

TITLE:	Area Tourism Partnership Meeting	
DATE:	5 th December 2006	
VENUE/TIME:	SNH – Carmont House @ 10.00am	
PRESENT:	J Mitchell, D Holland, I McLatchie, R Soutar, L Vickers, L Chambers, T Gillespie, M Hannay, M Scott, R Smith, C Wood-Gee	
IN ATTENDANCE:	S Hellowell, T Smeaton, A McColl	
APOLOGIES:	G Hood, J Denerley, T Fitzpatrick, D Wilson	
CIRCULATION:	Those present, Apologies + J Purdie, R Grant, J Shearer	
		ACTIONS
1. <u>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES</u>		
<p>Joan Mitchell (vice chair) took the chair in the absence of Gordon Hood on holiday and welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Gordon Hood, Tony Fitzpatrick, Damien Wilson. Unfortunately it had not been possible to arrange for an interpreter and therefore John Denerley was not able to attend.</p> <p>Allison McColl and Louise Vickers joined the meeting at 11.30am.</p> <p>Rab Smith joined the meeting at 11.45am.</p>		
2. <u>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</u>		
<p>Minutes from 11th October 2006 were proposed by Joan Mitchell and seconded by Rob Soutar as an accurate record.</p>		
3. <u>MATTERS ARISING</u>		
3.1 <u>Area Tourism Partnership Plan</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft copies of the ATPP were distributed. Delia emphasized that this was an ATP Plan, not a VisitScotland plan and only through partnership could the activity be delivered. Comments on the draft should be returned to Delia by 5th January 2007, with the aim of to arranging a partnership launch in early February. • There was considerable discussion on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The lack of funding support from the enterprise company for the preparation of the plan. - The 'strategic' nature of the plan – necessary to enable leverage of funding – and its relationship to more detailed plans which would be developed for sub-group activity. - The new, more commercial approach to industry engagement by VisitScotland and the gaps this was opening up across the region. - The cut in core funding to VisitScotland from DGC and the message this was giving on the importance of tourism to the region. - The commitment by SEDG both to the ATP and to strategic tourism activity across the region. 		

CONTINUATION SHEET	ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial implications – support from Scottish Executive to the new Park development. • It was also suggested that businesses should respond individually to the consultation to show their support for the Park. <p>4. <u>HOME COMING 2009</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delia Holland gave a presentation on Homecoming 2009 both at national and local level. Following a workshop earlier in the year, Dumfries & Galloway were well placed to move forward and maximize on the opportunity this project offered the region. However, it was important that a fragmented approach was avoided, that a project team was set up by April 2007 with a project officer and business plan in place by no later than June 2007. • This approach was welcomed and supported by the ATP, as was the over-arching theme of 'creativity linked to the environment'. It was agreed that information on the project should be communicated to the industry through the ATP e-newsletter. • It was agreed to follow up the idea of the Project team applying to the VisitScotland Challenge Fund to support identified activity. • Discussion suggested the following themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The 'Sound of Scotland' – hold Scottish Concerts as we have a lot of talent in D&G e.g. Nicky Spence. - Scottish Borders Link / family roots / Clans / North of England & Ireland connections. - Golf – expose D&G nationally. - Produce a DVD show casing D&G. - Cycling - 'Natural Place to Come Home to' <p>5. <u>UPDATE ON THE BRANDWHEEL</u></p> <p>Delia Holland advised that VisitScotland and 1576 were progressing work on the brand wheel and a small working group would be established to take design work forward.</p> <p>6. <u>UPDATES</u></p> <p><u>VS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VisitScotland Dumfries Network Office have retained their Gold Green Tourism Business Scheme award. They are now taking forward activity to include all our tourist information centres in the scheme. - Peter Lederer, Chairman of VisitScotland, spent two days in Dumfries & Galloway meeting with tourism businesses, representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and partners from tourism agencies and initiatives across the region. - Dumfries & Galloway Council have indicated a reduction of £50,000 core funding to VisitScotland Dumfries Network Office in 2007/08. Discussions will be held between the two teams early in January 2007 to consider the implications of this reduction and opportunities for more efficient working but the cut is likely to have implications on activity within the region. 	<p style="text-align: center;">DH</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DH</p>

CONTINUATION SHEET	ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Tourism Officers Strategy Group has been set up to encourage prioritisation and alignment of tourism projects, to avoid duplication and to share best practice across the region. - VisitScotland led a workshop attended by the Homecoming Project Communications Officer to explore ways in which Dumfries & Galloway can maximise opportunities for 2009. - Events Challenge Fund – the final round of applications will be considered under this scheme in January 2007. - VisitScotland Dumfries & Galloway will submit an ERDF Application to SOSEP under measure 1.3. Should the application be successful a work plan will be developed to ensure synergy of activity between SEDG and VisitScotland. ● Marketing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Winter Campaign - this is the final ERDF campaign under the current project and mailers have been sent to 75,000 names taken from both the local and national databases. The theme of Good Times in D&G this winter has been developed to take the 2005 Traveller's Tales idea into postcards from visitors describing their personal experiences in the region. The E-blast is the first using new e-news tool. Participation levels from businesses good. - 2007 See and Do and Accommodation guide now printed and available for distribution early December. - Golf Passes – Sales update – 563 x 3 round, 1377 x 6 round, 219 x 10 round. Total 2159 tickets and £187,300 value of sales. Estimated bednights 6352. Down on last year's sales of passes; however revenue increased and net cost likely to be contained to £5,500. - Spring 06 mailings – results being further analysed but indications show 19% overall conversion. 19,000 trips were generated and allowing for 22% which also visited another area during their trip, the campaign generated 19,000 trips and £6.4m to the area. ● Industry Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With the core print brochures now complete, the industry team are focusing on getting out and about across the region and meeting with businesses on a one-to-basis and in groups. - For the year 2007/08 the local team are looking at more effective ways of engaging with the industry and will be establishing area forums to which representatives of groups and initiatives in the region will be invited. More information to follow. - The annual industry conference will take place on 6 February 2007 and will take the form of workshop discussions on topics of interest. More details together with invitations will be sent out early in the New Year. - Challenge Funding – A number of groups are currently preparing bids, including the 7stanes community network and the Heart of Galloway initiative. ● Business Tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Business Tourism Unit in Dumfries & Galloway held a very successful buyers event in the region at the end of November and indications are that this high revenue sector is beginning to develop. - VisitScotland supported the bid for the IMBA Conference to be held at Easterbrook Hall in 2008 as part of the Festival of Mountain Biking in Scotland. This would be the biggest event of its kind held in the region. 	

- **Visitor Services**

- Discussions are ongoing with the management team at Gretna Outlet Village for the TIC to be moved from its current premises to new premises as part of the Mathesons Restaurant unit. The move will be complete prior to the start of the 2007 season.
- VisitScotland are currently considering proposals for the development of the TIC at Southwaite into a showcase Gateway to Scotland and to Dumfries & Galloway. It is hoped that some refurbishment work will take place prior to the start of the 2007 season.

DGC

In Tony Fitzpatrick's absence Chris Wood-Gee attended and distributed copies of the Competitiveness Strategy.

SE DG

- **SE Tourism Leadership Programme 2006 – 2007**

Brochure sent out to industry. Copies available through SEDG Workforce Development Team and Business Gateway.

- **Business Insight Event – Adventure Sports Tourism (17 Nov 06)**

Event well received. 7Stanes Business Development Fact Sheet launched at event. Copies of Fact Sheet will be available from FCS and Business Gateway.

- **Fresh Talent Initiative**

SE DG is currently working closely with Fresh Talent to develop projects around migrant workers in D&G. The Fresh Talent initiative information and assistance for companies that are recruiting or considering recruiting migrant workers. An employer's toolkit is available from SEDG which provides information for employers on legislation and procedures around employing migrant workers with a useful section on frequently asked questions and answers. Fresh Talent also have a specialist advisor available to advise companies on home office procedures.

More information can be found on www.scotlandistheplace.com or by contacting Fresh Talent on 0845 602 0297.

- **Innovation Events**

Stranraer Event 21 February 2007
 Lockerbie Event 27 February 2007
 7Stanes Event 7 March and 20 March 2007

- **Tourism Innovation Development Awards**

Ceremony held at Auchestoshan Distillery – November 2006
 2 winners from D&G – Galloway Cycling Holidays, Castle Douglas
 Criffel Coaches, Dumfries (Seed to Sawmill Tours)

FCS

- **Galloway Forest Park:** FCS has commissioned a consultant to review the park boundaries in the light of the objectives of Galloway Forest Park Tourism Strategy published last year. The Park boundary has traditionally been focused entirely on FCS land, but other public land and even private land may be considered in the future (though only on an entirely voluntary basis).

CONTINUATION SHEET	ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information panels: FCS, as part of the Galloway Forest Park interpretation strategy have installed two new prototypes of possible information panels for Galloway Forest Park. These are positioned at the main car park in Cally woods and on the drive towards the Cally Hotel, near Gatehouse of Fleet. Comments are welcome. • Kirroughtree Visitor Centre Cycle Hire Franchise: Nearly a dozen businesses (new and existing) demonstrated an interest in the opportunity to compete for use of "the shack", adjacent to Kirroughtree Visitor Centre and the associated 7Stanes mountain bike trails. Many attended a briefing and discussion meeting on-site and 3 serious written applications were formally received. Two of these companies have been asked to make formal presentations to a review panel towards the end of the month. The winning company will work with FCS to develop the potential of a business at this site, but with a view to an open competition again in five years. • Ae Centre Development: Plans are at an advanced stage regarding proposals to move the Forest District Staff from their current office to the former Management Training Centre across the road at Ae. If successful it is hoped that this will free up the existing office to provide toilet and shower facilities and possibly a franchised business opportunity, linking in with the highly successful 7Stanes mountain bike trails, Dog Sport Scotland trails and BHS Countryside Trails at Ae. The Forest District and SEDG are discussing development plans and funding issues. • Dalbeattie Forest Development: Ae Forest District are working with a private sector partner to facilitate access to a development involving holiday accommodation and other services at the start of the Dalbeattie 7Stanes trails. • 7Stanes Project Manager: Colin Williamson has been appointed as Project Manager for completion of the 2nd phase of 7Stanes. • Biosphere Reserve: Southern Upland Partnership and East Ayrshire Woodlands have been appointed by SNH to jointly facilitate a wider discussion and debate on the possibility of a biosphere reserve focused on hills of Galloway and southern Ayrshire. The consultants will approach the ATP in due course. <p><u>SNH</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cairnsmore NNR - redevelopment work on the visitor centre, offices and approach road is now well underway, and is expected to enable us to open for the start of the season (weather permitting!). The consultation on the Reserve Story and Plan is about to start - giving the local community an opportunity to influence how we will manage the reserve, and the facilities that it will provide, in the future. • Biosphere Reserve - a complex funding package has been assembled, enabling us to consult on the Rural Development opportunities that the proposed status will bring. Further work is anticipated after July, eventually leading to a submission to UNESCO in Summer 2008. • Gateway to Galloway Hills - working with Newton Stewart Business Association & Initiative, to develop the concept of Newton Stewart as an outdoor activities hub (fishing, shooting, walking & cycling, and nature-based tourism). • Southern Upland Way Development Project - the new Business Development & Promotions Officer will be starting to contact local businesses and accommodation providers shortly. A number of workshops are planned to discuss how local business can benefit from the project. 	

CONTINUATION SHEET	ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ranger Services - SNH is working with the local rangers (both public sector & private) to develop their ability to meet the public and facilitate nature-based tourism. <p>7. <u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></p> <p>7.1 <i>Regional Transport Partnership</i></p> <p>Ian McLatchie reported on his first meeting as representative of the ATP on the Regional Transport Partnership. He expressed disappointment that discussion mainly focused on public sector activity.</p> <p>8. <u>DATE OF NEXT ATP MEETING</u></p> <p>This will be held on Wednesday the 31st of January at 10.30am at Carmont House (SNH). Dates for the remainder of 2007 need to be agreed.</p> <p>J Mitchell Vice Chair</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">DH</p>