

In view of the power cut affecting most of Gatehouse, the meeting relocated to Whitefield at the Chairman's kind invitation.

Present: D Steel (Chair); I Burnie; R Forster; C Gillespie; J Jameson; W McKie; K Smyth.

1. Apologies: D Finlay; W Finlay; A Johnson; P Addison; A Stephenson

D Steel welcomed Cara Gillespie to the meeting who indicated she would be happy to be added to the GDI membership.

2. Minutes 27 January. Accepted. Proposed R Forster; seconded W McKie.

3. Matters arising: None.

4. Finance

Bank balances:

- Main Account £7500. Approximately £4000 of the funds in the Main Account are restricted. Invoices to advertisers in the Gatehouse Newsletter will be issued shortly and will increase the unrestricted funds in the Main Account by approximately £1000.
- No.2 Account (Cally Boundaries) £13700, thanks to the payment of the final tranche from the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- No.3 Account (Carbon Action Project) On receipt of the current claim, and settlement of the corresponding pending invoices, the account will be in funds of approximately £3000. Thanks to prompt settlement of claims by the Climate Challenge Fund, a reasonably workable cash-flow management system is now operating.

Financial report

- The first draft of the accounts for the year 2009 has been received from the Accountants and will be discussed with them shortly.
- There is some hope that the air will be cleared over the future of the Kiosk at the meeting with Visit Scotland on April 13th. Current funds available in the Kiosk account are almost exhausted.
- Although some income from the Wind Turbine electricity generation during the winter is expected, damage to the electrical control system has once again interrupted operation. Remedial action may be covered by insurance. The lack of reliable performance, however, may call in question future GDI dependence on this as a source of green energy income and justify some reconsideration of the asset value of the Wind Turbine in the balance sheet.

Cara Gillespie advised the meeting that she has previously been part of a project assessing the comparative performance of hydro, wind and solar energy technologies. By far the most reliable and consistent is hydro. D Steel confirmed that Gatehouse is already looking at hydro options. K Smyth indicated that the Mill on the Fleet would also be very keen to progress some kind of hydro system at the Mill, at the very least for demonstration/exhibition purposes, but hopefully to actually produce some useful energy.

- The workload on the Treasurer's desk as a result of the very short notice addition of the Carbon Action Project to the GDI portfolio has been considerable! He hopes it is all worth the effort!

5. Current Projects

Cally Designed Landscape. **Cally Walls.** Work has started on clearing the sunken dyke.

Old School House. The Council workers have carried out initial clearing work on and about the building. Ron Forster has replanted snowdrops away from the working area for their protection. The timetable for the project should see it completed by August. An interpretation panel will be included. It is still hoped that someone may have an old photo of the building in use - an appeal for any images has been included in the Gatehouse Newsletter. Certain curious architectural details have been noted including joist holes which may have supported an extended roof around the building. It is also suggested that the building may have been clad with logs.

Country Market: A costing for the landscaping of the area between the Kiosk and the Car Park entry road is awaited. Subject to a satisfactory meeting with Visit Scotland on 13 April, it is hoped to proceed with this work as quickly as possible in order to be off the car park before the holiday season.

Economic Development: Ongoing.

Galloway Carbon Action Project: This is progressing well with regular meetings by the project team with local groups, and with a number of local events already staged. A problem has arisen with a questionnaire supplied by the Macauley Institute for distribution to the community in advance of the community's own survey. This seems to have been commissioned by the Crichton Carbon Centre on behalf of the Community, but without any meaningful discussion with the community, and no contact whatsoever with the community by the Macauley Institute. It is felt the distribution of this questionnaire

in advance of the community survey team's own visits could seriously undermine the project. A meeting between Gatehouse along with the other two communities which are similarly affected, and concerned, with the Carbon Centre and the Macauley has been arranged for mid April to try to resolve the problem and make best use of the investment already made.

Garries Park: Garries Wood. Solway Heritage have completed their survey of the wood. The report will be available on the Gatehouse website shortly. Keith Kirk, Council Ranger, is continuing to monitor the wood. Recommendations from the report would see some coppicing and tidying up within the wood, although it is felt important to leave much of the undergrowth in place because of its benefit to wildlife. A narrow strip along the boundaries of the wood will be tidied up rather more to improve the general appearance. Efforts will be made to manage the damage caused by fly tipping along the High Street side of the wood which has resulted in non-native plants spreading into the wood. The meeting indicated its support for the recommendations.

Garries Park Car Park Entrance. Dykers will shortly be stabilising and restoring the recently cleared section of wall around the car park entrance to the Park. With the removal of the blue paper bins imminent, it is proposed that the remaining bins be moved to the top end of the car park adjacent to the toilet block. This will greatly improve the aspect from the car park of the improved entrance to the park.

Garries Park. I Burnie has spoken with Andrew Ward of the Creetown Initiative to seek advice on fundraising for additional play equipment. Creetown Initiative are happy to help with fundraising, but charge a fee based on a percentage of the grant achieved. It has also been suggested that a larger fund might be applied for as part of a 'whole park' improvement/management scheme. The meeting agreed that Irene should explore this further with the Council and start to develop a development plan.

Sensory Garden. It was reported that this has been vandalised with spray paint. The Council will be asked if they can assist with removal of the paint as they have the necessary equipment.

Newsletter: Willie McKie was commended on the first edition of the newsletter which has now been delivered by the scouts to much of the town. Further supplies have been lodged around the town for residents/visitors to pick up. The newsletter has been well received, and there have been enquiries from additional potential advertisers. It was suggested that the Carbon Project might make a contribution as the newsletter is being used as one of the awareness raising tools for the project.

Port Macadam: Two trees have recently come down: an old poplar, and a large tree removed by Scottish Power as it was interfering with their lines. A good deal of damage has been done to the grass verges in the process. The Council have been advised of this.

The Kiosk: A meeting is scheduled with Visit Scotland on 13th April. It is hoped that a revised offer of a longer lease at a non-commercial rate will be made, which will allow the project to develop and funds to be secured for improvements to the building.

Walks: Core Paths. There remains one objection to the proposed network. A Dalbeattie community walks leaflet was tabled for information. They are producing this themselves and charging £1 for it.

Website: Ongoing.

Wind Turbine: Nothing further to report beyond the problems mentioned above.

6. Any other business: None

7. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 26 May, 7.30pm, Venue to be confirmed.