

Present: D Steel (Chair); P Addison; F Bruno; I Burnie; T Burnie; R Forster; S Harris; J Jameson; A Mitchell; J Morton; D McIntyre; J Russell; K Smyth; T Vaux.

Apologies: J Davidson; M Hannay; W McKie

In his introduction to the meeting, D Steel informed the meeting of Wilma and David Finlay's achievement in winning the Farm of the Year award. It was agreed that the Chair would write to them warmly congratulating them on behalf of the GDI.

2. Minutes of 27 September meeting.

These were adopted with the following amendments. Item 4: Economic Development, F Bruno requested that her own fuller account of her proposal for the Mill be included. This was accepted. It was also accepted that it should be recorded that K Smyth responded as a member of the Mill Board. Under Item 4: Multipurpose Hall, J Russell noted that the project should be known as The New Town Hall.

3. Matters arising

D Steel reported that further money may be available for solar panel schemes. W McKie has been investigating this in relation to installation within the conservation area. Further feedback on their effectiveness would be useful. R Forster referred to a previous note from M Hannay indicating that he was pleased with the performance of his panels. T Burnie noted that he had noted his interest in the project for the first round of the project but had not been contacted and therefore had missed out on it.

4. Current Projects

CountryMarket: The first two markets of the three market pilot have taken place and have been very successful, popular with both producers and public. If the third market goes well and producers are happy to continue, the market will continue as a regular fixture on the first Saturday of each month next year. It is intended to look at purchasing a set of stalls for the purpose to save on hire fees and setting up time. The stalls should pay for themselves within a year and could be used for other town events. It seems likely the event will generate a small revenue which will go back into GDI funds. T Burnie was concerned that communication re the event within the GDI had not been clear. K Smyth explained that this was because the event had been set up at rather short notice to take advantage of an opportunity to get the event piloted and accepted that communicating the event to the Initiative had been less than satisfactory and apologised for this.

Economic Development: J Jameson reported that the sub-group had held a meeting to discuss the Mill which had been useful. D Steel reported that meetings had been held to discuss the CADISPA project further and that discussions were currently ongoing to agree a process for surveying the community. It has been agreed to also seek the views of holiday makers. F Bruno was unhappy with the idea of sampling. It was explained that the organisation has well founded methods for doing this and that a survey of the whole community would not necessarily achieve a different result. T Burnie confirmed from previous experience that this was the case. It is likely that of 700 households which will all receive shorter questionnaires, 375 will receive enhanced questionnaires. The survey will include the two parishes and possibly those who work in the area but do not live in it.

Garries Park: Multi-activity equipment: An application has been made for a Flying Fox.

Sensory Garden: Match funding has been achieved for this. The location has been selected and Roger Lewis who has been involved with the Twynholm Garden will carry out the work. Kind offers of assistance have also come from Michael Wickenden of Cally Gardens, the Horticultural Society, and private individuals. Work will start shortly. Combined Services have agreed to maintain the garden. They have also been approached re improvements to the path leading into the park which is in very poor condition.

The Children's Slide has been condemned as unsafe. A blacksmith has looked at it and believes it could be repaired safely for a great deal less than the cost of a new one. This will need to be agreed with the Council and insurance implications checked out.

Vandalism: T Burnie also reported that a commemorative tree has been vandalised and expressed disappointment at the inferior quality of a replacement bench for the one previously vandalised.

Multipurpose Hall (Town Hall): J Russell is investigating the criteria for a Big Lottery bid. Sue Best is drawing up detailed plans. He reported that he would attend the Community Centre Management Committee AGM on 11 December to try to gain support for the project. D McIntyre indicated that it is not that the Committee are against it, but that they doubt that it is sustainable given the difficulty they have filling the current centre. They are however also concerned at rising maintenance costs. J Jameson noted that the CADISPA survey was ideally placed for looking at this issue and in conjunction with all meeting facilities in the town. I Burnie noted that failings in the standard of some of the facilities may be an issue in attracting users. T Vaux noted that the Management Committee must be allowed to maintain the Centre to avoid

it deteriorating. K Smyth noted that it might be helpful if the feasibility study focused on costs, use and sustainability of a new hall without addressing the location at present to take some of the pressure off the Management Committee.

Port Macadam: The Volunteers are continuing to carry out maintenance. A useful meeting has been held with a Council architect. They are happy to advise on maintenance and repair.

Renewables: Solar Panels: Nothing to report.

Geothermal: Nothing to report.

Wind Turbine: The turbine is awaiting dispatch by boat from Canada. The tower is also ready for shipping. It is hoped that they will arrive within the next few weeks for installation. Quotes are being obtained from crane companies.

Walks: Nothing to report.

Web Site: Running smoothly. GDI pages have been added. J Russell asked about hits on the site. This will be reported on at the next meeting. T Vaux reported that they get many more enquiries via the Town site than through Visit Scotland. K Smyth explained that accommodation providers without their own site could have an additional page on the site for which they pay £30 annually, which goes into GDI funds.

[Information gathered re the website following the meeting: Unique sessions served during November: 7932. However many of these will be search engines. Quality visits ie those visiting several pages and spending some time on the site are about 1200. The most popular pages are accommodation; living; what's on; location; holidays; history; business.]

5. Any Other Business

T Burnie asked whether funds held for projects in the GDI account earned interest. J Russell confirmed that they do.

F Bruno asked if future meetings could include a finance report. W McKie would be asked.

Action: W McKie

R Forster reported that the new sample Forestry Commission boards are now set up in the Cally Woods. Feedback on them is welcomed by Forestry.

R Forster asked if draft minutes could be circulated after the meeting, rather than with the agenda for the following meeting. This was agreed.

Action: K Smyth

F Bruno informed the meeting that the Christmas Lights event at the Murray Arms would take place on 10 December at 5pm with the school children singing, and other musical entertainment.

F Bruno reported that a meeting had taken place between the 3 theme towns who were gaining substantial funding for their joint promotion. D Steel has spoken to Steve Groom (CD Food Town) to indicate that Gatehouse would wish to be involved with this.

D Steel reported that a request from the Community Council for a tripartite meeting between the Community Council, GDI and Mill Board to discuss the Mill's future plans had been received. As this is a divisive issue it was felt that it would be appropriate to allow the Mill time to finalise their plans, and that at a future point a meeting could be held if it were felt to be useful.

6. Dates of future meetings

31 January 2007; 28 March; 30 May