

General Meeting
Bowburn & Parkhill Community Partnership - Charity Number 1112151

Tuesday 18 November 2008

From 6.30pm to 8.30pm

Present: W Bates, M Bell, J Blackburn, S Colquhoun, J Dinning, N Dixon, S Featherstone, J Geyer, A Gregory, B Gregory, R Jackson, B Jennings, John Kane, K Haigh, G Kitson, R Millerchip, S Raine, V Richardson, Maggie Robinson, Maureen Robinson, J Shields, M Syer, R Walsh (Chair)

In Attendance: J Anson, G Marsden, A Tankerville, D Warburton, M Williams

1. Apologies for absence: J Blakey, K Calvert, B Cockburn, R Cowen, P Dawe, K Griffiths, Ian Hunter Smart, G Hutchinson, Judith Kane, G Parle, A Richardson, M Ridley, A Shutt, S Thompson, S Walworth, D Whittaker

2. Presentation: D Warburton and A Tankerville – Unadopted Roads:

D Warburton introduced himself and pointed out that un-adopted streets represent a significant problem in County Durham as it would cost approximately £60-£70M to bring them up to adoptable standards (Dec 2006 highways report).

DW is aware of the strength of feeling in this community, and GW from northern Area Highways office has already given estimates for improving Lansdowne Crescent/Neville Terrace/Grangepark Crescent to adoptable standards.

The County Council's policy is as follows:

They will make a road up to adoptable standard where 100% of frontages are in favour of the works, and where they meet the total costs of the works. That option is still available.

Over the last 10 years the County Council has upgraded a few streets with regeneration funds; the most recent of these include Thornley and New Brancepeth Home Zone projects including additional funding from HZ and URRI funds. Unfortunately in 2006 an exercise to secure European funding was not successful.

Last October John Richardson suggested that he would investigate funding schemes using an Equity Share scheme and in the last 12 months there has been:

- Collation of information on the current position to determine the potential scope of the project.
- Scoping study to examine project options across the county.
- Discussions with Government Office and County Durham Housing Board.
- An exploratory meeting with A Tankerville to investigate the financial opportunity.
- Local MPs K Jones and R Blackman Woods met with J Richardson at the end of September.
- There has been interest in Whitehall from DfT.
- Further meeting with A Tankerville and housing colleagues at Sedgfield to discuss the applicability of the financial mechanism.

A Tankerville introduced herself and said that she has been put in place for 2 years to investigate a possible loan delivery mechanism to help homeowners to finance the improvement, repair, and adaptation of their homes. It is possible that this delivery mechanism could be used to help homeowners to fund works to upgrade the standard of unadopted roads.

A new policy containing the above scheme is to be taken to Cabinet in January 2009; if carried and loans can be made available, homeowners could be helped to upgrade their unadopted roads.

The works would be costed and divided by the number of houses; the equity of each house would be checked; the loan would be calculated as a percentage of the equity in the house; there would be an agreement with each homeowner to pay back the loan when there was a transfer of ownership that would be equal to a percentage of the value of the house sale – this is known as a 'property appreciation loan'.

If there is no equity; there could be an interest free loan or a grant to pay back when the ownership ceased.

Member: We have the problem of certain residents refusing to make any payments.

AT: There is already legislation that allows the County Council to compel payment.

DW: The Highways Act has the ability to compel a property owner to pay (by placing a charge on the property) if a majority of residents agree to the scheme.

Member: What do you consider to be a majority?

DW: Need to check. The legislation should be over 50%, but there may be a local policy to set a higher particular percentage.

Member: The idea was tried 15 years ago and if one resident opts out then the scheme fails, and loans put a family into more debt.

AT: The County would be able to reclaim their money because there would be charges against the property on the deeds in the Land Registry. Homeowners would get independent advice about taking the loan.

Member: 98% of residents in Lansdowne/Neville/Grangepark want the scheme; they know there is nothing to pay up front; they know it is not going to be a problem; the local Councillors and Government agree; the residents are fundraising; I feel very positive about getting the roads upgraded.

AT: If the group have funds it makes their case to seek further funding even stronger.

Member: I would like to give support to all unadopted road schemes in the area.

Member: The local Bowburn scheme, The Three Streets, would provide a pattern for other unadopted roads.

It was felt that that this scheme gave The Three Streets the best chance yet of getting their roads adopted.

DW: Bowburn would certainly be in the top 10 of schemes to be chosen as the pilot project.

Member: What are the other 9 'top streets' like, because the Three Streets have done a lot of work to date.

DW would like Bowburn to be the pilot but he cannot give any promises. The other unadopted roads would not be surveyed and if only one scheme can be done then it must be the one that enhances the chance of further funding, (demonstrates that the scheme works).

Member: The Three Streets are enthusiastic have 98% agreement; the councillors and the MP on side; plus unadopted roads are on the village Masterplan.

Member: If all the funds are tied up in housing how can money be recycled?

AT: A successful first scheme could encourage further funders to give more money.

Member: Private funders Tarmac and Balfour Beatty have already supported the Three Streets.

DW: Whatever funding opportunities are available should be put into the Three Streets including regeneration money to reduce the overall costs.

Finally DW could see unadopted streets being tackled early in the life of the Unitary Council.

It was agreed to write to J Richardson to ask if DW and AT could attend a meeting for an update in the New Year after the policy had gone to Cabinet. (Action Janet)

The meeting thanked DW and AT for their comprehensive update as they left the meeting.

3. Police Report: PC Cockburn sent the following report:-

Cassop 1 Criminal Damage; Parkhill No reported crime; Bowburn 6 Burglaries (The majority of these are commercial premises), 4 Theft (2 Drive off from petrol stations, 1 theft of a vehicle, 1 theft of copper piping), 4 Criminal Damage (2 windows, 2 vehicle damage).

4. Masterplan Updates – Community Development Officer and Project Leaders

Highways: The Wheatley Hill link road was opened on 29 October.

Parkhill: Parkhill Residents Group is currently collecting consultation documents from residents regarding the Community building. Several modular buildings have been looked at and the most likely could be the "Pasuda" which would cost around £68,883.00 plus carriage, VAT, Plastisol coating, and air conditioning as well as management fees. (This would also be subject to future price increases). This would leave an approximate shortfall of between £40,000.00 and £50,000.00. Information is still needed on the lease for the site and an application for planning permission can only proceed after this is secured.

Heritage Room: The grilles have been fitted and a lottery grant has been obtained.

Community Centre: A meeting has taken place with the Community Association to discuss the Regeneration Application and OMT Report and possible match funding, which was organised subsequent to advice taken from Mike Thompson once he had considered the Draft Report submitted to him from JA. The group are currently prioritising and re-costing the scheme so that it is achievable in terms of external funding possibilities. On Monday there will be a reduced scheme to JA who will amend the OMT Report to be discussed on Tuesday 2 December. CSEP Application has been submitted towards the new heating system and the funding officer is working on some queries they have raised.

Members and JA attended Cassop School to view their wood pellet boiler and discuss the maintenance.

Youth Centre: It is unlikely to get regeneration money so will apply for an Awards For All grant for refurbishment.

The young people were praised for helping to put together an impressive Annual Report including photographs.

Church: JA is currently working with group for funding to buy the sliding doors. There was an appeal for top soil for the landscaping. The car park is to be at the side of the church. The floor has been repaired and the roof is not leaking and never has been. That was a rumour.

Centenary – Bowburn School: The Harvest Festival was an enjoyable event and the fruit was taken to the Guardian Angels Residential home. A school reunion is being held in March 2009 and any memorabilia would be appreciated.

Unadopted Roads: See Item2

Park Project: Park Cottage – the City Council have sought advice regards this and unfortunately have been informed they must wait until nearer the end of the financial year.

The Park will be officially opened on Thursday 11 December at 1:30pm and all are invited to attend the photo opportunity. The buffet has been funded by PARC officials, city and county councillors, and private donations.

The sensory Garden works will commence in the next three weeks.

Environment and URRI: The Environment Group and B&PCP have identified 9 environmental improvement schemes which include bollards, lighting, pathways etc throughout the village, which were discussed and agreed at the last meeting. JA thanked JB and SR for discussing the schemes with her and taking photographs; she has also visited the sites. JA is consulting with County Council colleagues with a view to securing costs, discussing the schemes and hopefully gaining financial support.

JB reported that Cllrs Williams and Blakey thought there may be some funding for Project 2, the street lighting. There is no further update available on the Co-op Scheme

Cllr Williams noted that the Co-op area was due to start on 12 December and there would be discussions on Romaine Square and a 'gateway' project through the URRI scheme.

JA thought that Romaine Square was shelved for the present and asked for details about the above.

As JA had finished her report, members thanked her for attending, and she left the meeting.

5. Minutes of last General meeting - 21 October 2008

After the typo error in Item 3 Environment, 'Highway' had been corrected to 'Highways' the minutes were taken as a true record by R Jackson and R Millerchip, and the meeting agreed them unanimously.

Matters Arising:

- > The kerbs have been dropped at each pedestrian crossing point on the motorway roundabout.
- > An oak tree has been ordered from Hill Nurseries through the National Tree Week grant.
- > Mike Thompson, Head of Community Services on the City Council, is looking into the possibility of getting a 'top up' to the Community Chest fund from the Regeneration Pot.
- > G Woodcock, Esh Group, would like as many ideas as possible for the proposed art work scheme and he would hope to find the means to fund the chosen work.
- > R Cowen suggested that the Quarry Walk takes place on Saturday 27 December; time to be decided (say 9/10am), starting and finishing at his house. Numbers and details to be confirmed at the December meeting.

6. Report - Trustees' meeting: 28 October 2008:

After some discussion it was decided to (i) argue for direct representation of the Community Partnership on the board of the Area Action Partnership (ii) opt for the 'East Durham Rural Corridor' 'Area' in the hope that it gains the maximum benefit for Bowburn.

R Walsh and K Haigh are to represent the Partnership, but interested members should attend the meeting at 6.00pm in Coxhoe Village Hall on 20 November.

Training is available through Skillshare at a subsidised cost of £150, with grateful thanks to the City of Durham for the funding; course details are to follow.

7. Correspondence:

- > Conditions applied to the construction of an Anaerobic Digester at Old Quarrington Farm – some minor changes have been made to the wording of some conditions and in particular to condition 17 – 'to permit the transportation of agricultural crops from land belonging to Quarrington Farm along Heugh Hall Row'.
- > Leisure Services – In November parents and families can access the Future Fitness suite in the district leisure centres free of charge. Young people, 13-17 can access the Young Lifestyle sessions OR at any time with a parent or guardian.
- > Durham County Council – consult on the geographical boundary of the local AAP on 20 November.
- > M Thompson repeating the fact that no more money is eligible for the Regeneration Pot in Bowburn and therefore there will be no money from Tail upon End Lane site.
- > Letter to GONE stating the case for monies from Tail upon End Lane to be go into projects from the Masterplan.

8. Items of Any Other Business: (i) Cars parked in Robert/David Terrace

A member reported that there was a problem with illegal parking in Robert Terrace and it was said that the police said they could not respond immediately. PC Cockburn has been informed so that the local police are aware of the problem. Residents have been threatened with fines and the member felt that these should be pursued.

It was agreed to write a letter to the police in support of further investigation into this problem. (Action Janet)
(ii) The Wheatley Hill link road.

9. Treasurer's Report and Fundraising:

Income in October came from the 'On Broadway' concert, Quiz and Refreshments plus raffle. Payments were made to the Quiz winners, Gaming Licence and Poppy Wreath. £10 840.85 remains in the funds; Made up of Restricted funds - £8008.29 and Unrestricted funds - £2832.56.

Quiz: "Common Phrases, Names and Titles" where the answer has three words with 'The' as the middle word. The closing date is 13 February 2009.

The raffle for fundraising was won by A Shutt. With thanks to R Millerchip for donating the prize.

10. Community Chest:

MS, MR and JB declared an interest in the following application.

Bowburn Community Centre requested funding of £3272.50 to commission electrical specifications for a complete re-wiring of the building costing £3525.00.

Funding of £3272.50 was granted without objection.

RW cautioned that scheduled rates can change but a clause could be put in place to overcome this.

RW agreed to help with this statement.

(Action RW)

11. Reports and matters arising:

Regeneration Working Group/Walkabout: JA is arranging with D Fishburn to have land owned by the City Council in Philip Avenue cul-de-sac tidied up. R Bass is not sure if the drain has been cleared at the entrance to the cul-de-sac, and an alternative connection may be needed for the sewers from Horton Crescent and the extension from Prince Charles Avenue.

The wall indicated in Horton Crescent is a mixture of brick and wooden fencing.

Temporary repairs are to be carried out at the junction of Griffiths Court and Philip Avenue to prevent standing water. Possible solutions are to be looked at to remove the graffiti in the concrete at the bottom of David Terrace.

The road closure in Horton Crescent can be ended at any time and the new residents will not be affected by the closure. The security lights may be adjusted at the discretion of the site manager. A flagpole was removed from the site by persons unknown.

M Thompson is not aware of any plans to demolish any more properties in Bowburn, but he will investigate how the rumour came about.

He will make further enquiries about transplanting the trees from Tail-upon-End into Mary Terrace and Prince Charles Avenue, but they could be transplanted in certain areas of the park.

Everything is being done to prevent wrapping paper from blowing about the site, and apologies were given for the recent problem during the high winds. Haslam will remove fly tipping on the Tail-upon-End site, but the present state of the area cannot be changed whilst it is a building site. The next meeting is 15 January 2009.

Prince Charles/Horton Crescent: See above.

Tail-upon-End Lane Site: See above

Cape Site: All areas of known asbestos have been investigated and the materials removed from the site. Works are now dominated by the lifting, inspection and crushing of the former factory's floor slab; careful stockpiling of the underlying sub-base and excavation of any hydrocarbon impacted soils.

Affordable Housing: G Woodcock, Esh Group, met with members on 23 October to describe the housing on the former Cape site: Phase 1 – possible 40 houses to rent. Consideration is being given for a block of 12 Aged Miners Homes and a plot of Self Build units.

Parish Council: The next meeting is on Tuesday 19 November.

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS): No report.

Noticeboard: The three boards have been ordered.

Quarry Liaison Committee: The next meeting for Quarrington is 12 December.

LSP: No report.

12 Villages Representative: No report.

Unitary Council – Area Action Partnership consultation event will be held at Coxhoe on 20 November.

12. Group Noticeboard: Please contact the representatives after the meeting if you have any questions.

Banner (Mike Syer): The banner has been taken to Murton, New Herrington, Houghton, Heweth, the first service at Christ the King and finally the Remembrance Service at the war memorial.

BVC (Maureen Robinson): All news items and photographs should be sent to MS as soon as possible for the next edition in December.

Dance -12 December (Janet Blackburn): Tickets are available at £7.50 for the Bush Big Band Xmas event on 12 December; doors and bar open at 7.00pm; band starts at 8.00pm; event closes at 11.00pm

Football Teams (J Kushnirenco, G Parle, G Hutchinson, A Wilson):

> Athletic FC: The tots have now scored 5 goals this season; the U12 Girls are top of their league scoring 60 goals and there are places available; U14 Boys Athletic 4 - Bowburn Youth 0. U 14 Boys play at any time in Mainsforth.

> Cooperage FC: The team lost 6-0 in their last game; suffering from the after-effects of the charity match for Robbie Jones – a worthy reason. Changes and additions will be made to the squad in the hope of better results.

History (Mal Bell): The main meeting was a general discussion evening; Displays were taken to County Hall for the History & Heritage Day.

Website (George Stoker): No report

13. Any Other Business: A member reported that motorbikes were travelling backwards and forwards on the Wheatley Hill link road and appeared to be speeding, making her feel very afraid as she walked along the cycle path.

14. Date and Time of Meetings:

Next meeting is 16 December 2008 at 6.30pm