



Forth Bridges Forum - Meeting 38

26 January 2021

MS Teams meeting

MINUTE

Attendees

Hugh Gillies (HG) Chair	Transport Scotland
Scott Lees (SL) Vice Chair	Transport Scotland
Michael Dineen (MD)	Transport Scotland
John Andrew (JA)	ICE Consultant / Transport Scotland
Joanna Noble (JN)	Network Rail
Caroline Warburton (CWar)	Visit Scotland
Miles Oglethorpe (MO)	HES
Rebecca Jones (RJ)	HES
Ken Gourlay (KG)	Fife Council
Elin Williamson (EW)	City of Edinburgh Council
Graeme Malcolm (GM)	West Lothian Council
Andy Thomson (AT)	BEAR Scotland
Chris Tracey (CT)	BEAR Scotland
Chris Waite (CW)	BEAR Scotland
Gillian Laurie (GL) Secretariat	BEAR Scotland

1. Welcome & Introductions

- 1.1. HG welcomed all attendees to Meeting 38 of the Forth Bridges Forum. Introductions were done.

2. Apologies, Minutes of Previous Meeting and Actions

- 2.1. Apologies received from: - Mark Dunlop, Lawrence Shackman, Keavy O'Neil – Transport Scotland; Sarah Duignan – Network Rail; Janice MacGregor – Visit Scotland; Paul Lawrence – CEC, Graeme Malcolm – West Lothian Council
- 2.2. Minutes of previous meeting held on 27 October 2020 were agreed and subsequently published.
- 2.3. Action points were reviewed and updated as follows:
 - Action 21.2 – Open action
 - Action 35.1 – Closed
 - Action 35.2 – Closed
 - Action 36.2 – Ongoing
 - Action 36.3 – Closed
 - Action 36.4 – On hold

Action 37.1 – Ongoing
Action 37.2 – Closed
Action 37.3 – Ongoing
Action 37.4 – Closed
Action 37.5 - Closed
Action 37.6 - Ongoing

- 2.4. Action 36.2 & 37.1 – JN to contact D Boyce for update on WH Coordinator post.
- 2.5. Action 36.4 – Zip line event on hold during COVID restrictions
- 2.6. Action 37.3 – Lighting Proposal Paper – CW investigate paper produced by D Halford, Amey.
- 2.7. Action 37.6 – Forth Bridges Website proposal paper will be presented at Communications meeting on 4 March 2021.

3. Covid-19

- 3.1. HG highlighted the importance of continuing with Forth Bridges Forum work and meetings during the current restrictions.

4. Tourism Update – Update by EW

- 4.1. New Tourism Strategy Manager due to start 8 February 2021 following Alan Watts departure. As tourism during the pandemic is uncertain the postholder will focus on the domestic market and contact will be made with local community councils. Widening the area when lockdown restrictions start to ease. Tourism will experience a slow recovery.
- 4.2. Funding discussions on Signage Strategy ongoing. MD contacted Paul Hogarth and will look towards applying to the National Lottery fund. Applications for funding between £100k and £250k open on 8 February 2021. Initial indications suggest that a partner contribution of 10% of the sum being applied for will be required. Clarity will be provided on 8 February 2021. Paul Hogarth advised we approach a third party to assist us compiling the application form, further details will be provided on receipt.
- 4.3. CEC currently chair the Tourism Groups. The Coordinators Group meeting scheduled for 18 January 2021 was postponed. Tourism Director Group have discussed funding for virtual reality experience.
- 4.4. Online Business event being discussed, postponed until summer.
- 4.5. A Scotland Wide Visitor Management Strategy Group has been set up chaired by Visit Scotland.

5. World Heritage Management Group Update – Update by MO

- 5.1. Appointment of World Heritage Coordinator is key to the Management Plan refresh. This has now expired and is of high priority for the management

group. MD advised that due to a recruitment freeze at Network Rail the appointment of the coordinator was still on hold until start of April 2021.

- 5.2. HES Memorandum of Understanding with Transport Scotland is yet to be formalised. MO is discussing the details with senior colleagues.
- 5.3. UNESCO trail is on-going and led by Visit Scotland.

6. Forth Bridges Forum

- 6.1. A Forth Bridges newsletter was distributed to stakeholders, local communities and Forth bridges subscribers on 21 December 2020. CW asked that an online public meeting is considered. MD advised that TS had considered options for this. HG asked that this is taken as an action.

Action: HG/SL/MD to consider options for public meetings during ongoing covid restrictions

- 6.2. Merchandising – Final costs show no loss and no profit with sales. Extensive amount of stock held in BEAR Scotland Stores in South Queensferry. Online sales options being considered. This will be discussed with incoming Tourism Strategy Manager. The assessment has indicated what sells and what doesn't, along with competitive pricing indicators.

7. Queensferry Crossing – Update by SL

- 7.1. [One Year after Opening Evaluation Report](#) was published in December 2020. This will also be reported on 3 and 5 years after opening.
- 7.2. Work to tackle ice accretion problem on Queensferry Crossing ongoing. Recent closure is third to falling ice this since opening: February 2020, December 2020 and January 2021. Teams are working to manage the issue and find solutions. There is now an option to use FRB for diverted traffic. Post meeting note: FRB diversion trial was held Sat 29 January 2021. Press Release was issued and stakeholders informed.
- 7.3. KG asked if some vehicles were given permission to cross FRB on 21 January 2021. CT advised no one was authorised and due to uncontrolled traffic using the crossing the decision to close FRB was taken for safety reasons.

8. Communications Group – Update by CW

- 8.1. Last Communications meeting was held on 3 December 2020.
- 8.2. Forth Bridges newsletter was produced with contribution from various partners.
- 8.3. Engagement with QDCC resumed in December 2020 with BEAR Scotland senior management. Meeting went well and looking to continue with regular meetings. CW advised that some of QDCC issues are not necessarily for BEAR and more for CEC.

8.4. Website Statistics report for Q4 was issued. CW gave overview of the report with no notable events during the period. Q1 2021 report will show spikes due to QC closure and winter conditions.

9. Network Rail Update – JN provided an update

9.1. Bridge Walkway Experience – Tenders returned from contractors, evaluated and Network Rail in discussions with Transport Scotland over affordability due to tender costs being higher than anticipated. Full business case will be submitted to Transport Scotland at the end of February 2021. Project delivery of Spring 2022 is at risk.

9.2. JN highlighted the benefits of the project on the local and national economy.

Action: HG asked that TS are copied in on correspondence to maintain a clear interest.

10. AOB

10.1. SL added that the Contact and Education Centre has been closed since March 2020. Hope is to hold virtual educational sessions with schools. This is being considered with BEAR Scotland.

11. Date of next meeting – 27 April 2021