

## **Gatehouse Development Initiative AGM Wednesday 26 March 2008 7.30pm Community Centre**

**Present:** D Steel (Chair); P Addison; R Forster; S Harris; J Jameson; J King; A Mitchell; J Morton; W McKie; J Russell; K Smyth; A Steel. Attending from Solway Heritage, Eykolina de Zwart.

### **1. Apologies:** D & W Finlay; F Bruno.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and especially Eykolina de Zwart, Wood Pasture Officer for Solway Heritage who was attending to brief the meeting on potential support for Stellage Wood. The Chairman also advised the meeting that it would not be possible to present finalised accounts due to an error on the part of the accountants Bell Ogilvy. The accounts had been returned to them for correction and would then be circulated in the first instance to the Directors and then tabled for acceptance at the next scheduled meeting in May.

### **2. Minutes of 2007 AGM.** Accepted, proposed J Morton, seconded J Jameson.

**Matters arising:** S Harris asked why the Visit Scotland statement has been made at the GDI meeting and not at the Community Council which was not informed of the situation until their meeting on 10 April. D Steel replied that following Visit Scotland's announcement that they would not be reopening the TIC, the GDI meeting was the first public meeting which provided the opportunity to invite Visit Scotland to explain their position and for them to hear the views of Gatehouse people. S Harris accepted that she and other community councillors were in attendance at the meeting.

### **3. Accounts for 2007**

In view of the problem with the accounts W McKie suggested that the Directors meet at 7pm prior to the start of the May meeting to discuss the accounts before they are tabled. He suggested that in view of this year's problem at the accountants, and as the GDI do not need to supply accounts to Companies House until later in the year, the AGM should move back to May next year to avoid the pre-April rush for accountants as this may have contributed to the problem. This was agreed. While the very strict procedures demanded by OSCR have increased administrative costs for the GDI it is clear that the GDI has much to gain by retaining charitable status both in terms of access to funders and from repayments through Gift Aid. Providing an overview of activity in 2007, the Treasurer noted the increased value of GDI assets and increasing sources of income. The Turbine is both a major asset and now also delivering a significant income for the GDI. Other income is being derived from sales of booklets - D L Sayers and Cally Park, and from the website. Core funding is down this coming year however despite increasing core costs as a result of OSCR requirements, and the Chairman asked A Mitchell as the GDI's Council representative that this concern be passed back to the Council. J King asked if the accounts could be published on the website. Technically this is not a problem and the meeting agreed that this would be done. The Chairman thanked the Treasurer for his work this year.

### **Activities 2007**

Before moving on to project reports, the Chairman invited Eykolina de Zwart, Tree Pasture Officer for Solway Heritage to report on a visit to the Stellage Wood and on the potential for funding to develop tree pasture regeneration work in Gatehouse. The wood comprises a group of large mature trees which are reaching the end of their natural life and the woodland is in need of regenerative work to maintain it. Up to £2000 may be available to help with this. Volunteers and young people could be involved in replanting and access and paths could be improved to the woodland to increase its recreational value for the town. The importance of looking after the natural environment is a key finding of the CADISPA report and could support any funding bid. It was also noted that development of the wood would fit in well with work on the Cally parkland and woods and with a potential arboretum. Eykolina would return when the trees were in leaf to carry out a proper survey of the woodland. There was general support from the meeting to take the project forward and apply for funding.

The Chairman drew attention to projects completed during the past year including the Wind Turbine and the Sensory Garden. The Cally Booklet had been published and was presented to a meeting of the Garden History Society which had been held at Cally Palace. The CADISPA survey had been carried out and the report presented to a well attended meeting of Gatehouse residents.

**CADISPA:** The survey had drawn 379 returned forms, 30 interviews had been conducted with groups. The report was presented to a well attended public meeting on 6 March, and follow-up workshops took place on 7 and 25 March, part of a process of consultation to decide priorities. The Chamber of Trade and Community Council would discuss the report, a session for young people at the Drop-in Centre would be organised, and a presentation would be arranged for the primary

school. Different recommendations may be taken forward by different groups within the town. Key issues appear to be housing, business units, community hall. In relation to a sports hall it was noted that the school hall is sitting heated and unused but janitor availability/costs make it an unworkable option for community groups. Regarding housing, the Community Council has set up a working group and it was suggested this group work together with a GDI sub-group to look at the various housing questions.

**Cally Designed Landscape:** The Cally booklet is now for sale in local shops. Funding for the Cally walls survey has been obtained and a training session has taken place.

**Country Market:** Markets have been held monthly throughout the year with one extra pre-Christmas market at the request of the producers. Both producers and market customers seem happy with the market which is now well established.

**Economic Development:** Dealt with under CADISPA above.

**Garries Park:** *Wild Flower Meadow.* A trail bike has been used in the meadow area causing damage. J Russell will look in to regulations/bylaws re. the use of the park. Efforts are being made to ensure the meadow is protected from regular cutting this season.

**New Town Hall:** Dealt with under CADISPA above.

**Port Macadam:** General maintenance ongoing. Three trees lost in winter storms. Clearing of the culvert is now in hand.

**Walks:** The Arneil paths audit is continuing to be reviewed. The path along the Fleet is now overgrown. The Core Paths process is overdue with the Council. The Gatehouse walks leaflet will be reprinted with the addition of some new walks.

**Web Site:** This has run smoothly throughout the year with the addition of a News element and more effort to generate income from the Accommodation section.

**Wind Turbine:** This is continuing to generate funds. A 'Big Cheque' photo opportunity is being planned for a press release.

## **5. Election of Directors**

Current directors who indicated their willingness to continue were reappointed. F Bruno to be reappointed if she is willing to continue.

## **6. Any Other Business**

### **7. Dates of future meetings**

28 May (Directors to meet at 7pm prior to start of main meeting at 7.30pm to consider the accounts); 30 July

### **After the close of the AGM. Meeting of Directors to Appoint Office Bearers.**

Current Office Bearers re-appointed: D Steel (Chairman); P Addison (Vice Chairman); W McKie (Treasurer); K Smyth (Company Secretary).