

29/05/2024

REPORT FROM CAP STEERING GROUP - YEAR ONE ACTIONS

1. CDM RECRUITMENT PROJECT

All completed - Company policies and procedures in place; pension, PAYE, expenses, employment contract complete. Steering group of six residents set up. Community office space established in the Wee Crook.

A. Ongoing funding for role after a year one

In discussion with Colin McMillan of SSE Windfarm Community Fund, the current funders.

2. DESTINATION TWEED

Our CDM is a member of their core partners team, which meets four times a year, and is liaising over their planned path. However, the Upper Tweed section is proving very complicated due to difficult negotiations with landowners. It will not now be completed until the 2025 to 26 financial year.

For this reason, it will be dropped from the year one actions.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ROUTES

Facilitating new active travel routes within the community: we are supporting the Gameshope bridge accessing the bothy. Funds have been approved and work is underway.

The key route from Village to hall to Crook Inn site is work in progress. Meetings with local landowners are planned and a meeting with Philippa Gilhooley (SBC Road safety officer) is scheduled for 31st of May.

4. INTERPRETATION ON NEW AND EXISTING ROUTES

Four new panels are in the draft stages. An interpretation planning group of volunteers has been established. BFT partnership work on a toposcope and walk signage. A new Tweedsmuir Glass sign has been created for the Wee Crook and new noticeboard installed outside the building.

5. DEVELOP PLANS FOR GUIDED HERITAGE WALKS

Wildlife Tour of Stanhope estate with gamekeeper took place on April 24. 16 people attended.

Emily from Connecting Threads will be leading a heart, head and hands walk in June.

Charlotte Cavey-Wilcox will be leading a summer walk

Scottish Borders fungi group walk scheduled for autumn.

Primary schools' visits to Gameshope arranged - 50 children in June.

Borders Forest Trust has plans for various walks around Gameshope. They are also looking for our support with historical themed walks.

6. ECOMUSEUM

All has changed at SUP. LM has met with the new CEO, Cara Gillespie, who has as her first priority a big, seven generation plan for Talla Wildfell. When she has that mapped out, she will be looking at the Ecomuseum. They would be keen to take the lead on recruitment of volunteers and supporting the curation/development function for the future. Their new development officer will not be appointed until late summer, however.

7. IMPROVE BROADBAND

We have StarLink at the Village Hall, funded until October. Starlink has also been purchased and set up at the Wee Crook. This is an interim solution as SBC is planning to install 5G at the Crook site as a pathfinder project, demonstrating the benefits of the technology in a remote rural community. CDM has input into the plans. The local hub should reach the village, and people will be able to subscribe on an individual basis, in addition to the development of innovative tech solutions, data collection for business, potential for improved traffic safety, et cetera.

8. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

We need to develop an action plan from scratch, as the local housing plan doesn't recognise the need in our area. CDM has made a new contact with Scottish Borders Housing Association and Stanhope estate has expressed an interest in building some new affordable homes.

9. REDUCE TWEEDSMUIR CARBON FOOTPRINT

We are now in the loop for getting access to and training in thermal imaging equipment. CDM has a meeting scheduled in June. The first repair café and bike clinic have been held at Tweedsmuir Village Hall.

Using more local produce - CDM has contacted a number of local suppliers about being included in a leaflet and promoted to the community. Two have responded, three more are awaited. She is chasing the unpaid work team to see whether they will complete the polytunnel, to enable us to grow more. We are growing vegetable seeds at home for planting in the Crook gardens or selling in the community. The vegetable bed has been prepared and fruit bushes planted

The Ridan composter is being used more, and will be promoted at Rhubarb Bash, with signage to assist and the offer of compost caddies to people who would like to collect their food waste and take it to the composter. Now that the Wee Crook is open, there should be a steady flow of kitchen waste, which will improve its operation.

10. ACCESSING WINDFARM GRANTS

This action is largely completed. Our CDM has designed a flowchart showing people how to access grants, which has proved very popular - other areas, including Biggar want their own versions, which we are providing for them. A generalised version is being reproduced in the Community News.

Two extra youth bursary applications have been received as a result of the extra publicity.

Negotiations are underway with Whitelaw Brae about the new community fund that will be coming on stream when they start generating. They want this tied up quite quickly. The community council is a key partner in working out what the fund should look like and the area of benefit. The community company is purposely not involved in this decision-making, because we will be the prime applicant.

11. PROMOTING USE OF THE VILLAGE HALL

The village hall is an important local resource, and we are encouraging as many community bookings as possible. Aiming for a couple of community events each month and considering additional uses where possible.

It is being used more now than last year, with regular Ceilidh dancing and FitSteps classes and one-off events such as flower arranging, film night and curry cooking demonstration. A pilot outreach service from CAB has been trialed.

A novel new use is renting secure storage within the hall.

12. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

As a small community, this is really the only way to get things done we are working to grow existing links with other southern Upland communities like Ettrick, as well as West Linton for environmental projects, Biggar Area Climate Care, et cetera. Need to improve dialogue with planners, which is starting to happen.

13. CAMPING PODS AND BUNKHOUSE

For the pods, all funding is secured and there is nothing more we can do until planning permission is received. It was resubmitted in February 2024 and more feedback to planners given in April 2024. The aim is to have the pods erected immediately permission is received. All groundworks have been completed.

Bunkhouse plans have been reviewed by TCC and TTG. Building warrant work is underway, and the next step is to secure funding for the build itself, with opening scheduled for summer 2027.

14. OUTREACH SERVICES

The CAP steering group have considered a wide range of possibilities, some more feasible than others. For example, holding medical clinics with windfarm funding where NHS services are not available, to address the disadvantage of living in an isolated area.

Chemist drop-off service for prescriptions - will talk to the pharmacy and see whether we can set this up, either with a volunteer, or formalise it as a small job for somebody local.

Parcel drop-off? Probably not needed any longer, as everybody has made arrangements of their own. But a universal map of house names for delivery drivers would be useful.

Village shop – the outreach trial from Broughton wasn't really successful, possibly because the offering was very limited. Now that the Wee Crook is open, it might be possible for the café to take on some of this - selling emergency-type food supplies such as milk and bread. Needs to be discussed with the operators.

Post office? Providing services such as banking and parcel drop-off. This could be included in a questionnaire to find out what services people would actually want. Others could be carry-out meals, tool share, community taxi, veg boxes.

Recycling - the Rag Bag has arrived and been installed at the village hall for collecting used textiles. A community kiosk has been purchased and is being fitted out. We will be able to use it as a location to recycle cheese wrappers, coffee packaging, toothbrushes and batteries, among other things.

Our CDM has also obtained agreement from SBC that we can use “a man with a van” to collect items to take to the tip on our behalf, without being penalised financially. Details need to be worked out.

15. SECURING FUTURE FUNDING FOR CDM

Colin wants the grant application by the 12th of July, with an updated year one actions document plus summary of outcomes.

He is suggesting two years' funding with a review at the end of year one. Not three, because he is struggling with the panel over the idea of funding running costs. This is a pioneering project, and he needs to bring the panel along with him.

We want to prove benefit for the wider Upper Tweed area, which can be done with projects like the school walks.

We need to be recording volunteer work. We should all be logging our time spent volunteering, though that is very hard to do. We could produce some estimates of how long tasks take, and use that to work out the hours of volunteer time given. We will need to include both numbers of people and time in the next grant application.

16. TCC STRATEGIC PLANNING

We need to develop a five-year plan for the community company. Apart from anything else, this is a fundamental part of the grant application process which we have to grasp. There is a summary of the purpose and content of the plan which will give us a starting point.