

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CROSS PARTY GROUP ON TOWNS AND TOWN CENTRES

Wednesday, 9 September 2020, 13:00 – 14:15

Online Meeting

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Convener, John Scott MSP welcomed all to the meeting.

Attendees and Apologies are noted in Appendix 2.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cross Party Group held 13th March 2019.

The Minutes of the Meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record.

3. AGM Business

John Scott MSP introduces AGM business. The Minutes of the last AGM Meeting held 4th September 2019 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Gillian Martin MSP proposes J Scott continues as Convener. Seconded by Neil Bibby MSP. Accepted by J Scott MSP.

J Scott MSP proposes G Martin to continue as Deputy Convener. Seconded by N Bibby MSP. Accepted by G Martin MSP.

J Scott MSP proposes N Bibby MSP to continue as Deputy Convener. Seconded by G Martin MSP. Accepted by N Bibby MSP.

Agreement reached that Scotland's Towns Partnership to continue as secretary to the group.

J Scott summarised the group's activities in the year to date and forward plans. This and other required reporting will be available in the annual report on the parliament website following the meeting.

4. 'Scotland's Towns Post-Covid – The Recovery'

Phil Prentice, Chief Officer, Scotland's Towns Partnership and National Director, Scotland's Improvement Districts gave an overview on the focus on recovery and on the good behaviours coming out of the pandemic. The Scottish Government quickly entered the dialogue and supported the Covid-19 BIDs Resilience Fund to help provide local solutions. He added that the meeting will hear best practice examples later.

The £1 million Towns and BIDs Resilience and Recovery Fund supported 188 projects; a further £1 million Phase 2 will be launched in the Autumn.

Phase 1 of the Scotland Loves Local initiative was launched with national television adverts and press coverage. Phase 2 will tell the story of towns and show people why spending local keeps their money in the local economy.

4.1 Danielle McCrorie-Smith, Go Forth Stirling BID

Danielle McCrorie-Smith gave a summary of what the Stirling BID has been doing to support businesses throughout the pandemic:

- Various groups came together to form a local partnership to provide one central source of information,
- Set up an online training portal offering two courses per month to all business whether or not they were BID members,
- Established a virtual High Street to promote businesses throughout the pandemic,
- Developed a business directory,
- Set up an e-commerce initiative grant scheme which offered match funding to businesses.

Moving on to the reopening phase in July, GO Forth Stirling:

- Delivered 1500 items of PPE to businesses,
- Produced customer notices and risk assessments for business,
- Produced hospitality check list guidelines,
- Spread the message that Stirling is open for business,
- Supported the Scotland Loves Local campaign,
- Supported virtual events in Stirling.

What's next for Stirling? The BID has started an Independent Stirling Campaign to follow on from the Scotland Loves Local campaign and are tackling the issue of vacant units.

4.2 Caroline Warburton, VisitScotland

VisitScotland is the national tourism organisation working closely with STP on the Scotland Loves Local campaign.

Towns and tourism are inextricably linked and help many communities through direct spending which supports both the wider community and the supply chain. Towns are an important part of the visitor experience whether food and drink, accommodation, live music and the arts, visitor attractions, all have been affected over recent few months.

In Scotland, VisitScotland has:

- Traditional towns such as spa and coastal towns, for example, Pitlochry, Oban and Callendar,
- New opportunities such as cruise ships in Kirkwall, Invergordon, and Inverclyde,
- Regeneration in Falkirk and Dunfermline,

The Scottish Energy Response Group brought together a number of agencies and a plan was quickly developed with four key areas: respond, reset, restart and recover

Some key projects include:

- a destination and sector support fund, 81 projects were supported to the value of £500,000,
- a visitor charter to encourage business to support the local economy,
- a good to go scheme, to date over 6500 businesses have signed up,

- focus on key areas such as connectivity, public services, development of public spaces, showcase local arts and crafts

4.3 Debbie McCallum, Tourism St Andrews

This group is a volunteer association that was set up in 2015 and has 150 members. The group works closely with the St Andrews BID and their main focus is to inform businesses and encourage engagement and collaboration.

The group maintained contact with local businesses through the pandemic and supported the Covid Response Group.

The group formulated the Stay Safe St Andrews Campaign and received funding from VisitScotland working with 300 local businesses including the University to create a charter to make the town a safe and secure place to live, work and visit.

5. Questions

1. Question for Scotland's Towns Partnership - Have they considered complementary currencies to help businesses with cashflow? And beyond existing advertising campaigns, what initiatives are envisaged to encourage shoppers back to the high street? PP replied that part 2 of the Scotland Loves Local campaign will create a national platform to support local currencies which can only be redeemed with the local economy. The campaign will create advertising platforms with partners already lined up.
2. Question for Danielle McCrorie-Smith - Why have 29% of businesses not got a web presence? DMCCS replied that some businesses have had no need for an online presence and some have not been open to it. The BID has said they are willing to step in and assist if required.
3. Question for all - What do you all think about each town having access to a standardised mobile app? PP said there is potential for a national dialogue. Stirling have a number of individual apps but can see the need for a Scotland wide app. CW said VS would need to know what the app is for – is it for local people or for visitors. In her opinion, the simpler the better.
4. Question for DMCC-S – There is no funding available for the Musselburgh business group, what advice can Stirling offer? DMCC-S said she would be happy to have a conversation offline.

6. Summary

PP finished the meeting by outlining the Town Centre Review which will focus on resilience and recovery. Phil noted that it's important not to take an eye off the longer term. Professor Leigh Sparks, Chair of Scotland's Towns Partnership, is chairing the Scottish Government review which offers an opportunity to look at best practice. The review should be published November/December.

7. Any Other Competent Business and Date of Next Meeting

There was no other business. John Scott MSP thanked the speakers for a very stimulating conversation, the chat box is full and the STP team will pick up on any questions which have not been answered.

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 9th December, 13:00-14:30

APPENDIX 1 – RECORD OF 9 September AGENDA

Cross Party Group on Towns and Town Centres

13:00-14:15, Wednesday 9th September

Online Meeting

AGENDA

Scotland's Towns Post-Covid – The Recovery

13:00 Welcome and Opening Remarks – John Scott MSP, Convener

13:05 Minutes of the Meeting of the Cross Party Group held 4 March, 2020

Matters Arising from the Minutes

13:10 AGM Business, including Minutes for the last AGM held 4 September 2019

'Scotland's Towns Post-Covid – The Recovery'

13:15 Phil Prentice, Chief Officer, Scotland's Towns Partnership

13:25 Danielle McRorie-Smith, Manager, Go Forth Stirling BID

13:35 Caroline Warburton, Regional Leadership Director (East), VisitScotland

13:45 Debbie MacCallum, Chair, Tourism St Andrews

13:55 Discussion

14:10 Any Other Competent Business

14:15 Close of Meeting

APPENDIX 2 – ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

Cross Party Group on Towns and Town Centres Attendance
9 September 2020, 13:00 – 14:15

Attendees

Maxwell	Agnew	
David	Anderson	
Edward	Archer	
Sandra	Benn	
Neil	Bibby	MSP
Laura	Blair	Zero Waste Scotland
Bill	Bowman	MSP
Joanne	Boyle	Scottish Government
Sophie	Bridger	Eden Project
Rhona	Brown	Scotland's Towns Partnership
Diane	Brown	Alloa First
Gillian	Bruce	South Ayrshire Council
Matthew	Brushett	Audit Wales
Fiona	Buchanan	Stirling Council
Claire	Carpenter	The Melting Pot
Duncan	Clelland	South Ayrshire Council
Colin	Clement	
Viv	Collie	Vivid Ideas and Solutions
Janice	Connelly	
Steve	Crawford	HFM
Hazel	Cross	
Gemma	Cruickshank	Elgin BID
Ewan	Curtis	Glasgow City Council
Shaheena	Din	Shelter
Tom	Donaldson	One Dalkeith
John	Duffy	
David	Dunlop	Glasgow City Council
Andy	Dunlop	East Renfrewshire BIDs
Patrick	Dunne	South Ayrshire Council
Ewan	Eccleston	Glasgow City Council
Jenny	Elliot	University of Edinburgh
Jennifer	Fingland	Cycling Scotland
Barry	Fisher	Keep Scotland Beautiful
Tony	Fitzpatrick	
Leslie	Forsyth	Rediscover Peterhead
Julia	Frost	PAS
Leys	Geddes	Moffat Community Council
Rona	Gibb	Paths for All
Linda	Gillespie	DTAS
Anne	Grove	Scottish Government
Emma	Guy	Tweed Valley BID
Sophie	Hainsworth	LoyalFree

Neale	Hanvey	MP
Bill	Harvey	Scotland's Improvement District
Linzi	Harvey	Entourage UK
Cammy	Hendry	Go Forth Stirling
Stuart	Hodge	
Lynda	Holton	UK Parliament
Stephen	Horsburgh	East Dunbartonshire Council
Lynn	Hubber	Local IQ
Hazel	Johnson	Historic Environment Scotland
Susan	Jones	Renfrewshire Council
Alison	Jones	Scotland's Towns Partnership
Davina	Lavery	West Dunbartonshire Council
Thom	Ledingham	North Ayrshire Council
David	Logie	
Richard	Logie	
David	Lonsdale	Scottish Retail Consortium
Colin	Love	South Ayrshire Council
Debbie	MacCullum	Tourism St. Andrews
Sarah	Macdonald	Explore Selkirk
Murdo	Macdonald	Church of Scotland
Ailsa	Macfarlane	BEFS
Isabelle	MacKenzie	Highland Council
Katie	Mackie	Scottish Parliament
Steve	Malone	Architecutre + Design Scotland
Gillian	Martin	MSP
Del	Mawdsley	Welsh Government
Debbi	McCall	Scottish Parliament
Stephen	McConnachie	Catapult
Gillian	McCracken	Fife Council
Catherine	McKay	East Renfrewshire Council
Barbara	Mcnaughton	East Ayrshire Council
Audrey	Michie	Aberdeenshire Council
Emma	Miller	Living Lerwick
Laura	Mills	Entourage UK
Colin	Moulson	Dunoon Presents
Rebecca	Muir	
Rebecca	Muir	Scotland's Food and Drink County
Deborah	Murray	Visit West End
Michael	O'Brien	SSEK
Andrew	Ormston	Drew Wylie
Bill	Pagan	
Antonia	Pompa	Discover Lanark
Phil	Prentice	Scotland's Towns Partnership
Grant	Riley	North Lanarkshire Council
Derek	Ritchie	Inverurie BID
Steven	Robb	Historic Environment Scotland
Derek	Robertson	Green Action Trust
Jo	Robertson	AH Fund
Ewan	Robertson	Scotland's Towns Partnership

Colin	Ross	
Iain	Ross	South Lanarkshire Council
John	Scott	MSP
Laura	Scott-Simmons	Landscape Institute Scotland
Pat	Scrutton	
John	Semple	East Renfrewshire Council
Tom	Sneddon	DTAS
Andrew	Spence	BID4Oban
Hazel Anne	Stephen	
James	Trolland	
Julie	Twaddell	Friends of the Broadway Prestwick
Caroline	Warburton	Visit Scotland
John	Weir	Isle of Bute BID
Ian	Winton	
Nick	Wright	Nick Wright Planning

Apologies

Chic	Brodie	
John	Howie	Public Health Scotland
Elaine	Morrison	Scottish Enterprise
Lucy	Schofield	East Lothian Council
Mike	Smith	Inverness BID