

Minute of Meeting of the Tweeddale Access Panel
held in Dovecot Court, Dovecot Road, Peebles on
Wednesday 8 November 2017 at 7.00p.m.

PRESENT: *Michael Davis (Chairman), Yvonne Armstrong, Spencer Cobley, Mary Daykin, Frank Drummond, Callum MacDonald.*

IN ATTENDANCE: *Mags Greig (BSL Interpreter), Graham Lumb (Acting Community Consultant, Eastgate Theatre) (Item 1 only), Paul Nichol (prospective member), Councillor Robin Tatler (Items 1 and 2 only).*

APOLOGIES: *Elaine Collins, Mary Sharratt.*

1. Eastgate Theatre

The Chairman welcomed Graham Lumb, Acting Community Consultant, Eastgate Theatre, to the meeting, and invited him to address the Panel. Graham passed on apologies for absence from Cath Shephard, the Eastgate's actual Community Consultant, who had a prior engagement.

He explained that the Eastgate were trying to obtain funding to make significant changes both to the Theatre building and to the activities they provide there. They were consulting the community to find out what facilities people would like to see improved, and whether there were any activities not provided locally for which there was a demand. The Eastgate would like to be accessible to as many people as possible, regardless of age or disability.

Panel members were keen to stress that the Eastgate was a terrific facility to have in the town, but being an adaptation of an old church building meant that there were restrictions in what could be done in the original conversion. There were a number of ways in which services and facilities could be improved if funds permitted, including (in no particular order):

- (a) As different people benefit from different systems, both an induction loop and an infra-red system should be available for deaf and hard of hearing people wherever performances or meetings are held.
- (b) More use could be made of captions/subtitles /supertitles – not just in foreign language screenings.
- (c) Some performances might benefit from the attendance of a BSL interpreter. It was mentioned that Adam Hills makes a point of having a BSL interpreter for some of his comedy gigs.
- (d) Some performances might benefit from the attendance of a scene interpreter for blind and visually impaired people, and possibly a pre-show tour of the set.
- (e) Action could be taken to deaden background noise in the café area, or at least part of it, for the benefit of those with hearing impairments.
- (f) The café layout could include an area suitable for informal group meetings.
- (g) The main entrance could be more clearly defined and relocated away from the pillar, in order to avoid collisions such as those experienced by one visually impaired Panel member.
- (h) The disabled toilet could be upgraded to Changing Places standard, with a hoist and changing bed.
- (i) As well as front row seating for people with disabilities, perhaps some back row seating might be kept available for those who might need a comfort break

during a performance, to allow them to slip out un-noticed and with minimum disturbance to the rest of the audience.

- (j) Consideration might be given to amending the location or angle of the auditorium speakers so as not to cause discomfort for any disabled people in the front row who were particularly sensitive to noise.
- (k) Seat comfort and legroom could be improved.

DECISION

NOTED (i) that Graham would report the Panel's comments back to Cath Shephard for inclusion in her report to the Eastgate Board on the outcome of the consultation exercise; and (ii) that Mary encouraged members to vote for an Eastgate project in the current Tesco charity funding allocation process.

Sederunt

Graham Lumb left the meeting at 8.20 pm, following the conclusion of the above item.

2. Connected Borders 2017-2022 (SBC Vision Statement)/Our Scottish Borders – Your Community Plan Consultation Draft

Councillor Tatler drew the Panel's attention to the recent publication of two documents by the Council - Connected Borders 2017-2022 (SBC Vision Statement), and Our Scottish Borders – Your Community Plan Consultation Draft, on which comments were sought.

He would be chairing the new Tweeddale Community Partnership, which would meet five times each year to hear from the public and to debate a theme from the Plan.

DECISION

NOTED that Councillor Tatler would provide a link to both documents and keep the Panel advised regarding dates, times and locations of Partnership meetings.

Sederunt

Councillor Tatler left the meeting following the conclusion of the above item at 8.25pm.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 30 August 2017 had been circulated.

DECISION

APPROVED as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising

(a) Peebles High School – Curtains

Frank advised the Panel that Peebles High School PTA had been awarded £2,000 by Tesco towards the cost of curtains to improve acoustics in the school dining hall.

DECISION

NOTED.

(b) SMS Messaging Service/Contact BSL/Next Generation Text Service

Michael advised the Panel that he had written an article for publication in the next edition of Open Door, encouraging other Panels to press for the introduction of Contact BSL or Next Generation Text Service in their areas, as Tweeddale Access Panel were doing with NHS Borders.

DECISION

NOTED.

(c) **Panel Logo/Promotional Pack**

Frank advised that Tweed Youth Action had withdrawn their interest in designing a logo for the Panel.

He reminded members that the Panel had previously discussed the possibility of involving Peebles High School or Borders College in a design competition

DECISION

NOTED and **AGREED** that

- (i) both Borders College and Peebles High School be invited to take part in a design competition;
- (ii) a prize to the value of £50 be awarded to the winner, and £25 to the runner up; and
- (iii) Frank prepare a brief to be sent out to both bodies, telling them about what the Panel does, but giving them a free reign on the design front.

(d) **Consultation Papers**

Michael referred to the agreed procedure for dealing with consultation papers, whereby these would be circulated, with members submitting comments to him, following which he would collate and submit comments on behalf of the Panel. He had received no comments in respect of the recent Hate Crime consultation, and so no comments had been submitted to the Scottish Government.

DECISION

NOTED.

(f) **Eddleston – Pedestrian Refuge**

Callum advised that he had no further progress to report regarding the possible relocation of the pedestrian refuge island in the middle of the main road through Eddleston to a position further westwards.

Council officers had undertaken to review traffic density figures, give the matter further consideration and advise the Community Council of their decision in due course.

DECISION

NOTED.

5. **Accessible Housing**

Paul Nichol advised that he had attended a presentation given in Dundee by Blackwood Housing on the accessible housing template they had rolled out in a number of recent developments in Dundee and Glasgow. Blackwood Housing showed the other organisations represented what good accessible housing looked like, described how they had consulted people and gave an interactive walk-through of the accommodation, which they could make available on request. Paul had a particular interest in housing provision for young disabled people, and hoped to share this with a number of local families.

Blackwood Housing had created a flexible environment where work surfaces could be lowered to suit a wheelchair user, and then raised to suit another tenant. Technology centred around the kitchen and bathroom. There was a Skype-type of link between warden and occupier, using a tablet device. Carers used a phone-type device to access the accommodation, and could access information on the tenant electronically.

Blackwood Housing confirmed that their Tweedbridge Court site in Peebles had been sold.

DECISION

AGREED that Paul draft a letter for the Panel to send to Scottish Borders Council, expressing concern at the lack of sheltered/supported accommodation for younger persons in Tweeddale.

8. Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting

AGREED, in view of the lateness of the hour, that the meeting be drawn to a close at that point, and that the next meeting be held in Dovecot Court on Wednesday 10 February 2018 at 7.00pm