

Consett Area Neighbourhood Forum – Management Committee

7pm, 14 October 2024

Zoom call

Attendees:

Christine Thomas – Chair
Mike Shiels – Secretary
Mark Russell – MC member
Lucy Reed – Data Protection Officer
John Million – MC member
Maureen Clyne – MC member
Richard Lumley – MC member
Anne Louise Grant – Treasurer

Apologies:

Niamh McDonald – MC member
Anthony Robson – MC member
Ian Peart – MC Member
Kelli Turner – MC member
Jo-Anne Garrick – Planning Consultant

Minutes

1. Feedback from Forum meeting (Sep)

Lack of WiFi was a real issue, especially given £50 charge for facility. Need to find somewhere that has reliable connectivity and stick with it. Christine to ask Stuart (DCC) if we can drop requirement to move around the area.

Thanks to all who were able to attend.

2. Other presentations

24 Sep: Shotley Bridge Village Trush meeting was worthwhile. They had not heard of us, and some members subsequently came to Sep Forum meeting.

27 Sep: Christine did presentation to Environment Conference of Derwent Valley AAP. Focused on green spaces work.

11 Oct: Garden Network meeting (Derwentside) – again, presentation focused on green spaces.

10 Oct: Stuart Armstrong (business Durham) invited Christine to the “co-design of an all-age careers framework for County Durham”. She spoke about Forum

3. Completing GIS descriptions and images

Volunteers:

Heritage: John volunteered. Christine proposed Peter to help. Should be able to cover in one meeting with Ian.

Green spaces: Anne-Louise happy to do this, but not free for next 3 weekends. Mark also volunteered. Assume Niamh can also help (she was not present to confirm)

Clarify with Ian whether this can be done from home.

MC does not wish to proceed with putting GIS on website yet – prefer to wait until data is more finalised. Suggest it just needs to be up about a month before next Forum.

4. Design Codes

Becky Mather attended with a colleague. Discussed how varied the area is, and the poor quality of existing design examples. Becky spoke about setting a model for best practice.

If Durham are creating design codes, no point in us doing something in conflict. Therefore, we need to work in collaboration with Stuart – Christine meeting with him and Becky tomorrow (15 Oct).

Becky coming for site visit on Friday 18 Oct. This will be the first of several they will make.

5. Housing Needs Assessment

Christine has confirmed with AECOM that HNA report will include section on older people (75+ demographic), and that draft report will be with us before 19 Jan.

The sequence of stages is:

- (a) First Draft
- (b) Internal Review by AECOM
- (c) Group Review by CANF – this is when we first see it and give our feedback
- (d) Locality Review (final quality check only – no material changes)
- (e) Final Report

We agreed that we should dedicate a full session to reviewing the draft report at step (c), so as not to hold up the process and get a collective view.

An example housing needs assessment for Blyth can be found at:

https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Housing%20Studies/9.%20Local%20housing%20needs%20assessments/Blyth-Housing-Needs-Assessment_Final-Report-June-2023.pdf

6. CIO application

Application was initially rejected, as the Commission believes that we were including non-charitable aims, e.g., related to economic growth. We need to make it clear that CIO is

separate from the Forum and the Neighbourhood Plan but supports it with charitable aspects (only). Christine and Debbie are working on a response.

7. Future Events

Christmas night out – proposed for Thurs Dec 12, at Soami's in Consett.

8. Actions completed / new actions

Actions were reviewed and updated - See action log.

9. Date / time of future meetings

- Management Committee meeting – Monday 28 Oct 2024, Consett Business Park
- Next Forum meeting 19 January 2025 (likely Steel Club, Consett – to be confirmed)