**Background information**

**Overview of Langholm Initiative (LI)**

The Langholm Initiative is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation based in Langholm in the South of Scotland. The organisation has operated for over 25 years and was one of the south of Scotland’s earliest development trusts. It is managed by a Board of Trustees who oversee the delivery of a number of community projects. The organisation has a membership of 390 full members and 370 associate members/friends who live out with our postcode area. See the LI website for more detail of current and past projects. (<https://www.langholminitiative.org.uk/>) and our social media accounts.

**A bit about Langholm**

Langholm is located 8 miles from the border and the town developed around the textile industry. There were over 12 working mills in the town, including Edinburgh Woollen mill employing many hundreds of people but several of the mills are currently lying empty. Whilst there are a small number of niche textile industries, these only employ a small number of people; current local employment includes retail, forestry, local authority/nhs. The town developed around the confluence of 3 rivers – the river Esk, Ewes water and the Wauchope water. Tourism is underdeveloped in the town but is seen as being a key part of its future. Langholm is an incredibly active town with many organisations and a very active volunteer community who support many ventures; it is also famous for its annual Common Riding.

**Past and current activity of LI**

Much of the work of the Langholm initiative has been as a result of the downturn in the textile industry. In addition to projects such as Weaving a future for Eskdale or the Digital Skills project, it operates the Welcome to Langholm base on the High Street with local volunteers. It also owns a small kiosk near to the main carpark which it intends to lease out to local caterers. The activity undertaken by the Initiative has often been supported by grants which has meant many projects have been time limited. The Initiative would like to move towards being less reliant on grants and is currently reviewing its future activity to look at ways in which it can be financially sustainable.

**Tarras Valley Nature Reserve**

In 2021 the Langholm Initiative following a high-profile fundraising campaign, purchased 5,200 acres of land and 6 residential properties from Buccleuch estate in what is the South of Scotland’s first large scale community purchase. The aim of this purchase was to establish the Tarras Valley Nature Reserve (TVNR). This is one of the most significant, long-term project the organisation has taken on board and there are 4.5 members of staff ( estate manager, development manager, Inspiring Engagement in Nature, Creative Digital Media manager) employed by this project and it also has support from a staff member from the Woodland Trust. The TVNR team are currently fundraising 2.2m to secure a further 5,300 acres and 3 properties.

The organisation’s ambition for the land is one where the environment and the local economy work together to provide the catalyst for community regeneration in Langholm. The land and buildings are owned by the Langholm Initiative but authority for day to day management has been mandated to the TVNR Executive Committee.

TVNR has an active volunteer group who meet weekly and undertake practical works on the land. Much work is undertaken with schools including the John Muir Trust awards and the establishment of a junior ranger programme.

All staff are currently supported by grants from different sources but the medium to long term aim is to ensure that the project is sustainable and can exist independently from grants and this is the main priority for the TVNR development manager

Priority projects for the forthcoming financial year include:

* Development of a whole estate plan looking at land management, use of existing buildings, new developments, access etc
* Establishment of a glamping site
* New TVNR website

 A subsidiary organisation has been set up to manage commercial projects with its own board although this is currently dormant.

For more information on TVNR see our social media accounts

**Staff – see attached organisational chart for current structure**

Joyce Ireland – Finance and Admin officer ( for LI and TVNR)

Mark Hodgson – LI Digital skills officer

Angela Williams – TVNR development manager

Jenny Barlow – TVNR estate manager

Kat Mayer – TVNR Inspiring engagement with nature officer

Stuart Spray – TVNR Creative digital media manager

Jane Sayers – woodland trust employee seconded to TVNR, 2 days/week