



Elliott Clan Society submission to Teviot & Liddesdale Area Partnership to seek review of decision not to award sums to the society to underwrite £2k for the 2023 Ceilidh Event partnered with the Holm Show during the Clan Gathering in Newcastleton.

The work of the society:

- Although only formally established in 1972, when it was constituted and known as the Elliot Clan Society, the gathering has been part of the community culture and heritage since the Clans reived the Liddesdale valley centuries ago.
- The society has worldwide membership of 2,000+ (USA, Canada, Australia, and UK core markets)
- The Clan Chief is a member of the **Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs**, the Clan Society is a member of **Confederation of Scottish Clans and Societies (COSCA)**.
- Representing Newcastleton is an important part of the work the society undertakes promoting the south of Scotland to the 'international visitor' when attending clan events across the world.
- Newcastleton is the seat of the **Elliott Clan** with its historical base located at Redheugh, still occupied by the present Clan Chief, who manages a small museum for visitors at the site.
- Main Eliott artefacts are hosted locally in the **Liddesdale Heritage Museum** based in Newcastleton and are a valued part of the Heritage collection attracting visitors to village.
- The Elliott Clan is our part of our culture and our history, it is embedded in the community.

Events managed by the society in collaboration with other community groups; Liddesdale Heritage Centre and Liddesdale Agricultural Society (Holm Show) and the WRI:

- **The Gathering** (3 days of events) showcases local crafts and traditional skills as well as tours to other locations destinations showcasing the Scottish Borders. Events already planned:
 - dry stone walling (dyking), Stick dressing, Liddesdale Reivers, Lynn's Loom, Elliot shop and Clan Room, Falconry and pipes, sheep dog demonstrations.
 - Heritage Centre
 - Hermitage Castle, Caerlaverock Castle, Gilnockie Peel Tower
 - HOLM SHOW (Local agricultural show)
 - Church service at Kirkandrews on Esk
- The Elliott Clan Gathering is normally hosted locally every 4 years attracting international visitors to Newcastleton who are based here during the week of activities.
- The last gathering was in 2016, plans for the 2020 gathering were scuppered and incomes lost, because of covid. This is the first event for 7 years.
- Fund raising efforts have been badly impacted since covid and this year the level of support for all community fundraising has seen significant decline.
- Traditionally funds have been awarded by VisitScotland or through the festival fund but neither now exist.
- This application is to subsidise tickets for the community ceilidh, an event open to all locally (aged 16+)

Why we need you to support this event to preserve our culture and to help our local economy:

- Newcastleton has little in the way of cultural activities and can only host events when we can widen appeal to cover costs to support them.

- Our local economy is dependent on tourism which has seen a massive fall off since the storms of 2021 – all walks and trails have been closed or partially closed since that time; they are not expected to reopen until Spring 2023.
- The Holm Show and Clan Gathering are seen as the highlight of the summer calendar and currently are the only events Newcastleton can market to boost tourism as they do not require access to the forest estate which remains closed.
- Currently the day visitor market has completely disappeared, and the overnight market is struggling with forward bookings. Visitors are holding off either to wait to see facilities reopen or because they cannot afford to book holidays due to the cost-of-living crisis.
- One hotel has closed and is up for sale, another hospitality business is up for sale.
- The drop in visitors is significant, every event we can support and promote to attract visitors back to enjoy our location is a must.
- Whilst the ask is £2k the ROI is substantial locally; a ripple effect is generated for local business and community groups. The event has not happened for 7 years due to covid and has been sorely missed as a revenue generation.
- A ceilidh is part of a Scottish way of life, we cannot host a clan gathering event without one – it is what our visitors expect. To proceed without one will lessen the event and damage future events.
- Clan gatherings are part of Reiving culture, it is important that they continue to be recognised as a significant part of our local culture and are linked very much to our agricultural heritage.
- This whole event is only possible because of the commitment of the people who provide their skills to showcase Scottish Rural crafts and the voluntary groups that come together to support the event and the landowners who generously provide the sites to host the events.
- The Holm Show are providing use of their marquees to host the event. Part of the grant will be used to pay for the generator to provide power for the event, also shared with the Holm Show.
- Whilst this is primarily to engage and entertain our international visitors it will only be a successful event if it is full of locals doing traditional local dances, one cannot work without the other.
- This is the coming together of 4 voluntary groups as well as rural skills and crafts to host an event that showcases us to visitors every 4 years.
- Beneficial to the community and wider catchment when our guests tour all over Scotland, the majority staying in the south of Scotland for more than just 3 days.
- It needs to be supported if for no other reason than to demonstrate that the community believes in itself, declining to support our event sends out signals that others don't at a time the community is on its knees.

Finally, Newcastleton, unlike most of its neighbouring communities, has no fall back for funding – we don't have wind farms, we don't have common good funds, and this event doesn't qualify as festival. Where is it expected to get help if it isn't from a local grant fund. We hope you reconsider your decision as this really will make a difference to our event and our whole community.

Thank you.

Margaret Elliott, Clan Chief

12-2-2023

