

**Alnwick Community Partnership  
Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan  
Steering Group Meeting**

**Minutes of meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2012  
Alnwick Council Chamber 6.30pm**

**Present**

Cllr Alan Symmonds, Mayor, Chair (AS)  
Sue Patience, Gallery Youth (SP)  
David Lovie, Civic Society (DL)  
Rachael Roberts, Alnwick Friends of the Earth (RR)  
Colin Barnes, Northumberland Estates (CB)  
Philip Angier, Chamber of Trade (PA)  
Marc Johnson, Community Action Northumberland (MJ)  
Cllr John Taylor, NCC (JT)

**Apologies**

Clive Mattinson  
Cllr Gordon Castle  
Charlotte Colver  
Martin Murphy

**In attendance**

Peter Biggers, Project Coordinator (PB)  
Bill Batey, Alnwick Town Council (BB)  
Kevin Bartlett, Localities Officer NCC (KB)  
Chris Anderson, Plangle (CA)

**1. Introductions and Apologies**

1.1 Cllr Simmonds opened the meeting and accepted apologies

**2. Minutes of the Steering Group 17<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

2.1 Accepted and agreed

**3. Matters arising not on the agenda**

3.1 None

**4. Community Engagement Next Steps**

4.1 Chris Anderson of Plangle introduced himself. He is a town and country planner who previously worked for Planning Aid. He now has his own business working on intergenerational community planning. He could help with the engagement process in Alnwick

He is keen on engaging with all age groups and was at the meeting to find out how the committee would like to proceed.

#### 4.2 There followed a discussion on the way forward

1. There is a need to consult on some elements of the Issues and Options document before it is published
2. CB Concerned about having another consultation exercise before the Issues and Options consultation, is this too many consultations?
3. CA sees pre Issues and Options involvement bringing in a wider audience, however it may prove to only be those already engaged
4. PB suggested that a meeting be held to look at options with CA
5. RR Concern that people only choose their favourite options and would not bring new ideas to the table. Opportunities were needed to bring in new ideas.
6. JT Was concerned that there were only a few people at the current meeting and that there needs to be signs of delivery, not consultations
7. AS proposed a small group meet with CA to see what could be offered
8. The upcoming LDF consultation was noted. It is not possible to combine consultations as it was felt this would confuse people
9. DL proposed that the 45 interested members of the public, following the survey, be used in future discussions
10. PB noted the proposed cross topic discussion session (in Item 9 on the Agenda) as an opportunity to challenge individual topics on their impact on other topics. Do this exercise before the Issues and Options stage. Keep the discussion contained within the steering group, the 45 interested parties and some "target" individuals
11. SP The Community Engagement Sub Group will meet with CA to discuss future ideas SP to send an e-mail to sub group to put the ideas together

### **5. Web Site**

5.1 Bill Grizedale had put together a website for the neighbourhood plan SP demonstrated the site, including the drop down tabs and content. Some suggestions for tweaks and location of various pages were offered

5.2 The overall look of the site was agreed subject to the proposed amendments and fine details including improvements to contact details

5.3 The strapline for the project is: "Your Town-Your Plan-Your Future"

5.4 Volunteers are needed to respond to Twitter and Facebook comments. All the steering group encouraged to sign up to the Facebook page

5.5 AS noted he had been contacted by the Frontrunner office at CLG, who were impressed by the consultation process and web site

### **6. Budget Update**

6.1 £5,000 last year all spent apart from £500 rolled into this financial year to fund the we site development

6.2 This financial year £12,000 had been allocated by the Town Council. This includes £6,960 for the co-ordinator role

## **7. Planning Regulations**

7.1 PB reported that the final regulations for Neighbourhood Planning were published on April 6<sup>th</sup>. It was noted that the requirement for a referendum was buried within the regulations. Is this for future review?

7.2 A statement of the Neighbourhood Plan area and explanation to be sent to the County Council so that it can be formally advertised and announce to the public that development of the plan is in process

## **8. Application for Designation of Neighbourhood Area**

8.1 To proceed with 7 above this needs to be produced. There is no fixed time as to when this should happen, but the sooner it is done the sooner the process can be taken forward

## **9. Update on Topics**

### **9.1 Heritage and Culture:**

The Heritage document has been produced, the Culture document is in production

9.2 Culture document. Interviews have been carried out with major attractions in the town. Also meeting with Wendy Scott from County Hall.

9.3 Heritage Document.

A meeting has been held with the County Council Heritage Experts and a literature review undertaken.

Ideas for the document were looked at under the headings of buildings, parks, traffic etc. The emphasis of the work was within the steering group with a view to producing ideas for consultation, building on information already produced.

The crunch part will be fitting this with the other topics.

It was noted (SP) that the document was easy to read and understand.

DL Identified a need to identify what questions need to be asked before meeting with outside experts

AS congratulated the Heritage team on their work

9.4 Using the Heritage document and some ideas from elsewhere a topic template has been produced. CB noted that it will be an exercise in itself to pull together the topics into a "house style"

### **9.5 Environment**

Monthly discussions at Friends of the Earth meetings had been ongoing and a consultation event had been held (Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2012) on the scoping document and other relevant documents and information. The consultation included looking at Natural England's guidelines on open space and an exercise on how to look at issues and incorporate ideas.

This has highlighted what questions need to be taken to the County Council. The biggest problem was to fit it into 20 pages and capture all the relevant issues.

## **9.6 Economy and Employment**

The first draft has now been sent to PB. It is succinct at around five pages. A meeting has been held with the County LDF employment team and the consultants used to inform the LDF.

The consultation questionnaire results and comments from local commercial agents were also used, as were background documents and new planning documents (e.g. LDF employment chapter)

There is a need to expand on issues around employment land and types of future employment uses, including the need for growth, or not.

The tourism element needs expanding and how this is planned for. The document should be ready for the next meeting.

9.7 It was noted that the Counties LDF document will be very high level with little specific detail so the Neighbourhood Plan is an ideal opportunity to greatly influence the future of Alnwick. There is a need to ensure the distinction between the LDF and the Neighbourhood Plan consultations is clearly highlighted to the public.

## **9.8 Retail and Town Centre**

The desk research is completed and recurring themes and cluster issues noted. The Portas report has been used as a basis for developing issues and to identify future consultation topics.

Future conversations to be held with the Chamber of Trade, landlords and the business parks. Some of these conversations will be held shortly but it is likely to be near July by the time all have been undertaken.

CB Noted it was worth reading existing plans including the Alnwick Healthcheck to inform the future view.

## **9.10 Community**

Little progress so far. There is a need to identify who to speak to at County Hall. It was suggested that MJ meet Charlotte Colver and KB to identify key people including asset transfer.

JT noted that asset transfer were identifying small parcels of land for affordable housing, or to offer to town and parish councils. ARCH is looking at this as well. The first batch of properties was recently released for sale

## **9.11 Education**

Maurice Hall is involved in the major issue over the future of the High School. He has gathered information ready to start on the document

## **9.12 Housing**

PB currently looking at relevant documents. Charlotte Culver is working on the county wide housing needs to inform the work. Working with Steph Linnel LDF housing officer. Currently waiting for housing quantities for Northumberland and the LDF documents

### **9.13 Sport and Leisure**

Three headings. Sport facilities, Parks and Activities for young people. Meeting with North Country Leisure plus document search undertaken. Future meetings with the County Council and Alnwick and District Sports Council to be arranged. More work is needed on the youth activities topic.

### **10 AOB**

10.1 Cross topic discussion date to be arranged by the /community Engagement Group. May have to be in July due to availability of key people.

10.2 Timetable may slip beyond May 2013 because of the work to be carried out in the meantime

10.3 SP and PB had a “telecon” with Locality who are an organisation assisting frontrunners. Alnwick has been long listed for help and should hear by Friday 18<sup>th</sup> May. The help will be people help, not cash.

The help requested will be around consultation and community engagement, including community events.

Ideas about formats and an approach to drafting the plan using the evidence base will also be requested

The work will be very focussed and be before July 2012.

CB One thing that would be very useful would be example of other market towns involved in the process and how they have gone about the process. This sharing of good practice has been requested from CLG by AS

Meeting finished at 8.25pm

Next meeting Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> June 6.30pm