

Tweedsmuir Community Company (TCC) Chairman's Report 2018

Annual General Meeting Thursday 25th October 2018 Tweedsmuir Village Hall

Since the last AGM on 4th August 2017 the Board of the TCC has been working with others on proposals to support and develop our community and, in particular, the Crook Inn Hub.

The TCC proposes a phased development of Crook Inn Hub, starting with the Crook Inn Café, a bunkhouse and campsite to provide facilities to support the community and tourism. These require architectural designs and cost plans. We are grateful for funding for these from SSE Clyde Community Fund, Glenkerie Community Fund and the SBC Community Fund.

We commissioned designs from WTArchitecture who developed the 2014-5 plans for the complete renovation of the Crook Inn, still awaiting funding. Their café design includes shower and toilet facilities for a campsite. The proposed bunkhouse is to replace the uninhabitable staff accommodation building with a new bunkhouse on the same footprint, as this will be cheaper to build and more efficient than renovation. The designs were submitted to the SBC for planning permission in September 2018 together with a proposal to remove of the leaking, dangerous flat-roofed 1930's kitchen extension of the Crook Inn and to renew the planning application for the Crook Inn.



These developments are in keeping with the Tweedsmuir Action Plan 2017-22 in which the highest priority in the first theme is the 'the local economy and tourism'. The TCC also supports the Tweedsmuir Community Council's proposals for developing superfast broadband.

The second theme of the Action Plan is developing facilities for interpretation of the environment and heritage assets, another important aim of the TCC. Last year we had discussion with Tweed Forum who were developing proposals to Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a major development involving the entire Tweed valley from the source to the sea, including our café and bunkhouse. Unfortunately, HLF chose another major Scottish project but this bold vision will emerge again.

Funding major projects in a small rural community demands strategic planning and we started discussions with Jura Consultants, who have extensive

experience of development a variety of heritage projects. We then obtained a grant under the Scottish Government's Strengthening Community Programme, managed by the Development Trusts Association Scotland. This has enabled us to engage Jura Consultants, led by Paul Jardine and Luke Fisher, to develop robust business plans and grant applications for funding. The Strengthening Communities Grant also has enabled us to engage Mr Bruce Clarke as a part-time consultant for six months. Mr Clarke has extensive experience of community project developments and we look forward to his work with us.

We also held interesting community events an evening of music, poetry and food called '*Wool to the Mill*' in September 2017, and an excellent talk by Kenny Martin on Photography in April. We hosted a curious event at the Crook Inn in June: a 'bananas' stop, (also labelled as a 'cyclerve'), with music, lights and midges, and refreshment in the overnight cycle event for about 800 cyclists from Carlisle to Cramond, '*Ride to the Sun*'.

I would like to pay tribute to the Board members that have put their time, energy and skills into these developments, to volunteers who assist in community events and keeping the weeds down and grass-cut, without which the Crook inn would look an even sadder spectacle. In particular, I would like to thank Doug Roper, who has been helping to fight the battle against inevitable structural deterioration in the Crook Inn until such time as the renovation of the Crook Inn, Phase 2, is funded.

We end this year with optimism that the first phase of the Crook Inn Hub will emerge, and that our community and its heritage will be strengthened. Following this AGM, we will examine the evolving vision and the practicalities for the Crook Inn Hub with Wil Tunnel of WTArchitecture, Paul Jardine of Jura Consultants, Bruce Clarke, members of the TCC and others.

Duncan Davidson

