

Midlothian Financial Inclusion Network

Midlothian Financial Inclusion Network Minutes of Meeting

Tuesday 28th November 2017, 9.30am, Dalkeith Corn Exchange.

Present:

Lesley Kelly	MVA (Treasurer)
Kirsten Cook	Changeworks (Vice-Chair)
Chris Clyne	Changeworks
Nicole Bethune	Midlothian Council
Susan Bowes	Dalkeith CAB (Secretary)
Jim Boyle	Bridges Project
Janice Burns	Midlothian Foodbank (Trustee)
Miriam Leighton	MVA
Catherine Davidson	DWP
Ben Forsyth	Midlothian Council
Caroline Keir	Castle Rock Edinvar
Jacquie Mather	Melville Housing
Helen Smart	NHS Lothian
Graeme Egan	MFIN
Sue Peart	Penicuik CAB (Chair)

Apologies:

Kyna Reeves	CAPS Edinburgh
Rona Duncan	Police Scotland
Heather Ritchie	Midlothian Council
Roisin Hurst	Home Energy Scotland
Sharon Hill	MAEDT
Lorraine Chapman	Midlothian Council

	<i>Item</i>	<i>Action</i>
1	Welcome and Apologies: Kirsten chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone. Apologies were as noted above.	
2	Minutes / Matters Arising: Printed minutes from previous meeting have pages missing, GE to reissue. There were no actions arising from the minutes.	GE to reissue minutes.
3	Aspiring Communities (AC) Project - presentation by Miriam Leighton (MVA): The project is funded by the Scottish Government's Aspiring Communities Fund and the European Social Fund (ESF), this is stage 1 funding for research and it is hoped that it will lead to a bid for stage 2 funding. From the Scot Gov website: " <i>The Fund will help enable community bodies and third sector organisations in our most deprived and fragile communities to develop and deliver long-term local solutions that address local priorities and needs, increase active inclusion and build on the assets of local communities to reduce poverty and to enable inclusive growth.</i> " Miriam is one of two Community Researchers working on the project for	

MVA, Naomi Knights is the second.

The geographical area covered by the project is Central Dalkeith and Woodburn.

There are four strands being researched, these are:

1. Facilities and Assets – There will be long and short lists of community facilities, for example the MARC building in Woodburn.
2. Greenspaces – Including community gardens and growing spaces
3. Community Arts and Heritage
4. Financial Inclusion – Including areas such as child care

It is hoped that there will be opportunities to match AC work to the MFIN strategy and make use of the MFIN resources and past project information.

It is hoped that a sub-group of interested MFIN members can be formed to work with the AC researchers.

AC will use a community led approach and it is hoped that this will include/generate:

- Creative thinking
- Ideal projects matched to specific local needs
- Build on a research base using ‘real’ stories from local people
- Use creative media, video, art etc.
- Make use of volunteering and peer support
- Encourage sustainability
- Have continuity of service provision beyond the lifetime of the project

There will be an appeal to local organisations to get involved.

Following Miriam’s presentation comments were invited from the MFIN membership.

JB – There is a similarly funded project in Gorebridge being done by The Bethany Trust. ML – This would be a good networking opportunity, JB will provide contact details.

CK – Castle Rock Edinvar will be happy to offer advice.

ML – AC are looking for examples of good practice. JB mentioned the Horizons café which ML is already aware of.

NB – Has relevant data which she will make available to AC.

CD – Mentioned that there is a need for activities for men over 50, others agreed with this.

LK – Avoid employability as that is already funded elsewhere. The proposed council cuts may influence the future direction of AC.

ML – Cited the Gorebridge Digital Hub as an example of what could be

	<p>done to promote financial inclusion. There may be scope to do something similar in the MARC building.</p> <p>ML – AC will come up with a ‘dream list’ of proposed activities and services using the opportunity to do something creative.</p> <p>JB – There is a Thursday community meal in Gorebridge which is a great example of a wide range of people getting together.</p> <p>CD – It would appear that there are already lots of good things happening and there is a need to collate, store and distribute that information.</p> <p>For information, details of the fund can be found here: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/15300/ESFTPSI/AspiringCommunities</p>	
4	<p>MFIN Project work update:</p> <p>GE continues to update the digital mapping guide with new information and will draw a line under that and issue it shortly.</p> <p>The guide contains a section on the facilities provided in Midlothian libraries which highlights how important the libraries are in their local communities.</p> <p>Rather than send out lots of MFIN emails GE will try to collate as many as possible into a single weekly email.</p> <p>GE to start sending out regular MFIN newsletters.</p>	
5	<p>Information Exchange including proposed Council budget cuts:</p> <p>LK provided an update on the proposed council budget cuts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was mixed and varied feedback on the consultation meeting held by the council. • It was felt that there was a degree of misinformation from the council with their references to ‘profitable’ third sector organisations. • There are many positive messages being put out there about all the good work that the third sector does in Midlothian. • Whilst a petition is not allowed due to there being a live consultation responses to the council are encouraged. • There is still no clarification on the welfare rights changes, particularly as to how the two Citizens Advice Bureaux. • There is a planned social media campaign and all organisations are encouraged to be involved. • It is hoped that the local press will keep reporting on the proposed cuts to raise and maintain public awareness. • Lesley will issue an email with the important dates during the consultation. 14/12/17 - Scot Gov allocation to council known. Feb 2018 - Final meeting to discuss cuts. Jun 2018 - will know about grants programme. • Third sector organisations are actively looking for alternative sources of funding. 	

	<p>SP and SB – As above the position with the CABx is unknown at the moment. SB – Dalkeith CAB are taking on a new employee which is positive news.</p> <p>It was noted that there are council employees involved with MFIN who are also impacted by the proposed cuts.</p> <p>ML – Asked if people refer to the MFIN strategy and whether MFIN have commented on the proposed cuts. GE will remind people about the strategy and see about formulating an MFIN response to the cuts.</p> <p>NB – Commented that the council hold MFIN in high regard and look to MFIN for local information.</p> <p>LK – MFIN should look at scenario/contingency planning for outcomes such as the libraries closing. A discussion should be organised to discuss possible scenarios. GE to action.</p> <p>SP – Penicuik CAB has a six month run down contingency plan in place.</p> <p>SB – The concern over cuts isn't particular to Midlothian, Edinburgh council met with Dalkeith CAB and talked about a 25% cut in Edinburgh.</p> <p>The free bus ticket funding stream has now stopped.</p> <p>Scotrail are offering free train tickets for jobseekers going to job interviews.</p> <p>The new B+M at Straiton are struggling to fill all their job vacancies.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Any other business:</p> <p>LK – There is to be another round of participatory budgeting.</p> <p>CD – There has been an increase in child poverty during the school day, this is where children are socially excluded due to not being able to afford to take part in school activities. There is a DWP project underway looking at food bank usage for jobseekers. It was noted that Lothian Buses do not offer any travel discount for jobseekers but there are other travel companies that do. MFIN should write to LRT to see if there is any possibility of a discount being offered. SB – Commented that there are proposed cuts to subsidised routes.</p> <p>NB – Asked if there is any fuel bank funding or bus ticket funding left? LK will clarify position on fuel bank funding. SP and SB said that each CAB has 80 bus tickets left for referrals.</p> <p>LK – Commented on the signs of homelessness in Midlothian, a case in point being a chap found sleeping rough in the MVA doorway in Dalkeith. Other people then related their own stories and JB told us about a lady in Gorebridge for whom being without a permanent home is a lifestyle choice and her support needs are different to those of other homeless clients.</p>	

7	Dates of next meeting/s The January Meeting will be held on Tuesday 16th January 2018. The proposed next meeting after that will be on Tuesday 28th March 2018.	
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