

Benwell and Scotswood Ward Committee

5 May 2009

(6.30 - 7.25 pm)

Meeting held in the Riverside Community Health Project (basement of Old Benwell Library), Atkinson Road

Present:

Councillor: Beecham (Chair)

Councillors: Higgins and Stephenson

In attendance:

P. McKinnell – Ward Coordinator
 D. Orr – Neighbourhood Response Manager
 D. Glaysbrook – Northumbria Police
 D. Burton – Northumbria Police
 B. Ogle – Community Development Unit
 R. Hibbert – Head of Transport Strategy
 S. Harrison – NHS North of Tyne
 N. Sherwood – NHS North of Tyne
 F. Marshall – Democratic Services

– There were approximately 5 residents and representatives of local organisations present.

139 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair opened the meeting and introduced the Members and officers present. The Ward Committee extended a warm welcome to P. McKinnell as the new Ward Co-ordinator for Benwell and Scotswood.

On behalf of the Committee the Chair congratulated D. Orr (Neighbourhood Response Manager) on the birth of his first child.

140 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from E. MacKinnon.

141 **CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE**

PC Glaysbrook from Northumbria Police was in attendance and provided a verbal update on crime and community safety issue in the Benwell part of the ward. He drew the Committee's attention to the following issues;

- Northumbria Police initiatives to tackle speeding on Atkinson Road such as education projects with local junior wardens and deployment of speeding registration equipment.
- Levels of crime in the ward continued to fall in comparison with the previous year.
- The Policing Pledge had identified littering, youth disorder and petty criminal damage as the key priorities for the ward. Northumbria Police resources for the ward would focus on tackling these issues.
- Northumbria Police Officers had been working closely with D. Orr to tackle graffiti in the ward.
- The utility of Northumbria Police's interactive website: www.northumbriapolice.co.uk was promoted. Members of the public could report crimes online as well as register their properties via the website. The interactive services would be advertised imminently. P. McKinnell agreed to ensure the website was publicised to local residents.

PC Glaysbrook encouraged members of the public to make the police aware of any issues of concerns. The floor was opened to questions.

Residents expressed concern regarding alcohol related youth anti-social behaviour in Hodgkin Park. PC Glaysbrook assured residents that the park was regularly patrolled by Northumbria Police, Neighbourhood Wardens and Park Rangers. The Hodgkin Park User Group was commended for its pro-active contribution to maintaining the park area.

Speeding on Benwell Lane and Whickham View was drawn to the Committee's attention. PC Glaysbrook explained that the cameras on Pendower Way were unable to record vehicles' speed. Handheld speed recording equipment was available but required a long stretch of straight road to register vehicles' speed. PC Glaysbrook encouraged residents to report speeding violations to provide the police with an evidence base from which to investigate and take action. B. Ogle made clear that Neighbourhood Action and Problem Solving Group (SNAPS) was aware of the issue and exploring various courses of action. The Chair proposed the feasibility of installing signs which displayed vehicles speed be investigated. It was suggested these speeding concerns be relayed to Stage Coach and Nexus regarding bus drivers' speed.

Residents drew to the Committee's attention several graffiti hotspots in the local area. PC Glaysbrook agreed to investigate in conjunction with D. Orr and the local Neighbourhood Wardens.

A Member drew attention to a spate of break-ins to residential garages and sheds in the Slatyford area. In response to questions, PC Glaysbrook noted that the trend appeared to be localised to the Slatyford area rather than ward wide. He urged residents to be vigilant and stressed the importance of crime prevention measures such as keeping garden implements under-lock. Subject to sufficient Northumbria

Police resources, members of the public were invited to contact their local police station to request valuable items of their property be marked.

142 NEIGHBOURHOOD RESPONSE MANAGER UPDATE

D. Orr was in attendance and provided a verbal update regarding environmental issues in the ward. He highlighted the following issues:

- Educational projects with local schools promoting environmental responsibility and increasing recycling awareness.
- Collaboration between Northumbria Police and the Neighbourhood Response Team to tackle environmental crime such as graffiti.
- The Environmental Ward Stewardship (EWS) Budget for the new financial year would be between £27,000.00 - £28,000.00. The development of the Neighbourhood Charter would provide an avenue for securing additional funds.

D. Orr invited the floor to raise any issues of concern.

In response to concerns raised by the Chair, D. Orr agreed to investigate Ethal Street play area.

The presence of Japanese Knot Weed on the Benwell Towers site was drawn attention to. The Chair expressed concern that the Japanese Knot Weed posed a threat to the surrounding area. The BBC's lease on the land was due to expire imminently. The Chair requested the BBC or new lease holder be contacted regarding the Japanese Knot Weed. D. Orr agreed to pursue the matter.

Residents queried the fate of Lilya Community Hall on the Benwell Towers Estate. Members emphasised the importance of maintaining community facilities for public use. D. Orr recorded his intention to explore the matter and update the Committee at a future meeting.

A Member requested an update on the capacity of garden waste disposal in the ward. D. Orr made clear that the feasibility of expanding the availability of garden waste recycling bins across the ward was under investigation. He highlighted the limits of the EWS budget in comparison with the financial demands of increasing recycling services across the ward. D. Orr agreed to update the Committee at the June meeting on which areas within the ward were without garden waste recycling bins.

143 ACTION LIST DATABASE

Submitted: Action List outlining progress on issues raised previously by local residents (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes)

The Chair briefly outlined the Report, paying particular interest to items remaining outstanding. He requested all outstanding items continue to be followed up.

A resident requested an update on the situation with regards to the former Embassy Bingo Hall site. Members highlighted that an initial planning application to develop a residential care home for the elderly had been submitted. Local residents would be central to the consultation process. Residents in the nearby area yet to receive a consultation letter were invited to contact the Ward Committee or the Newcastle City Council (NCC) Planning Department.

Resolved: That the Report be received for Information

144 **NEW HEALTH CENTRE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE - CAROLINE/MARIA STREET**

Submitted: Report by Director of Neighborhood Services (copy previously circulated and attached to the Official Minutes)

S. Harrison and N. Sherwood from the National Health Service (NHS) North of Tyne Trust provided a brief overview of the Report outlining the development of a new NHS Centre at Caroline Street/Maria Street in Benwell. The new Centre would modernise and reduce inequalities in the provision of primary and community health services for those living in Benwell. S. Harrison and N. Sherwood drew attention to the range of mixed services available and answered questions from the Committee.

In the subsequent discussion, the following issues were raised;

- Determining service priorities for the local community through consultation would be the foundation of the planning process. Residents were invited contact NHS North of the Tyne Trust to request further detail or provide feedback regarding the proposals via email, phone or written correspondence.
- Members welcomed the development. The Chair requested Members and local residents be given an opportunity to review the planning process as it developed. It was agreed a meeting be held between the North of the Tyne Trust and the intimate local community once the planning process was significantly developed.
- Unconnected to the Caroline Street/Maria Street development, it was noted that Scotswood was to receive a new GP's surgery as a consequence of a city-wide consultation of medical services.

Resolved: That the Report be received for Information

145 **OLDER PERSON FRIENDLY CITY - PARKS AND RECREATIONAL AREAS**

Submitted: Reports by Director of Neighborhood Services and Elders Council of Newcastle Working Group (copy previously circulated and attached to the Official Minutes)

The Chair drew attention to the Report for information purposes.

Resolved: That the Report be received for Information

146 CITYLIFE CONSULTATION WITH RESIDENTS

Submitted: Report by Director of Communications and Marketing (copy previously circulated and attached to the Official Minutes)

P. McKinnell briefly presented the Report requesting local input into ways to improve Citylife magazine. He highlighted the availability of focus group discussion questions as a means of relaying residents' responses. Formal questionnaires would be distributed in Citylife and would be available at a later date.

Members and residents expressed reservations regarding inequalities in the distribution of Citylife within Benwell and Scotswood ward. Comment was also made on the content covered by Citylife. As a Citywide publication, the content of Citylife is inherently Citywide in scope. Due to the broad nature of the publication's coverage, the Chair highlighted the need for a medium which could provide more detailed and localised information on Newcastle City Council (NCC) services. Ward specific publications, such as ward newsletters, were suggested as an accessible means of providing current, localised information to members of the public. The Chair acknowledged the necessity for strict regulations to safeguard the publication from being utilised for self promoting means. He requested his comments be formally relayed to the Director of Communication and Marketing regarding a review of the ban on Ward Committee publications.

Resolved: (i) That the Report be received for Information
(ii) That the Chair's remarks be relayed to the Director of Marketing and Communications

147 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Submitted: The Financial Statement as of Monday 20 April 2009 (previously circulated and copy attached to the Official Minutes)

Due to the annual accountancy processes at the end of the financial year, an updated financial statement including carry forward or under-spend funds was unavailable. P. McKinnell made clear that a finalised financial statement for the previous financial year would be available for the June 2009 Committee.

Resolved: That the Financial Statement as at Monday 20 April 2009 be noted

148 GRANT AID APPLICATIONS

(a) **Pendower Gardening Group - £450.00**

Resolved: That a grant of £400.00 be agreed

149 WARD SUPPORT APPLICATION

(a) **Hodgkin Park User Group - £1200.00**

Members expressed support for the application and proposed local press be invited to report on the event.

Resolved: That a grant of £1200.00 be agreed

150 **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 24 MARCH 2009**

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the following amendment:

- That under 'Minute Amendments' P. Devenham' be amended to P. Devlin.

Matters Arising:

(a) St Cuthbert's School Planning Application

The amended Planning Application for St Cuthbert's Upper School was agreed by Development Control Committee on Friday 1 May 2009.

(b) Thorntree Drive

Road maintenance works on Thorntree Drive were complete.

(c) Selective Licensing

The Chair was yet to receive a response from the Executive Member for Regeneration in regard to concerns raised relating to the impact the Selective Licensing Report on the Benwell and Scotswood ward.

151 **INFORMATION EXCHANGE**

The availability of the information leaflets on the following was drawn attention to:

- West Road Public Transport Corridor Consultation Letter
- Parking in Newcastle – a useful guide
- Recycling Information
- Carers Conference Information
- Single Equality Scheme Action Plan Consultation

152 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Ward Committee would be held on 9 June 2009 at 6.30pm. The venue to be confirmed.