Gatehouse Development Initiative

Wednesday 3 June 2026 7.30pm The River Room

Trustees Meeting

1. **Present:** Francois van der Zee (Chair), Peter Taylor, Tarena Dickie, David Steel, Ian Carson, Mark Laird, Sara-Leigh Cain, Ken Smyth.
   In attendance: Julia Weston, John McMuldroch.
   Apologies: None.

   John McMuldroch was welcomed to the meeting. He has generously offered to provide legal support and advice to the Woodside Project.

2. **Minutes of previous meeting:** Mark Laird advised that he had been in attendance but had been left off the list of those present. He will be added. Minutes approved.

3. **Matters arising:**
   Peter Garson has stepped down as a trustee. He will continue to lead the Gatehouse Squirrels project. He was warmly thanked for his contribution as a trustee.

4. **Financial report:** Peter provided a short report on the current finances across projects.
   The GDI insurance has been renewed.
   Peter advised the meeting of his intention to step down from the GDI by the end of September. A new treasurer will need to be found and inducted into the role before then.
   Francois has spoken to his accountants in Glasgow and received a quote to provide accountancy services including monthly management accounts, set-up of a full accounting package for the GDI, and VAT returns. Further comparative quotes will be sought before selecting a provider.

5. **Current Projects:**
   Gatehouse Greenway: The new active travel route from Penpont to Thornhill was visited and ridden by Liz and Barbara. Contact has also been made with Senga Greenwood (now with the Biosphere team) who was involved with the track's development. A further meeting has taken place with SWestrans to discuss the practicalities and who does what as the project moves forward.
   Drystone Route: An online meeting of the association was held at the end of April. The intention is still to submit the application during the summer to establish a Council of Europe Dry Stone Heritage Trail.
   Gatehouse Squirrels Group: GSG remains solvent thanks to another successful donation appeal at the start of the year. There are 120 people on the email list, who are the eyes and ears of the Group. Reds seem fine and some unusually early young were seen at the start of May. Greys have remained well nigh invisible since the start of the year as usual, but the number of June/July sightings will give an indication of their status (hopefully declining) around Gatehouse. During March-May, survey work was completed at seven fixed sites as our contribution to the annual cross-border distribution survey for reds, greys and pine martens, which covers c.350 sites across the region. The Project plans to have our stall at the Creetown (25 July) and Gatehouse (1 August) Gala Days, as last year.
   Newsletter: Intention is still to get a new issue out for the summer season. Sara-Leigh has offered her support which is much appreciated.
   Town Hall Bridge: Francois has spoken with Ward Officer Ingrid Gemmel. Issues to resolve include ownership and liability. Also noted that if the community via the GDI were to take on ownership, the process of asset transfer is very slow and cumbersome.

Fleet Valley Volunteers: The group continues to meet on Wednesday mornings and will be working on Trusty's Hill and clearing excessive growth over and around dykes.
Community Website: All well. The community diary/calendar is being maintained on the site and regular posters derived from it are being displayed. However the addition of fresh events has diminished a bit and all are encouraged to submit events to be included.
Wheels of Fleet: No direct report for this meeting, but generally all seems to be running smoothly.
Woodside Housing Project
The ongoing delay in release of RCGF funding from DGC puts the housing project at significant risk. Critically, the RCGF funding includes pre-construction fees of £68,000, without which, the project will stall and there is a risk that the funding will be lost due to failure to meet the March '27 fund deadline. On the basis that the RCGF funding will be released in due course, the meeting agreed to use the GDI's unallocated reserve to keep essential project work moving.
VAT and Trading Subsidiary Proposal: Strongly recommend seeking professional advice on this asap due to the impact on future funding and existing funder contracts.
Funding Update: Funding secured: £1.75m of which £1.3m is allocated capital funding.
Applications underway: SOSE £800k; RHF £800k; Community Led Local Development Fund £17k (to discharge planning conditions); The Robertson Trust EOI £320k; The Hugh Fraser Foundation £100k; Local Energy Scotland Community Energy Generation Growth Fund EOI £200k; The Holywood Trust enquiry re potential apprenticeship funding.
PR & Publicity: Good coverage following the recent announcement with BBC online, BBC radio and the local press picking up the story. This is helping to raise the profile of the project amongst funders, construction companies and potential tenants.

6. **School Playing Field/MUGA**
   There has been no further communication from Environmental Health. Mark Laird was again keen to make clear that it was not he who had contacted Environmental Health. This had already been made clear at the February meeting and the meeting was quite happy then as now to accept that he hadn't been involved in approaching them.
   An additional sign has been added at the MUGA to encourage considerate behaviour. Issues continue to be closely monitored.

7. **Any Other Business:**
   Noticeboard: A question was raised re the Community Noticeboard by the main car park and possible improvements. This can be considered by those interested and reported back on.
   The Kiosk: The former Market storage unit built onto the side of the Kiosk is now in a very dilapidated condition. It was agreed to clear the contents and remove the doors in the meantime.

8. **Dates of future meetings:** Wednesday 1st July - Woodside progress meeting; Wednesday 2nd August - full meeting.