

Area Tourism Partnership Meeting
Minute of meeting of the Scottish Borders Area Tourism Partnership
held at Lochcarron of Scotland, Selkirk on Wednesday 7 May 2008

Present:

Sue Beck, Chair
Sandi Hellowell, VisitScotland
Billy Hamilton, Buccleuch Arms Hotel, Hotel Rep
Jim Renwick, Lochcarron of Scotland, Retail Rep
Marion Oates, Scottish Borders Council
Hélène Sinclair, VisitScotland
Keith Campbell, Borders Sport & Leisure Trust, Leisure & Rec Rep
Nicola Watt, Scottish Enterprise
Catherine Maxwell Stuart, Traquair House, Attractions Rep
Karen Leithead, VisitScotland

Action

1. Welcome and Introductions

Sue Beck welcomed everyone to the meeting

- Margaret Lawrie will be the new B&B Rep – very happy to come along, couldn't attend this meeting.
- SH Action Induction Pack required
- Food Tourism – good piece of Border News. Nicola & Billy interviewed.

SH

2. Apologies

Chris Winson
Alan Elliott
Cllr Ron Smith
Colin Chisholm
Cllr Vicky Davidson
Cllr Ron Smith

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Matters Arising

- Number 5. Govt are asking for info on 50% growth. Marion has had no feedback as yet.
- Other matters arising discussed below.

4. ATP Trade/Group representation

- Letter composed but not sent out.
- Discussion as to whether we put out as a general invite to all groups or specific groups?
- Decided it should be formally constituted groups who are signed up to growing tourism in the area.
- Talk over the events forum and asking them to sit round the table. Marion will email the contact details.
- FCS and SNH suggested. Previously there have been worries over being too public agency heavy but would be good to have them on board.

SB

MO

- Concerns over increasing the size of the ATP.
- Newcastleton Group really wanted to be part of something. Rory Bannerman from Hawick Group was another suggestion. As well as Jedburgh Alliance, Berwickshire Dive Group (they may not have the time to get here), Borders food network, Bryan Barry (wedding group), and Peebles Retail.
- We really want to get communications channels in place so we get out to these people.
- Many of these groups have other commitments so perhaps we could simply ask for comments pre meeting and bring them along.
- Needs to be something in it for these groups.
- Example: Other areas have Area Tourism Forums which happen geographically and then this is fed into the ATP.
- Objective: Get the word out re ATP activity.
- Need to write and ask them to become involved either as a rep or to feed into the group. Gage opinion as to what would suit best. Letter needs to stipulate that it's signing up to local strategy.
- Borders Tourist Board (BTB) – Invite them as part of above mailing.
- Need to get more positive stories into the Southern Reporter. We have tried to get Susan Windram to have an ATP section.

SB

- There is a role for the ATP to go to David Hume at SBC to request funding, Perhaps use Cllr Davidson as first approach. The group needs to have a proper plan which Marion and Sandi can assist. Billy, Catherine & Keith will be part of this with Sue.

MO, SH

**SB, BH,
CMS, KC**

- Side issue: James Kennedy said groups can be added to VS.com/VSBorders.com. However they do need to be QA'd which is an issue with some groups.

5. Action Plan Progress reporting – any questions – paper attached strategy & plan refresh

- MO circulated an update and will email to the group
- Events Strategy Group & Forum have done really well.
- There has been a huge amount of progress with Events.

MO

Homecoming Scotland

- We had 5 applications that went through and 3 of the 5 are successful with another getting a wee bit of funding.
- Objective was to get the Borders into the national activity.
- Return to the Ridings, Walking Festival and the Scott Clan Gathering (September) are 3 successes.
- Co-ordinator will be brought on by SBC.
- The other opportunity is through the rolling programme for the Borders. Won't hear about this for 2/3 weeks.

SE Update from Nicola

- Equestrian – SE have been looking at the value of this and opportunities for investment.
- S. Scotland Adventure Sports – Final report just came through to SE and Executive Summary will soon be ready. Happy to circulate.
- July (5-6) event – Dirty Weekend – Endurance Event being held at

Traquair (SE/SBC/Event Scotland Support) anticipating 1000 participants.

- Cycling – looking with partners plus SBC and VisitScotland on Scottish Borders existing assets. Draft Report has come in. Happy to circulate. Overall impression is that there needs to be more marketing and sign up to cyclers welcome.
- Innerleithen uplift, massive piece of work. The study is currently with partners.

- Strategy Plan does need to be renewed and updated. **ALL**
- There's a need for everyone in the ATP to be part of renewal of the plan.
- There will be a government way of having to collate information on the 50% growth ambition which the public agencies will have to adhere to. **MO / SH**
- Way forward for a Refresh – Marion has some funding which could be used to get someone to look at the plan and refresh. VisitScotland would also feel the need to be part of that.
- The sub-group meeting the council need to add this to their 'wish list' and then get agency funding on top of that and business backing. **SB, BH, CMS, KC**
- Also, build communication into this strategy.
- Any ideas on who could do it? John Lennon has done it in the past, could he do it again? We would need to work out what we want, put it in a brief and then send it out to agencies. **SB**
- Contribute ideas on who the brief should go out to.
- Issues raised around TIC's (much more money is spent on TIC's than marketing) and the worries over future funding. Suggested that Sheila Campbell report back on TIC review at a future date. **SH**

6. Ancestral Tourism Update

- Managed to get Gillian Harrower down for a session with Anne McAvoy at the Heart of Hawick meeting.
- Ron Smith chairing Forum on the 21 May.
- Initial steps to get folk signed up to ancestral course then revamp fact file on how to research roots and before looking at website.
- Quality seems to be missing but we'll look at that.

7. Research, statistics, trends, marketing

- Invitation from SBC Tourism coordination Group
- Small towns survey

- So important for businesses to actually feedback information.
- Small Towns – Have looked at statistics and asked VisitScotland research to the tourism co-ordination group. ATP are invited to that meeting. Suggested we do a trends/segmentation presentation on the 1st August (11-12:30pm council chamber, SCB) and then Paul Buchman will do the next one.
- Small Town Survey – on going. As part of the SBC programme it will be broadened out and these surveys will feed into it. Doing up to 10 towns, Jedburgh next.

8. Scottish Borders Tourism Xchange Day feedback

- date for next year

- Sue has had some nice letters – read one from John Lamont, MSP, Helen Curries, Bowhill.
- Comment re the combination of Xchange and conference being a bit confusing.
- Other comments: Better in the morning / no talks but summaries / good to network and learn form other businesses / more businesses to support / would the good to move it more centrally as Kelso is not a great venue.
- One person said she got £5000 worth of business as a result.
- Suggested Sue comes into the office and Olivia could work on a report re numbers/feedback etc then there could be a possibility for PR. **SB**
- People are not picking up leaflets as they did, so there is a change in how this day is used by those who attend.
- If anyone has feedback, send to Sue and VS will produce report for next meeting. **ALL**
- There is a need to go out to those who exhibited and then discuss the future date and format.
- Discuss next meeting. **Next meeting**

9. Communications

- Industry representatives meetings Jan/Feb 08
- Feedback from industry aligned to 50% growth/key drivers/SBTP Action Plan
- Billy has been using email to communicate with hoteliers. He raised three points which got them replying.
- Catherine only got one response however it was very short notice.
- Is there 2-3 specific questions we could pose to the industry during rep contact?
 - Gage the importance of TIC's.
- Tiscover / new vs.com website – slightly confusing? The wording is confusing. Bucc Arms getting less bookings than normal. More businesses need to do the training. ATP could arrange vs.com to come down and do workshops for businesses. Would need to be by sector / level of knowledge. **SB**
- It would be good to get Homecoming Scotland messages out to businesses. Also mention Homecoming at David Hume Meeting and the need to get businesses involved. **SB, BH, CMS, KC**
- Can VisitScotland send out emails to trade from trade reps? Yes, Helene can send on behalf of – clearly stating on behalf of rep.
- Billy also emailed re the A68 closing in October to repair bridges. Mustn't happen in October. Need to enrol local Councillor and MSP on this. Jed Town seem to be on the case through the Alliance. Simply needs to be delayed. **SB**

10. Invitation Jim Mather & Christine Graham – 03 June

- Email through saying 3 June looking unlikely for Jim Mather. Request dates from Jim Mather and then get back to him to confirm. **SH**
- Need to discuss joined up delivery of tourism framework, what support there will be for small rural businesses, quality assurance, future thoughts on marketing bigger areas i.e. rather than SBorders and Dumfries & Galloway why don't we market S. Scotland? **SB**
Railway (?), Licensing. Increasing number of charges for

businesses. Recycling/GTBS – would be good to be part of the overall QA because it being separate is too expensive. Would be good for the Government to support businesses more with their recycling, as it costs a lot.

ALL

- Feed in ideas on what could be discussed.
- Many businesses don't see the value of QA. Different messages coming out from Public Agencies.

11. Scottish Enterprise / VisitScotland restructure update

VisitScotland (VS)

- Sandi circulated a document on the structure
- Asked to go through restructure by Govt at the end of last year. VisitScotland has identified key customers – visitors, business, strategy partnerships and Corporate Services – so our directorates are based on that.
- The re-organisation is about our internal processes and procedures and there should be no great change to what VisitScotland delivers for the Borders from what we do at present - we will still have a team of tourism experts promoting the Scottish Borders, we will still retain a local office in the Scottish Borders and we will continue to work closely with the Area tourism Partnership.
- There are local people and regional people who are experts in their field. Sheila Campbell, Sandi and Jim Clarkson form the regional management team. We still have local staff in Selkirk working hard for the Borders.
- As part of the Enterprise Review, the Scottish Government has asked VisitScotland to explore opportunities for shared services to ensure we are providing the best possible value. Therefore, we are considering a range of options such as shared office space or finding more efficient office space.
- We do need to get some formal comms out to the industry as there is, understandably, confusion on what's happening.
- Questions were raised around marketing activity and whether we can choose what we do.
- Important to use this group when it comes to the council / councillors and getting positive messages out to everyone.
- Will ATPs be supported in the future? VS shall continue its support but what it looks like in the future is up to this group.
- With changes to VS, SE and council there are even more reasons for us all to work together.

Scottish Enterprise (SE)

- One of 5 operational regions for Scottish Enterprise
- Regional Director, Management Team & operational teams covering:
- 7 team leaders across the South - 2 for Priority Industry with a team of 9 across the South.
- National organisation with national priorities to adhere to. Key products are Forest Tourism and Adventure Tourism. Things that come under this are the likes of 7 Stanes, Diving, Mountain biking.
- 2 Main Offices – Dumfries & Galashiels
- Cover Tourism, Food and Drink, Forestry, Textiles, Energy and Construction as core priorities.

- Annual targets based around Enterprise, Innovation & Investment
- Range of approved industry delivery projects
- Approved regional business infrastructure projects
- South of Scotland Innovation Initiative
- Development of South Adventure Sports activity
- Range of food, tourism and energy projects

12. Any other business

Tom Burnham – request to present to ATP

- Written a book on setting up rural networks.
- He wanted to present to the ATP. Decision that this is not the right avenue for him. Sue to go back.

SB

- The Visitor Attraction Forum has met. There will be no joint leaflet this year but they will produce one in August with a two year shelf life.
- Catherine handed out Tweed Valley leaflets
- Sandi handed out New Ways Awards leaflets
- Sandi mentioned Scottish Borders Campus opportunity on the 22nd May 2008. No one can attend.

13. Meeting venues and presentations 2008

3rd September 2008 - BSLT

3rd December 2008 – SE Galashiels

**KC
NW**