**THE BRIDGE**



**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**

**10th November 2022**

**held at St Boswells Village Hall**

**Present:**

Alastair Hirst The Bridge Board member – Co-Convener

Margaret Hindmarsh The Bridge Board member – Co-Convener

David Brackenridge The Bridge Board member

Andrew Findlay The Bridge Board member - Treasurer

and representatives from members of The Bridge and community planning partners:

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| --- | --- |
| Ian Rendall-Reid | Cheviot Youth |
| Hazell Woodsell |  |
| John Stobart | Yetholm History Society |
| Dougie Oliver | St Boswells Village Hall |
| Gus Russell | Kelso Community Council/Tweed Valley Railway |
| Isabel Gordon | Friends of Kelso Library |
| Eileen Forbes | Newstead Village Hall |
| Gloria Reid | Borders Talking Newspaper |

**Apologies:**

**Alistair Minnis, The Bridge Board.**

Apologies were received from 10 members of The Bridge, community planning partners, and local elected members. List available.

**In attendance:**

Morag Walker The Bridge – Executive Officer

Heather Batsch The Bridge - Area Manager Roxburgh

Lorna McCullough The Bridge – Area Manager, Tweeddale

Margaret Hindmarsh welcomed everyone to The Bridge AGM as co-Convener. Margaret introduced the rest of the Board (Alastair Hirst – co-Convener, Andrew Findlay – Treasurer, and David Brackenridge – Trustee) together with Morag Walker, the Executive Officer, Heather Batsch, Area Manager for Roxburgh and Lorna McCullough Area Manager for Tweeddale.

**providing community and voluntary sector support**

# Scottish Borders Community Development Company (operating as The Bridge)

# Registered in Scotland as a Company Limited by Guarantee No. 305830: Scottish Charity No. SC037646

# VAT Reg. No. 918 1477 11 Registered/Head Office: 3 Roxburgh House Court, Roxburgh Street, Galashiels, TD1 1NY

www.thebridge.scot

**THE BRIDGE AGM**

1. **Minutes of AGM 2021;** acceptance was proposed by members Hazel Woodsell and Andrew Findlay and approved.
2. **Report of The Bridge Board**

Alistair Hirst – Expressed gratitude of the trustees and board members, diligence and loyalty of all staff and supporters over the period this report covers, 12 months up to March 2022. Most of this time has been under the shadow of covid and all the constraints that brought.

The main point to mention is the stats achievements in supporting Third Sector organisations setting up governance and obtaining funding,106 orgs received 1.1 support, 34 organisations assisted in obtaining grant funding. Funding valued over £560k, project values this went into is nearly £740k, noted as a significant contribution. 12 start ups were supported, 4 windings up were supported. 73 organisations received assistance with their legal structure. 36 organisations supported to develop their strategy to generate their income. 78 assisted with business planning. 3 Federations of village halls, 69 village hall committees received supported with covid compliance. Information and guidance disseminated by The Bridge through ebulletins and website. Handling administration of grant fund and dispersing funds – Fallago Environmental Fund. Continued to deliver community transport, including raising funds for a new minibus for Tweed Wheels. The Thrift shops have delivered a solid performance in the circumstances, supporting our community transport as well as other development work. Representing grass roots organisations and public administration, conveying concerns and interests ‘making our voice heard’ to SBC and Scottish Government through collaborative partner arrangements in the Borders TSI as well as H & SC Integration, consultations, within the Scottish Borders. Also on a national level through the TSI Network.

Since March 2022, work has continued, but in the background discussions have proceeded in relation to the impending date of March 2023 when our core grant ends and the structuring of the collaborative arrangements with the Borders TSI.

1. **Acceptance of Annual Report and Accounts 2019**

Treasurer Andrew Findlay introduced the annual accounts. Unrestricted is up from £91k to £147k, highest surplus for sometime.

Certain % from covid grants, surplus of £15k a very healthy position.

Shops bounced back very quickly, income not far off what we’d expect normal levels. Shops did really well, supported locally. £35k profit over both shops.

Transport was not back to normal, it is now. Not broken down in the accounts to each transport service.

Pages 22-23 of the annual report shows overall picture very accurately, split into restricted and unrestricted.

UK Community Renewal Fund Project in partnership with BAVS only started in February 2022 but will conclude in the current year.

Acceptance of the annual report and accounts was proposed by David Brackenridge and seconded by Margaret Hindmarsh.

Andrew Findlay provided and update on the Borders Third Sector Interface (TSI). This has been a Partnership with 3 other orgs, making up the TSI, Scottish Borders Social Enterprise Chamber (SBSEC), Volunteer Centre Borders (VCB) and Berwickshire Association of Volunary Service (BAVS). The funding for community development work mostly comes from Scottish Government. All 4 partners have worked together to deliver the work set out by the Scottish Government framework, with The Bridge as the lead partner. In 2007 BAVS decided to remain independent when The Bridge was created as an amalgamation of the local Community Voluntary Service (CVS). Scottish Government were keen to ensure the Scottish Borders TSI were united, to iron out tensions in partnership models. Individual partners have fulfilled their individual roles but working together has been the challenge.

The work has been about developing a vision for the Third Sector in the Scottish Borders, the Borders TSI Re-imagined project. It has concentrated so far on each organisation. The Bridge board carried out an options appraisal in November 2022 and agreed a single organisation was the best way forward. The options appraisal is available for anyone who wishes to review it.

The new Borders TSI will have an HQ and a Comms officer, without additional funding. The Bridge feel for the Borders a unified organisation makes a lot of sense. This situation is still in progress, therefore we cannot discuss situation with all of the partners currently. For The Bridge, in the next few months, the board may come with a formal resolution to hold an EGM to wind up the organisation and move over into the Borders TSI. Alternatively the registered company name of Scottish Borders Community Development Company (SBCDC), trading currently as The Bridge could be used as the single entity with some re-branding but this may receive resistance from partners. Confident The Bridge and our community development work will not be adversely affected by it, it will be a positive move, a great opportunity to make a more unified control and provide a higher level of representation.

Questions – Did you consider folding into one of the other 3 organisations? The Bridge is the only organisation into which you could fold the others into because of the existing structure. Some partners wish to fold into the single organisation and for them it’s very straightforward for them to do. SBSEC will operate within an SLA, another is folding entirely and the other organisation have made a decision (that cannot be shared currently). Reactions of partners has been unexpected. Further information and progress with timescales will be shared as soon as possible, as a board we are confident this will happen in a positive way. It’s possible only 1 or 2 board members will continue to be elected to the new single organisation.

Morag added the process has been ongoing for a considerable time now, in June MW circulated information and held meetings to discuss the reimaged project with members in each of our offices, but it’s a very recent progress that has been made that has led to The Bridge board decision to have a unified organisation.

Heather Batsch commented that the staff are protected and the board are committed to work to support the third sector in the Scottish Borders. The day to day work will continue on the ground, everything will be maintained and improved too.

1. **Appointment of Independent Examiner**

The appointment of Douglas Hume and Partners as Independent Examiners for The Bridge proposed by Alistair Hirst, seconded by Andrew Findlay, and approved.

1. **Election of Directors**

The Board members/charity trustees were re-elected and are as follows for the forthcoming year:

Margaret Hindmarsh re-elected proposed by David Brackenridge and seconded by Alastair Hirst.

Margaret presented Heather Batsch with a bouquet for her dedication to The Bridge and the Roxburghshire area. Heather thanked everyone, saying how much she’s enjoyed working for The Bridge ahead of her retirement in December 2022.

**6. Close of AGM.**

There was no other business and Margaret Hindmarsh brought the AGM to a close. She thanked Morag Walker all the staff for their support, and gave a special thanks to all our volunteers.

**Speaker: Luke Comins, Tweed Forum**

Morag Walker introduced the speaker, Luke Comins, who is the Director of Tweed Forum. Charitable Trust relating to water and integrated land management.

Luke gave a presentation on Tweed Forum (see presentation) which generated an active questions and answers session particularly around the Destination Tweed project.

Alistair Hirst thanked Luke for his presentation, everyone agreed it was very interesting.

The AGM closed at 7.55pm.