

GENERAL MEETING – MINUTES
Bowburn & Parkhill Community Partnership – Charity Number 1112151
Tuesday 20 November 2007.
From 6.30pm to 8.30pm

Present: K Barber, W Bates, M Bell, J Blackburn, J Blakey, K Calvert, S Colquhoun, R Cowen, P Dawe, N Dixon, J Geyer, A Gregory, B Gregory, K Haigh, A Hindshaw, D Hindshaw, K Howe, R Howe, John Kane, Judith Kane, B Jennings, G Kitson, R McGrath, R Millerchip, S Millerchip, S Raine, A Richardson, V Richardson, Maggie Robinson, Maureen Robinson, W Rumney, J Shields, S Sudder, M Syer, S Thompson, D Whittaker, A Wilson, Joan Wilson,

In Attendance: J Anson, I Hunter Smart, G Marsden, M Ridley, B Spears

1. Apologies for absence: P Anderson, PC B Cockburn, G Hutchinson, R Jackson, P Nixon, P Sinclair, R Walsh, M Williamson

2. Chief Executive Brian Spears: Brian thanked the Partnership for the invitation to the meeting. He explained that there has been an exchange of correspondence on Figure 5 in the Executive Summary. Fiona will meet with the trustees with a revised draft and discuss an annual update of the Masterplan.

There are no other plans for major re-housing or demolition in Bowburn. It is an issue of sustainability and in future years there may be plans for other development.

There is one further planning permission to get through with the spin offs for completing further projects in the Masterplan, but that is more likely to happen under a new authority. In April 09 the new authority will take on the City assets, with the hope that they honour the commitments that are in place. The minister will not give a final decision on the regulations until the end of the year or beginning of next year. After that the City will not start any new contracts but will have projects in the pipeline for the new authority to pick up on. There may be an election for the new authority in May 08 which will work through the transition period.

The City is seeking clarification on contractual issues over £100 th; those of £1M cannot be entered into without the permission of the Secretary of State or the new authority. If the decision is to backdate projects to 2006 then the City is already over the £1M limit and could not enter into any other contracts. At the moment the City is unclear how to protect spending on schemes over £100 th. Brian is awaiting further information.

Q. Why has nothing been mentioned about promising the £1.8M?

BS. There is a commitment to the Park scheme. The £1.8M will either go into the budget or into the company.

Q. Has the Swimming Baths project been frozen?

BS. No as the contract has already been entered into.

The government have learnt from the past when councils either spent their money or entered into contracts which left a deficit in the budget. Therefore both Durham councils, City and County, will be under the same strict rules.

Brian gave an explanation of the 'company' as the Durham Regeneration Villages Company (DVRC) which has been in existence for 10 years. It is composed of 51% from the Private Sector and 49% from the City Council. The City will argue that this is a Private company not under the authority of the Secretary of State and can therefore keep the money. At the moment there are three directors elected from City Councillors. Once the new authority takes over the city councillors will be replaced by councillors from the new authority, hopefully from within the city.

Q. Why did GO-NE not put a section 106 clause or covenant on Tail-upon-End site to build a play area, and contribute money into the village?

BS. It was expected of GO-NE to put restrictions on the plan, but it is the planning authority's decision to make a section 106 clause.

Q. It seems short-sighted to get the Tail-upon-End site through planning when the City council may not exist.

BS. No. If the Masterplan is to be completed then there needs to be money in the company.

Q. As the £1.8M goes over the limit of £1M would the Partnership be able to apply, or the City Council apply on behalf of the Partnership to the minister for consent?

BS. The Park will continue and after December the City will be able to move forward other projects because they are in budget.

Q. Will Parkhill Park go through?

BS. There should be nothing to stop it going through in the next 12/15 months.

Q. Is it possible to put the £720th for the Park into the Partnership's account?

BS. Unlikely, and anyway that project is safe. It is the other contracts that have a problem. There is a block on substantial amounts going out of the City and the auditors are bound by strict regulations.

Q. As the Park contract goes over £1M and the football is phased over 2 years can the contract be split?

BS Do not know, but there is a need to be careful if the 'split' is to get round the rules. There is already a 'split' as play equipment has been bought.

Q. As the Cape site is run by a private company will it affect the sites on Tail-upon-End and Horton?

BS the Cape site has outline planning permission making it acceptable to build houses on that site. The site will probably be sold on, then there is the detailed planning permission requirements of decontamination, sewerage and a possible problem of hard to sell industrial units which could take all of two years.

Q. Will land be sold in Robert, Surtees and Dallymore?

BS To protect them they will be transferred into the company and a decision on what to do with them will be taken in the future. Again there will be full consultation and nothing will happen in the next 18 months with commitments being protected.

Q. If land is transferred into a private company do the ratepayers get the best value and what protects the authority?

BS When the District Valuer signs it off it is on public record and nobody can change the value.

Q Is the land protected?

BS Not known.

Q. Should it be done if you are not sure?

BS Intend to get the value into the company to protect them. The local councillors have the option to take it out.

Q. Are you taking more land for housing?

BS Its use could be for landscaping and environmental works in the Masterplan. There are no plans for housing.

Q. What are the Horton Crescent plans?

BS More social houses are needed. There are alternate schemes 'Home Buy Plus' and 'Shared Ownership' so that young people can get onto the housing ladder.

Q. Why are there one bedroom houses in the plan?

BS That will change.

Q. As there is to be a deviation from the plans will it need a new planning permission?

BS Hopefully not.

As there were no more questions the chair thanked Brian for coming to the meeting and clarifying the situation.

Brian added that he will come to a meeting in the New Year, possibly in February with further news.

3. Police Report:: Cassop 1 Burglary, 2 theft; Parkhill 1 theft; Bowburn 2 burglaries, 9 theft, 3 criminal damage.

4. Masterplan: Updates – CDO and Project Leaders:

Highways: Wheatley Hill Link Road: The dolomite is ready to be laid; The Parkhill to Red Briar section should be finished fairly quickly; The c12a road will now be closed until Easter 08.

Western Spine Road: The decision to develop the Cape site prevents the building of the spine road because the plans show that it is built over; It was agreed to write to the MP asking for her support.

Safe Crossing Points: Enquiries are being made about a crossing point in Durham Road; The crossing at the Hare & Greyhound is gaining priority.

Community Transport: Green Transport should make proper provision for cycle routes (separate from vehicular traffic as far as possible), keep to the guidelines, and showers should be installed to encourage cycling to work.

There was: Disappointment about the response from the County over footpath 29; Support for maintaining the footpath between nos.32 and 34 Horton Crescent through the proposed new development.

The culvert is in the hands of the Environment Agency.

Parkhill: The application for the play areas is ongoing and planning permission has been gained for both.

Heritage Room: No movement.

Community & Youth Centres: No progress. S Hawley has asked for a definitive fee stage breakdown in letter form.

A member explained that the Community Centre plans are not as grand as previously hoped but the City Council had been engaged to take them forward.

The Youth Centre plans are less ambitious and work will be done gradually and help from the City had been appreciated.

Church: The application is progressing; forms should be filled in by December for the Regeneration Fund even though planning permission would need to be applied for.

JA: The grant could be given subject to the condition that planning permission was obtained.

Environment: The consultation for Durham Rd is completed.

Ian Hunter Smart brought the statistics from the consultation to the meeting.

It was asked if the scheme will be extended in the New Year as the press had reported that there was extra funding, when restrictions on spending are in place for both councils.

(Action Janet)

Unadopted Roads: Fundraising is ongoing and the next meeting is 4 December.

Park Project: The plans will be submitted for planning permission in the first week of December; funding applications are going well.

A rep from PARC read out an article to be printed in the Interchange to redress the balance of the article in June. Sport England are prepared to split the funding for the footpath and CCTV schemes.

Centenary – Bowburn School: A spreadsheet of events is available for those who would like to join a focus group. Meetings have taken place for the Harvest Festival and History Day; others are being arranged in the New Year.

The Apprenticeship scheme through Haslam has 6 young people from Bowburn; one of whom has been entered into the Skill Built Competition.

5. Minutes of last General meeting; 16 October 2007:

The minutes were proposed as a true record by Maggie Robinson, seconded by Maureen Robinson, and the meeting agreed them unanimously.

Matters Arising: Item 4, Page 3: Conditions for the Tail-upon-End site had been passed on to the interested person. Item 6, Page 3: Inquiries have been made for a tree to be planted behind the War Memorial.

It was asked why an avenue of trees was not planted in front of Mary Terrace.

In answer it is because one tree costs £110 + VAT, but this could be done over a number of years.

6. Report - Trustees' meeting 30 October 2007: Brian Spears discussed Fig. 5 and the Explanatory text.

It was suggested that the Partnership could sponsor a review of the Fun Day organised by the Racial Equality Council and become involved in organising another event with the hope that it would broaden the membership and promote good relationships. The trustees thought that the principle was good and worth doing.

Ian Hunter Smart added that there had been a suggestion that the Partnership invite ethnic minority residents to an evening to try and involve them by telling them about the Partnership. The REC would send out invitations.

Member: The Family Fun Day had been excellent and well attended and there is a need to follow this up to promote best relations in the village.

There were no objections to this idea or to inviting Ijjou Thompson to the Partnership, from the members.

The trustees' minutes from the September meeting were distributed to members.

7. Correspondence:

>Letter of thanks from the Hare & Greyhound Darts and Dominoes Teams for the grant from the Community Chest.

>Letter from the Parish informing of the grant of £100.00 to the Partnership. Thanks were sent to the Parish.

>Letter to B Spears listing the errors and corrections required for Fig 5, and the need for an explanation of Fig 5 in the Masterplan.

>Letter from Bowburn PARC asking if the Partnership would apply for funds on its behalf.

The chair asked what the amounts would be as the Partnership could incur audit costs.

It was said that total income could be £5M and advice from the CVS had said that the Partnership was a holding account for such money and should not incur costs.

JA The grants would be about £100 th and the deadline is January.

It was proposed by MS and seconded by DW that the trustees verify the situation and bring it back to the general meeting. There were no objections to this suggestion.

It was asked if the Partnership was not the applicant could the City apply, but this would depend on the criteria.

>Email from P Nixon updating the situation of her post as CEDI Officer for Bowburn. After discussion it has been concluded that many of the projects outlined in the bid are no longer applicable or achievable. Work will take place on a future bid with schools, private sector and DCC. A full consultation programme will be outlined in due course.

> Letter about the Cape site gaining planning permission to build 250 houses, after the Public Enquiry.

8. Items of Any Other Business:

(i) Broken glass

(ii) Stamps

(iii) Miners tub

9. Treasurer's Report:

>BVC payment from the Community Chest for the railings was paid out of the general fund as the intention was to install them for the Remembrance Service. The £146 has since been received and the General Fund is £719.18.

>Quiz £1.00: The answers for 'Partners and Pairs' have 3 words with 'and' as the middle word.

Note the Return Date is 11 January.

10. Community Chest:

There were two applications from Bowburn Junior School:

(1) To "Create a Sensory Community Room" asking for the full funding cost of £2500. The group submitted the necessary quotations.

J Blackburn, P Dawe, and J Anson presented the application.

Funding of £2500 was granted without any objection.

(2) To "Install high netting to improve part of the playground to prevent accidents" asking for £1250 out of a total of £2500. The group submitted one quotation. As the project costs are over £1000 the group must provide two quotations. Therefore the meeting agreed that funding will be granted when the second quotation is submitted.

A member of the Friends of the Infant School showed members the plans for the school garden, and thanked the group for giving the grant because it had helped the school to get a further £1000 from other funding. The group is progressing to become fully constituted.

11. Reports and matters arising:

Regeneration Working Group – plus questions for next meeting:

All the points discussed, except that the problem of surface water drainage from new sites is being looked into.

Walkabout: The compound is to be dismantled; The footpath into David Terrace is to be repaired; The lamppost in Philip Avenue has been connected; After the heavy rainfall the mounds on the Horton Crescent site should settle allowing them to be backfilled.

Cape Public Enquiry: No further information.

Tail-upon-End Lane Site: No further information.

Parish Council: No update. The minutes are in the Community Centre.

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS): None

Noticeboard: No update.

Quarry Liaison Committee: No update and the problem could be that they do not own the land.

LSP: A community sector committee meeting has taken place.

12 Villages Representative: At the AGM K James was elected as chair; E Cummings gained an award.

12. Group Noticeboard:

Banner: The third Banner Case is installed in the Community Centre. The next meeting is at 6pm on 14 December.

BVC: The next paper will go to print at the beginning of December.

Football Teams:

Juniors – They are the first club in the county to be a Charter Standard Community Club. The 5/6 year olds won their first game in the league and the U15s are improving.

There is still a problem with a flooded pitch and dog dirt on the pitch.

Seniors – The Crowtrees Club had a disastrous start to the season and are still looking for new players.

The Hare & Greyhound Club have had a mixed start to the season but still hope to do well in the league.

History: Held a business meeting with a speaker. They are involved in the Distinctly Durham project for 2009. There was an appeal for photographs and memories of Bowburn School – contact M Syer. They will be used by the History Group and the Bowburn Infant Centenary Group.

Website: The site is going well and has over 230 members.

Xmas Event 7 Dec: Band+Dance tickets are available at £7.50; Raffle prizes should be left with Janet.

13. Any Other Business:

(1) Smashed glass at the Co-op could have damaged car tyres. A council worker did not have a phone so could not report it immediately. It was agreed to bring this to the notice of the Council. (Action Janet)

(2) Royal Mail is to vary the cost of postage according to area. Agreed to make enquiries about this (Action Janet)
There is a second round of PO closures and there is concern about Bowburn. Suggest PO be put in Masterplan.

(3) The Miners Tub looks good but cars that have driven over the gravel could damage it.

It was said that shrubs or trees may help to deter people. It was suggested that when Tail-upon-End site was cleared the trees could be replanted in the area of the tub. (Action Janet)

A member thought bollards were needed along Tweddle Terrace to discourage people driving over the grass verge. In addition it was mentioned that the Bowburn beck is a disgrace. There are various owners of the bank sides but a member said that this could be brought up at the Parish Council meeting.

14. Date and Time of Meetings: Next meeting is on 18 December 2007 at 6.30pm

Date of future meetings in 2008: 15 Jan, 19 Feb, 18 Mar, 15 Apr, 20 May, 17 Jun.