

# *Bedlington Forum*



*A Community in Partnership*

Minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2012 at the Salvation Army, Hartford Road, Bedlington.

**Present:**

Brian Oliver – Chair

Margaret Oliver – Secretary

Colin Heathcote – SNRG

Neil Nevens – Police

Alan Stewart – EBPC/FOGP

John Masters – Chamber of Trade

Stephen Shephard – WBT Council

David Graham – F.O.G.P

20 members of the public

Malcolm Robinson – Vice Chair

Richard Schofield – NCC

Neal Younger – SNRG

George Todd – NCC/WBTC

George Webster – FOGP

Richard Wearmouth – Salvation Army

Valerie Tyler – Resident & F.O.G.P

Dennis Fancett – Cty Church/Help Hub

## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

## **2. Apologies**

Cllrs Alex & Allison Wallace, Cllr Tracey Aynsley, Cllr Mary Allan, C Cllr Arthur Pegg.

## **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2012**

## **4. Matters Arising**

- Community Centre; A member of the Town Council gave an update on progress and announced that the next Town Council meeting, which is held every second Thursday of the month, will be held there.
- Sustran cycle route; The Chair had been in touch with James Adamson with regards to the markings for the shared pedestrian/cyclist route. James informed him he was unaware that this had not been done but would follow it up as NCC is responsible for this after the end of February. These markings still have not materialised so BKO will continue to pursue this matter.
- The Forum is involved in a steering group meeting with FOGP and the Development Trust along with a number of NCC officers, as well as sitting on this group, the Forum also meets with a wider group, both meetings were again looking at proposals for leisure provisions in Bedlington. Further meetings are planned to take place during the year.
- Brian, Malcolm and Margaret attended a Planning Training meeting for SE Northumberland where information was given about the new planning guidance rules and regulations which are to be applied very shortly. Another training session is to take place in March which will cover the Localism Bill. They were looking for more Planning Champions as they at present only have two and Brian said he would be interested in this as he has been involved in the past with planning issues in the Town. He has set wheels in motion to try and achieve this.
- We continue to attend the Area Committee meetings every month raising any areas of concerns where appropriate.
- There is to be a management Voluntary Community Sectors Alliance meeting next week where the Chair will be present.

- Later in February there is to be a Forums Chair meeting being hosted by Wansbeck VCS. This is the first meeting for this year so it will be interesting to see how other Forums in the area have progressed or finding out about any problems they may have come across.

## 5. Police update

General Crime in Bedlington is DOWN over the last 28 days by 21 offences but is UP by 10 compared to the same period last year.

Crime Numbers	Last LMAPS session 23rd Nov 2011	Total from 19 Dec – 16 Jan Compared to last 28 days up to 19 Dec 2011	Differences
Burglary Dwelling	5	(1) 2	-3
Burglary OTD	4	(15) 1	-3
Criminal Damage	34	(30) 27	-7
Vehicle	9	(6) 6	-3
Violent Crime	35	(15) 16	-19
<b>Total Crime (All categories)</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>(99) 78</b>	<b>-40</b>
	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	
Year to date comparison	<b>118</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>Down 40</b>
Detection Rate % [Target 45.6%]	52.4%	52.3%	- 0.1%
<b>Anti-Social Behaviour</b>			
Youth ASB	76	(34) 23	-53
Non Youth ASB	103	(89) 109	+6
<b>Total ASB</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>(123) 132</b>	<b>-56</b>

Criminal Damage continues to be an issue in respect of damage to vehicles in the Town Centre area however this has not occurred since late December 2011 and several people have been arrested or are on bail for these offences. The Proactive Crime Team has been given the role to investigate the offences and extra patrols have been instigated. It is also a TCG (Tasking and Coordinating Group) priority and a Neighbourhood Priority.

Other crime of note relate to two thefts from the persons where females were walking home late at night and had their bags stolen in a non violent manner by a lone male. This happened over the Christmas period. Enquiries are ongoing and one male has been arrested and given Police Bail.

Members of the Community in Bedlington are encouraged to check the local media for details of the Community Messaging scheme which is being set up in the Bedlington area. Community messaging allows members of the public to receive information from their local Neighbourhood Policing Team regarding current local trends, crime patterns and appeals. These messages are sent out instantly by email, text and voicemail, more information can be found on the Northumbria Police Website. People can send their contact email address to NPT Mailbox via the internet to sign up for Community Messaging.

Email address: [bedlington.npt@northumbria.pnn.police.uk](mailto:bedlington.npt@northumbria.pnn.police.uk)

Traffic problems at St Benet Biscop was once more discussed and it had also been discussed at the last LMAPs meeting, but unfortunately the only apparent solution is to have a magic wand and the lack of finances to achieve any solution does not look promising at all. Brian said that he will go back to the school and discuss their safety policy with regards to the students being dropped off from the buses.

It was reported that strobe lights emitting from the Blue Bell Public House were distracting drivers whilst they were driving up Front Street West. *(Since the meeting I can report*

*that this matter has been rectified, courtesy of PC Nevens.)* A number of other questions were asked from the floor and addressed by PC Nevens.

## 6. THI update

- Overall, progress is going very well with a lot of interest/demand for grants. Around 97% of the budget is now ring-fenced with around 60% awarded in grant to date. This will help improve 18 buildings containing 26 businesses. Over the next few weeks around 9 schemes will be completing. Over the next few months and the rest of the year we should see a further 8 schemes onsite.
- **Complementary Initiatives**  
*Conservation Area Leaflet*  
1500 copies distributed end of August to all properties within and near vicinity of the conservation area and within key public buildings. E-copy also online - <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=8046#BedlingtonTHI>. Bedlington Development Trust has helped promote the leaflet with a You Tube production and also getting these guides into most tourist/information points up and down Northumberland. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iqecpk6LpFk>. The leaflet will be revised and re-printed in 2013 towards the end of the THI.
- *Heritage Skills Training*  
Working with NECT and Meadowdale Middle School, heritage skills workshops took place 23-24 January 2012 with Year Five (9-10 year old). Over the two days, 110 children were introduced to the following skills and had hands-on experience in: Lime Pointing Cobbling, Stone Carving, Willow weaving and Traditional Pottery. The feedback from the schools was excellent, with the desire to repeat with other year groups.

## 7. SNRG update

The big news is that Ofcom has given us the go ahead to broadcast as from Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> March. We will be broadcasting throughout South East Northumberland on 87.7FM and the rest of the world on [www.synergysradio.co.uk](http://www.synergysradio.co.uk)

Our aim is to be something akin to an on-air local newspaper with music to suit all tastes. So if any of you want to come and talk about local issues, or what your charity/organisation is doing on behalf of your community, nobble myself or Neal. My programme will be going out daily between 9am and noon after Neal's spot from 7 to 9. Again, very many thanks to Brian and Malcolm for all their hard work in helping to convert 90a Front Street into a radio station. We were able to toast the switch-on of electricity just before Christmas. Thanks again to Russell for his help in transporting our load of office furniture that had been donated by supporters in Alnwick, this now graces the premises. Our building is now carpeted and lined throughout, the decorating is just about finished – many thanks to professional decorator Kevin Foster of Bedlington Station for doing this work free of charge. On December 8th West Bedlington Town Council approved our application for a £500 community chest grant. We are still fund-raising and have recently applied to the Coalfields Regeneration Trust for £5000 and the Hadrian Trust for £1000. I've sent a begging e-mail to Lord Bedlington the 466<sup>th</sup> wealthiest person in the world, Robert Rich who has become a benefactor to the Terriers. Finally, if anybody fancies their hand at presenting or being involved in our work, we've arranged a 'meet and greet' session at the studio next Monday 6.30pm.

## 8. BDT update

- Malcolm informed the meeting that the Development Trust now have full planning permission on the building that they are trying to regenerate, which is situated behind the Post Office at the rear of Front Street West. That's the good news..... despite having our project initially accepted for the funding money we needed for this build, the deadline for this grant application expired on

the 30<sup>th</sup> December, our planning permission did not come through until the 31<sup>st</sup> Dec! Speaking of planning, after several problems identified by the planning department, which later turned out to be spurious when challenged, they then hit us with the need for an entomology (bat) report. I would like to thank David Lynn for his help in enabling us to get around that one. We are now awaiting the technical drawings and specification so we can progress with estimate tenders for the build costs, after which we can then go after any funding still out there.

- The computer and internet training is going well but I would still like to see more people use it. We have managed to put just under 50 people through the short course. We have around 2 months left to run so if you want to take the course or you know anyone who might please let us know. I have approached the Adult Learning Centre at Bed. Station to arrange for further additional courses, UK Online informally accepted my funding bid and gave me the go-ahead to make an application to fund these courses. I am still waiting for further information from ALC so I can finalise the application.
- There has been further action on the Bedlington leisure provision question, a steering group has been formed with several NCC officers, Friends of Gallagher Park, Bedlington Forum and the Development Trust to look at what the Gallagher Park site might offer by way of development potential. A larger meeting has already taken place which looked at what is or could be available in the Bedlington area, a further meeting is scheduled for February.
- The Development Trust undertook a public consultation, many of you filled out a form at our last meeting, and just under 3800 responses were received, with 47 individual suggestions.

A presentation was given showing all of these results. The steering group will be drawing up a list of short and longer term objectives and benchmarking progress using these suggestions!

One of the themes I am keen to include is some sort of heritage aspect as that should bring in its own funding streams through exhibitions to celebrate Bedlington's contributions such as the Iron & Steel Industry, Communications, the Early Railway industry and of course mining as well as many others.

- Another item to note is that I have been working with Ashington Development Trust and there will be a Riverside Festival held on 26<sup>th</sup> May at the Wansbeck Riverside Park. This should be a great family day out and we intend to hold various competitions and games to involve youngsters. There could also be some form of games with the possibility of teams from different Towns taking part in a knockout competition.

## **9. Any other Business**

- Bedlington Lloyds TSB branch is on a hit list for closure or possible takeover. Lloyds TSB have been ordered by the EU to get rid of 620 branches in the name of fairer competition. This is called 'Project Verde' and effectively puts our branch up for sale. How anyone can justify the possible closure of our last high street banking presence as good for customers is beyond me! Anyway we might see another group such as the CO-OP or even Virgin Money taking it over.
- Both the Forum and the Development Trust are supporting the community orchard which is being created at The Lodge site. Trees are being sponsored and it only costs £10.00, for this small fee local organisations or individuals can get a tree dedicated to them with a plaque and a photograph included.

Contact details.....

w: [www.leadinglink.co.uk](http://www.leadinglink.co.uk)

- West Bedlington Town Council are planning to make funding money available to support activities within the Community Centre particularly targeting school children during holiday periods.
- Cllr Tyler informed us of the Mathew Project which is being run from the ‘Coffin Chapel.’ This involves supplying food parcels to needy families via referrals from Social Services, any donations of tinned foods would be gratefully accepted.
- The meeting was informed of an application to construct two wind turbines in the Choppington Lane area. BKO to investigate further.
- A discussion took place regarding a recent planning objection which highlights the absence of legislation covering sunlight being obstructed to solar panels.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012 6.30pm, Salvation Army, Hartford Road**  
This will start with our AGM followed by our usual meeting