**Minute of Virtual Meeting of the Tweeddale Access Panel, held on Zoom, on Wednesday, 20 January 2021 at 7.00pm.**

**PRESENT:** *Paul Nichol (Chairman), Spencer Cobley, Frank Drummond, Stuart Hill, Callum Macdonald, and Elaine Thomson.*

**IN ATTENDANCE:** *Councillor Robin Tatler.*

**APOLOGIES:** *Michael Davis.*

1. **Condolences**

Before commencing the official business,the Chairman expressed deep sympathy on behalf of the Panel to Michael Davis, following the death of his wife, Morag. Her loss would be hugely felt not only by her family and friends, but also by the wider community in Peebles and beyond, as members heard in tributes paid by Frank and Callum. The Panel agreed that their condolences be recorded in the Minutes.

1. **Panel Membership and Quorum**

The Chairman referred to recent repeated problems caused by an insufficient number of members being present to form a quorum at Panel meetings. He had emailed those who had not attended for a year or more, asking if they wished to continue in membership, and stating that if they did not reply by a deadline they would be deemed to have resigned. Only one reply was received,

**DECISION**

**AGREED** that the Panel now had nine members, namely Paul Nichol, Yvonne Armstrong, Spencer Cobley, Michael Davis, Frank Drummond, Stuart Hill, Callum Macdonald, Mary Sharratt, and Elaine Thomson

and therefore a quorum would be five in terms of the current Constitution.

1. **Minute of Meeting held on 25 November 2020**

The Minute of the Meeting held on 23 November 2020 had been circulated.

**DECISION**

**APPROVED** as a correct record.

1. **Matters Arising**

**(a) Street Access Surveys**

Paul advised that he had forwarded copies of the Street Access Surveys to Philippa Gilhooley at Scottish Borders Council, who had provided the funding to cover David Hunter’s consultancy fees. Philippa was heavily involved in the roll-out of 20 mph speed limits in Borders towns and villages, and so had not yet had time to respond. Paul proposed that Philippa’s comments be awaited before circulating the survey reports more widely.

**DECISION**

**NOTED and AGREED** that the Council’s response be obtained before circulating the survey reports to the other bodies previously identified (namely the Community Council, Community Trust and Go Tweed Valley Tourism BID); and to any private individuals whom the reports might benefit.

**(b) Website Improvements**

Paul reminded members that he had recently circulated an email, breaking down the desired website improvements into around 12-15 manageable tasks, and seeking volunteers to take on one or two tasks each. He would advise Fiona Budd of the stage we were at, and that fresh content would be forwarded as it became available for adding to our website.

**DECISION**

**NOTED.**

**(c) Constitution**

As agreed at the last meeting, Frank advised that he had begun a review of the Panel Constitution, with input from Paul and Callum. They had met online on two occasions, and Frank proposed to let the two of them see a clean draft for comments before passing this to Lorna McCulloch at the Bridge for her views. A final draft would then be brought to the full Panel. Once approved by the Panel as a draft, the Constitution would have to be submitted to OSCR for approval before being brought into operation.

**DECISION**

**NOTED.**

**(d) Wheelchair Accessible Housing – Target**

Paul confirmed that the Council’s annual target of 20 wheelchair accessible homes, consisting of 15 to be provided by Registered Social Landlords, and 5 from other sources, would be subject to annual review.

Paul advised that he had circulated a copy of the Council’s background paper, entitled “Space to live – Wheelchair accessible housing in the Scottish Borders”.

Robin updated members on progress with the Eildon Housing Association development of the former Tweedbridge Court site. Eildon had applied for a Stopping Up Order, which would allow construction to commence in February. Anyone wishing further details or to register an interest was advised to contact Eildon soon.

**DECISION**

**NOTED.**

**(e) Social Media**

Paul confirmed that he had publicised on Facebook the Panel’s need for help in dealing with social media. As a result of this, two names had been suggested to him, one of whom, Lewis Murray, was a recent first-class honours graduate in Marketing with Digital Media, and also had caring experience. Paul had asked Lewis for his comments on the Panel website, and suggested that he consider joining the Panel.

**DECISION**

**AGREED** that Lewis Murray be welcomed into membership, should he wish to join.

1. **Chairman’s Report**
2. **Connect Scotland**

Paul advised that, at Clare Wildsmith’s request, he had emailed Panel members regarding Connect Scotland, the Scottish Government scheme to connect isolated, eligible people on low income, with tablets, wi-fi, etc.

Callum advised that Paul Spence of Peebles Resilience Group was looking for disability champions to support people getting to grips with new technology. Callum had volunteered for this role. He advised that Eildon Housing Association had 50 i-pads and 50 chromebooks to give out to their tenants who were eligible.

Robin added that Ruth Noble from Outside The Box was liaising with Clare Wildsmith in getting people online.

**DECISION**

**NOTED.**

1. **Deaf Awareness and Covid**

Paul advised that he had held further discussions with Clare Wildsmith about putting together a business case for funding to improve communications between local businesses and people who were deaf or hard of hearing, when masks muffle sound and in most cases prevented lip-reading.

Robin pointed out that the Community Fund still had a reasonable balance available, and an application for less than £1,500 could be fast-tracked. An application for a larger amount would require consideration by the Tweeddale Area Partnership, which was not due to meet until 30 March. He recommended that any grant application to the Community Fund be made in the name of the Panel, as it was a constituted body and was a registered charity.

**DECISION**

**AGREED that the grant application proceed under the auspices of the Panel.**

1. **Bank Account**

Paul advised that all of the necessary paperwork relating to the change in office-bearers at the last AGM had now been lodged with, or exhibited to, the TSB Penicuik branch. He hoped that in the future, Bank statements would be sent to Stuart, our new Treasurer, and no longer be sent to Michael.

**DECISION**

**NOTED.**

1. **Secretary’s Report – Area Partnership Representation**

Frank advised that he had been unable to attend a meeting of the Tweeddale Area Partnership on Zoom on 19 January, as he had another commitment that evening. Unfortunately, this was an ongoing commitment on Tuesday nights, which would prevent his attendance at future Area Partnership meetings. He pointed out that any Panel member was welcome to attend the Area Partnership, but whilst these were being held on Microsoft Teams, only one Panel member would be able to speak.

Callum indicated that he would be willing to speak at Partnership meetings on matters relevant to the Panel

**DECISION**

**NOTED AND AGREED** that Callum act as the Panel spokesperson at online Area Partnership meetings.

1. **Treasurer’s Report**

Frank advised that changes to the Panel’s banking arrangements had still to take place at the time when the latest Bank statement was issued, with the result that this had been sent to Michael. In Michael’s absence Frank reported that the Panel’s current bank balance was £2,152.09, after payment of Bank service charges.

**DECISION**

**NOTED.**

1. **Tweeddale Area Partnership – Format For Future Meetings**

Robin advised that the previous evening’s Tweeddale Area Partnership meeting had continued discussions on how to become more representative, to attract more attendees and a wider range of attendees, which would probably need the Partnership to have some decision-making powers. Changes had also been made in the operation of the Community Fund, with the introduction of fast-tracking, which had already been touched upon to earlier in the Panel meeting

Information gathered at all of the Area Partnerships, and at the online drop-ins, would be gathered together and circulated to participants for their comments, which should be submitted for consideration at the Partnership meeting on Tuesday 30 March.

Robin referred to differences between Microsoft Teams, as used for Council meetings, and Zoom as used for Panel meetings, and to Frank’s previous comments about possible use of subtitles at virtual Partnership meetings. Robin suggested that the Panel might wish to recommend the use of Zoom for Partnership meetings.

Paul advised that he would ask Clare to comment on this aspect, in view of her online experience with a number of people with hearing impairments, liaising with a BSL interpreter, etc, and would propose that the next Panel meeting be held in time to comment on the Area Partnership issues by 30 March.

**DECISION**

**NOTED.**

1. **Date of Next Meeting**

**Wednesday 24 March 2021, on Zoom, at 7.00pm**