony Fitzpatrick of Dumfries & Galloway Council gave a presentation on 'Partners Promoting Tourism', detailing the tourism activity of the Council and its partners.

John Denerley asked how it was possible to obtain information on funding. Tony Fitzpatrick said he would pass information on the Heritage Lottery Fund to Mr Denerley.

John Shearer asked what the £405k given to VisitScotland by the local Council would be used for. Tony Fitzpatrick informed him that the money would be used for funding VisitScotland Dumfries & Galloway to deliver outputs agreed in the Partnership Agreement between the two organisations.

## **8. PRESENTATION BY KAREN WILSON, VISITSCOTLAND DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY**

Karen Wilson of VisitScotland Dumfries & Galloway gave a presentation on the challenges and opportunities the Partnership and the local VisitScotland Dumfries & Galloway Network Office faced in marketing Dumfries & Galloway.

John Shearer enquired whether VSDG were using any of the new technology marketing techniques such as mobile phones, email, etc. Karen Wilson responded by stating that new technologies had been used but the marketing was aimed at the over 55's and most success had been with press inserts and direct mail.

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Delia Holland proposed that the Area Tourism Partnership should host an industry conference with tourism awards nominated by visitors. It was agreed that Mrs Holland should draft a proposal and circulate it for comment.

Gordon Hood closed the meeting by thanking all who had given presentations and everyone for attending. It was proposed that the next meeting should be held in September at a date and time to be agreed.