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MINUTES of MEETING of FORWARD DUNOON AND COWAL GROUP held in the 22 HILL STREET, DUNOON on MONDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2014

Present: Councillor Bruce Marshall (Chair)

Councillor Gordon Blair Councillor Michael Breslin
Councillor Alex McNaughton

Attending:

Janet McKellar, Help Project
Lorna Elliot, Area Committee Manager
John Gordon, Regeneration Project Manager
Sue Minns, Cowalfest
Ailsa Cunningham, Amenity Services Technical Officer
Catriona Craig, Cowal Marketing Group
Brian Close, Planning Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:-

Councillor Jimmy McQueen
David Adams McGilp, Visit Scotland
Colin Moulson, PA23 BID

2. MINUTES

The minute of the Forward Dunoon and Cowal Group of 11th August 2014 were approved as a correct record.

3. COWALFEST

Sue Minns gave a verbal update on events that had taken place for Cowalfest 2014.

She informed the group that numbers were down this year in regards to runners, this was primarily due to the Glasgow half marathon and Glencoe race being held just before the Cowalfest events.

Sue reported that the mountain bike race had 34 competitors and was seen by competitors and organisers as very successful.

A discussion took place surrounding events licensing and Ailsa Cunningham agreed to liaise with Sue to discuss and plan the licenses required for next years events.

2015 Planning

Sue ran through a list of planned events for next year that is to include sea kayaking, canoeing, a half marathon and various running events. There are also plans in place to run a series of workshops in the run up to next years events that will concentrate on areas such as outdoor craft and first aid.

Sue reported that the Cowalfest committee were still in a strong position but she felt that they required more publicity and support from the local community.

**Councillor Michael Breslin left the meeting at this point at 2.15pm
returning at 2.20pm**

Outcome

Councillor Gordon Blair agreed to take on the task of trying to promote Cowalfest throughout the schools in Edinburgh.

It was agreed that more work is required with the Cowal Marketing Group. Partner agencies around the table were encouraged to include Cowalfest into any marketing campaigns that they were running.

4. TEAMTOWN

John Gordon, Regeneration Project Manager gave the group a verbal update on the emerging thinking in respect of the TEAMTOWN model for delivering proposals for change, which will hopefully identify the current and future barriers to economic development under the key headings of: environmental, safety and security, economic, accessibility, integration and social inclusion, with the outcome being to remove these barriers. He took the forum through the purpose of the project, its objectives, outcomes, timescales and gave a breakdown of the community groups and partner agencies that they hope to get involved.

John informed the group that he hoped emphasis would be put on the younger members of the community to get involved in particular teenagers and young adults.

The overall aim of the project is to set up a working model that can be adopted and run by the local community. It is projected that the initial start up cost will be £10,000.

5. AOCB

Queens Hall

John Gordon gave the group a brief progress update on the proposed work to the Queen's Hall and Pier Area of the town. He informed the group that the building would be closing at the end of May 2015 for construction work to begin and all the relevant planning applications and warrants are in.

John also gave an update on a sea trial that took place in September, this involved an experiment to encase the wooden beams in an outer shell as this would be more economically viable than replacing them all with green heart timber, Historic Scotland were invited at this stage for their view point on this option.

Planning

Councillor Marshall highlighted a concern regarding the lack of planning applications in the Cowal area and asked Brian if there was anything interesting coming up of which he replied there wasn't.

A discussion took place regarding the use of outside contractors for building projects in the town and how this would stunt the economic development locally.

Brian Close informed the group that they were currently looking to set up stakeholder groups and if anyone around the table was interested to contact himself for further details.

Councillor McNaughton informed the group that in the local plan the whole of the Dunoon area was marked for action.

Help

Janet McKellar reported to the group that the Help Project was doing well.

They are currently looking at re-running their twelve week employment programme.

Janet also informed the group that they are looking for four week projects and would be looking to the forum for suggestions. She felt this is an important area of work for the local community as it provides improvements to communal areas of the town.

Janet also reported that as a result of their last jobs fair the unemployment register in the local area was reduced by 7%. HELP are also planning to run another jobs fair within Dunoon Grammar School with the hope that they can engage with pupils and encourage participation.

Cowal Marketing Group

Catriona Craig raised a concern in regards to the varying ticket prices available on the Western Ferries, the group also felt this was an issue, in particular the lack of retail outlets supplying the tickets on the Gourock side.

It was felt that it would be beneficial to arrange a meeting with Gordon Ross from Western Ferries to see if anything can be done to rectify the situation.

Catriona then informed the group that seven people had been appointed throughout the whole of Argyll and Bute to actively help with Tourism Promotion. The successful candidate for the Cowal Area was Virginia Sumsion, it was agreed that she would be invited on to the forum.

Catriona then raised a point regarding the lack of flag flying at the Castle Hill and the impact this could have on tourists visiting the area. The Community Governance Manager responded to Catriona, explaining that the current flag flying policy that Argyll and Bute Council adhere to is going to full council in December for review. This decision was agreed by Members at the October Area Committee.

PA23BID

Councillor Marshall on behalf of Colin Moulson updated the group about the progress of the PA23BID and future planned events which included an endurance cycling event set to take place in the spring.

A discussion also took place regarding re-running the best Christmas Window display this year for local retailers in Argyll street, this still needs to be confirmed.

Burgh Hall Trust

Councillor Marshall informed the group that funding totally 1.6m was now in place, as a result of this the Burgh Hall will close at the end of November 2014 to allow works to start on the building. Two points were raised from this discussion.

1. The Queens Hall and the Burgh Hall would be closed at the same time.
2. The Burgh Hall closure would not effect the erection of the Christmas Tree which will remain just outside the building.

Wind Turbines

A discussion took place between Members regarding established Wind Farm sites in the Cowal area and the associated opportunities for Community Development Trusts.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the date for the next Forward Dunoon and Cowal Group would be held in February and the Senior Area Committee Assistant would be in contact with members of the Forum to confirm the date.