



TWEEDSMUIR COMMUNITY COMPANY

A Tweedsmuir Community project

Chairperson report for AGM on 11th August 2023

Welcome to our AGM!

It has been a very busy year for all of our directors/trustees, Community Development Officer and volunteers - we have lots of achievements to celebrate.

Last summer the completion of work and fit out of The Wee Crook were paramount. Many of the grants were time sensitive and enabled the purchase and fitment of equipment and landscaping. Plans and policies were developed and licences applied for. We thank John Lawrie and WTA and their teams for undertaking our project and all of our funders who made the Wee Crook possible.

Following feedback from our funders, we have been requested to update our constitution which was developed in 2008. Frances Leckie, our secretary, has led on creating our new SCIO constitution based on our previous aims and purposes with support from Borders Community Action and we would like to adopt the new SCIO constitution at this meeting. The aims of Tweedsmuir Community Company are:

The advancement of education

The advancement of citizenship or community development,

The advancement of the arts, heritage, culture or science

The provision of recreational facilities, or the organisation of recreational activities, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the persons for whom the facilities or activities are primarily intended,

The advancement of environmental protection or improvement,

The promotion of equality and diversity

To comply with charitable status we set up a Tweedsmuir Trading Group which allows for profits to be transferred to Tweedsmuir Community Company for charitable use. Since last summer, we have held many fundraising events which were very popular including, Rhubarbfest, curry nights, Rugby socials, music nights, fine dining, Quiz nights, Night Sky Presentations and regular opening of the bar at weekends. In addition, the building has been hired by external groups and hosted meetings, parties, storytelling and also provided showers and washing facilities for the local community. We began advertising for an operator when the building was under construction and have to date been unsuccessful which is probably due to the current financial climate.

The Wee Crook was granted food licence approval and we are operating under Liquor Occasional licences until the Premises licence can be granted.

During the last year we have had changes to our board and we thank Kevin Dempster and Debbie Cullen who have resigned for their contributions and support. We thank Helen Wood who is standing down from the role of treasurer but will continue to serve as a director and support the new role of bookkeeper with her invaluable experience.

The gardening group have been working away all year making a huge difference to how the garden looks but also educating us on many aspects of gardening and teamwork. – Thank you Caroline Matthias who keeps us all motivated and organised delivering wildlife areas, an orchard, hedging, community vegetables while keeping a usable

community space. There are always plenty of jobs for everybody with no experience necessary and it's a great opportunity to meet and chat.

Progression of the Camping Pods has been challenging and after discussion with SBC planning department we have commissioned topographical drawings to support the planning process.

Scottish Government funding has reopened and we have registered a note of interest to move forward phase 2 – the Bunkhouse development. I would like to thank both James Welch and Jamie Bateman for their ongoing work with planning and building developments.

Hazel Mason put forward a proposal to operate a café during the summer operating Friday to Sunday 10am to 3pm until 12th August. Insurances had to be updated and implemented to enable the operation of a café which was different from our previous set up of fundraising run by volunteers. Many thanks to Hazel, her family, Grace, and the many volunteers who contributed to the opening and running of the café. This enterprise was profitmaking and the information received will be invaluable for the future. Tweedsmuir benefited from local employment, volunteering opportunities, training – especially important for the youth in our area.

We thank Lesley Mason who has been both Heritage Officer and Community Development officer, her work has been invaluable to the achievements of the Company. The funding for these posts is now exhausted and an application to SSE Clyde Borders for funding support for a Community Development Officer has been submitted and we await the outcome. Lesley has led interaction with other community focused bodies including Destination Tweed, Tweedsmuir Community Council, Southern Upland Partnership and Ettrick and Yarrow community development company. Heritage information boards have been installed at various points around our area and link to our website and Ecomuseum www.Tweedsmuir.scot This is an

ongoing project and further input to our heritage content and sharing of information is very welcome. We now have a new Community Action Plan developed with feedback from our stakeholders and residents which provides information on our needs and priorities for the next 5 years. On the basis of the CAP, we replied to planning consultations regarding proposed masts in the Tweedsmuir area. The CAP will involve future community consultations of the use of the former Crook Inn building and also Tweedsmuir Kirk which was given notice to be disposed of by Church of Scotland by 2027. The board looked into windfarm community ownership with Whitelaw Brae but felt at this time we did not have the resources to take this forward. As well as supporting development of The CAP with Tweedsmuir Community Council, the board are working towards better communication, increased membership and further developing the Crook site.

The number of people to be thanked is great and so not to miss anyone – Personal thanks to everyone who has been involved either on the board, volunteering, or supporting events - we are a small community but together we are making a big difference.

Gavin Parker