

Jul / Aug Sep 2017 Peebles Community Trust Report

The PCT is urgently looking to re-build its board, and to substantially strengthen its engagement with its membership and supporters. This follows some reduction in current board membership (due to competing commitments and changed circumstances), the announcement earlier in the year that David Pye would be stepping down as Chair, and the very recent announcement that Crick Carleton will be stepping back from his role as coordinator of the PCT. It also, to a degree, reflects continuing lack of success in attracting funding support to strengthen the visibility and core functionality of the Trust, and attracting and managing regular volunteer input to assist with the PCT's communications and community engagement activities.

Our latest application for funding to the government run Community Choices Fund to strengthen the capacity of the PCT has been unsuccessful. This is disappointing.

In the early days of the PCT we were successful in gaining establishment funding for the PCT (in 2012 £5,000 from Awards for All and in 2015 £10,000 from the DTAS Town Centre Regeneration funding programme). Since this time we have been unsuccessful in two significant applications to government funded schemes to support further strengthening of the PCT. The unsuccessful application to the Community Choices Fund is the third. This is disheartening.

By contrast, over the same period we have been successful in securing project related funding – to develop a business plan for a Tweeddale Wood Fuel Group, and to undertake a viability assessment of community purchase and development of parts of the March Street Mills site.

Some restructuring of the PCT board is now required, attracting new blood, and taking a fresh look at engaging with and mobilising the considerable support evident from within its membership and participants in past and current projects and engagement events.

In the meantime we are progressing with two key projects:

- ❑ The March Street Mills project working group is seeking to accomplish purchase of parts of this site for community development and use:
 - With Stage 1 funding from the government funded Scottish Land Fund, administered through The Big Lottery, the PCT has commissioned consultants to prepare a viability assessment of the PCT's proposals. This has now been completed.
 - The PCT is working with the March Street Mills allotments association to support its work in securing transfer of ownership of the allotments to the community.
 - The PCT has funds in hand to engage necessary professional services in progressing project ambitions.
- ❑ The Esheils Wood project working group is working to secure the purchase of the Esheils Wood (comprising part of the land lying between the Tweed and that part of the multi-use path running between the Esheils Recycling Centre and the spur to Glentress).
 - The intention is that the woodland will be managed and developed as a recreational and teaching / learning resource available to Peebles community groups and others.
 - Discussions between Forest Enterprise Scotland and the group are ongoing.
 - The group is developing both business and technical plans for acquisition and management of the site.

If you would like to talk through any of the above, or for further information, please contact our secretary on myriam@PeeblesCommunity.org, or phone 01721 729839.