



Scottish Government Planning Updates

Alan Cameron from the Scottish Government's Planning Modernisation and Co-ordination division recently contacted Community Councils reminding us of our unique and developing status in the planning system and that we can sign up for e-mail or hard copy alerts about planning consultations and other relevant documents. He went on to say that Community Councils will be

given a greater statutory role in the modernised planning system being introduced this year – as consultees on the preparation of development plans and on pre-application consultation with local communities on certain projects. In order to meet these new responsibilities and properly discharge their new functions, it is important that they understand them by registering for these updates. Community Councils can

register to receive e-mail alerts for new planning publications at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/built-environment/planning>

(see "Subscribe to eNews").

For those without internet access please contact the Directorate for the Built Environment on 0131 244 7610.

Voluntary and Community Sector Liaison (VSL)

My role is to act as liaison between voluntary and community organisations and statutory Community Planning partners. This is assisted by the VSL Group which brings together a huge range of voluntary and community sector forums/networks to provide a venue for discussion, a common voice for the sector and a reference group for community planning representatives. The group is also responsible for the voluntary sector's role in the

Compact Action Plan. The people attending meetings are responsible for two way feed back to and from their forums/networks.

The group meets quarterly with email communication between meetings and its members also attend specific meetings to add the sector's input to community planning documents and to inform elected members of Scottish Borders Council. The members of the VSL Group attend meetings on

top of their 'day job' so have little time to devote to preparation for meetings or for reading the reports from community planning representatives so the system is not perfect but it is certainly better than no system at all.

Comments welcome.

Liz Walthew
Voluntary Sector Liaison Officer
 The Bridge

We can provide this document on tape, in large print and various other formats by contacting the address below. In addition, contact us for information on other language translations, additional copies, or to arrange for an officer to meet with you and explain any areas of the publication that you would like clarified.

Clare Malster, Community Engagement Officer
 Business Improvement Unit, Scottish Borders Council Headquarters
 Newtown St. Boswells
 MELROSE TD6 0SA
 Tel: 01835 826626



March 2009

Chairman's Comments

The demand for training fluctuates. Much depends upon the business of individual Community Councils. As business fluctuates, so does the demand for training. The most popular theme, of course, lies around fund raising through sources of grant aid – the most obvious being Lottery funded opportunities. Other popular themes include Planning and Licensing. Responses to training opportunities indicate clearly that training for the sake of training does not appeal to the majority of Community Councillors. Rightly so. The idea that networking is a worthwhile by-product of training sessions seems not to appeal. So be it.

The Network plans to seek your views on a possible shift in emphasis, retaining a training programme for the foreseeable future, whilst continuing to offer opportunities to meet and discuss funding, project management, planning topics and licensing issues. We also intend to offer an opportunity for office bearers to meet. For example, area gatherings of secretaries on the topics of minute taking and data protection; of Chairmen on constitutional changes (national and local) or a more strategic

role for Community Councils; of treasurers on the outcomes of the Review of Community Council Funding. It would be good to offer similar gatherings for those delegated to keep the Asset Register; for those who have accepted a responsibility for Community Health and Well-Being or Environmental matters, or for those who are very new and would just like to hear all that others are doing.....

Instead of the customary form for completion the Secretary or Chairman of your Community Council may well receive a telephone call from a representative of the Community Council Network asking for the views of your Council on training opportunities. **Please place this matter on the agenda for your April or May meeting** so that we might contact you during June, ascertain your thoughts and plan a responsive training programme from September to December then March to June.

Graeme Donald
chair@sbccn.org.uk

Inside this issue:

	Pg
• Christmas Lights	2
• Revised Community Council Scheme Changes to Constitutions	2
• Climate Challenge Fund Update	2
• Improving Your Town or Village—Annual Conference	3
• Scottish Government Planning Updates	4
• Voluntary & Community Sector Liaison	4

Future Events:

- SBCCN Executive 1st April—Corn Exchange, Melrose
- SBCCN AGM 13th May—SBC HQ, Newtown St Boswells
- SBCCN Conference 3rd October - SBC HQ, Newtown St Boswells



Snippets

Christmas Lights

Does your Community Council organise the Christmas Lights in your area?

Would you be interested in working with other Community Councils to share ideas, source equipment and identify funding etc?

If so please note your interest with Clare Malster (address at the back of this newsletter).

Climate Challenge Fund Update

The BCCF Environmental bid to the Fund for a grant to improve home and village hall thermal insulation has passed the first stage (Expression of Interest) and the full application has been submitted for consideration. This take place later in the month and we should have a decision during April.

Although the project has an ambitious target of reducing the carbon footprint of 10% of Borders dwellings by 10%, this should be achievable by working with communities through the community council network and using data from various sources, particularly the Edinburgh-based Energy Savings Advice Centre.

Revised Community Council Scheme - Changes to Constitutions

The revised Scottish Borders Community Council Scheme was approved by Scottish Borders Council in December 2007; since then Community Councils have been amending their constitutions accordingly. For most there aren't many changes to make - just a tweak here and there.

There are five main changes to the Scheme which are summarised below:

Financial Year – Community Council financial years should be altered, where necessary, to run from April – March. This may involve operating a short or extended financial year initially.

Terms of Office – The minimum and maximum terms of office permitted have been changed to 2 and 4 respectively. Those Community Councils currently operating 1 or 5 year terms of office should amend them at an appropriate time.

Common Election Period – Scottish Borders Council has retained the right, from the previous Scheme, to set a common election period. The Community Engagement Officer is awaiting the publication of the National Model before fixing a common election month. All Community Councils that are due an election in any given

year will hold them in a named month. Until the results of the National work are known, and a local common election month fixed, Community Councils should proceed with elections as normal.

Code of Conduct – The Code of Conduct for Community Councillors replaces the Scottish Borders Council Protocol on Councillor's Personal Conduct/Behaviour and is more relevant to the work of Community Councillors. Prospective Community Councillors agree to abide by the Code of Conduct by signing the nomination form. It is also a condition of

funding that each Community Council should agree in writing, once a year to abide by the Code of Conduct. However, this has not been enforced during 2008 in order to give the Scheme time to bed in.

Asset Register – Each Community Council has been asked to develop and hold an asset register in order to support Scottish Borders Council in the dispersal of these assets should the Community Council dissolve.

Advice on implementation is available from Clare Malster on 01835 826626
cmalster@scotborders.gov.uk

BCCF Environmental – The Master Composter Programme

BCCF Environmental (formally Berwickshire Community Councils' Forum Environmental Group) works Borders wide to advance environmental protection and improvement.

The Master Composter Programme aims to promote home composting across the Scottish Borders with the support of local Master

Composters. Master Composters are local volunteers trained and ready to help with all your home composting questions.

If you are just starting out, beginning to use your compost or simply want to check you are on the right track, local Master Composters are available to give free advice and support.

They can attend community events, give presentations and lead workshops to provide you with all the information you need to compost at home successfully.

The Scottish Borders Master Composter Project is looking for volunteers to promote home composting in their local community. Volunteers

will be fully trained in home composting techniques so they can use this knowledge to help and encourage others.

For details please contact the Scottish Borders Master Composter Programme on 01573 410274 or e-mail David@BCCFEnvironmental.org.uk or visit www.wasteawarescotland.com.

Snippets

Conference

Theme: Improving your Town or Village Centre

Date: 3rd October 2009.

Venue: Scottish Borders Council Offices; Newtown St Boswells.

There's no sadder sign of economic and social decline than the unkempt look of the main street and square in Borders small towns and villages – empty shops and an untidy environment sap the morale of communities. A new fund has been created by the Scottish Government to encourage local communities to come up with ideas to get their main street bustling again.

Programme:

1. The Relevance of the CoSLA Small Towns Study to the Scottish Borders and Community Councils, in the light of the Scottish Parliament Budget for Town Centre regeneration.
2. Working up the Case for your Town or Village.
3. The Findings of SBC's Review of Funding to Community Councils.

Market Place:

The Market Place will be available over a longer period than before.