

Bedlington Forum



A Community in Partnership

Minutes of the meeting held on 8th October 2012 at the Salvation Army, Hartford Road, Bedlington.

Present:

Brian Oliver – Chair
Margaret Oliver – Secretary
Keith Dalton – FoGP
Russell Hogg – Resident/R.T. allotments
Cllr Colin Parker – East Bed PC
Cliff Jenkinson – Chamber of Trade
Peter Clark – Salvation Army
Liz Prudhoe – Northumberland LINK

Malcolm Robinson – Vice Chair
Colin Heathcote – Radio Group
Cllr Alex Wallace-East Bed PC
Cllr Alyson Wallace-East Bed PC
Paul Hedley – West Bed TC
Stewart Allen – Radio Northumberland
Jen Sweeney – Northumbria Police
11 Members of the public

1. Welcome and Introductions

Apologies

Cllr Tracy Aynsley; Beverley Roberts; Richard Wearmouth; Larry Roberts; John Masters; Joe Henderson; John Hetherington; Cllr Arthur Pegg; Dennis Fancett

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

2. Matters Arising & Chairs Updates

- The Chair apologised to members because he had forgotten to bring up comments which were made at the last meeting regarding the public toilets, at the Town Council meeting, but promised to follow up at the next one which is on the 11th October.
- It is rumoured that the proposed development at St Cuthbert's Church Hall is to start Jan/Feb 2013.
- Meadowdale Academy is applying for grant funding to build a floodlit Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) which will be open for community use out of school hours. The Forum was invited by the school to help, as a result we asked other 'groups' within Bedlington if they could provide letters of support for this project. As you are aware it has always been the Forum's wish that some sort of community facility is available to the community at this end of the town so we are delighted to be involved with this.
- The Forum continues to work with the Leisure Provision Partners, the Gallagher Park steering group and Friend of Gallagher Park, the chair reported that some progress had been made but it is now becoming very complicated since NCC want to off load part of the park to East Bedlington Parish Council. This move could result in a substantial precept increase for residents for such maintenance issues as grass cutting etc.
- As you will all know the safety issue at St Benet Biscop School rolls on, unfortunately NCC's Area Committee meeting stated that they can no longer help us with this matter, so we need to think how to go forward with this.
- We continue to work with Wansbeck CVS and the Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance which brings together all the Community Groups within South East Northumberland. The Next Alliance meeting is on the 15th November at Hirst Welfare.
- The Chair brought to the attention of the meeting the pit falls of the private finance initiative for Bedlingtonshire High School. Much discussion followed about the fact that the existing sports facilities will go if someone or some organisation does not come forward to run them. It was further explained that if no one came forward to take over these facilities (gym, running track, bowling greens, tennis courts, etc) they would probably be bulldozed. This in effect would leave a brand new school, (in 2015) with next to no sport provision, which given local health issues would seem complete madness.

- BKO was formally invited to comment on the proposed large scale development at East Sleekburn, Cambois and Blyth.
- Bedlington Forum was represented at a Police Consultation Forum at Ashington.
- Finally once again there has been no update on the proposed development at Tesco's.

3. Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) update

The Chair gave the THI update on behalf of Richard Schofield. The members appreciated the visual impact of the renovated businesses.

- Of those waiting for completion are: Johnson's and the Flower Stop (two residential units upstairs), Custom Ink (signage).
- Work due to start on: Verdi Restaurant, Renown Estate Agents, Lloyds Pharmacy and the residential above.
- Of the 10 schemes completed this supports 12 businesses.
Of the 4 schemes currently 'onsite' this will support 7 businesses when completed.
There are 5 schemes being processed which will support 6 further businesses.
To summaries, of the £1.2 million, £900,000 comes in the form of grants from the Town Scape Heritage Fund and £300,000 has been provided by the businesses themselves.

4. Police Update (CSO Jen Sweeney)

There has been a rise of 25 crimes in Bedlington over the past month. However, the crime level is identical to that experienced during this period last year. The sector remains 100 crimes down year to date a reduction of some 32%. This good news is down to on-going work of police and partners, and we will continue to work to drive down this figure.

- There has been a slight decrease (-8%) in youth anti-social behaviour over the past month. However, this is considered to be more significant as there has been a half term holiday during this period which normally brings about a rise in such activity. During this half term period resources were deployed to areas which had previously been problematic. This reduction brings the overall reduction for the year to date to some 34% with 68 fewer people affected by such behaviour.
- We are current working with partners to develop plans for the festive period aimed at diverting young people towards more constructive activities.
- Burglary has reduced significantly over the last month and is down by 13 (-43%) offences year to date. This is a result of committing resources to the affected areas at key times and targeting known offenders. Recently vehicle crime has increased mainly due to attacks on vehicles which are either insecure or have expensive items visible within them. Operation Admire is running across the area command to address this issue.

Following Jen's update some discussion took place regarding alleged inappropriate parking on Hassop Way, BKO to meet with Jen to discuss this matter further.

5 Northumberland LINK (Liz Prudhoe)

- Liz Prudhoe introduced herself and explained her role as Director of Adapt (North East) which provides the Host function for Northumberland LINK. Liz went onto explain both Adapt and LINK.
- Adapt (North East) – Adapt is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee working with disabled and disadvantaged people. The primary aim of Adapt is to improve the quality of life of disabled and disadvantaged people. Adapt provides a range of services working with a social enterprise ethos in delivery. Adapt's current services include community transport, employability support, Criminal Records Bureau checks, day activities and host role for Northumberland LINK. Liz highlighted two projects which may be of interest in Bedlington.
- Employability support for young people 18 – 24 which includes access to training and funding for driving licences and/or Theory/ Practical driving tests, young people are referred through Job Centre Plus but can also self refer for further details please contact – katherineh@adapt-tyndale.org.uk
- Green Light to Work is a service which provides advice and practical support to people who are unable to access employment through public transport and can hire a car or scooter. People must have a job

offer and live in Northumberland for more information please go to www.greenlighttowork.org.uk or telephone 01434 600599

- Northumberland LINK is a local involvement network for health and social care it is the place where you can have your say on health and social care services. It is made up of local people, community groups and organisations and aims to improve health and social care services in local communities.

For more information on Northumberland LINK please go to www.northumberlandlink.org.uk

- However from April 2013 it will be replaced with Healthwatch Northumberland as part of the Governments Health and Social Care Bill. Northumberland County Council are currently commissioning a suitably qualified organisation to deliver Health Watch in Northumberland.
- Health Watch Northumberland will be a new independent consumer champion for patients, carers and those using health and social care services, as well as the wider public, ensuring that the views and feedback from patients and carers are an integral part of local commissioning across health and social care. For more information regarding the commissioning process information is available on the NEPO purchasing website www.qtegov.com

For more information please information please contact – Liz Prudhoe lizp@adapt-tyndale.org.uk

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

- Since the last Forum meeting in July we have worked hard on trying to raise money for the next 28days Restricted Service Licence broadcast and the planned five-year full time licence. Our success has been mixed: we received £1000 from West Bedlington TC but, disappointingly, nothing from East Bedlington PC. No formal reason for refusal has yet been received but comments made at the beginning of the Parish Council meeting suggested that the council's ability to fund local causes was being badly affected by increased responsibilities for funding local services transferred to it by the county council. We've also had a rejection from Pegswood PC but we are hopeful of getting something from Morpeth TC who has asked us to interview one of its councillors on the subject of flood insurance.
- Again, disappointingly, most of the parish and town councils in our broadcast area have not even acknowledged our request for funding and we have only had a couple of responses from the 35 County Councillors representing South East Northumberland who have a pot of money to use for local capital projects. Part of any money we get is destined for paying for capital items such as equipment and building work.
- There are also a considerable number of other funding applications which are under consideration from public and private sources and we remain ever hopeful that we'll at the very least get help towards the cost of the 28-day broadcast which, realistically and most regrettably, is unlikely to take place this side of Christmas.

6. Bedlingtonshire Development Trust (BDT) update (Malcolm Robinson)

- Helped with the Sustrans Opening of the Cycle track at Gallagher Park last month.
- Continue to help FoGP with their efforts.
- I have managed to get three new litter bins for Gallagher Park sponsored so therefore we should see a much better gateway feature and signage because the money saved will go into enhancing these features.
- I have a meeting with the Football Association to try and get their backing for a development in the Park. We have partnered up with one of our football teams on this so they can roll out the infrastructure needed almost immediately if we are successful.
- I had a verbal assurance from the portfolio holder for leisure provision along with a written assurance from the lead officer that Gallagher Park will be designated a Country Park and remain within the remit of NCC. The ink hadn't dried on that statement when NCC held a meeting with the local parish council and asked them to take over a large section of the Park, so the future of this Park is far from certain!
- I was asked to promote the 'Love Your Field' campaign run by QE11 Fields Trust. It had two votes when NCC passed it onto me, it now has over 275 and leads the totals nationally. Please vote..... If we win we get another prestigious award.

- Speaking of prestigious awards we now have the official QE11 designation for Gallagher Park. (Malcolm then showed the plaque to the meeting.)
- Our build development has reached something of a hiatus. We now have all the documentation and legal requirements to proceed with this project the only thing missing is the funding needed to start the actual build. I attended the recent Funding event at Choppington organised by Wansbeck and Blyth CVS and couldn't quite fit the whole of this project into one single funder's criteria. I had previously 'debated' with the regional head of the Big Lottery and he agreed with my concerns but still we don't quite fit their remit. Everyone one of the funders said it looked a quality project, well worked through with huge potential BUT.... I have given our board some options to consider regarding this initiative now so depending on what the directors decide to do.....The problem we face, which a lot of other groups face, is the likes of local authority cutbacks which have resulted in normally funded schemes and organisations by ones which carry much more gravitas such as disabled and child services seeing their budgets cut and in some cases disappear, so they have to go cap in hand to the CVS funders too. Stacking up our build project against, for example, a Child Abuse centre, there is only one winner and I would probably agree with that too!

We now have another video this time interviews with the Deputy Leader, Roger Styring of NCC and the Portfolio holder, County Councillor Neil Bradbury responsible for leisure provision.

- We have been working with C4C (Connect 4 Change) and I am now on the Shadow Action Group for a countywide VCS Assembly. Similarly we are working with WCVS putting together an Alliance for SE Northumberland.
- Fingers crossed for our Heritage Lottery Fund bid which reports this month.
- At our recent Development Trust AGM we decided to look into various manufacturing possibilities. I have been doing a lot of work with one project and again fingers crossed; we should be able to unveil something at our next meeting.
- I am working with NCC and we are pressing BT to get the whole of Bedlington covered by super-fast broadband. There are 2 cabinets that they have refused to upgrade but we continue to challenge them on this issue. As part of this working arrangement there may be some funding available to hold more computer training sessions. This time I want the people participating to decide what form of help they need with regard to how they utilize a computer, especially as Liz has just mentioned, because more and more of our normal day forms will only be accessible online. Malcolm asked those present at the meeting what they would like to see included in the courses.

7. Any other business

- Stewart Allen, Radio Northumberland gave an update informing everyone about the large number of events they had attended, such as the Olympic Torch parade and the Sustran Cycle Route official opening. Stewart went on to say that if you send him information via text or e mail he will post it on line.
- Keith Dalton, FoGP, gave a brief outline of what progress has been made, he met with funders who were interested with his projects of Skate Board Park and children's play-ground with disabled access but he needs to speak with someone at NCC as they are the land owners of Gallagher Park. There was a mention of a multi used games area at this location, but as already mentioned the whole future of the park depends upon how NCC and other stake holders move forward..... complicated!!!
- It was reported that there was large scale test drilling in the Nedderton Village area.....open cast???

NEXT MEETING MONDAY 10th December 2012 6.30pm.

Salvation Army, Hartford Road Bedlington