

LIMAVADY BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMHAIRLE BHUIRG LÉIM AN MHADAIDH

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
8 DECEMBER 2004

Minutes of a meeting of the above Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, 7 Connell Street, Limavady at 7.30 pm on the above date.

PRESENT:

Aldermen J. Dolan and M Carten, Councillors A. Brolly, B. Chivers, L. Cubitt, M. Donaghy, B. Douglas, D. Lowry, M. McGuigan, G. Mullan, J. Rankin, E. Stevenson (in the chair).

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Recreation/Tourist Officer, Acting Economic Development Officer and the Committee Clerk.

APOLOGIES:

Alderman G. Robinson, Councillor Coyle and the Town Clerk.

MINUTES:

The minutes of Development Committee meeting held 10 November 2004 were approved and signed on the proposal of Alderman Carten, seconded by Alderman Dolan.

CAUSEWAY COAST & ANTRIM GLENS REGIONAL TOURISM COMMITTEE – MARKETING PLAN:

The Chair welcomed Mr Don Wilmont, Manager of Causeway Coast & Antrim Glens Regional Tourism Committee to the meeting.

Mr Wilmont explained to members how the Regional Tourism Committee was formed, its structure and how it was funded. He said that the board was made up of 24 members, divided equally between the public and private sector and that to date membership totalled 418. He added that the benefit to members included:

- opportunity to make difference in how their area was marketed
- high profile organisation with direct line to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Tourism Ireland and government departments

It was explained to members that Council's contribution of £16,882 would enable it to be included in a £31 million market, with access to exhibitions, familiarisation trips and advertising and that literature marketing areas could include pocket golf, cycling and foreign language guides.

Mr Wilmont outlined 5 signature projects with the potential to deliver international 'stand out' for Northern Ireland as:

(1) Giant's Causeway/Antrim and Causeway Coast Area (2) Titanic (Maritime) Belfast (3) Walled City of Derry (4) Christian Heritage/St Patrick and (5) Mourne National Park Area.

Mr Wilmont referred to the Causeway Coast & Glen 10 year Tourism Masterplan objectives of; 11 layby and stop off points, 9 toilet/amenity blocks and a technical study to be undertaken to identify a likely route for the proposed trail. The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer said that Council's contribution of £16,882 enabled it to have access to a £31 million tourism market.

In reply to a question from Councillor Cubitt's, Mr Wilmont said that a 'loop' within the Masterplan would come directly to Limavady and that there would be signs indicating the location of the Country Park, Benevenagh and other areas of myth and legend.

In response to Councillor Rankin's concern at the lack of accommodation along the coast and attractions such as Benone Complex opening throughout the year, Mr Wilmont said that there was a need for more good quality 3 star accommodation rather than building additional hotels. He added that it was regrettable that the Appraisal Audit had recommended closure of Benone during the winter months as it was ideally located beside a blue flag beach and ferry terminal and that in his opinion, keeping attractions open a few more weeks of the year could make a major contribution to tourism in the area. He further added that now for the first time in many years there was a window of opportunity to promote and develop tourism and encouraged Council to avail of this.

The Chair thanked Mr Wilmont for attending the meeting and answering member's questions.

MATTERS ARISING:

ICT - Broadband: The Acting Economic Development Officer reported that he was continuing his investigation into broadband access for rural areas.

Backburn Park Playground: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer highlighted that a preferred tender had been selected for the provision of a playground at Backburn Park. He said that the application was to be fast tracked and equipment ordered as soon as possible so that the allocated £100,000 would be spent before the end of the financial year. Councillor Rankin suggested Connell Street residents be invited to attend the meeting with Alexander Road residents as they also had concerns on the provision of the playground.

Events Company/Financial Cuts: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer explained that he had received a response from Minister Smith regarding Council's concern at financial cuts from the Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure 2006/07 and 2007/2008 draft annual budgets. He said that the Minister would take Council's concerns into consideration before budget figures were finalised.

Backburn Park to Scroggy Road Public Path Order: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer reported that he understood from correspondence received that Mr Hickey would be issuing his report on the Backburn Park to Scroggy Road Public

Path Order and that subject to this being available, would be circulated to members at the next Development Committee meeting.

Multi Cultural Resource Centre: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer explained that discussions had taken place with officers from Council and Roe Fold residents regarding the use of the access road during demolition of former Town Hall. It was hoped that the problem of right of way would be resolved in the near future and the Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer undertook to update members at the next meeting of Council.

Map – County Londonderry 1814: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer reported that the Map donated by Martin, King, French and Ingram solicitors was with Ulster Museum where it was getting repaired. He said that Museum staff had clarified that the map was in excellent condition for its age.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT – DECEMBER 2004:

The Acting Economic Development Officer presented the Economic Development Report for December and enlarged thereon. The report was adopted on the proposal of Councillor Cubitt, seconded by Councillor Lowry subject to the following:

Business Start Programme: The Acting Economic Development Officer reported that the Business Start Programme had been exceptionally successful in Limavady with it moving from the lowest to highest start up rate over a three year period. In outlining the pertinent facts and figures of the programme, the Acting Economic Development Officer pointed out that funding of the programme was coming to an end and that there was a need to ensure that jobs continue to grow, with manufacturing and IT jobs being encouraged.

Councillor Lowry commended the Economic Development Department for their energy and vitality and said it was encouraging to see a wide number of start ups through the various sectors.

Business Growth & Development: The Acting Economic Development Officer informed members of a collaborative project between Coleraine and Magherafelt Borough Council to develop a database of business information which would allow future actions to be more easily targeted. It was agreed that £8,000 be contributed to the salary of the data-inputter.

Rural Community Regeneration: The Acting Economic Development Officer explained that all funding for Rural Community Regeneration had been allocated and that grants were made by Roe Valley Rural Development to the following:

•	<i>Galvin Area Community Association</i>	<i>£6,697</i>
•	<i>Feeny Community Association</i>	<i>£10,000</i>
•	<i>Burnfoot Community Development (2 projects)</i>	<i>£20,000</i>
•	<i>Bleech Green Residents Association</i>	<i>£10,000</i>
•	<i>Burnfoot, Foreglen & Gortnaghey Partnership</i>	<i>£10,452</i>
•	<i>Forglen Community Association</i>	<i>£12,925</i>
•	<i>Largy Community Association</i>	<i>£9,975</i>
•	<i>Magilligan Community Association</i>	<i>£10,058</i>
•	<i>Community Information & Exchange Forum</i>	<i>£2,600</i>

The Acting Economic Development Officer pointed out that this programme was an important means of supporting bricks and mortar community programmes and that the focus was on spend over the next six to eight months.

LEADER+: The Acting Economic Development Officer provided a synopsis on the LEADER+ programme for member's information. He said that this programme funds off-farm enterprises but problems had stemmed from the fact that around half of VAT registered businesses in the Borough were farmers and not eligible for funding under the LEADER+ programme. He added that the programme had been advertised widely through publicity and word of mouth and that a Rural Business Adviser had been engaged to assist in completing LEADER+ forms. Councillor A Brolly suggested that Council had to look at other ways of informing people of the programme as funds still remained unallocated. The Acting Economic Development Officer responded that he would raise the issue with Roe Valley Rural Development who manage the funding. Councillor Douglas said that Councillors could play their part by spreading the word of funds being available to the local community.

Limavady Food Market: The Acting Economic Development Officer reported that Economic Development staff had assisted with the Limavady Food Market pilot initiative, which had taken place on 27 November 2004 and that initial observations indicated that the event was well received, had a good attendance and that many had expressed the desire to see such an event being held again. He said that local traders had been happy with returns and that the only criticism was that the market could have been more centrally located.

The Acting Economic Development Officer pointed out that there was a need to make sure local traders saw any future Food Market as complimentary rather than competition. He also said that traders in the town needed to look at where they wished to position themselves in either a dormitory town or a vibrant market town. Members praised staff on how well the Food Market was organised and said a perfect location would be new Town Square when this was completed. It was agreed that the Food Market should take place again 3 times over the next 18 months.

Councillor McGuigan and Lowry left the room at 9.15 pm.

CHIEF RECREATION/TOURIST OFFICER'S REPORT – DECEMBER 2004:

The Chief Recreation/Tourist Officer presented his report and enlarged thereon. The report was adopted on the proposal of Alderman Dolan, seconded by Councillor Cubitt subject to the following:

Northern Ireland Milk Cup: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer reported that the date agreed for the Northern Ireland Milk Cup Tournament was 1 – 5 August 2005. He said that Coleraine, Ballymoney and Ballymena Councils had been approached to consider increasing funding and Limavady had been asked to consider a similar proportional increase. It was agreed that Council contribute £10,000 towards the 2005 event.

Benone Tourist Complex – Natural History Tourism Exhibit: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer advised members that the Natural History Exhibition currently on display at Benone Tourist Complex did not have disability access and

therefore did not comply with the Disability Discrimination Act. He said that Ms Liz Wallace, Assistant Advisory Officer, Magilligan Field Centre had contacted Council with a request to rehouse the exhibition on permanent loan in their newly refurbished 'Education for Sustainability Awareness' class room at Magilligan Field Centre. It was agreed that the exhibition boards from Benone be given on permanent loan to Magilligan Field Centre and this be acknowledged by way of a plaque attached to the exhibit.

Northern Ireland Tourist Board Visitor Servicing Strategy: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer outlined the main points of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board Visitor Servicing Strategy as follows:

Public Transport

Tourist Information Network

Points of entry

Routes and Trails

Literature and

Signposting

IT and e-tourism strategy

Urban Areas

Areas of Environmental Sensitivity

Monitoring

Members requested that if possible, signs be provided indicating the location of the following sites:

blind fiddlers grave; Broghter Gold; John Mitchell; Magilligan Chapel; Drumcreatt and touchdown of Virgin Atlantic Balloon at Drumreighland

The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer agreed to investigate the sites identified and report back to Council at a future meeting.

Request for Temporary Closure of a Public Right of Way: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer said that Council had received a request from Oakmore Developments Ltd to make a temporary closure order of a public right of way leading from Main Street, Limavady through the grounds of The Lodge to the Roe Bank. He advised members that the path was used very little from October through to April and that fishermen, cricketers and a few people walked their dog along the path in summer. It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Douglas, seconded by Councillor Cubitt that the pathway be closed in the interests of safety.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Co. Londonderry Darts Association: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer said he had received a request for funding from Co. Londonderry Darts Association. It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Cubitt, seconded by Councillor A Brolly that £300 be donated to the Association.

Gortnaghey Community Association: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer said that a new hall had been proposed for Gortnaghey and that the Rural Development Council had yet to confirm grant assistance to the project. He said that until such time as the Rural Development Council confirmed the amount of grant aid it would not be possible to make a recommendation on this application for financial assistance. It was agreed that members would be kept informed of progress in the situation in future reports.

Jane Ross – Memorabilia: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer informed members that Councillor Brown together with members of Council had visited the family of Mr John Trelawney Ross in Bristol. Here valuable information had been obtained regarding the possibility of obtaining some items of Memorabilia pertaining to Jane Ross, together with a framed portrait of Mr William Trelawney Ross. It was agreed that the Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer would follow up on these items and on other information received.

Hospitality for French Visitors: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer reminded members that Limavady would have three exchange visitors from Vigneux sur Seine from 13 – 15 December 2004. As the Twinning Committee hoped to home host the visitors, it was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Cubitt, seconded by Alderman Carten that Council provide an evening reception for the visitors.

The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer left the meeting at 10.05 pm.

Special Meeting of Council: (IN COMMITTEE) Councillor Cubitt suggested that a Special Meeting of Council be held to discuss temporary cover for the Chief Executive as there would be constraints on time due to the Mayor hosting his annual Christmas Reception for Councillors after the Finance & General Purposes meeting on 15 December 2004. It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor A Brolly, seconded by Alderman Dolan that the Mayor's Christmas Reception be deferred and that the discussion on temporary cover would take place on 15 December 2004 as agreed. **(OUT OF COMMITTEE)**

The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer returned to the meeting at 10.10 pm

Refreshments during Committee Meetings: Members voiced their dissatisfaction at tea and coffee being served in flasks as this appeared to affect the taste. It was agreed that the tea/coffee be made fresh and that the Chair would suspend the meeting when refreshments were being served at 9 pm.

NEXT MEETING:

12 January 2005

**THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
(The meeting ended at 10:15 pm)**