

## Upper Eskdale Development Group Directors' Meeting Wednesday 10 June 2015

Present: Sue Company, Nick Jennings, Ernie Buck, Les Harrison, Jock Miller, Jennie Mills, Bernard Provost, Lodro Dorje, Susie Lilley

Absent/Apologies: Scott McCarthy, Victoria Long

Minutes of the Meeting of May 2015: Jennie moved to accept, and Bernard seconded the motion, which was carried.

### Matters Arising:

- **Keyholders.** The induction meeting was held and members are awaiting keys.
- **Snagging group.** Bernard has compiled a list of small issues, but reports no major faults with the building.
- Bernard agreed to be a contact for Sharon if she needs to call on his expertise for any issues with the Hub building which may be out of her area of knowledge.
- **Wifi.** Resolving issues with the current internet provider is ongoing. Nick is hopeful this will happen soon.
- **Bike rack.** Ernie's request for a covered bike rack was revisited. There is general support for this and it is included in an ongoing discussion of a wishlist (see below). Ernie will resite the existing bike rack to the rear of the building.
- **'Wishlist'.** The finance committee has begun compiling a list of wished for items for the Hub. Nick will circulate the current list to directors. They could make a case for any additions they would like to see added to this, ideally including research of where they could be purchased and the cost. Items will be categorized by area: outside, schoolroom, café, office. Nick asked for feedback for each item looking at priority, pricing, balance of funding. The Wishlist Subgroup (Jennie, Ernie, Susie, Victoria) will organize the list and set up a meeting after Victoria's return (22 June). The Finance Subgroup will make the final decision.
- **Brochure for the Hub.** A draft for this has been completed by Sharon and Nick. The Brochure Subgroup (Lodro Dorje, Sharon, Jennie) will meet and discuss this draft before the brochure is finalised and printed.
- **Events procedure** (as agreed in May meeting) is now in effect. Any ideas for events should be developed as fully as possible before the proposed plan is submitted to Sharon, who will promote the event. Members were issued with the proposed schedule of events that Sharon has developed and were asked to direct any comments about the content to the chairman.
- **Display freezer.** This has been purchased, and frozen ice cream products were included in the sale price.
- **Dogs in the café.** Sharon had researched this issue in similar café/pub venues, and she shared this with the Group. Most places do not allow this, and the places that do she felt seemed not to have a good hygienic atmosphere. The Group discussed this and voted "no" to dogs in the café, except for guide dogs, with the compromise that dogs could be allowed outside by the picnic tables and to provide hooks for leads and water bowls for the dogs. The Group instructed Tanith to ask dog owners to keep their dogs outside.
- **Kitchen fan.** Bernard said that there are still complaints about the fan noise, even though the noise levels fall well within measured health and safety requirements. The group continues to decide that no solution that has been suggested would be financially feasible.
- **Attracting bikers.** Sue suggested having a shed with maintenance equipment for motorbikes – water hose, brake fluid, etc. (Like Dave Smith, local hotel owner in Moffat.)– and being included on the 'Moto-go-loco' website, promoting the Hub as an attractive stop for bikers on a local driving route.

### Reports: Development Manager

- **Nick's employment.** A schedule for Nick's ultimate retirement was discussed, and it was agreed that he will work 4 days per week in July, 3 days per week in August. He will continue to lessen his hours until his final retirement in January 2016.
- **Bookkeeping/Finances.** There are still some issues regarding administration of the monthly finances for the café. Nick arranged training for Sharon on this, and he has found a new community member with a background in auditing who has expressed an interest in helping, perhaps monthly. This issue will be

revisited at the next Board meeting. Members agreed that the search for a bookkeeper be started. Nick has written a provisional finance report, and will circulate it when he has completed it.

- **Affordable housing survey results.** Nick concluded after compiling the results of the survey that there is a demand for affordable housing. He has been advised that the possibility of securing funding for this is highly likely. (See report circulated to the Board by Nick.)
- **Renewable energy.** Re: Windfarm turbines on Castle Hill. Nick encouraged Directors to show their support for this and will send links to them. He pointed out that this could bring, over 25-year span, an income into UEDG of thousands of pounds.
- **Field visits re: ideas for café.** Nick is planning to take Tanith and Sharon to visit other local successful establishments for inspiration, including: The Old School, Mrs. Green's Café in Dumfries, the Buccleuch Arms in Moffat, Café 91 in Lockerbie, and Loch Arthur in Beeswing.

#### Reports: Chair

- **Shift of Hub operation from Development Phase to Revenue Phase.** Sue presented structure and management models representing this. It was agreed that the ideal scenario would be that the Project Development Manager role would be entirely separate from the operations roles and would focus on the development of revenue generating projects such as affordable housing and renewable energy. The remit of the Hub Manager would include all Hub and Café operations roles.

#### Reports: Hub Administrator.

- **Westerkirk Writing Group.** There is a possibility of Eskdalemuir group joining with this group. Sharon is in touch with Angie Ball who coordinates in Eskdalemuir.
- **Website.** Lodro Dorje reminded the group about the high quality of Samye Ling's website and suggested the Hub contact the same company. It cost SL £2000, and the group agreed this level outlay is necessary for a successful website. Nick will arrange a meeting with the company and Sharon to discuss this possibility.
- **Hub as a wedding venue.** Sharon suggests promoting the Hub as a wedding venue. Having past experience at Gretna Green, she suggests we might hire a 'dresser' to take photos of how the Hub could appear for such an event. The group agreed that she get a quote for this.
- **Room rates.** Sharon asks for clarification on pricing. The treatment room upstairs is not being utilised. Nick suggested the room rate be lowered to £5 + VAT as a special offer to attract therapists. There is an issue with a faint glue-like chemical smell permeating the room, which is being investigated.
- **Community Tapestry.** Sharon suggested an evening event to unveil the tapestry in which canapés could be provided. Do Victoria and Claire wish to host such an evening event?
- **Induction training for volunteers.** Sharon will develop this, perhaps supported by contacting Third Sector Agency and also for guidance on whether any disclosures might be needed (eg for working with school pupils, see below)
- **Training Link with Langholm Academy.** The café could offer work experience for fifth year students. The group met this with approval.

#### Reports: Café Manager.

- **New Café staff.** Tanith reports that they are settling in well. Wolfie is not able to do regular hours but agreed to be included in a "bank" of available staff. Sharon, Nick and Tanith will work to expand this 'bank'.
- **Training for café employees.** A subsidy up to £3000 has been identified for this. Tanith and Sharon will identify staff training needs.
- **Café customers.** There is a steady growth in footfall, and the feedback has been typically positive.

#### Events:

- **Fund-raising events.** The Board suggested the encouragement of "themed nights" with food available, since historically they have been highly successful.
- **Paintballing event.** This will occur at some point in July. Nick is in communication with the organiser and it is hoped that the Hub will be able to benefit from the extra custom, via bar and food sales.
- **Scottish rally events.** Nick has been in contact with the organiser about those taking place in our locale, who has agreed to promote the Hub via social media and send business our way during event days.

- **Day of the Region.** Taking place in October, date tbc. This year's theme is 'Connectivity'. Although there is substantially less funding this year, the group agreed that UEDG and the Hub be part of this again – Sharon will confirm our involvement. Further details will be discussed next meeting.
- **Games Night,** Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June. Jock will coordinate this. Tanith will provide snack food.
- **Ceiledh Night:** With 'Riddles Fiddles', Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> June. Kitchen preparing a basic menu.
- Proposed Car boot sale, Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June. Plants and cream teas will also be sold.

Next Meeting: Thursday 9th July 7.30pm

Respectfully submitted by Susie Lilley (acting Secretary)