

Edinburgh & Lothians Area Tourism Partnership (ATP)

Wednesday 5th September 2007

at 9.45 am

Almond Valley, Livingston, West Lothian

Present

Cllr Steve Cardownie	City of Edinburgh Council
Alan Russell	East Lothian Tourism Forum
Robert Conway	East Lothian Tourism Forum
Simon Williams	Edinburgh Tourism Action Group
Fergus Waters (Vice Chair)	Midlothian Tourism Forum
Quintin Young	Midlothian Tourism Forum
Cllr Martyn Day	West Lothian Council
Robin Chesters	West Lothian Tourism Forum
Geraldine Hamilton	West Lothian Tourism Forum
Pam Turnbull	City of Edinburgh Council
Claire Dutton	East Lothian Council
Sandy MacMillan	Midlothian Council
Aileen McDougall	Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian
John Masson	West Lothian Council
Ben Carter	VisitScotland Edinburgh Network Office

In Attendance

Sharon Watt	VisitScotland Edinburgh Network Office
Katrina Morrison	Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian

Apologies

Cllr Jenny Dawe	City of Edinburgh Council
Cllr David Berry	East Lothian Tourism Council
Nico De Freitas	East Lothian Tourism Forum
Bill McNair	East Lothian Tourism Forum
Richard Jeffrey	Edinburgh Tourism Action Group
Sue Stuart	Edinburgh Convention Bureau Ltd
John Beveridge	Midlothian Council
Provost Adam Montgomery	Midlothian Council
Kenneth Wardrop	City of Edinburgh Council
Raoul Barbier	City of Edinburgh Council
Susan Smith	East Lothian Council
Susan Watson	Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian
Stephen Gallagher	Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian
Alistair Shaw	West Lothian Council

1 Welcome and introductions

Vice Chair, Fergus Waters, welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Area Tourism Partnership (ATP). Fergus began by introducing Robin Chesters, Director of Almond Valley Heritage Trust, and thanked him for hosting today's meeting. Further introductions were given to guest presenter, Katrina Morrison, Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh and Lothians; Councillor Steve Cardownie, City of Edinburgh Council and Robert Conway, East Lothian Tourism Forum. Round table introductions then followed.

Apologies were noted as shown above.

2 Minutes of 7th March 2007

All agreed as a correct record.

3 Matters arising

Green Tourism – Geraldine Hamilton had raised the issue on Green Tourism at the previous meeting stating that VisitScotland is trying to encourage growth in membership of the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) but that there may be an issue with the ability of GTBS to respond to a growth in demand. Ben Carter updated the group noting that we are moving in the right direction and it is now possible to search businesses and Accommodation Providers participating in the GTBS.

Ben added that Green Business UK Ltd, the GTBS contractor, has undertaken a major review of internal operating systems as the scheme continues to expand. They now have more grading staff, a more sophisticated phone system and CRM database. This will help alleviate pressure on a small company in view of increased emphasis on the scheme in The Tourism Framework for Change. There are currently 16 businesses across Edinburgh and Lothians awaiting grading.

4 Almond Valley

Robin Chesters welcomed everyone to the Almond Valley Heritage Centre and presented on the key highlights and future developments. The centre has been open to visitors for 20 years. Over the years annual visitor figures have increased from 10,000 to the current level of around 85,000 and it is a four-star visitor attraction. Two key projects are the Charlesfield development which aims to recreate a typical corner of West Lothian as it might have appeared in the early 1960's; and Morag's Meadow which aims to create indoor play facilities and help sustain Almond Valley as a year-round attraction.

Almond Valley provides a family friendly environment with opportunities for community and volunteer involvement. For full information you can access the following link:

<http://www.almondvalley.co.uk>

5 Scottish Enterprise Tourism Product Priorities

Katrina Morrison, Scottish Enterprise Tourism Team delivered a presentation on Scottish Enterprise Tourism Product Priorities. Some of the points covered in the presentations included:

- Tourism Market
- Product Development
- Product Priorities
 - Whisky, Forest, Golf, Food, Angling, Ancestral, Wildlife, Heritage

There have been recent food developments in Edinburgh and Lothians (e.g. Dine Around, Taste of Edinburgh, Farmers' Markets, East Lothian Food and Drink Festival): Katrina highlighted that an online tourism foodkit will be launched in September 2007. See www.foodtourismscotland.com for information.

A copy of Katrina's Powerpoint presentation is available. Please contact Sharon Watt if you require a copy.

6 VisitScotland Edinburgh & Lothian Network Office – report from Area Director

Ben Carter presented a report and gave highlights. Ben drew attention to visitor numbers to the Airport Tourist Information centre noting that additional signage to the TIC is now in place and visible from domestic arrivals. Since the signage has been put in place, visitor numbers to the TIC have increased.

Ben also provided a brief update on the following:

- Success of the Edinburgh 7's
- Edinburgh & Festivals digi-brochure
- Edinburgh Inspiring Cuisine
- Forth Fringe sponsorship
- Evening News coverage of areas out with Edinburgh
- Scottish Thistle Awards

This report was circulated to the group prior to the meeting and will also be posted on http://www.visitscotland.org/about_us/local_network_offices/edinburgh_and_lothians/edinburgh_and_lothians-minutes_and_reports.htm

7 Key highlights / activities from partners

The Chair invited each area's representatives to provide an update on their local activity. Full updates are shown as Appendix 1 of the minutes.

Discussions evolved from this included:

- The temporary closure of the Royal Museum from May 2008 until 2011 and the impact this will have on Edinburgh's ability to host major conferences. Edinburgh Convention Bureau Limited is investigating potential alternative venues for events for over 600 delegates.
- Quintin Young raised the issue of Scotland's Home Coming adding that there are few events coming up in Edinburgh and Lothians. Aileen added that Scottish

Enterprise Edinburgh and Lothians are looking at working with local events that have been planned or that are in the planning.

Full updates are shown as Appendix 1 of the minutes.

8 Any other competent business

Visitor Levy

Visitor Levy was discussed and representatives from Lothians said they were keen to be invited to future presentations. Aileen McDougall updated to the group noting that research is still continuing and information is available on:

http://www.visitscotland.org/research_and_statistics/scenarios/etag-research.htm

Action: Aileen to invite a representative from each of the Forums to participate in the next Visitor Levy discussion. Details of the next meeting will be forwarded to Forum chairs in due course.

Role of the Area Tourism Partnership - The ATP meetings provide an opportunity for individual forums to exchange ideas and to identify any common issues. Question of who lobbies was raised again and agreed that if individual forums wish to lobby they can take up any issues with the Scottish Tourism Forum or direct with the organisation they wish to lobby.

Fringe Programmes – Geraldine Hamilton raised the issue of the lack of fringe programmes in libraries in West Lothian. Ben Carter will pass feedback onto Edinburgh Festival Fringe team.

Hogmanay – Cllr Cardownie discussed the concerns of Edinburgh's Hogmanay Street Party after being cancelled twice in the last four years (2003 and 2006) and the effect it may have on this year's street party (tickets have been selling out in recent years but not as quickly). He added that Glasgow and Newcastle amongst others are now competing and that we cannot be complacent.

9 Dates of Future Meetings

Friday 7th December 2007, VisitScotland, Ocean Point, Edinburgh

Appendix 1

Edinburgh and Lothian Area Tourism Partnership Meeting: 5th September 2007 - Area Updates Paper

EAST LOTHIAN

Report from Economic Development East Lothian Tourism Forum

- Joint project with other Lothian Councils on Mary Queen of Scots. Developing trails/marketing associated with important sites in the Lothians in time for new Mary Queen of Scots film which stars Scarlett Johansson
- Finalised tourism action plan for East Lothian, a shorter version of this to be printed with copy of Action plan. Will be designed and printed by ELC.
- Initial East Lothian Council discussions on Homecoming Scotland and proposed projects for 2009.
- East Lothian Food and Drink Festival 28th- 30th September – programme now out, information available on www.eastlothian.gov.uk Main events are Ceilidh at Glenkinchie Distillery, Haddington Farmer's Market, family fun day at Dirleton castle, Royal Scot's Raceday with local food producers, food fair, children event and food workshop in North Berwick and Evening with Peter Kerr – Viva East Lothian! In support of this are a number of restaurants using local produce in their menus.
- Currently arranging 100K welcomes training for tourism forum and also East Lothian Council frontline staff
- Occupancy study has gone back out to accommodation providers to see if we can increase response rate. Current response though indicates good occupancy from April to September.

Report from Allan Minto

Senior Open Championship

Due to a funding partner withdrawing support of an Economic Assessment Audit, I am collating stats on accommodation occupancy and levels of business at local golf clubs

Square Meal Venues & Events Show

- Send invites to ELGTA's corporate database
- Organise stand layout
- Discuss promotional literature for Exclusive East Lothian brand

Golfeastlothian.com website

- Progressing with amendments and updates to Golf Package pages

Press Trips

- Organising a trip for 2 Swiss Golf Journalists from Golf & Country between 19th and 26th September

- Trying to get Petra Himmel, a German freelancer to join the same itinerary
- Organising a visit by John Atwood, Editor in Chief at Travel + Leisure Golf in New York.
- Organising a trip for Tero Parkkinen, a Finnish golf journalist who will be visiting East Lothian from 1st – 4th November.

Golf & Whisky Tourism

- Discussing golf & whisky winter packages for the Scandinavian market
- Arranging a training session for 12 East Lothian Golf Tourism Alliance businesses to become “Whisky Embassies”.

Questback

- Setting up Questback online visitor surveys for a sample of local golf clubs

Marketing

- Arranging copy for a half page advert for the 2008 Official Guide to Golf in Scotland
- Assisting with production of a golf map for the East Lothian Golf Alliance members

EDINBURGH CONVENTION BUREAU

Conference Infrastructure Audit

The lucrative nature of business tourism has resulted in many competitor city destinations in UK and around the world increasing their investment in facilities and infrastructure. The planned expansion of EICC will of course provide Edinburgh with increased conference and exhibition space. In addition the Royal Museum project commencing in May 2008 and due for completion in 2011, will increase banqueting capacity at this venue from 650 delegates to 900.

From a business tourism perspective these planned expansions are most welcome. However with the closure of the Royal Museum from May 2008 until 2011 the city faces a challenge in providing appropriate space for both confirmed and potential events which have a dinner requirement for over 600 delegates.

Working in collaboration with SEEL, CEC and ECB members, the Bureau is leading a conference infrastructure audit to address alternative banqueting options in, or close to, the city centre. As part of this exercise detailed planning, structural and refurbishment costs will also be produced. Support of the project in terms of development funding has been granted by SEEL.

Looking to the future, and as a second stage of the audit process, ECB's wishes to identify the conference infrastructure developments which the city requires in the longer term if it is to remain competitive. It is envisaged that this work will be undertaken on a consultancy or project manager basis. A request for consideration of funding for this aspect of the project will also be submitted to SEEL towards the end of the year.

Confirmed Conferences

The past few months have seen the Bureau confirm 39 new events for the city with a total economic value of £22.1 million. Economic value, year to date of conferences confirmed or influenced by Edinburgh Convention Bureau is £28.1 million compared to £20 million for the same period in 2006.

The confirmed conferences range from a 160 delegate meeting on Motor Neuron Disease to a 1,200 delegate event on International Investigative Dermatology for May 2013 with an estimated economic benefit to the city of £1.35million.

Marketing Sales Activities

ECB initiated and participated in several sales and promotional events during the Spring these included:

- **Festival Familiarisation Visit**- a successful event initiated and organised by ECB which showcases Edinburgh's conference product to association clients pre-disposed to placing future business in the city.
- **ICCA Research, Sales & Marketing Conference** – Ellen Colingsworth of the ECB team and Jim foster, chief Executive of Royal college of Surgeons of Edinburgh were guest speakers at this event which took place in Dublin. They presented as a best practice case study, the partnership marketing programme undertaken under Edinburgh Ambassador programme brand to promote Edinburgh as a conference destination in conjunction with the Quincentenary of RCSED.

The Meetings Marketing Industry Awards

Now in its 6th year, The Meetings industry Marketing Awards was created to raise the standards in the events industry and to reward the marketers. There are twelve available categories. ECB has submitted two entries, choosing Blueprint for The Best Brochure – Destination section and www.meetingedinburgh.com for the Best Web site category. Awards will be announced and presented at the Science Museum, London on 15th October 2007.

EDINBURGH

ETAG Annual Action Plan 08

Approved version attached for information – Jim Mather has agreed to launch this document, date yet to be finalised but probably October.

Edinburgh Navigator System/Map

Some savings have been made from Capital Signs (road signage) project which will be used to enable the Navigator pedestrian signage to be refreshed, including cleaning existing units and adding interpretation panels. The 'i' symbol will be added to the reverse of the units to improve their visibility. It is hoped that the funding will allow for the pocket map to be further revised and reprinted for 2008.

Waterfront Visitor Destination Development Plan

With support from SEEL consultants have been appointed to undertake this piece of work. The Communication Group will be consulting with key stakeholders over the coming months and their report should be available at the beginning of next year.

Sustainable Urban Tourism strategy

A sub-group of ETAG, supported by representatives from CEC's sustainability unit and VisitScotland's sustainable tourism unit, had their first meeting last week to develop a SUT (sustainable urban tourism) strategy for the city. As a first step an appendix to the Edinburgh Tourism strategy will be drafted for consideration at the next sub-group meeting at the end of October.

Festivals

Full results not available yet but early indications are that all the summer festivals ticket sales are up marginally on last year. The Fringe ticket sales through their central box office alone are up 10% on last year, and double the number of International Festival shows sold out this year compared with last year.

MIDLOTHIAN

Provost Adam Montgomery

Provost Adam Montgomery has been formally appointed to represent Midlothian Council on the Edinburgh and Lothians Area Tourism Partnership.

Midlothian Tourism Action Plan 2007/2010

The Plan has been subject to the Strategic Environmental Assessment screening process and, Historic Scotland, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Midlothian Tourism Forum and Scottish Natural Heritage have agreed that there is no likelihood of significant environmental effects. The determination will be advertised and the Consultation Authorities informed. Cabinet approval will now be obtained and the Plan launched in consultation with the partners.

Penicuik Skatepark

The new Penicuik skatepark opened in June 2007 and has proved popular with skateboarders and BMXers.

Midlothian Tourism Forum

Membership is growing and now stands at 40.

The Homecoming Scotland presentation by John McCann at the last MTF meeting, resulted in a meeting to consider the way forward as funding is likely to be available. The potential to develop a programme of events themed around the proposed Mary Queen of Scots project will be considered by the ATP. Other niche market proposals are also being considered. The next meeting of the Forum and the AGM will be on the 9th October.

Events

- Brass in the Park, Newtongrange Park, 31 August to 2 September. The event opened with a gala concert and closed with a musical garden party.

- Penicuik Arts Festival: 25 August to Sunday 9 September 2007. First year a co-ordinated arts festival has been held in the town.
- Doors Open Day: Saturday September 8 September 2007. 26 venues participating including many visitor attractions.
- IKEA Winter Festival: 22 November to 19 December 2007. Visitor attraction programme to be developed.

Tyne Esk LEADER 2007 - 2013 programme bid

Proposed Partnership Details have been submitted to The Scottish Executive including the proposed geographical area for the new programme along with Local Action Group (LAG) and Advisory Group (AG) details.

IBP and EKOS Ltd are the consultants contracted to develop and write the Tyne Esk Business Plan and Rural Strategy for the new programme.

A stakeholder workshop is to take place on Monday 24th September 2007, 10am - 12:30pm at Penicuik YMCA-WYCA.

The Consultants will conduct a telephone questionnaire with at least 35% of the Tyne Esk LEADER+ projects.

SCOTTISH ENTERPRISE EDINBURGH AND LOTHIAN

Tourism Management Development Programme

The Scottish Enterprise Tourism Management Development Programme for 07/08 has recently been launched. It includes a number of conferences, masterclasses, business insight seminars and learning journeys. The programme is always very popular and ATP members are encouraged to promote it to their members. Two imminent conferences are detailed below. To find out more and register online, visit www.scottish-enterprise.com/tourismevents.

Sustainable Development Conference

This conference will be held at The Radisson SAS Hotel on the High Street in Edinburgh on Tuesday 2 October. Speakers will include Justin Francis of responsibletravel.com and Auden Schendler from Aspen Snow Mass. Details on the above website.

Business Tourism Conference

To be held on Tuesday 20 November at the Crowne plaza Hotel in Glasgow, this fifth annual Business Tourism Conference aims to help individual businesses achieve bottom-line benefits and increase Scotland's overall competitiveness in the business tourism market. Speakers include Rick Antonsen from Tourism Vancouver and Liza Christensen from Jumeirah International. Details on the above website.

Linlithgow "Citta Slow" Bid

Linlithgow is well placed to gain Citta Slow status within 9 months to a year. One of the main drivers for Cittaslow has been the monthly Farmers' Markets which have now been running for almost a year. On average there are 15 stalls at each market, including a growing number of local businesses (currently 6). One of the next tasks for the Linlithgow Citta Slow Steering Group will be to broaden its base to include other

businesses, voluntary organisations and interested individuals. Although, food and local produce are core elements in Cittaslow, the project will also cover areas such as hospitality (including accommodation providers), the environment and historic buildings - all of which are relevant to sustaining and developing Linlithgow in terms of tourism. SEEL is assisting West Lothian Council with the costs of the bid for Citta Slow Status.

Waterfront Events

As part of the development of Edinburgh's Waterfront, SEEL is currently working with the three major landowners in the area and the City of Edinburgh council to identify major events which could be attracted to the area. Many of these are water based and, where appropriate, SEEL will explore the potential for the benefits of these events to be extended to other parts of the Lothian's coast.

Business Tourism Infrastructure

Business Tourism is worth an estimated £300 million to the economy of Edinburgh and the Lothians each year. However, a number of conferences are potentially under threat of cancellation in Edinburgh with the closure of the Royal Museum in April 2008 and alternative venues are being identified by Edinburgh Convention Bureau. There is now a requirement for detailed work to be progressed to identify the optimum site for provision of the temporary solution, secure suitable premises and identify a commercial operator who will manage the facility. This work, undertaken via Edinburgh Convention Bureau (ECB), is essential for Edinburgh to maintain its reputation as a leading conference destination and to safeguard the existing levels of economic impact. SEEL funding of up to £10,000 has been made available to appoint ECB to provide an option appraisal report.

West Lothian Report

West Lothian Tourism Action Plan 2007 – 10

The Plan is scheduled to be finalised by 07 September and presented to the next meeting of West Lothian Tourism Forum on 19 September.

Linlithgow TIC

Linlithgow Burgh Halls, which house Linlithgow TIC, are due to close mid-Summer 2008 for a major refurbishment. Discussions are currently underway to find alternative accommodation for the TIC during the period when the Burgh Halls are closed (until late 2009) or to find alternative ways of delivering tourist information services in Linlithgow.

James Doohan Memorial Exhibition

Following two years of planning since the actor's death in 2005, the James Doohan Memorial Exhibition opened in Annet House, Linlithgow at the beginning of August. The exhibition focuses on Doohan's life before, during and after his role as Scotty in the original Star Trek series. Doohan's family have been very supportive in the development of the exhibition and his widow and son will unveil a commemorative plaque in Linlithgow later this month.

Grapevine Twinning

Following a visit to West Lothian by the Chief Executive of Grapevine Visitor and Convention Centre in Texas, a delegation from West Lothian will visit Grapevine later this month with a view to establishing a formal twinning arrangement.

Cittaslow

Linlithgow is bidding to become Scotland's second Cittaslow town. (Perth is the first.) Cittaslow developed from the slow food movement in Italy and is now an international network of towns. To gain Cittaslow status a town signs up to working towards a set of goals that aim to improve the quality of life, and needs to pass an assessment relating to these goals which cover areas such as the environment, infrastructure, quality of urban fabric, encouragement of local produce / products and hospitality / tourism. A Steering Group has been established and a consultant employed to manage the process. The Group hope to achieve Cittaslow status for Linlithgow by April 2008. The project is supported by West Lothian Council and Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh and Lothian.

Accommodation Providers Network

Accommodation providers in Linlithgow and the surrounding area have developed a network for sharing information on room occupancy and availability. Although the network has only been in operation for approximately two months, evaluation from those involved has been very positive.