

**FIFE TOURISM ALLIANCE
MINUTE OF MEETING
20 February 2007
Keavil House Hotel, Crossford, Dunfermline**

ATTENDING: Chair – Nick White (hotels); Ken Lawson (guest houses, b&bs); Tom Potter (self catering, caravan & camping); Cllr Peter Douglas, Cllr John Cameron (Fife Council); Linda Greig (business tourism); Steve Blaney (FSB); Stuart Gray (attractions and activities); Linda McKnight (Fife Colleges);

In attendance: Alan Graham (VisitScotland); Sandra Montador-Stewart (Fife Council); Robin Presswood (Fife Council); Iain Whitelaw (Fife Council); Martin Grigg (Scottish Enterprise Fife); Catherine Dunkerley (VisitScotland); Amanda Drummond (Fife Coast and Countryside Trust).

APOLOGIES: Keith Winter (Fife Council); Duncan Dewar (Fife Chamber of Commerce)

MINUTE OF MEETING OF 20 DECEMBER 2006

The minute was accepted as a fair and accurate record of the meeting of 20 December 2006.

There were no matters arising.

VISITSCOTLAND UPDATE

Alan Graham, VisitScotland Area Director, spoke to this report.

With reference to the item on the Tourist Information Review, there was general discussion on the key findings and Alan Graham made particular reference to the issue of the range and condition of information and interpretation panels throughout Fife. Robin Presswood advised that he was generally happy with the review report and audit although he would have liked to see a little more emphasis on the role that technology can play in delivering information services at key locations. The findings from the report were being assessed and implementation would take place throughout 2007-2008.

The item on Scottish Tourism Week was noted and Nick White advised that a number of hoteliers were keen to have elected members visit their establishments to see and discuss the challenges facing businesses. Catherine Dunkerley advised that this was being addressed elsewhere but after the elections in May. Ken Lawson advised that Iain Smith MSP had spent the day with him as part of an FSB initiative. It was agreed that this matter should be progressed locally in the context of the new elected members joining the Alliance as part of an induction process.

ST ANDREWS TOWN AUDIT

The report on the St Andrews Town Audit was noted. It was agreed that Patrick Laughlin, the Project Manager, would be invited to present to the next meeting of the Alliance on progress on implementation of the findings from the Audit and the St Andrews World Class Project in general.

FIFE TOURISM STRATEGY

Alan Graham spoke to this item and advised that Fife Council had considered the Strategy at its recent Environment and Development Committee. The Committee had requested that consideration should be given to a further theme being incorporated that reflected the importance of Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy. Alan Graham stated that, in conjunction with Fife Council, the Strategy had been revised to incorporate this request and that only minor changes to text were required. There had been no substantive changes to the overall thrust of the Strategy. The revised Strategy was approved. There then followed general discussion on the various area based initiatives that were taking place in Fife.

FIFE STRATEGIC TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FUND

Sandra Montador-Stewart spoke to this item. She outlined progress in terms of disbursements from the Fund and in certain instances funds would to be de-committed from projects as there had been no progress to date. Nick White commented on the good progress that was now being made in terms of the Fund's investment to support projects.

Redevelopment of Pittencrieff Park

Iain Whitelaw spoke to this application to the Fund. Support was being sought for feasibility work and business plans which would have a particular emphasis on revenue streams for the Park's facilities. Funding support of £10K towards a total project cost of £30K was approved.

Kirkcaldy Tourism Signposting

Nick White queried the proposed intervention rate of 75% from the Fund to support this project. After some discussion, it was agreed that this project would be supported at a level of 50% with the request that other avenues for co-finance should be explored by Kirkcaldy Town Centre Management.

PILOT FOOD HYGIENE AND SAFETY RATING REPORTS

Nick White spoke to this item, referring to the representations that had been made to him by hospitality businesses regarding the presentation of report information on the Fife Council website and the accuracy and currency thereof. He also queried the value of such information from a customer's point of view insofar as the system appeared to yield very little meaningful information upon which a customer could make a decision regarding any given establishment.

Robin Presswood responded that he had raised the matter with the Environmental Services department of the Council which would be happy to attend a meeting with industry representatives to explore this area further. Robin Presswood offered to facilitate this meeting and it was agreed that a special meeting with a sub-group representing the Fife Tourism Alliance would be convened.

TOMORROW'S TOURISM EVENT

Martin Grigg reported that the industry employers' event, "Tomorrow's Tourism" had gone well and the work-out sessions had been well received. However, there was recognition that there was much to be done by the various agencies involved in terms of taking this forward. A sub-group of the Fife Economic Forum had been established to progress specific action points in relation to recruitment and retention. Housing and transportation for key workers had also emerged on the day as key issues. There was discussion on the role that technology could play in relation to the recruitment process, particularly in relation to presenting candidates in the job application process, communicating vacancies and opportunities.

FIFE HOTEL STUDY

Max Gaunt, RGA consultants, presented on the Fife Hotels Study which had been undertaken to look in more detail at the characteristics of supply and demand for hotels in Fife and the opportunities for further hotel development in the area.

A copy of the presentation, comprising key findings and recommendations, would be distributed following the meeting.

AOCB

Tourism Tax

Nick White raised this item as the debate on variable tourism tax was still in currency. He advised that the British Hospitality Association and Scottish Tourism Forum positions were opposed to the concept as it was being presently mooted as it placed an undue focus on the accommodation sector. The view of both bodies was that any local tourism tax should be applied across the tourism sector and not purely focused on the accommodation sector and its staying visitors.

St Andrews Area Personnel Changes

Nick White advised the Alliance that Mr Charles Head had recently started as General Manager at the Fairmont St Andrews and that he and Alan Graham had met with him. He also advised that Mr Jonathan Stapleton would shortly be leaving the Old Course Hotel.

Levenmouth Tourism Group

Steve Blaney advised that he was a member of this recently formed trade group that was looking at tourism and regeneration issues in the Levenmouth area. A sub group would be looking at marketing issues including a website but the group acknowledged that there were presentation issues that needed to be addressed as early actions including tourism signposting.

Communications

Nick White used the preceding initiative as an example of the number of tourism related projects and associated groups that existed in Fife and the concern that existed in relation to communications with such groups, not only from a Fife Tourism Alliance perspective, but also between the groups themselves. Nick White stated that he could, off the top of his head, think of about 18 groups and ventures with which the Alliance should be communicating. Discussion then ensued on the most effective mechanisms for engagement with groups and the wider industry in terms of the role and functions of the Alliance as an Area Tourism Partnership but also on communicating progress in terms of the development of tourism. It was agreed that a paper would be prepared for consideration by the Alliance at its next meeting on the subject of a communications strategy.

Tourism Framework for Change

Catherine Dunkerley raised the issue of monitoring the progress of new Fife Tourism Strategy and action plan and the need to firm up on some of the aspirations in terms of targets.

Changes to the Fife Tourism Alliance

It was announced that in due course Tom Potter would be leaving the Fife Tourism Alliance. The Chair acknowledged that after the election a number of the elected members would be leaving Fife Council and he conveyed his appreciation for all their support of tourism in Fife.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

In view of the local council election in May, it was agreed that there would not an April meeting of the Alliance and, accordingly the next meeting of the Alliance would be on:

Tuesday, 19 June 2007, 2pm – venue tbc (mid Fife).