

FIFE TOURISM ALLIANCE

25 SEPTEMBER 2007

MINUTE OF MEETING

19 JUNE 2007

ADAM SMITH COLLEGE, KIRKCALDY

ATTENDING: Chair – Nick White (hotels); Ken Lawson (guest houses, b&bs); Tom Potter (self catering, caravan & camping); Steve Blaney (FSB); Linda McKnight (Fife Colleges); Duncan Dewar (Fife Chamber of Commerce);

In attendance: Alan Graham (VisitScotland); Robin Presswood (Fife Council); Iain Whitelaw (Fife Council); Willie Johnston, Martin Grigg (Scottish Enterprise Fife); Amanda Drummond (Fife Coast and Countryside Trust).

APOLOGIES: Keith Winter, Iain Whitelaw, Sandra Montador-Stewart (Fife Council); Stuart Grey (attractions, sport and leisure); Linda Greig (business tourism); Catherine Dunkerley (VisitScotland).

PRESENTATION ON ST ANDREWS WORLD CLASS – PATRICK LAUGHLIN

Patrick Laughlin, project manager for the St Andrews World Class Initiative, presented to the Fife Tourism Alliance, recapping on the background to the initiative and outlining some of the key achievements to date. These included:

- Broad based participation in SAWC by a range of agencies and community organisations
- A range of high quality environmental projects completed
- Skills and training initiatives completed including training courses for businesses, working with school pupils, job shadowing
- Miscellaneous projects including collaborative marketing initiatives by the Golf Development Group, establishment of the Gateway Centre's interpretative and orientation facilities
- The St Andrews Town Audit – this had been part funded by the Strategic Tourism Development Fund

With specific reference to this last output, Patrick advised that this was a catalyst for action and implementation and had been the basis of the submission, to be discussed as a separate item at the meeting, to the Strategic Tourism Development Fund. This submission focused on a number of elements:

- The development of a St Andrews Skills Academy as a "virtual" academy through which training and skills development initiatives would be channelled to businesses.
- Improving signposting and interpretation
- Product development
- Scoping the future – the aspiration being to move towards a DMO (Destination Management Organisation) type vehicle while going through a learning and information sharing process

In conclusion, Patrick gave a recap on the rationale for the creation of the Fife Strategic Tourism Development Fund, with which he had been closely involved, stating that it had been established principally to support major projects of scale that could make a real difference to Fife's tourism performance.

Duncan Dewar commended the presentation but made the point about the need for succession, asking for clarification on the future on SAWC. Patrick advised that SAWC had a horizon of 2-3 years in its present format. Willie Johnston commented that it was recognised that there was a need for a self sustaining model to be developed, particularly in view of the time and resource intensive nature of the initiative to date.

Linda McKnight welcomed the commitment to skills and training but looked for a number of assurances in relation to the Skills Academy proposal. In particular, she hoped that funding would be directed to the

point of delivery. Tom Potter queried the necessity of the umbrella mechanism role which the Skills Academy would have in terms of delivery.

Patrick responded that it was recognised that the colleges do need to be part of the process in terms of developing the Skills Academy concept. It was envisaged that the Skills Academy would operate for an initial 3 year period in order that it have a sound formative period. Patrick also confirmed that the tendering process in terms of the management delivery would be completely transparent and, all things being equal, the recruitment of the manager would commence early in the summer. It was also acknowledged that the full detail of the Skills Academy was not available at this stage as this was something of a ground breaking project without precedent.

Willie Johnston stressed that the Skills Academy initiative was very much being driven by local businesses and as a result of this being a business led initiative Scottish Enterprise was particularly interested in the model which was being proposed.

There was extensive discussion on the subject of skills, training and further education establishments. It was agreed to continue with business in view of the paper on St Andrews World Class which the Alliance would consider presently.

MINUTE OF MEETING OF 20 FEBRUARY 2007

Matters Arising

The Chair acknowledged that a meeting with Fife Council officers and tourism business representatives was still to be arranged.

The minute was approved as a fair and accurate record of the meeting of 20 February 2007.

VISITSCOTLAND FIFE REPORT

Alan Graham spoke to this report which was noted. Duncan Dewar asked if there had been any indication of Scottish Executive policy with regard to VisitScotland. Alan Graham advised that Philip Riddle and Peter Lederer had met with the new Minister for Enterprise, Energy and Tourism Jim Mather but organisational matters had not been raised at this juncture.

FIFE TOURISM STRATEGY

Alan Graham spoke to this report, outlining the annual action plan and performance indicators which were appended to the main Fife Tourism Strategy.

The Chair raised a query with regard to the action on the chefs' programme which was cited as an action under the Food theme and aligned with the goal of developing Fife's Slow Food offering. Martin Grigg responded that this action supported the aspiration of developing and increasing the use of fresh local produce in Fife's eating out offering.

The report was noted.

FIFE STRATEGIC TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FUND

A number of submissions for financial support were submitted:

First in Fife Golf Group

The application for £11,500 towards research and marketing activity was approved.

Dunfermline & Kirkcaldy Signage

The application for £20,000 towards signage audits and the development of implementation plans was approved. It was noted that an earlier application for support for pedestrian finger signposting in Kirkcaldy should be decommitted as a consequence. It was requested that the plans should make provision for the ongoing management, maintenance and replacement of materials.

Fife Coastal Path (Burntisland Extension)

The application for £10,000 towards the costs of signage, interpretative and information boards for the Burntisland extension was approved.

St Andrews World Class

There was further extensive discussion on the St Andrews World Class application with particular reference to the Skills Academy element. Some concern was expressed as to how best Fife's colleges should be represented in the development of this part of the initiative.

The recommendation for the overall application for £190,800 was approved, subject to the issues associated with the Skills Academy being resolved.

Such is the level of interest in the Skills Academy element that the Fife Colleges (through Linda McKnight as the Fife colleges' representative on the Fife Tourism Alliance) should engage with the working group which is addressing the development of the Skills Academy at an early juncture. In addition, this matter should be the subject of a report to the next meeting of the Alliance. It was acknowledged that given the scale of this bid for financial support it would have to be referred to the next Environment and Transport Committee of Fife Council for approval. (The date for this meeting was subsequently confirmed as 30 August).

TOWN CENTRES FUND – ANNUAL REPORT

The report was noted.

SMALL GRANTS SCHEME UPDATE

There was general discussion on the value of this scheme, particularly in terms of supporting events which attracted visitors into Fife. Alan Graham advised that it was a condition of support that initiatives should demonstrate marketing activity being undertaken outside Fife. The report was noted.

FIFE TOURISM CHALLENGE

The Chair gave a verbal report on the Fife Tourism Challenge with particular reference to the final Schools Showcase event. He advised that he and all the judges had been extremely impressed by the outputs and the dedication and commitment shown by pupils and staff. Overall it had been successful in getting children to think about tourism and hospitality and the feedback from the schools themselves had been very positive. Unfortunately, Careers Scotland was not in a position to lead on the delivery of a future Challenge.

There was discussion on a way forward to ensure that the success of the event is built upon and that there is a legacy from the 2007 event. Linda McKnight proposed that the colleges/schools partnership could be a vehicle to take matters forward and she offered to investigate matters further on behalf of the Alliance.

FIFE TOURISM INDUSTRY PUBLICATION

The report was noted.

AOB

Ken Lawson raised the matter of the impact of the traffic restrictions on the Forth Road Bridge in relation to tourism and stated that it was evident that these were damaging day visits and short breaks to Fife. The long term prognosis for the Bridge was not good. Duncan Dewar stated the Chamber of Commerce position which was that time was not on our side and that the Scottish Executive must commit to a new crossing as a matter of extreme urgency.

There was extensive discussion on the subject of the Bridge from both a short term and long term perspective. Duncan Dewar asked that VisitScotland align itself with bodies such as Scottish Chambers of Commerce in pressing for early actions as this was a matter of national concern. He would raise this with Philip Riddle at the Chamber of Commerce lunch the following day.

It was agreed:

- A representative of FETA (Forth Estuary Transport Authority) is invited to a future meeting of the Alliance to update on the condition of the Bridge.
- A letter to be sent from the Alliance to MSPs pressing for early commitment to a new crossing.
- A letter to be sent from the Alliance to other area tourism partnerships in Scotland seeking support on this matter.

In terms of representation by elected members on the Fife Tourism Alliance, Robin Presswood advised that Cllrs Tony Martin, William Kay, Ross Vettraino and Dorothea Morrison would henceforth be representing Fife Council.

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

The dates for the next meetings of the Fife Tourism Alliance were set for:

Tuesday 25 September – morning meeting (venue to be arranged – North East Fife)

Tuesday 11 December – morning meeting (venue to be arranged – West Fife)