

Gatehouse Development Initiative

Meeting Wednesday 31 January 7.30pm Community Centre

Present: D Steel (Chair); P Addison; F Bruno; R Dean; L Dent; D Finlay; R Forster; S Harris; J Jameson; J Morton; D McIntyre; K Smyth; T Vaux.

Apologies: I Burnie; T Burnie; J Davidson; M Hannay; A Johnson; W McKie; A Mitchell; J Russell

In his introduction to the meeting, D Steel informed the meeting that Irene Burnie was in hospital following a fall. The meeting wished to convey their best wishes to her for a speedy recovery.

2. Minutes of 29 November meeting.

D Steel informed the meeting that he had received a letter from F Bruno who was unhappy with the way her requested change to the 27 September minute had been dealt with. The Chair informed her that it was his decision; that her amendment to the draft minute had been accepted and the official minute now used her wording. The decision to make this change has also been recorded appropriately in the 29 November minute. F Bruno requested a vote on the procedure to be taken. The Chair asked for a show of hands on the procedure that had been followed. Five showed in favour, one against, seven abstained. F Bruno accepted the decision.

3. Matters arising

No further matters arising.

4. Current Projects

Cally Designed Landscape - Management Plan: Solway Heritage are undertaking the development of the plan. A meeting of the 'stakeholders' group with Solway Heritage has taken place, and the process is progressing well. As a result of publicity in the papers, new material is coming in which together with material gathered for the report will provide a very useful resource. Solway Heritage is due to report within the next month.

CountryMarket: The market is now established as a monthly event on the first Saturday of each month and will hopefully continue as long as producers and public wish it to. It is being restricted to food producers, but it is hoped that other events and activities including for example a non-food market might take advantage of the increased numbers in the town on market day. F Bruno suggested that a communal stall for local gardeners to sell excess produce might be a welcome addition.

Economic Development: J Jameson reported that it is hoped that the CADISPA survey will get under way in February/March. They are confident that funding will be found, and the necessary applications are in. The possibility of two housing developments have been discussed with D and G Housing Partnership, for 20 houses where Garries Wood is currently, and for 10-12 houses on the left-hand side of the road to the golf course. Both proposals if they were to be pursued would require a great deal of consultation with owners, interested agencies and planning. There was a discussion about the balance between low cost housing and private housing. It was noted that the school role is falling, and young families would be welcome. It is hoped CADISPA will provide some useful insights on this issue. L Dent noted that the provision of sheltered housing might free up larger houses. R Forster asked about the current position re the Garage site, however no info at present.

Garries Park: R Forster reported that work has now started on the Sensory Garden. The dyker is currently working, and the volunteers group have been involved. The slide has been barricaded off as unsafe, but the Council are intending to repair it.

New Town Hall: D McIntyre reported that the Community Centre Management Committee are awaiting the outcome of the CADISPA survey before moving on any major repairs. However the subsidence has been checked and is not too serious and no other significant repairs are needed at present. J Russell had attended the Centre AGM and had noted that the original deed for the Community Centre included Sport in the title. This may be amended. Another meeting about the Town Hall will take place in March.

Port Macadam: The extension of the pavement at the castle end to meet up with the new path has started. The volunteers have been carrying out general maintenance. D and G Engineering and Design Services are advising on the restoration of the harbour wall. It is agreed that the work should be thoroughly done at this stage rather than cosmetic repairs, although it will take more time and money. The wall is likely to include both new stone as well as recovered stone from the river bed.

Renewables: Solar Panels: Another property has received planning permission for solar panels.

Geothermal: Nothing to report. This will be removed from the projects list for the time being.

Wind Turbine: The turbine, blades and tower are now all on site and ready for putting together and raising into position. This is a big job involving two cranes which only one contractor is willing to undertake. Preparations and discussion are continuing but it is hoped to carry out the lift during a window of quiet weather.

Walks: P Addison reported that he is intending to carry out an update of Brian Arniel's walks audit, checking out the current state of paths and adding new ones as appropriate. He has had discussions with the Access Officer for Kirkcudbright about paths in the Gatehouse area. He expressed concern about the content of the new Forestry panel in Cally Woods. D Steel advised that this panel is only a mock-up for consultation purposes. It will eventually contain site specific information as well as regional information and additional non-Forestry local information as appropriate. Feedback is welcome, and P Addison will write on behalf of the GDI to provide this. R Dean reported that the Carstramon Wood information panel has also been updated.

Web Site: A news section has been added to the site picking up on current stories and project updates within the community. This will tie in with a new newsletter which is being developed for the town by K Smyth, and Chris Walker for the Community Council. This will be full colour, twice yearly, and paid for by local advertising. An overview of website visits and statistics for December was also given.

5. Finance report:

A financial report for the year so far, prepared by the Treasurer, was tabled. The Chair gave a brief overview of the project and funding activity.

6. Any Other Business

D McIntyre advised the meeting that rental rates for the Community Centre rooms were increasing slightly. She also expressed concern that the old chairs, originally from the Town Hall were possibly getting damaged. It was suggested that she contact David Devereux, Museums Manager for the Stewartry for advice.

6. Dates of future meetings

28 March -this meeting will include the AGM; 30 May