

MINUTES OF THE DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY TOURISM PARTNERSHIP HELD ON 18 OCTOBER 2005

Present	Mr Tony Fitzpatrick	Dumfries & Galloway Council
	Mr John Shearer	Selkirk Arms Hotel
	Mr Keith Muir	Forestry Commission Scotland
	Mr Mike Scott	Scottish Natural Heritage
	Allison McColl	Scottish Enterprise Dumfries & Galloway
	Mr John Denerley	Galloway Wildlife Park
	Mr Gordon Hood	Wallamhill B&B
	Councillor Joan Mitchell	Dumfries & Galloway Council
	Mr Jim Smith	Scottish Enterprise Dumfries & Galloway
	Ms Margaret Burton	Chamber of Commerce
Mr George Abernethy	SLTA	
In Attendance	Mrs Delia Holland	Area Director
	Ms Anne Massey	Business Relationship & Marketing Manager
	Ms Sandi Hellowell	VisitScotland
	Mr Andrew Dewey	Interpreter
	Ms Lorraine Brown	Interpreter
Apologies	Ms Jane Howe	Redcastle Cottages
	Mr Roger Grant	Dumfries & Galloway Council

1. WELCOME

Gordon Hood welcomed all in attendance and gave a brief overview of the objectives of the meeting. GH mentioned an article he had seen in The Herald which estimated the economic worth of Tourism & Food & Drink to the UK Economy which is £81b, with Food & Drink worth £35b. GH also made the point that on holiday in Ibiza, bars and restaurants were open to suit the customer i.e. in some instances until midnight. GH feels that through the ATP we can explore how to cater more for the needs of the visitor.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING OF 4 JULY 05

Amendments to be made P2, please change Riddle Graham to Philip Riddle
Minutes proposed by JM, seconded by AMcC

3. CHANGES TO CONSTITUTION

Approval of redrafted constitution sought.

JM advised of inconsistency in point 3.5 serve 2-year term.

All present agreed it should state 2-year term.

2nd inconsistency point 1.4 'Making representation' Change 'lobbying' to 'Make representation'

MB queried presence of Chamber of Commerce and to clarify in what capacity were they expected to attend ATP. Chamber of Commerce represents all businesses and not just retail. MB proposed that Rab Smith, Vice-Chair of Chamber of Commerce sit on ATP to represent retailers.

JS asked if we could Co-opt retail sector as retail is a key sector. JD agreed that co-opting needs clarification in constitution. It was proposed for Rab Smith to represent Chamber of Commerce and Retail sector on ATP. However, JS added that Chamber of Commerce represented all businesses and retail therefore would prefer to see retail and Chamber on ATP. GH suggested that the constitution be adapted to give elasticity to be able to co-opt in

and out as needed. DH agreed to make constitutional changes and send to ATP members for approval

ACTION: DH

JD asked about constituted groups attending the ATP meetings i.e. from the Visitor Attraction sector it was agreed that the Vice-Chair could attend ATP meetings if JD not available. It was agreed that substitutes attend but not have voting rights.

4. VISITSCOTLAND DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY ACTIVITY UPDATE – DELIA HOLLAND

DH gave an update of activity from the local network office.

- Monet exhibition – estimated 60k visitors to area generating £5m revenue.
- 7stanes – Seventh Heaven campaign, results still being evaluated but anecdotal evidence suggests a great success
- In partnership with DGC, production of a Civil Weddings brochure
- Current Autumn campaign generated 9,600 responses to date, well on target
- 2006 Visitor & Accommodation guides all on track for being published December
- August Occupancy stats – mixed reviews. Hotel sector is the lowest in Scotland – challenge for ATP.
- Scotland's best summer recorded – D&G up 1% overall
- B&B's similar to hotels
- On the positive side SC sector well above Scottish Average – 91% as opposed to 88% across Scotland
- Caravan & Camping stands at 72%, increase of 19% and 15% higher than Highlands & Islands area
- ERDF funding – 7 months to go, lost 2 members of staff. Looking at recruiting to fill in the ERDF gaps, extending the term of the posts and sharing resources between VSD&G and DGC.
- Possibility of positioning D&G as 'Rural Cultural Capital' of Scotland, postulated by Philip Riddle. Brainstorming session to be arranged on next few months to take this idea forward.
- Industry Engagement – pleased with the continuing engagement with businesses in D&G, number of businesses engaging has fallen slightly but is better than rest of Scotland.
- Account Management – Launched in a blaze of glory, but nothing much done about it. Now have Caroline Robertson recruited as Business Relationship Manager and Mark Joseph as Industry Development Officer – ICT to work with businesses in the region. We are being trained on the CRM system and appreciate the patience that all businesses have afforded us over the past few months.
- Talking Tourism – disappointed with turn out to by businesses to meet Philip Riddle however those attending the tour found it very positive.
- Date for Diary – 8 December – VisitScotland Dumfries & Galloway Industry Conference (replacing the AGM). Peter Lederer is coming as keynote speaker to talk about Quality and Service. Also will have workshops i.e. how to make the most of opportunities from Prestwick Airport, e-commerce for businesses etc.
- Sales & information review – ongoing. Schedule – research complete end October, workshops for staff/partners November, Proposals to VisitScotland Board December, Discussion with partners, January, Implementation April 2006.
- Staffing – Admin review headaches as Admin staff now have to go through the comparability process. Out of the old DGTB staff only one member of staff has not found employment in the new structure.
- After a difficult year we move forward to a more positive 2006.

5. QUESTIONS/ISSUES ARISING FROM VSD&G UPDATE

- How do we ensure we continue to get the Dumfries & Galloway message across, especially to Scots? AM noted that there was research being undertaken to see how VisitScotland should 'talk' to the Scots encouraging us to holiday in our own country as this would be different from how we talk to visitors from other UK countries.
- There should be signage on the motorway to direct the traffic to D&G and asked about the Gretna Gateway Arts project. DH suggested that we add this to the agenda for the next meeting to debate.

ACTION: DH

- How do we develop the D&G brand – key issue for ATP. JM asked if using occupancy figures as benchmark of success was best way forward. Agreed that they had to be taken in context as not every accommodation provider contributed to these figures.
- What is classed as a VisitScotland partner. DH explained that a business actively engaged with VisitScotland is termed a partner, however new opportunities now available. The way forward is to work with Quality & Standards.

6. DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY COUNCIL UPDATE – TONY FITZPATRICK EVENTS

- Events Strategy – this is now agreed & signed off.
- Developing broader events with detailed action plan, finely benchmarked. This was about to go public
- Putting together funding package for Identified festivals also £220k for DGC Challenge Fund
- Ian Barr appointed Events Co-ordinator on a 3 year secondment
- Funding & resources – went into Monet & Tour of Britain
- Wickerman Festival – numbers have doubled
- Walking Festivals remain very popular
- Screen Commission of Scotland – Mark Geddes appointed
 - Border TV Productions in the region
 - Taste for the Road
 - Rivers
 - Firefighters
 - BBC Filming for Robert the Bruce
 - C4 filming in the Galloway Forest – Scrappy Races
 - Impact of C4 filming generated 800 additional rooms nights for the region
- Planning & Environment Committee – DH presents a mid-term report in December and will report on progress with the ATP
- Access – working with VisitScotland on Objective 2 – walking festivals established, Formal consultations taking place this month
- Heritage Lottery Fund - £1.9m with partner contributions to package resources/cultural heritage – 'Natural Place'

7. QUESTIONS/ISSUES ARISING FROM DGCUPDATE

- How can we encourage events at shoulder periods
- What is the DGC stance on upgrading A75 to dual carriageway. This is unlikely to happen however there are 7 major improvements in the pipeline.

8. SCOTTISH ENTERPRISE DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY UPDATE – ALLISON MCCOLL

- Galloway Forest Park – Innovation day with key partners 27 October looking at potential for forests egg Sled Dogs, walking, Cycling
- Supporting DGC in work with Newton Stewart Nature Forum, will have action plan from scheduled innovation day on 15 November
- Tour of Britain – Economic Impact Assessment being done and keen to share the information
- Planning for 2006 ToB event starting November 05 – keen that route reflects key products in region
- Stranraer waterfront – SED&G leading with DGC support. The format has now changed and is being broken into groups i.e. benefits of marine tourism, using the potential of the sea and activities
- Tourism skill – pushing on with training workshops. Now proposing new strategy to allow the focus to be on specific projects and keen to use a refreshed approach to training
- SE National – Gleneagles Masterclasses happening as well as the learning journeys.
- 100k welcomes – feedback criticism???
- Springboard Scotland
- Events strategy working with Ian Barr – crucial to set proper baseline measures
- Burns Homecoming – research has been agreed
 - a. Economic benefit to date
 - b. Including trail from Ayrshire to D&G

9. QUESTIONS/ISSUES ARISING FROM SED&GUPDATE

- Training is difficult because of the hidden costs i.e. wages for cover, accommodation costs etc. AMcC aware of the issue and looking at various options

10. DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT

JD discussed the DDA and how to implement better in D&G as has had feedback from visitors to his establishment regarding barriers to visitors such as bad service (discriminatory) We need to encourage disabled visitors to D&G

Agreed a sub-group to be formed to consider DDA legislation and its implications

ACTION: DH

11. GALLOWAY FOREST PARK PRESENTATION

DH congratulated KM on producing the first tourism strategy for forestry in Scotland and invited endorsement from ATP to support this project 100%.

Agreed: ATP will support the development of the strategy and seek opportunities to link with timber development (eg housing) in the region

12. REVIEW OF AREA TOURISM STRATEGY

DH began by saying that the role of the ATP is to develop & lead tourism in the area. There are two key areas to look at – Branding and Business Tourism. There are huge issues with these and are we taking on too much in the first instance with these, although we will eventually have a shared resource to help with Business Tourism. DH made the suggestion that the strategy runs 2001-2006 and to take this forward to 2006 we should concentrate on 2 projects that we can deliver effectively. We then need to consider how to take the plan forward from 2006 with something that is meaningful. DH suggested that the 2 projects we supported are GFP and the Southern Upland Partnership as there is lots of product development work to do and it meets the objectives within the strategy. DH has prepared a discussion document on the SUP to include:

- Issues surrounding the partnership
- Agreement to adopt
- Someone from ATP to go into the SUP steering group
- Current D&G Strategy continues until 2006
- Vital to identify key areas within that strategy to take forward in the new plan for 2007 – 2010

However in the short term DH felt that 2 projects would benefit from ATP support should be:

- Southern Upland way
- Galloway Forest Park

ISSUES SURROUNDING SUP

QUALITY – from VisitScotland perspective we need to look at accommodation on route, as we cannot engage with businesses that are not Quality Assured . There are mixed feelings about accommodation on offer and we need to work with the businesses. This has been discussed with Tony Mercer, Head of QA in Inverness. We also have Caroline Robertson who has joined the Industry team as Business Relationship Manager who has moved from being a QA Advisor. CR would be a useful person to help with the quality issue.

WEB ISSUES – VisitScotland.com had previously seen SU website as a competitor therefore would not work with them. However Andrew Case recently met Marco Trufelli, MD for dotcom, and the understanding is now that they will work together and are looking at models as to how this can be done.

MARKETING – Proposal was given to SOSEP for route development marketing manager. If agreement is reached then ATP should write to SOSEP supporting project

This would be in addition to ongoing projects such as Events, 7stanes, Dog Sport Scotland etc. After much discussion it was agreed that:

- The ATP would support to project to develop the SUW & ask Mark Hannay if he would represent the ATP on the SUW steering group
 - The ATP would actively support the GFP strategy
- The ATP would continue to support other key tourism initiatives in the area

11. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

AMcC advised that SED&G are making appointments for new management team to take 7stanes forward.

JS advised of an issue raised with Hoteliers association. Quality end 4/5* competing as 'Exclusive use venues' with those not graded. It was agreed that this would be included in the agenda for the next meeting in January

ACTION: DH

13. Date of next meetings - 2006

31 January

16 May

19 September

5 December