**Press Release**

**Yetholm Community Shop Steering Group**

The Yetholm Community Shop steering group have been told that the application for Scottish Land Fund Stage 1 grant funding has been approved. A formal letter confirming the terms and conditions of the Stage 1 grant is expected to be received shortly. The amount received at this stage is £11090.

The Scottish Land Fund is a Scottish Government funded programme, which supports community organisations across Scotland to own land, buildings and other assets.

The Stage 1 grant funding will provide the wherewithal to engage professional advisers to prepare a detailed and robust business plan to demonstrate the financial viability and long-term sustainability of the village shop, and to carry out a full survey and an independent valuation. When these are prepared and approved by the village community, an application can then formally be made to the Scottish Land Fund for Stage 2 funding to assist in buying the shop. Other sources of funding for purchase and further development of the shop will be needed as well. These will include raising funds through the issue of Community Shares by a new Community Benefit Society owned by the whole village and which will buy and manage the shop.

Before the next application can be made there are a number of vitally important steps in the project. These include drawing on great local skills and experience of Yetholm people, assessing the options for additional and complementary activities to strengthen the financial position of the shop in a changing and challenging retail market and ensuring the widest possible community engagement and participation. It’s planned to have another village meeting in the near future and, provided the business plan is agreed by the village, to make the application to the Scottish Land Fund for Stage 2 funding next year.

A spokesperson for the steering group said, “This is great news for the people of Yetholm and surrounding areas. The shop is a vital village asset and is used by all sections of the community. We have had outstanding support so far and want to thank everyone who has shared their views and expertise. Everyone will now be working to ensure the future of the shop for the village.”

*Sunday, 15 December 2019*