

Glendale Community Forum

Minutes of a meeting held on 24th September 2009 at Milfield School

Present:

David Abercrombie	Wooler resident
Kate Bagenal-Lowe	Wooler resident
Bob Burston	Glendale Gateway Trust /
Jan Casson	Children's Centres Manager North, Northumberland County Council
Tony Finch	Milfield Parish Council
Angela Hallam-Baker	Branxton / Cornhill / Kirknewton Parish Councils
Clive Hallam-Baker	Glendale Group of Parish Councils / Branxton Parish Council
Kevin Harrington	Milfield Parish Council
Iain Hedley	Northumberland National Park Authority
Marc Johnson	Community Action Northumberland
Tom Johnston	Glendale Gateway Trust
David Lockie	Ford Parish Council
Kevin Malloy	Doddington Parish Council
Roger Miket	Gefrin Trust / Glendale Gateway Trust
Barbara Rattcliff	Glendale Gateway Trust
Gillian Simmons	Locality Officer, Northumberland County Council
Brian Watson	Milfield resident
Neil Wilson	Glendale Gateway Trust

Apologies:

Edward Brown	Kirknewton Parish Council
David Buckle	Glendale Gateway Trust
John Cooper	Locality Officer, Northumberland County Council
John Davidson	Wooler Parish Council / Glendale Gateway Trust
Julie Grainger	Cornhill First School
David Larmour	Wooler Evangelical Church
E K Macaulay	Hepburn Farm
Cllr Anthony Murray	Northumberland County Council
Linda Murray	Glendale Sports and Leisure Association
Timothy Sharp	Glendale Gateway Trust
Joan and Harry Thomas	Carham Parish Council

1. Election of Chair

One expression of interest in the role of Chair was received from Jane Pannell. Following a short discussion, those present agreed that Mrs Pannell should be appointed Chair of Glendale Community Forum for the rest of this year (to 31st March 2010).

As Jane Pannell was not present at the meeting, it was agreed that Gillian Simmons should remain in the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

2. Appointment of Community Forum Host

One application was for the role of Host to the Glendale Community Forum was received from Glendale Gateway Trust, together with a letter of support for the application from the Glendale Group of Parish Councils. It was therefore agreed by those present that the Glendale Gateway Trust should be Host of the Forum for the rest of this financial year (to 31st March 2010).

3. Wooler Work Web

Neil Wilson of the Glendale Gateway Trust outlined the Wooler Work Web project, which uses a partnership between the public and voluntary sector to help individuals solve problems related to finding work. This may involve using the project's small grants pot to help with child care costs, or training, or travel to work, or may involve brokering in support from organisations which are not based in Glendale.

The project is specifically for people living in Glendale, and has been expanded with the area with screens advertising the project, and jobs and training opportunities, now at sites across Glendale. There is a high success rate in filling jobs through the screens, but it can be hard to engage with employers and get them to put jobs forward to be advertised.

Publicity – a number of mechanisms have been used to keep people informed and to encourage them to take part in the project. A newsletter is distributed to every household with a Glendale postcode, and leaflets are also available. A beer mat has been produced to try and engage with harder to reach groups – during the first week this led directly to three enquiries.

Training – as well as advertising jobs, the project is helping to co-ordinate the provision of work-related courses through the Glendale Learning Partnership. This ensures that courses meet local needs and that different providers know what each other are planning.

Funding for the project ends in March 2011, but during the intervening time guidance from communities as to how to make it sustainable would be welcomed. Help with spreading the word about the project and in encouraging employers to participate would be useful too, and any ideas for where screens should be placed, or how the project can link to other initiatives would also be valuable.

Neil provided leaflets, newsletters, training course schedules etc which people were able to take away for information.

4. Northumberland National Park grants programmes

Iain Hedley, Community Enterprise Officer with Northumberland National Park Authority provided information on grants programmes managed by the National

Park Authority and which are available for projects in the National Park “action plan areas”.

Originally the Northumberland National Park Authority had the mission to foster social and economic well-being of its communities, but it was clear that most of the communities were outside the boundary of the National Park itself, so the four action plan areas were introduced.

The National Park Authority has two teams, one based in Rothbury and serving the North, to offer support, guidance, networking, advocacy, brokerage and help with grant applications and project development. Grants include

Area Grant - The Glendale Action Area covers much the same area as the Glendale Community Forum – although not Cornhill – and there is an area grant of £26,000 for projects fostering social and economic well-being. Currently half of this is still available, and it is particularly suitable for tourism developments.

Sustainable Development Fund – this fund of £200,000 to integrate the community, economic interests and the environment. This is almost completely spent up.

Leader programme – The funding being distributed using the Leader approach is very economically driven and is much harder to access than previous Leader schemes. The NNPA team can help people prepare applications for the Uplands Leader programme, but are not closely involved with its operation.

Good Nature Fund – this fund has been set up to protect the future of the National Park, and is funded by donations, legacies and other gifts.

5. Update on the future of the Milfield School building

Jan Casson gave those present a tour of the Milfield School building, so that they could visualise for themselves the spaces available. She then provided an update on the current situation.

Northumberland County Council has agreed to keep the building open until March 2010, with Sure Start underwriting the bills until then. The building needs to be used, and so Jan intends to restart the family drop-ins, and will use the early years room for crèche sessions with the 3 youngsters from Milfield and will bring other children out from Wooler to join them. In addition, Jan will be able to use the hall for some training courses that Sure Start will be running.

However for a long term future as a community asset, a number of different uses will be required. Tony Finch of Milfield Parish Council said that the parish council was working with Jan, Brian Watson and other stakeholders to identify what the building could be used for, and to come up with a draft plan which could then be taken out for consultation to the wider community.

The acoustics in the hall were poor, but Kate Bagenal-Lowe suggested that this could be easily remedied by using hangings or curtains to soften the sound and reduce the echo. This would make it a more useable space.

Keith Harrington said that the parish council would be happy to help with jobs which arise over the winter in order to help Jan keep the building open, and anyone wishing to use the space for one-off activities can contact Jan :

Jan Casson,
Children's Centres Manager for the North Locality
Sure Start Rural Outreach Office
Wooler Fire Station
South Road
Wooler
Northumberland
NE71 6SN

Telephone: 01668 283372

Email: jan.casson@northumberland.gov.uk

Those with ideas for long-term use of the building should contact Jan as above, or Tony Finch at Milfield Parish Council.

6. Community Planning – how to involve the wider community

Gillian Simmons explained the work which is being done at County Hall to support community planning across the 27 localities in the county. Parish Plans, market town plans and other plans which have been produced are being gathered together so that they can be sifted for the issues which have been raised. The specific issues relating to each locality will be brought back to the relevant community forum, hopefully in December, together with a statistical profile of the locality, and a list of priorities will be drawn together using local knowledge and the data provided.

The priorities will then need to be tested with the wider community and how this can best be done to ensure it is inclusive will need to be worked out in due course.

It was agreed that this should be the main topic for the November meeting of the Community Forum.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Jan Casson asked for support for a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the development of the Heritage Play Trail across North Northumberland. It was agreed that she could include the Glendale Community Forum's support in her evidence.

8. Date, time and venue for next meeting

Please note that this date has changed from that agreed at the meeting:

Thursday 10th December at 7.00pm in The Cheviot Centre, Wooler.