**DRAFT**

**Intergenerational National Network**

Meeting on 5 April at 7 p.m. at the Stove, Dumfries

**Present**

Matt Baker The Stove

Anne Connor Outside the Box

Isla Robertson The Crichton Trust

Marian Krawczyk University of Glasgow, School of Interdisciplinary Studies

Elaine Tyler Creative Futures and Maxwelltown Residents Association

Andre Anderson

Michael Moore Blueprint 100 (The Stove)

Mike O’Kane

Jimmy Russell The Stove

Pat Scrutton Intergenerational National Network

**Apologies**

Jan Hogarth

Carol Hannaford

Anne Horn

Ryan McKay

Kate MacLean

**1. Welcome and introductions**

Pat welcomed everyone to the Intergenerational National Network, and to Dumfries. Everyone then introduced themselves.

**2. What is an artist-led community development trust?**

Matt Baker reported that the Stove began with a group of artists who wanted to work in the town of Dumfries. On the one hand, the High Street has been falling on hard times; on the other hand, there is a strong artistic community across Dumfries and Galloway. They began talking about ways in which they could bring life back into the town centre.

They asked themselves what a market town is, and can be, in the 21st century, if it is not a retail centre. They thought it should be about people coming together, whether to celebrate; to protest; or to remember.

Dumfries is in need of regeneration. The council’s regeneration strategy is based on attracting retailers and developing a big new shopping centre; but this is clearly not working. So the artists asked themselves what a group of artists could do?

Based in the Stove building, on the High Street, they are now creating their own regeneration strategy. They have about 30 people on various contracts, 75% of whom are under 30.

Classic regeneration is about buildings, roads and physical infrastructure. The Stove, which functions as a development trust, is about people. The Stove is an accessible space, and includes a community café. They are growing partnerships and making projects for the town. They have a monthly calendar, which includes people using the space to run events.

They have four strands of regular activity: music; word; visual arts; and food.

**Music** encompasses a radio station; workshops; gigs; and young bands, who also play in other venues.

**Word** includes ‘brave new words’ workshops which encourage people who may be marginalised to find ways of expressing their own creativity. These attract people as young as 14 and as old as 80. They also provide a supportive environment for established poets.

**The visual arts** element is about visualising conversations about the town, rather then exhibitions. For instance, they facilitated a conversation about transport; and an artist interpreted this visually.

**Food** is an important element. They use the café to promote multicultural food, as well as more conversations!

Longer tern projects include **Nithraid**. Beginning with the role of the river in the town, this incorporates a sailing race and a group of young artists redesigning the ‘Salty Coo’.

They also get involved in civic issues, such as the restoration of the town fountain.

**‘Square Go’** is about what local people want their town to look like.

**‘A House on the High Street’** is a film by John Wallace. The idea behind it is about bringing people back to live in the High Street. The idea is now becoming a vision. They have created a community benefit society, which will be able to take ownership of the many empty buildings, so that they can be used for housing; local small businesses; social events; etc. They are looking at co-housing models with affordable rents. They will launch the ‘Midsteeple Quarter project’ on Saturday 7 April.

Michael added that **Blueprint 100** was developed because Dumfries and Galloway has the lowest percentile of 18 – 30 year olds in Scotland; the aim is to keep them from moving away. They use professional artists, not as teachers, but to engage with young people in arts-based activities.

A social history project, the **‘Hidden Histories Group’** is working at Lincluden Abbey, which has been abandoned by Historic Scotland.

There is a strong community development aspect to their work. They are growing an umbrella, under which people are meeting across the different groups and pieces of work, and realising how much they have in common.

**‘Our Norwegian Story’** highlights the role Dumfries played in the second world war. When Norway was occupied, Dumfries became the main centre for exiles. With intermarriage, many older people today have some Norwegian inheritance.

For many years, Norway sent them a Christmas tree, but this came to an end in the 1980s. The project is funded by the Heritage Lottery. It includes:

* food: recipe swaps and a market with Norwegian food;
* skills: knitting, embroidery, boatbuilding and woodcraft, for example;
* football;
* a shadow puppet project;
* a mapping project; and
* a monthly ‘stitching our story’ meeting.

They are now working on a Norwegian trail. There is a dedicated website, [www.norwegianstory.com](http://www.norwegianstory.com).

**3. Rural Wisdom**

Anne Connor is the Chief Executive of Outside the Box, a voluntary organisation which is based in Glasgow, but works across Scotland.

Dumfries and Galloway was ones of the sites for the ‘Mums Supporting Mums’ programme, which worked alongside mums with ‘sub-optimal well-being’, offering peer support.

Rural Wisdom is funded by the Big Lottery, with the aim of exploring how rural communities work for older people. Classically, twice as many older people live in rural areas as in cities. Not surprisingly, people who design policies based on cities don’t get it right! Rural policies usually focus on creating jobs to attract young people; but ignore the existing older people.

This is the end of year one of a five year project. There are two ’demonstration areas’ in Wales, and three in Scotland. Although they are all different, there are many common issues.

Outside the Box will work in three areas of Scotland for two years; then they will identify two or three different areas, where they will work for the following two years. In year five, there will be a series of get-togethers across Scotland to share the learning.

In Wales, Milford Haven used to be a prosperous sea port and tourist destination, but is now facing poverty. The other area is in the north, inland, and has a high proportion of Welsh speakers.

In Scotland, they are working in Edzell and Brechin, which have a [population of about 8,000. Brechin has a community campus, but it is up a hill, at one end of town, with no bus service. Most people on low incomes live at the other end of town. Edzell is only 8 miles away; but it takes an hour on the bus. It is also shortly to double in size, to accommodate commuters to Aberdeen.

The second site is in rural Perthshire (Aberfeldy and Kinlochrannoch). Getting to Pitlochry, the nearest big town, can take one and a half hours. Although the population of Aberfeldy is less than 2,000, it has a vibrant town centre, with between 30 and 40 shops. However, the local bank branch is just about to close.

The third site is Eaglesham, which is only 5 miles south of Glasgow. Many rural areas are quite close to big cities. Although bigger than Aberfeldy, it only has three shops. People who move there can be quite isolated. The sheltered housing development looks out over the primary school and the scout hut, but it is only now that they have established meaningful contact.

They are hearing that older people want:

* to stay and die in the place they know;
* to contribute; not just to be looked after; to be supported to be part of their local community;
* to live in a community that works for everyone; and
* housing options.

In Edzell and Brechin, one major issue is that there is not enough for children and young people to do. They are looking at activities such as a film day, where a child is invited to bring along an adult; intergenerational tea dances; etc. There is currently very little that brings the whole community together is a way that is welcoming for everyone, including, for example, people with dementia.

Topics such as local shops and transport raise heated discussions. The health centre is five miles away, and is not served by buses.

In Perthshire, there is no care at home service, so local people are coming up with their own solutions. Kinlochrannoch has a population of between 500 and 600. People report that they do need help; but they also want to give help. They are also looking for more flexibility in housing options; and access to transport, particularly to council and health services and appointments. Public transport is scheduled, rather then events-based.

They are looking for possible local solutions: for instance, if a shop in Aberfeldy is doing a delivery, could they offer someone a lift? Commercial vehicles, library buses, etc. could possibly also participate? And the sheltered housing development’s minibus is not used much.

In the early stages, they spent a lot of time going to where people are, and listening to their concerns and their views and opinions. The local authority is running ‘consultations’, but somehow they don’t join things up. Commercial concerns tend to think only in terms of the market.

They are now at the stage of trying things out: tea dances; film nights; knitting groups; men’s sheds; etc. Many of the solutions are intergenerational, even thought they might not be labeled as such.

Marian asked what they were looking for by the end of the project.

Anne replied that the plan is that, by the end of the work, things would be happening in these areas which would otherwise not have happened. These would be being delivered locally, not by Outside the Box. Overall, there would be:

* more things happening;
* evidence of what works;
* a better understanding of the issues by all concerned;
* an understanding of what difference providing care and support locally makes;
* more outreach work;
* a clearer understanding of what people want; and
* more networking.

This programmme is unusual, possibly unique, in looking specifically at rural communities. Most equivalent work is currently focusing on age-friendliness.

One area for exploration is how to make care homes better.

In response to a question from Mike, she added that there will be an evaluation, and opportunities for shared learning. But much of the evidence will take the shape of story-telling, which makes it more real.

There is a real issue about the amount of paperwork generated!

**4. Information sharing**

Isla works on the Crichton Care Campus project with Prof. David Clark. The Crichton Trust has applied for funding from LEADER. The campus would be based on the Crichton estate, and would explore new, innovative ways of caring for older people. It would work across Dumfries and Galloway to spread good practice.

Marian’s interest is in the end of life. She believes that there is a real desire for co-housing, including intergenerational housing solutions; it is not just about care.

Mike is interested in community centres and how they work. Some are very cliquey and unwelcoming. Others are very warm and welcoming to people across the generations; these also tend to have a stronger sense of energy; many of them are owned by their members. He emphasized the importance of people simply coming together and chatting , and how this can, almost invisibly, change minds. There are also connections with creativity, the arts and nutrition. Small successes can result in change to a ‘new normal’.

Matt added that a couple of things he had not mentioned before were a mill regeneration and the development of an artisan market. They plan to keep talking and supporting an intentional cultural shift from the assumption of council provision.

Anne agreed that the public sector only understand service provision. There is no training, support, or even permission for people to think innovatively. They are lamed if they get it wrong; and don’t get credit if they get it right!

Andre is involved in an intergenerational theatre project in Carlisle, which is part of a month long ‘Dance Ahead’ programme.

5. Future plans

Pat is in working on a programme for the rest of the year. A web page is also in development.