**Draft Minute of Virtual Meeting of the Tweeddale Access Panel, held on Zoom, on Wednesday, 26 May 2021 at 7.00pm.**

**PRESENT:** *Paul Nichol (Chairman), Spencer Cobley (from 7.17pm), Michael Davis, Frank Drummond, Isabel Headon (new member), Callum Macdonald, and Elaine Thomson.*

**IN ATTENDANCE:** *Jeremy Cunningham (Peebles Community Trust) (Item 1 only), (Mags Greig (BSL Interpreter), Pam Rigby (Youth Engagement Worker, Scottish Borders Council), Councillor Robin Tatler and Clare Wildsmith (Wildsmith Training/Positive Communication).*

**APOLOGIES:** *No apologies.*

**Welcome to New Member and Attendees**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, including some new faces, namely a prospective new member of the Panel, Isabel Headon, local Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament, Pam Rigby a Youth Engagement Worker with Scottish Borders Council attending along with Isabel, and Jeremy Cunningham, who had been invited to speak on the first item of business

**NOTED and AGREED that Isabel Headon be welcomed into membership of the Panel.**

1. **Peebles Riverside – Path Proposals**

There had been circulated prior to the meeting an email from Jeremy Cunningham, with attached plans showing proposals for path changes and other alterations alongside the River Tweed as it flowed through Peebles. The Chairman invited Jeremy to expand on these proposals.

Jeremy explained that he had been engaged by the Peebles Community Trust, with funding from Sustrans, to work on the path from Eddleston to Peebles, h aving previously been involved in the Tweed Valley Railway Path. Sustrans were initially interested in linking up the Eddleston Water Path with the Tweed Valley Railway Path, but they had been persuaded to expand that remit and were supportive of widening and improving the whole riverside-related path network through Peebles, and of some place-making.

Jeremy explained that Sustrans policy in relation to towns was to have as much separation as possible between walkers and cyclists, but in an old town like Peebles this was sometimes not possible. The paths through Tweed Green were six feet (1.8metres) wide, and not wide enough to “share nicely”. The ideal width for these paths would be 3-3.6 metres, up to double the actual width. The path on Janet’s Brae and through the tunnel at Eshiels was 2.5 metres wide, but some sections of the Tweed Valley Railway path, such as that at Cardrona Golf Course, were 3.5 metres wide. He referred to the wide path at the new housing development at Standalane, which narrowed at Violetbank, and also to his attempts to negotiate a path through the grounds of Kingsmeadows House. He mentioned that the Council planned to instal handrails on Priorsford Footbridge, and his view that this bridge could be widened on its existing foundations. A major accessibility problem was the stepped area between Hay Lodge Hospital and the Tweed, and the whole pathway from there to the mouth of the Eddleston Water looked neglected. Jeremy invited comments from the Panel on all of the issues which he had raised, and on any other relevant concerns which they had.

Whilst agreeing that many paths were too narrow, with walkers or cyclists having to go off a path to allow a wheelchair to pass by, the widening of paths would not on its own eliminate or alleviate the concerns of Panel members.

Frank commented that those who were deaf or hard of hearing would not hear cyclists approaching from behind, and many might not hear a cyclist’s bell sounded in warning. He also referred to the Tweed Foundation plans for a long distance trail from the source to the mouth of the Tweed, and how this would be likely to increase the number, and perhaps the average speed, of cyclists riding on the riverside paths through Peebles.

Elaine pointed out that a blind person using a long cane might cause a serious accident by inadvertently poking it through the spokes of a bike, wheelchair or pram. She also felt that rather than spending money on handrails on the bridge itself, which might narrow the width available for wheelchair users, the approach to Priorsford Bridge on the South side was in need of attention.

Isabel and Paul mentioned sections of the path from Hay Lodge to the Cuddy junction which were narrow, muddy, uneven and in need of paving or tarring to facilitate wheelchair use.

Robin encouraged Panel members to attend the next online meeting of the local Community Council on 10June at 7.00pm, when Paul Frankland, Engineering Design Manager, Scottish Borders Council, would report on the Hay Lodge steps problem.

**DECISION**

**NOTED and AGREED that Jeremy Cunningham be thanked for giving the Panel the opportunity to comment on the path proposals.**

*Sederunt*

*Spencer Cobley joined the meeting during discussion of the above item.*

1. **Minute of Meeting held on 24 March 2021**

The Minute of the Meeting held on 24 March 2021 had been circulated.

**DECISION**

**APPROVED as a correct record**.

1. **Matters Arising**

**(a) Street Access Surveys**

Paul advised that he had heard nothing back from Neil Pringle, Neighbourhood Services Manager, about which of the necessary road and footpath repairs, identified in the Panel’s Street Access Surveys, would be carried out.

**DECISION**

**NOTED and AGREED** **that Paul email a reminder to Neil, copying in Robin, regarding the minor works requested by the Panel.**

**(b) Website Improvements**

Paul reminded members that he still needed potted biographies and photographs from several Panel members to be put on the Panel website. He had received some photos and passed these on to Fiona Munro-Budd for uploading. Paul would be willing to draw up potted biographies for any members wishing him to do so on their behalf.

**DECISION**

**NOTED and AGREED that members either send biographies and photographs of themselves to Paul for inclusion on the website, or contact him for assistance.**

**(c) Constitution**

Frank advised that, following a delay for which he was entirely responsible, he was back in communication with Lorna McCulloch at The Bridge, and hoped to report progress at the next meeting.

**DECISION**

**NOTED.**

**4 Deaf Awareness – Positive Communication Project**

Clare had circulated prior to the meeting copies of various positive communication tips leaflets which she had prepared for different purposes, which she was distributing to local shops, as appropriate, along with dry wipeboards which she had sourced locally, and on which messages could be written down. Material had also been published in the Peebles Life magazine. The response from businesses visited so far was overwhelmingly positive.

Clare had also attended the last meeting of the Tweeddale Area Partnership to provide communication tips for participants. Robin invited her to attend the September Partnership meeting to report back on progress there.

**DECISION**

**AGREED** **that Clare be paid the £500 second instalment of the £1500 grant awarded to her, and that she attend the next Panel meeting to report on further progress with the project.**

**5.Bank Account – Change of Bank**

There had been circulated prior to the meeting a resolution which the Royal Bank of Scotland had asked the Panel to pass in connection with the proposed transfer of the Panel’s bank account to their local branch.

Although the Panel agreed to pass the resolution, it came to light after the meeting that, due to some confusion with the paperwork, the resolution provided was in the style intended for a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (a SCIO). The Panel, however was not a SCIO but an unincorporated association, and so the resolution was not appropriate.

**Consideration of this item, therefore, would require to be deferred until a later meeting.**

1. **Chairman’s Report**

Paul advised that all of his activities on behalf of the Panel had been covered in reports on other business.

**DECISION**

**NOTED.**

1. **Secretary’s Report**
2. **Tweeddale Area Partnership Meeting , 30 March 2021**

Frank advised that he had attended the online Tweeddale Area Partnership meeting on 30 March 2021. Pam Rigby had reported on a film by a group of S6 pupils at Peebles High School, entitled “A Climate Emergency – Our Future in the Scottish Borders”, but most of the meeting had been taken up with the consideration of grant applications and the criteria for these.

Robin confirmed that a streamlined process for grant applications was to be put in place, so this was unlikely to happen again. He also advised that the next Partnership meeting would be held on Tuesday 15 June at 7.00pm. The theme would be the Place Planning Process. He encouraged Panel members to attend, as this topic was highly relevant to their activities.

**DECISION**

**NOTED.**

1. **Access Audit Report Writing – Webinar - 12 May, 2021**

Frank advised that he had attended a Centre For Accessible Environment Webinar on Access Audit Report Writing, and had circulated copies of the slides shown there to Panel members.

**DECISION**

**NOTED.**

**(c)** **Accessible Journey Planning Webinar – 25 May 2021**

Frank advised that he had attended a DES/Transport Scotland/Traveline Webinar on Accessible Journey Planning, and had circulated a link to a summary recording of the event to Panel members**.**

**DECISION**

**NOTED.**

1. **Treasurer’s Report**

Michael advised that the Panel’s bank balance stood at £3,612.08, after a £25 deduction to correct the figure last reported, and making payments of £60 for BSL services, £500 to Clare Wildsmith for the Positive Communication project, £35.01 for printer ink and two payments of Bank charges of £5 each.

**DECISION**

**NOTED.**

1. **Changing Places Toilets**

Isabel spoke about her campaign, as a Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament, along with her colleagues in the Scottish Borders, to raise awareness of disability issues, of the need for accessible public transport, adapted housing, and, in particular, of the need for Changing Places toilets, and to have more of these provided. She was making a film in support of this campaign.

Paul advised her that the Panel had been involved in discussions with the Eastgate Theatre about their improvement programme, which included the provision of a Changing Places Toilet in the second phase. Peebles Baptist Church were also planning to instal a Changing Places toilet in their new building, which was currently under construction in Cleland Avenue, Peebles. Pam pointed out that new buildings above a certain size which are open to the public will be required to have a Changing Places toilet.

**DECISION**

**AGREED** that Isabel’s work be commended and that her film be shown at the next Panel meeting.

1. **Tweeddale Area Partnership**

Robin advised that the next meeting of the Tweeddale Area Partnership would be held online on Tuesday 15 June at 7.00pm, when the theme would be the Place Planning Process. He encouraged Panel members to attend

**DECISION**

**NOTED.**

1. **Wheelchair Accessible Housing Delivery 2020-21**

Robin reminded the Panel that the Council’s Executive Committee had last year agreed to set an annual target of 20 wheelchair accessible homes. The Executive had been advised at their meeting the previous week that, during 2020-2021, Registered Social Landlords had delivered 2 wheelchair accessible homes, and the private sector had delivered none.

**DECISION**

**AGREED that Paul pursue the matter further with Lindsey Renwick, and Frank invite Nile Istephan to the next meeting to provide an update on Eildon developments in Tweeddale.**

1. **Date of Next Meeting**

**Next meeting and possible AGM to be held on Wednesday 25 August 2021, probably on Zoom, at 7.00pm.**