

## **DUMFRIES TOWN BOARD**

Meeting of 10th February 2025

4pm @ SPEN Offices Dumfries

### **PRESENT**

Richie Nicoll – Town Board Chair (Via teams)  
Tom Mcaughtrie- Vice Chair  
Kenny Bowie – Chamber of Commerce  
John Dowson  
Supt Nicola Robison- Police Scotland (via Teams)  
Anne Marie Coulter- Summerhill Community Centre  
John Caskie- Guid Nychburris  
William Currie- DG College (via Teams)  
Isabelle Johnstone- Town Board Admin Support  
Cambell Young- SOSE (via teams)  
Rachael Milligan- Covetrus (Via teams)  
Jamie Milligan- The Swan/Steamboat (Via Teams)  
Julie Dykes- Bust Stop  
Cllr. Maureen Johnstone  
Cllr. David Slater

### **Council Officers**

Stuart McMillan – Strategic Economic Investment Manager

Matthew Watt (representing John Cooper MP) (via teams)

## **1) Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed members to the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Dumfries Town and informed the board of members that Lisa Callander Bone and Laura Thomas have stepped down. Also informing the board about the meetings which took place with Rosefield Mills, Scottish Town Partnerships and the HUB.

Richie was recently invited to Rosefield Mills to engage with the consultancy charged with engagement with the community as to building a proposal for the best use of the building for the whole community. Richie was present as a member of the Chamber of Commerce as well as Town Board. It was an interesting discussion from a wide range of community folks and there was a positive mood in line with ensuring that the building was kept and not demolished

for housing. The Dumfries Historical Trust trustees had a further meeting with Richie in which they asked about how to engage with the TB once their plans were coming to fruition. Richie advised that once the Programme Manager was in place, there would be tenders and expressions of interest being pushed out to the community aligned to the 3 interventions, and would then welcome any business proposal from DHBT

Three members of the Town Board have now become trustees of the HUB, allowing them to move forward with the process and make significant progress on their initiatives.

## **2) Apologies**

Laura Thomas- individual

John Strange – Owner Solway Sharks

## **3) Minute of meeting #10 (13<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025) Approval with matters arising**

The minute of the previous meeting was agreed. No matters arising and all actions from the previous meeting will be updated during this meeting.

## **4) 'The Hub' Update**

The outgoing trustees met with the new trustees—Kenny, Anne Marie, and Richie—on February 3rd during the AGM. The meeting was a formality, where financials were reviewed, and the chair stepped down. . The new trustees have a meeting scheduled in the next couple of weeks to discuss the next steps. Once all infrastructure issues are sorted and resolved, the Town Board will be ready to move in and set everything up. T. Chamber of Commerce members recently viewed the property and had mixed feelings, with concerns raised about safety and parking. These issues will be discussed further at the next Chamber meeting on February 24th. However, the Town Board believes the property is safe and secure, and after consulting with Police Scotland, they received a positive response.

## **5) Where are we at now?**

**Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) Update**

The UK Government has not yet released the revised guidance and prospectus that will inform the Board of the requirements ahead for 2025/26 before capital funding begins in April 2026. In a recent meeting with local authority representatives from the 10 Scottish towns, they were informed that the new guidance is imminent.

The Scottish Towns Partnership will invite all Town Board chairs to a meeting scheduled with Jamie Cowling from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on March 27th, which will serve as a question-and-answer session. Despite the hold-up on funding, some boards around the country, like Dumfries Town Board, have pressed forward. They've hired a new project manager and are preparing for when funding is available, ensuring they can hit the ground running. Richie requested that Matthew Watt took an action to request John Cooper MP brought the Dumfries TB's concerns up within Westminster.

## **6) Sub-Committee Intervention Groups**

Richie is advocating for a lead spokesperson for each committee, but no members have come forward despite having already held a meeting. Isabelle and the new project manager (once hired) will attend all meetings. Emails have been sent to board members to confirm their availability and provide structure for the committees. With two board members down, one group will be short-handed until two volunteers come forward. Isabelle will take minutes at each meeting, and the project manager will maintain the records.

Group leads are to reach out to the relevant personnel at the council to gain more knowledge and guidance, while also clarifying the boundaries between what the council handles and what the group can take on. It's important to engage the public, but also to clearly communicate what can and can't be done, ensuring everyone understands the limitations and opportunities moving forward.

The High Streets, Heritage, and Regeneration Committee is making progress and has contacted the council for a map to better understand the town's layout and overall outlook. They are also exploring the idea of placing screens around the town to advertise local events and provide transport links and timings. A key focus is improving communication between stakeholders and the public. One proposed idea is to gather landlords, shop owners, and members of the public in a meeting with the committee to discuss their needs and visions for the town, ensuring that they are ready to move forward once funding becomes available.

## **7) Programme Manager and Job Description**

The job advert for the new programme manager went live on Friday, February 6th. The role is designed to bring together all projects and ideas, while also ensuring

governance is maintained. The programme manager will be employed through the Secretariat will attend all meetings and work closely with the Admin Officer, operating out of the HUB. The application process will end at the end of February before shortlisting takes place. The Board will select the candidate they deem most suitable for the role. A key aspect of hiring is ensuring that, by April 2026, the team is fully prepared with plans in place and ready for action.

## **8) Website Update**

The website update is currently underway, with work being done to ensure the content is current and engaging. We are awaiting board members to send in their summaries, which will be featured on the site. Once all the summaries are received and reviewed by the board, we will finalise the content before making the website live. This update is a crucial step in enhancing communication and providing up-to-date information for the community and stakeholders.

As for the social media we had very good feedback from one business (Cammy Barbershop) in which we spoke and had posted on the Town Board Facebook. The feedback was positive and explained that they have received an influx of customers using the local business. We will continue to do this and improve Dumfries High Street slowly but surely by advertising the local shops and businesses. AM requested that social media feedback and analysis is reported on each board meeting to gauge engagement

## **9) AOB**

Social media to be added to the agenda for a constant update and to monitor its progress with the public and other town boards.

## **10) Next Steps**

To continue the recruitment process for the programme manager

Town Board chair posting an update on the social media platforms

The HUB trustees meeting update

Intervention schemes to have a leader/spokesperson for the meetings upcoming and a reminder sent out to who is in each group.

Pushing out for new two town board member and have asked all members to relay this information with their contacts

## **11) Date of Next Meeting**

TBC

