

Glendale Community Forum  
Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2010

7pm at The Cheviot Centre

**Present:** Jane Panell (Chair), Rachel Sinton (GGT Admin), Brian Watson (Green Glendale), John Cooper (NSP/NCC), Roger Miket (Gefrin Trust), R. Snooks (Local resident/GGT member), V. Snooks (Local resident/GGT member), Angela Hallam-Baker (GGPC clerk), E. Brown (Kirknewton Village Hall Trust), Iain Hedley (NNPA), E.K. Macauley (Hepburn farm), David Buckle (GGT), Marc Johnson (CAN), G. Gelson (Local resident), Tom Johnston (GGT), Anthony Murray (NCC), Kate Bagenal-Lowe (Local resident), Margaret Logan (NNTA), Hugh Logan (Fenton Hill Farm cottages & Farm crisis network), Kevin Malloy (Doddington PC), David Tennet, Sheila Tennet (Local business owner), Neil Maxwell (Doddington Dairy) Adrian Pardey (Youth Drop-In)

1. **Welcome & introductions:** JP welcomed everybody to the meeting and asked them to introduce themselves.
2. **Apologies for absence:** David Lockie, Tim Sharp, Ruth Bull, Barbara Rattcliff & Clive Hallam-Baker.
3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2009:** These were agreed and signed.
4. **Matters arising:** there were none from the room.
  - a. **Parish council & service Expectation** – Angela H-B said that most PCs were leaving the management of play areas to the NCC which would mean a precept increase of £1200. People did not feel ready to take on inspections etc. JP added that with additional areas of responsibility next year the precept might increase further. Anthony Murray told the meeting that Milfield PC were going to manage their pay area for half this price and that they had insurance in place – this could act as a good pilot for other PCs to learn from.
  - b. **Finding a business champion** – No suggestions were forthcoming so all were asked to keep thinking of potential champions – important to get the private sector involved.
5. **Glendale Opportunities:** a. **Update on progress** – There had been a meeting the previous week with several offers of support which may help provide funding for the plan. Further survey work to be done to see what work is needed. Tom J gave a presentation (Attached to minutes) on sustainability using data from [www.northumberlandinfonet.org.uk](http://www.northumberlandinfonet.org.uk) Localities across Northumberland can be compared and there is a wealth of detail. Looking at this data the sustainability group had identified four key themes of major importance in Glendale; Business and the Economy, Housing, Communication & Transport and Demographic change. These could be fed into the Community plan which hopefully will help secure investment in the area. Ted Brown asked why if the housing quality is so low house prices are high. Brian Watson answered that this was a reflection of the low percentage of owner-occupation – rental properties are often of poorer quality and are hard to heat etc. - which is a measure of condition. Kevin Malloy asked if a top issue was emerging which should be tackled first – JP answered that perhaps best to look at the economy as everything else flows from this and it is key to all issues. She added that the next piece of work will give a much better picture of priorities. The idea is to identify who can do the analysis of the statistics as evidence for future planning. The plan should be completed by the end of the year if funding can be found – important to do it properly. David Buckle added that the group was already on the ladder of resourcing opportunity.

b. Case Study – Neil Maxwell Doddington Dairy: Neil thanked the meeting for inviting him to tell them about some of the local problems in running a business. The economy is small in what is a poor rural area with one of the lowest wage rates in the country so not easy to sell a high end product. Geography also brings problems – Scotland traditionally does not buy from English suppliers, neither the Cheviots nor the North Sea are good markets and there are few big hitting attractions in close proximity – so nowhere much to sell locally! Distant markets make distribution harder and more costly. Seasonality is also an issue for ice-cream – though it can be deep frozen. One aim has been to get into entertainment venues which are often more active over the winter months when the outdoor attractions are closed or less busy. Winter tourism would help... Neil said he had been aided greatly by the strong economic base of coming from a large family which has helped with finding labour<sup>1</sup> He also has had very good staff including Polish workers – there are no local dairy workers as there are now so few dairy herds in north Northumberland. The loss of the Milk Marketing board led to this decline as farmers had to find their own markets. If equipment needs servicing there are no local firms so service staff have to come from many miles away adding to the cost. Neil has been lucky with some big businesses taking his product – but other national companies have a national buying policy and purchase elsewhere – e.g. Haggerston Castle cannot sell Doddington ice-cream as they are owned by Bourne Leisure who have a National contract with Nestle. Some super markets are trying to source locally so things may improve in that sector. Neil felt the Northumberland brand is quite weak as the area is lost between Scotland and Yorkshire which are so well recognised. The internet does offer opportunities for businesses – though not ice-cream! Tourism is the life blood of the dairy and the entire area – last year saw more people coming to Northumberland. Agriculture nationally has seen many years of decline which has had a huge effect on Glendale across the whole economy with a loss of population, jobs and investment. Roger Miket wondered if pressure could be put on big businesses to buy locally as national buying policies did nothing to help the local economy – Neil said that local sourcing is becoming ever more popular with customers so things may change. JP added that it would have to be in the financial interest of the big companies to change their policies. She thanked Neil for his very interesting case study.

c. Funding possibility – to develop Glendale opportunity. John Cooper told the meeting that NCC had been successful in getting funding to help look at community planning. Advisors are talking to the NCC – they will pick three localities, one in each area to develop a model. He suggested offering Glendale as an option – there would be help from the advisors and some small funds to work in the community and test the statistics. Community engagement would identify actions and whether it has been successful. This could then become a model to use across the county. The aim would be to find a top priority and look at this strand to identify key actions for community and agencies within the next six weeks. This is a very short time scale but it could perhaps be done by the existing sub group looking at business and economy. It was felt that more information was needed from the advisors. John Cooper is to send information which the GGT will share and then call a meeting of the sub group to move this forward.

6. **Faster Broadband**: this has been identified as a key priority in North and West Northumberland. The main priority is the gap between fast and slow connection areas - this gap must be narrowed. There is also a need to fill the voids where there is no connection at all. The need is to maximise the next generation of broadband which will be better for existing business and for attracting new. Many new homes have the infra structure which can be

spread to homes and businesses nearby. There is also a need to make more people aware of the benefits of broadband as there is still a relatively low take up. BT is looking to roll broadband enabling technology which will increase the reach and speed of connection which could fill many gaps – but this is expensive. OneNE has identified some funding and is working with BT - a decision is imminent. The next generation will be providing fibre cabling across Northumberland to bring high speed connections. Nine towns to be connected but the problem is how to spread this out into the rural areas – wireless technology is being looked at by a pilot project. Kate B-L asked if connection via mobile phones was an option in broadband black spots – masts are costly to install and there are planning issues but it is being looked at as part of the wider agenda. John asked anybody in an area with no broadband connection to contact Frank Freeman (Net-North Project Manager) on 01670 502207 or 07920 560404 or [Frank.Freeman@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Frank.Freeman@northumberland.gov.uk)

- 7. North Area Partnership update:** A self explanatory note had been circulated before the meeting which Jane went through. There were no suggestions for a Community Champion. It was **agreed** to put forward to infonet the four key areas identified previously in Tom's presentation namely; Business and the Economy, Housing, Communication & Transport and Demographic change. Kate B-L asked that the Forum also look at the opportunities for small hydro electric schemes combined with flood control. JP agreed that this should be included in the community strategy plan. John Cooper added that Northumberland is one of nine pilot areas looking at a low carbon framework. There were no volunteers to join the group looking at broadband and transport etc. Anybody interested in the low carbon framework should contact Ruth Machen (Policy officer (Place shaping and climate change)) at County Hall on 01670 533004 or 077764 5551 or [Ruth.Machen@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Ruth.Machen@northumberland.gov.uk)

Adrian Pardey left the meeting at 8.25pm

- 8. Green Glendale:** Brian Watson told the meeting he had been working on developing a Low carbon Communities bid which unfortunately been unsuccessful – since then he has been working on developing a broader vision. The low carbon framework is coming to Northumberland and it would be good to get green Glendale involved with this pilot. There are real problems with properties in Glendale and with fuel poverty. Brian has been working with Warmzone looking at properties in Ford & Etal - many properties are impossible to keep warm. Many could be improved with basic insulation. Future plans include looking at properties across Glendale (possibly with NNPA funding) and develop a detailed view of what needs to be done and then seek resources. Various feasibility studies may be carried out for schemes involving biomass boilers, a wood chipper enterprise and a hydro scheme at Etal. The aim is to learn from what has happened elsewhere and develop a broad vision for Glendale – then secure funding to develop this vision. JP asked for regular feedback to the Forum.
- 9. Eco Museums;** postponed for a future meeting.
- 10. NCC Customer Service Survey:** The council are doing a survey on it's customer service – it is asking those who have made contact with them to feedback their feelings about the service they received. Anybody interested in giving some feedback can contact John via [John.Cooper@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:John.Cooper@northumberland.gov.uk)

- 11. Date and arrangements for AGM – next meeting:** The AGM will be on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> April at 7pm in the Cheviot Centre. A chair will need to be elected – a form will be emailed with the minutes to for nominations which has to be returned at least a week before the meeting. Jane Pannell confirmed that she is prepared to stand again.  
Agenda items - Ted Brown asked for a discussion about the difficulties of getting prescriptions filled when conditions are snowy – there is no system in place.

Would everybody receiving these minutes pass them on to others who they think might be interested in coming to the Community Forum meetings – Thank you.

The meeting closed at 8.48pm