



**MINUTES OF THE AGM OF SCOTLAND'S TOWNS LTD HELD AT A+DS EDINBURGH  
ON 14 MAY 2014**

**PRESENT:**

Janet Archer, Creative Scotland  
Malcom Brown, Scotmid  
Viv Collie, Vivid Ideas and Solutions  
Ian Davison Porter, BIDs Scotland  
Mhairi Donaghy, EKOS  
Andy Godfrey, Alliance Boots  
David Grove, Fife Council  
Roddy Jamieson, 6274 Design  
Andy Kennedy, Stirling Council  
Euan Leitch, BEFS  
Gail MacFarlane, East Dunbartonshire Council  
Alison McIntosh, SCDI  
Ashleigh McLennan, SCID  
Maggie Mitchell, Dunfermline Delivers  
Alastair Mitchell, Falkirk Delivers  
Flick Monk, CSPP  
Colin Munto, MiConex  
Phil Prentice, East Renfrewshire Council  
Matt Ronan, SBRC  
Iain Ross, South Lanarkshire Council  
Eva Schonfeld, Transition Scotland  
Dorothy Smith, Fife Council  
Susan Smith, East Lothian Council  
Tom Sneddon, DTAS  
Ronnie Somerville, 5pm.co.uk  
Leigh Sparks, University of Stirling  
Dave Sutton, North Lanarkshire Council  
Sunil Varu, Renfrewshire Council  
A proxy vote was received from Jim Metcalfe of Carnegie UK  
Attending: Elaine Bone, Rebecca Mather, Yvonne Prager

Leigh Sparks, Chair of STP welcomed everyone to the first AGM of STP

## **AGM BUSINESS**

### **1.To consider and approve Financial Accounts for Year to end 31 March 2013**

As required by the Companies Act 2006, a copy of accounts has been made available on our website and offered to members on request.

Statement based on information from Accountants, Soroban:

“Income of £32,854 includes ‘Conference Income’ of £31,754 made up of conference-member fee packages, sponsorships and grants; and ‘Membership Fees’ of £1,100. The company had initial legal set up fees in the first full year of trading plus administration and accountancy costs, which created a small loss of £3,948. This was funded by an interest free loan from Improvement Districts Scotland. The company anticipates an increase in income from memberships and events including the conference; and is awaiting confirmation of grant funding.”

There were no questions and the accounts were approved.

### **2.To consider and appoint accountants – Soroban – for the next year.**

The members present agreed that Soroban Accountants be appointed for the next year.

### **3.Election of Directors**

In accordance with Articles 14.2.2 the Board has been appointed by the Directors of the Company as follows:

Chair: Prof Leigh Sparks – lead on policy and research  
Vice Chair: Ian Davison Porter, BIDs Scotland  
Vice Chair: Phil Prentice, SLAED (SLAED Towns Group)  
Treasurer: Tom Sneddon, DTA Scotland  
Directors: Malcolm Brown, Scotmid/Queensferry Ambition BID  
Mhairi Donaghy, EKOS  
Craig McLaren, RTPi Scotland and Northern Ireland  
Brian Patterson, Economic Development Association Scotland (standing down – EDAS representation to be confirmed)  
Matt Ronan, Scottish Business Resilience Centre  
Alliance Boots representative to take up post in June

Two further appointments are anticipated but no further nominations are sought presently.

All present accepted the proposals for election of new Board members.

### **4.To review the Company’s progress and discuss future plans**

## **SCOTLAND'S TOWNS PARTNERSHIP PROGRESS AND FUTURE PLANS**

### **THE JOURNEY SO FAR**

#### **2009/2010**

Think tank, the Centre for Scottish Public Policy, forms the Scottish Towns Policy Group, led by Prof Leigh Sparks, University of Stirling. Comprising a range of towns voices including, Action for Market Towns, Alliance Boots, ATCM, BIDs Scotland, CH2M Hill, DTAS, DTZ, EKOS, Essential Edinburgh, FSB, Industrial Communities Alliance Scotland, Riverside Inverclyde, Scottish Chambers of Commerce, Scottish Retail Consortium, Small Towns Association, South of Scotland Alliance, Space Unlimited, Streets-UK, SURF.

#### **2011/2012**

Following a long campaign by STPG for the revitalisation of Scotland's Towns, the group call for practical action – the creation of Scotland's Towns Partnership (STP).

#### **2012**

STP is legally formed as Scotland's Towns Ltd and a Board of Directors and secretariat appointed. See Annex 1 for Board.

With support from the Challenge Fund and commercial interests, STP takes over the reins from BIDs Scotland, hosting the Annual Scotland's Towns Conference - timed to contribute to the Scottish Government's Town Centre Review. STP is launched.

Forming a partnership with Action for Market Towns, a joint BID secures funding for a unique, new and sustainable means of measuring and evaluating towns – 'Benchmarking+'. A demonstration project is carried out in Barrhead, with the additional support of East Renfrewshire Council.

#### **2013**

Memberships, strategic partnerships and links with Scottish Government grow. See Annex 1 for Strategic Partners.

STP strengthens its information and communications base; hosts two learning events; and develops its Toolkit. Working in collaboration with a range of strategic partners, the Toolkit provides access to capacity building supports; addressing safety, funding, digital marketing, recruitment and more. Benchmark toolkit promoted on 4<sup>th</sup> November at the Lighthouse to Learning Network, and a regular Funding Newsletter is distributed to members.

Policy link with CSPP STPG ensures ongoing contribution to the TCR process.

STP reconstitutes the Scottish Parliamentary Cross Party Group on Towns and Town Centres, with Convener Margaret McCulloch MSP. STP is adviser and Secretary to the Group, coordinating meetings and encouraging participation.

With tremendous support from First UK Bus, and their Scotland wide poster campaign, Scotland's Towns Week is launched in parliament. A video media release features Minister for Towns, Margaret McCulloch MSP, Prof Leigh Sparks, and BIDs Scotland.

The Annual Scotland's Towns Conference heads to Inverness. Host is Leigh Sparks, with Minister for Towns giving his first public address on the TCAP. The programme centres on the six TCAP themes and delegates are inspired by world-stage speakers Lia Ghilardi and Pam Warhurst.

The 'Benchmarking+' demonstration project launches and the service is available to all.

## **2014 AND BEYOND**

Membership has grown to just over 50 organisations extending our reach to thousands of towns-related professionals. Strategic partnerships and support for STP continues to grow, diversify and strengthen.

In all future work areas, STP's main objectives will be to develop the knowledge, skills and capacity required by anchor organisations across Scotland's towns; enabling them to deliver: best value, sustainable project development and to empower their business and wider communities. These values remain at the heart of all areas of our work. Our work areas will focus on:

### **1. Providing a Learning Network – virtual and physical.**

- A new web presence, delivering an open virtual community.
- Supporting and sharing key publications, such as the Masterplanning Toolkit.
- Developing as part of a collective, a diagnostic tool to compare and contrast data, and to measure progress of a town as new strategies are developed and implemented. There is no previous or similar public domain platform that presents a focus for town based data.
- CPD events focused on practical support for towns and communities. Each offering associated supports e.g. free street audit linked to public realm event.
- Governance CPD Event delivered at A&DS, 30<sup>th</sup> April with support from Harper Macleod
- Joint consultation exercise with Scottish Community Development Centre to explore how town centre partnerships can work with their local communities to give real effect to the concept of "Enterprising Communities" set out in the Government's Town Centre Action Plan.
- This year's Conference is expected to attract 150 people to Paisley on 19<sup>th</sup> November.

### **2. Contributing to and disseminating activity around the TCR process and other policy conversations.**

As STP has grown beyond the STPG, CSPP has decided to retire the policy group and will subsume its work within STP. Developing work includes:

- Creating 6 policy streams aligned to key TCAP areas covered by groups led by STP Board and involving key stakeholders. Turning policy into practical supports and outputs based on issues arising from the groups.
- Overarching policy eye on strategic gaps/opportunities, across areas not being addressed by the TCAP.
- Informing and acting as a conduit for Scottish Government.
- Continuing as CPG adviser and Secretary, sharing policy outputs and news of practical outcomes. We have just completed the Annual Review paper - available online along with all past papers and presentations.

### **3. Promoting towns and practitioner activity aimed at connecting people and place, broadening out the town focus on business and retail, into the community.**

- Partnered with First and miconex for Catch the Bus Week in April and will do so again for Scotland's Towns Week (17 – 23 Nov).

- Develop new online campaign sharing stories through film, and building relationships to feature these on TV.
4. **Providing front line advice and capacity building support for Scotland's towns** to ensure that practitioners have access to a wealth of knowledge, opportunities and good practice; providing the tools and capacity required to help them to empower the businesses and communities they serve.

## **SUMMARY**

Through its embryonic links with CSPP's Scottish Towns Policy Group, STP has a strong understanding of the strategic context within which our members operate. Our 2012 conference provided input to the work of the External Advisory Group, and our 2013 conference disseminated good practice from across the six TCAP themes.

We are strong supporters of the Towns First principle and see real benefits in adopting a Whole Government approach to our towns.

We aim to be the central hub that connects policy aims with practitioner activity.

Our broad membership and connections across public, private, community, academia and other member organisations puts us in a unique position at the heart of Scotland's towns.

We understand the Scottish strategic context, the range of issues and potential opportunities, as well as the myriad of delivery models and approaches. We are therefore able to connect the various strands across our towns – business, governance and community – to drive the Government's ongoing commitment for national and local partners to work together and secure a positive future for Scotland's towns.

The outcomes of our work will be better informed policy makers, more effective practitioners, better connected governance mechanisms (at all levels), better value investment decisions, and critically, more sustainable and attractive towns across Scotland.

All of our work to date has been successfully and enthusiastically delivered on a self-income generating basis through memberships, partnerships, events, sponsorships and grants.

LS introduced the first speaker Janet Archer from Creative Scotland who gave a presentation on their action plan. LS then introduced Rob Hopkins of Transition network who joined the meeting by Skype and Eva Schonfeld of Transition Network Scotland . A short video was shown before discussion with Rob. A separate note of key points, audience discussion and film clips are available on the event Storify.

LS thanked our speakers, hosts A+DS, participants and the executive team. The CPG on Towns will meet in the Parliament this evening. News and information on future events and conference are available on the STP website at [www.scotlandstowns.org](http://www.scotlandstowns.org)