

Bedlington Forum



A Community in Partnership

Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd April 2012 at the Salvation Army, Hartford Road, Bedlington.

Present:

Brian Oliver – Chair

Margaret Oliver – Secretary

Robert Coulson – Treasurer & CoT

Sgt John Sanderson – North/bria Police

Mary Allen– WBT Council

Cllr Valerie Tyler – Resident & F.o.G.P

9 Members of the public

Malcolm Robinson – Vice Chair

Colin Heathcote – Radio Group

Keith Dalton – F.o.G.P

PC Melissa Hepburn – North/bria Police

Richard Wearmouth – Salvation Army

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Apologies

Cllr Alex & Allison Wallace; Cllr George Todd; Cllr Arthur Pegg; Cllr Colin Parker; Cllr Alan Stewart; Rev Peter Rand; Neal Younger Larry Roberts; Michael Wade; Peter Basnett; Dianne Lennon; Cliff Jenkinson.

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

3. Matters Arising

- The Chair informed the meeting that the company (Veolia ES Landfill Ltd) making the planning application for wind turbines at Choppington Lane had withdrawn their application following NCC asking for further information regarding the location. It is believed that the reason for the withdrawal is because the required information would take a long time to gather.
- The well discussed application for a home extension which was claimed would restrict light to newly installed solar panels on an a near by property, was given approval by NCC.
- The Chair has been assured by the planning department that the construction of a Care Home on the former Elliott's Garage site will commence mid April (2012).

4. Police Update

General Crime in Bedlington is down over the last 28 days by 25 offences, and is down on the same period last year by 46 offences.

Crime Numbers	February 2012	March 2012	Differences
Burglary Dwelling	2	1	-1
Burglary OTD	7	4	-3
Criminal Damage	15	32	-17
Vehicle	2	3	+ 1
Violent Crime	18	19	+ 1
Total Crime (All categories)	104	79	-25
	2011	2012	
Year to date comparison	125	79	- 46

Current (Tasking	Detection Rate % [Target 45.6%]	43.4%	50.9%	- 7.6%	TCG and
	Anti-Social Behaviour	Previous 28 Days	Current Period		
	Youth ASB	48	54	+ 6	
	Non Youth ASB	93	119	+ 26	
	Total ASB	141	174	+33	

Coordinating Group) priorities are shoplifting and Burglary. Following an increase in shoplifting offences officers have been working together with local retail premises conducting high visibility patrols in key premises to deter offenders. A shop watch scheme has also been initiated to make staff at retail premises aware of repeat and persistent offenders.

Officers and staff have also been working hard to drive down burglary by conducting high visibility patrols in key areas, posting crime prevention leaflets through letter boxes and open windows. This period has seen a decrease in both burglary dwelling and OTD. Members of the community are encouraged to keep windows and doors closed and keys and valuables out of reach of letter boxes. During the summer period there is traditionally an increase in shed burglaries. Please keep sheds locked with a secure padlock, consider marking equipment and record serial numbers and descriptions of valuable items.

There has been a slight increase in anti social behaviour this period. This can be attributed to the unseasonably warm weather and lighter nights. Officers continue to work hard to combat anti social behaviour. The local community are encouraged to contact the Police to let staff know where patrols should be focussed. The Neighbourhood Policing Team has increased patrols in key areas at relevant times. Any information that the public can give us to tackle problems of this nature is extremely valuable.

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

5. Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) update

The Chair gave the THI update, as Richard Schofield has been seconded to take up a new roll for NCC, however we are pleased to learn that he will still oversee all the work listed below. He hopes to be available to attend our next meeting.

- Budget: currently fully ring-fenced. Below, schemes either complete/in progress. No new schemes currently being considered. Grant support could only be considered if the property was brought into commercial use and if we had the budget, currently we don't. Re Tesco – we continue to press them for a start date. Meetings have taken place to discuss highway matters.
- **Complete**
2 Market Place, Beatrice/to be occupied; 22, 26 Front St West, Chic/D&J Lynn & Son;
30a Front St West, Community Hub; 32 Front St West, Valley Jewelers
40a Front Street West, Market Place Post Office; 72-74 Front Street West, Tallantyre & Ladbrokes;
76a Rook Matthews Sayer
- **Onsite**
4 Market Place, Former J R Johnson/Flower Stop; 28 Front St West, Boots
104 Front Street East, R & S Convenience; 10 Vulcan Place, Gordon Mackinnon Photography

- **Grant applications being Appraised – onsite this year**
20 Market Place, Munchie Moos, Silver Cells and Gerez; Raymond Diane, Optician;
80 Front Street West, Hetherington's Shoe Services
- **Being prepared by architects – onsite this year/early next**
1-3 Vulcan Place, Verdi and Renown; 1 Market Place, Custom Ink;
3 Market Place, New business moving in (solicitors); 2-4 Vulcan Place, Lloyds Pharmacy

6. South Northumberland Radio Group (SNRG) update (Colin Heathcote)

As most of you will know, our restricted service licence broadcast finished on Friday 30th March and it was a bit sad when Neal Younger pulled the transmission plug in the studio as I counted down the seconds to Midnight.

Although we had only been on air for four weeks, it seemed in many respects much longer and it was weird to hear a crackly hiss replace the music, jingles, adverts and speech that had previously filled the airwaves on 87.7FM and on-line at [www. synergyradio.co.uk](http://www.synergyradio.co.uk).

Whilst it's impossible to even guess at our listenership figures, we can report receiving many compliments, supportive letters, e-mails and texts from those who had either listened or who had been interviewed on-air.

During those four weeks we hosted some 97 people in the studio, staged a live transatlantic interview with a Bedlingtonian author now living in the US; relayed a specially recorded radio play on the triple Bedlington murder of 1913, had three live outside broadcasts and reported live updates from football matches featuring Bedlington Terriers, Ashington and Blyth Spartans on the four Saturdays.

Our studio guests ranged from three year old Trinity pre-school nursery tots who wanted to donate cream eggs to the PAWS to singers and musicians who showed what they could do. The interviewees also included local MPs, writers, representatives from charities and local organisations as diverse as the Samaritans, Age UK, the South East Northumberland Rail Users Group, the Lord Lieutenancy, the Lifespan/McMillan Nurses befriending service, teachers, Red Cross, Salvation Army, NHS, St Cuthbert's Church, local councillors, Bedlingtonshire Dev Trust, a foster mum and the Northumberland fostering and adoption service, work training agencies, actors, footballers, the neighbourhood policing team, Olympic flame carrier oh, and of course, the Bedlington Forum.

At the heart of all our public statements it has been the mantra that Synergy is a genuinely accessible community radio station and one of our experiences illustrates perfectly how we honoured that pledge. Ruth Iglesias Cuevas who runs HadaDuenda Herbs, the specialist tea shop at 22 Front Street East, was organising a party to raise funds for Ovarian Cancer research and she came into the studio reception and asked if we could display a poster. Within three minutes of her entering the building we had broadcast details of the event and continued to do so in the fortnight leading to the party on March 30. It was a real treat to see her smile as she heard her party being announced on the radio.

It's that kind of accessibility that we believe is key to a successful community radio station.

Our next step is to decide what we should do next, do we go for another 28-day licence or a five-year licence. We have a meeting arranged for April 16 to discuss this matter.

In the mean time, not only do we have to raise money to pay for future broadcasting projects, but also about £2,500 to put into the bank to cover outstanding bills for this broadcast.

7. **Bedlingtonshire Development Trust (BDT).**

- Working on the building project, now submitted detailed plans for building regs. Still a problem with legals or rather the costs of the legals! Getting estimates from builders.
- Gallagher Park. Steering group made up of NCC, FoGP, Forum and DT are considering the suggestions the community put forward through our consultation exercise and should have a list of short term and longer term aims. Short term aims such as litter bins, seating, lighting, picnic benches, signage etc. and longer term ones such as a sports facility. The steering group has applied for QE11 status, after being assured that the restrictive QE11 status will not impinge on any type of future development at the Park, and if awarded, a small grant pot also comes with it. So we should soon see the litter bins, signage, seating etc. as well as more cycling infrastructure, i.e. training area plus improvements to downhill mountain bike track.
- We have also put forward what we believe are the most basic and integral first rungs on the ladder for development at Gallagher Park, the need for a land survey and a cost effective road into the site. We are hitting resistance to getting these issues dealt with before we get carried away with anything else and officers are now insisting we produce a master plan for development. Whilst I agree we will need a master plan at some stage, and that's why we carried out the community consultation, getting the wrong answers to those first two questions will effectively kill off what we are all really hoping for, some sort of sports facility development at the Park. It would seem prudent to get those answered first?
- Speaking of sports facilities we have been working with Leading Link and the students at St Bennet Biscops and they have produced a video about the lack of facilities within Bedlington. We attracted some quite remarkable support and this will be used to form some of the evidence in possible future funding bids.
- Speaking of funding bids.....The idea I had for pressing the case for development at the Park, and I did say at our last Forum I wanted to commit to exploiting our Heritage potential, was to try for a Heritage Centre as a first development. This would have got the mains services on site and opened up a new road as well as car parking and street lighting. So getting a Heritage Centre would mean we get a lot of the necessary infrastructure other related development would need! My plan was to have a Heritage Centre as the first development but by using modular buildings we could attach a large sports shed at the back and then maybe a stand, changing rooms, toilets and possibly a small club house for the footballers. I had a meeting with and did a presentation to HLF but within 5 mins they turned me down before I could get into full flow! What they said was they don't fund new builds. I asked what the Newbiggin Maritime Centre was then but seemingly that replaced a beach hut which was on the site? They did say they liked the ideas and would be supportive so we still have that possibility even if we have to go around the houses to achieve this.
- We have also been doing training for business mentoring and now have a qualified SME business mentor.

- We did a slot on SNRG and I have to thank Colin, John, Neal and the guys there. I do have one question though, how come I got two interviewers firing non-stop questions whereas Brian gets Colin and Desert island discs? ☺ I think it's obvious what a real community asset this radio station is and well done to them.
- We have been doing work with the VCS Alliance and a meeting is set for mid April for all community and voluntary sector representatives to attend. We have also been lobbying through C4C, Connect for Change, which has the contract to deliver VCS structural support throughout the county.
- We have also been working with FoNDT as NCC copy the social enterprise model for a lot of their deliveries now.
- With Brian and Margaret Oliver we have also completed more Localism training.

8. **Any other business**

- A lengthy discussion took place over the lack of toilet provision within Bedlington Town Centre, BKO was to investigate further as to what constitutes a Strategic Toilet, as NCC intend to keep open and maintain only the strategic toilets in Northumberland..... Does this include the likes of the Atlee Park toilets?
- The Chair has been informed that the temporary repairs (post and tie wrap supports) made to hundreds of grave stones within the West Lea cemetery are to be professionally repaired by NCC contractors, at no cost to the relatives of the deceased.
- West Bedlington Town Council has offered the Forum the use of litter picking equipment, provided the Forum organised all of the work, along with the volunteers that would be required. As this is not part of the Forum's remit it was suggested that any volunteers wishing to do this should get in touch with the Town Council.

NEXT MEETING MONDAY 9th JULY 2012 6.30pm.

NB....Stop press! NB....Stop press! NB....Stop press! NB....Stop press! NB....Stop press! NB....Stop press!

Before our usual Forum meeting starts there will be a short presentation about the forthcoming Digital Switch Over in September, starting at 6.00pm.

Just about everyone will have to retune their TVs in September and even if you already have a brand new digital TV this will still affect you!

This presentation is for anyone with questions or concerns about the analogue switch off and anyone who wants the correct up to date information about digital.



(Includes free tea & coffee)

Printed with the support of the
NORTHUMBERLAND
Northumberland County Council
Community Chest