

## FIFE TOURISM ALLIANCE

### MINUTE OF MEETING 26 June 2006

#### East End Park, Dunfermline

**ATTENDING:** Chair – Nick White (hotels); Vice Chair – Anne Kinnes (attractions); Ken Lawson (guest houses, b&bs); Tom Potter (self catering, caravan & camping); Cllr Peter Douglas, Cllr John Cameron, Cllr Alex Thomson (Fife Council); Norman Bendex (Fife Colleges); Alan Russell (Fife Chamber of Commerce); Willie Johnston (Scottish Enterprise Fife).

In attendance: Alan Graham (VisitScotland); Robin Presswood (Fife Council); Iain Whitelaw (Fife Council); Patrick Laughlin (St Andrews World Class Project Manager).

**APOLOGIES:** Duncan Dewar (Fife Chamber of Commerce); Jaki Carnegie (business tourism); Martin Grigg (Scottish Enterprise Fife); Linda McKnight (Fife Colleges); Sandra Montador-Stewart (Fife Council); Steve Blaney (FSB).

#### **THE ST ANDREWS WORLD CLASS INITIATIVE – PRESENTATION BY PATRICK LAUGHLIN**

Patrick Laughlin gave a presentation on the St Andrews World Class initiative including its background and aims which, broadly, are to develop a shared vision for St Andrews as a truly world class location to live, work and visit. He gave an outline of the principal projects and work areas which cover improvements to the public environment, golf development, and service and skills. With particular reference to the latter area, Patrick made mention of the programme of training courses for businesses that had been developed and the initiatives to engage with young people and school pupils to highlight hospitality as a career path. With regard to the future direction of St Andrews World Class, Patrick described the aspiration to see a Destination Management Organisation (DMO) emerge and also touched on the momentum building behind a bid for World Heritage status for St Andrews.

The presentation was followed by a general discussion session. Nick White made the point that there was a very significant level of investment being made in St Andrews in terms of “five stars” developments – is there confidence that St Andrews can deliver what this market is looking for? Patrick responded that St Andrews World Class needs to anticipate change in St Andrews, including market change, and to ensure that there were appropriate local responses to this. It was also acknowledged that changes must be managed effectively in order not to adversely effect St Andrews core offerings. There was also discussion on the issue of affordable housing for key workers in the town and the available labour pool for the tourism and hospitality sector in particular. Patrick advised that this was a major issue and one of which the People and Skills group of St Andrews World Class was fully cognisant, recognising that it was a challenge to highlight to people living elsewhere in Fife that there were indeed employment opportunities in St Andrews.

Patrick advised that the first St Andrews World Class initiative newsletter would be published shortly and this could also be used as a tool for communicating about the Fife Tourism Alliance in future editions. Nick White thanked Patrick for his presentation and contribution to the discussions.

#### **MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF 20 APRIL 2006 AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minute was agreed to be an accurate record. There were no matters arising.

## **VISITSCOTLAND FIFE REPORT**

Alan Graham spoke to the report and highlighted the issue of Forth Bridges Tourist Information Centre which was facing closure after the landlord had served VisitScotland with a notice to quit. This had followed the acquisition of the hotel by Folio Hotels who were to embark on a major redevelopment and investment plan for the hotel. There was a general discussion on the implications of this regarding the provision of tourist information in that part of Fife. Alan Graham advised that in the short term there was little in the way of options for a fully staffed service given that the TIC at the hotel was very location specific. VisitScotland was looking at what could reasonably be achieved by way of alternative provision in and around the Forth Bridge landfall/North Queensferry area. Cllr Cameron commented that ideally what was required was some form of tourist information provision as close to the junction as possible.

There was concern expressed in relation to the STEAM (Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) figures for 2005 and the apparent drop in day visit numbers. Alan Graham advised that it was difficult to identify a single specific cause of this but that road restrictions on the Forth Road Bridge would certainly be a contributing factor. Ken Lawson commented that in the East Neuk day visitor numbers did seem to be down at weekends.

## **SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE NATIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY CONSULTATION – DRAFT RESPONSE**

Alan Graham spoke to the paper which comprised a draft response on behalf of the Fife Tourism Alliance to the Scottish Executive's consultation paper on the National Transport Strategy. VisitScotland was keen to seek the views of Area Tourism Partnerships such as the Alliance in order to inform its own response at the national level.

In developing this draft response, Alan Graham advised that he had taken due cognisance of the Fife Council response. Willie Johnston that the draft response was generally in line with that of Scottish Enterprise. Ken Lawson advised that, in his experience, there was a consumer perception that St Andrews was difficult to access by public transport and, indeed, this was the case from Edinburgh Airport. It was agreed that this was particularly pertinent in relation to Question 14 in the consultation document. Alan Russell commented that as far as rail connections were concerned would it not be an idea to rename Leuchars Station as St Andrews. There was some discussion on how achievable this could be and Robin Presswood undertook to raise the identity of Leuchars Station with Bob McLellan, Head of Transportation Services with Fife Council.

## **FIFE TOURISM STRATEGY**

Alan Graham gave a verbal update on the development of the strategy, thanking those who had attended the workshop on 22 May for their input. It was intended that a more fulsome report and discussion on the strategy would take place at the September of meeting of the Alliance. There followed a general discussion on the issue of sustainability and green business practices and the efficacy of these from a business point of view. There was general agreement that this would be a challenge in "selling" the concept of green tourism to businesses.

## **TRAINING AND SKILLS**

Anne Kinnes gave an update to the Alliance.

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| Tourism Trail          | There had been good business support for the pilot of this and it was hoped to roll this out further than St Andrews next year.  |
| Fife Tourism Challenge | Schools and businesses were being contacted about the Challenge with the introductory event to take place at Myres Castle in the last week in August. The final event would take place in February/March and the Connoisseurs Scotland consortium had agreed to put up prizes. |

100K Welcomes

The national launch for the new 100K Welcomes scheme would take place at St Andrews Bay resort in early autumn.

## **FIFE STRATEGIC TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FUND**

### **St Andrews Town Audit**

Tom Potter expressed the view that the Town Audit should consider the experience which St Andrews offers visitors at different times of the year. Alan Graham would relay this to Patrick Laughlin together with the view that this project should be commenced as a matter of some urgency. The Alliance approved a contribution of up to £7,500 towards the cost of the St Andrews Town Audit.

### **Fife Tourism Challenge**

Alan Graham advised that he had that morning received a further request for funding (in addition to the amount specified in the paper) from Careers Scotland for the Challenge's final event and prize giving. Anne Kinnes undertook to seek further clarification from Careers Scotland on this. The Alliance approved an additional contribution of up to £22,500 towards the costs of the Fife Tourism Challenge at this stage.

### **AOCB**

Alan Graham advised that as Anne Kinnes would be leaving Scotland there would be a vacancy for a sectoral representative as well as the position of Vice Chair. It was agreed that an approach should be made to Stuart Gray of Knockhill as a co-opted replacement for the visitor attractions, sport and leisure sector. The appointment of Vice Chair would be an agenda item for the next meeting of the Alliance. Nick White thanked Anne Kinnes for all her efforts and contributions on behalf of the Alliance and for her support as Vice Chair.

Nick White drew the attention of the Alliance to a new culinary initiative for Scotland, the establishment of a Scottish chapter of the international Chaine des Rotisseurs. This was a society with both professional and non professional members which was dedicated to good food and which, as a consequence of its international reach, could have great marketing potential for Fife as a food destination. Top quality restaurants in Fife were already signing up and links with other associations were being established with a view to joint marketing activity. Norman Bendex advised that there could also be links with the further education sector as well from the professional development point of view.

### **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

Wednesday, 27 September – 2pm to 4pm. Venue tbc

Tuesday, 12 December – 2pm to 4pm. Venue tbc