

## Consett Neighbour Forum Meeting – 13 February 2023

### Attendees:

Melanie Cant  
Stuart Carter  
Matthew Clarke  
James Cook  
Karen Craig  
Kevin Earley  
Carole Forbes (minutes)  
Anne-Louise Grant  
Jonny Hall  
Dominic Haney (Councillor)  
Niamh McDonald  
Steve Newcombe  
Lucy Reed  
Kathryn Rooney (Councillor)  
Mark Shiels  
Lee Stanford  
Christine Thomas (Chair)  
Kelli Turner  
Judith Twiss  
Michael Twiss  
Michelle Walton (Councillor)

### Apologies:

Alan Marshall  
Rachel O'Neil  
Alan Shields  
Barry Tupper

### **1. Stuart Carter Presentation / Questions and Decisions**

Stuart introduced himself and James Cook. They are part of the Spatial Policy Team at Durham County Council. Stuart is the Team Lead and the team deal mostly with neighbourhood planning policies, they also cover transport and housing.

Stuart shared his presentation regarding setting up a Neighbourhood Plan. He said there is still money available until the end of this financial year to support Neighbourhood Plans and further resources available.

#### Q&A:

- a) Do we need a majority vote to pass a Neighbourhood plan?  
Yes, but no minimum number of votes is required.
- b) Derwent Valley Partnership – are they developing a similar Forum?  
They want to remain neutral. They are not developing one and do not want to be involved with ours.
- c) What impact will the North-East Regions/boundary changes have?  
It is difficult to predict/foresee this, but it is unlikely to impact on Neighbourhood Plans.
- d) Will the boundary changes strengthen the need for Neighbourhood Plans?  
Again, it is difficult to foresee what the impact of the changes will be, and it is still unclear how much standardised policy we will have.

- e) Why did we not do this years ago? We had our first meeting last month and struggled to define what would be our area. The presentation mentioned Key Steps, how long do these take?

In terms of the area, normally this would go alongside the Parish boundary. You cannot stray into other Parish boundaries, if you did then other Parish Councils can take the lead.

Regarding time length, it does take a lot of commitment and there are formal processes that you need to go through. Some have taken several years to finalise. Recommend talking to other groups who have set-up Neighbourhood Plans.

- f) If this group decides on a Neighbourhood Plan, would Durham County Council have any intervention to say that a specific area could not be included?

The area would be signed off by a Director, they would have the final say; however cannot see any issues regarding the area.

- g) Regarding the Scale of Developments on the presentation, how could a Neighbourhood Plan regulate building proposals, for example a proposal to build something of a substantial height that is not in-keeping with the area?

Substantial evidence would need to be provided; this is set out in the local plan/national guidance.

Stuart said if there are any further questions, or another presentation is required then to contact him, and he will be happy to support the group further.

## **2. Area Boundary / Discussions and Decisions**

Christine has contacted several people regarding including Dipton area in the Neighbourhood Plan, however, she has had no reply.

Discussion around including Leadgate/Medomsley areas. Castleside already have a constitution in place. Part of Ebchester is covered in their own Parish (based on the map sent from Stuart).

Agreed that before finalising the area we can have a consultation with Leadgate/Medomsley residents to see what interest this provokes and let residents decide if they want to be included when the Neighbourhood Plan goes out to Consultation. Acknowledged that both areas were supportive of the Incinerator appeal.

## **3. Bank Account**

This is now set-up. Christine, Lucy Reed and Anne-Louise are signatories.

## **4. Grants**

Already covered in Stuart's presentation.

## **5. Feedback from Locality**

Locality is a charity to support Neighbourhood Plans. They have sent Christine 32 booklets. Christine has applied for Tech support and is hopeful we will get this due to the deprivation/population of Consett. This will support how to do a consultation and write questionnaires. The next stage will be applying for £10,000 grant for housing distribution, etc, and setting-up sub-committees. Niamh to research Planning Aid at university, however this will depend on deprivation of the area as to whether it can support.

**6. Feedback from Wade Tovey – Nunthorpe Vision**

Christine has met with Wade Tovey from Nunthorpe Vision, and he has sent some resources, questionnaires/newsletters. We have Consett Magazine. In Nunthorpe they are experiencing similar concerns to Consett, a lot of additional housing, but no additional amenities, for example schools, community buildings.

Christine has also met with Richard Holden who has been very supportive of the group. He said that if a Neighbourhood Plan is established then there would be the opportunity to access 106 funding. Consett has not received this previously as there has been no group to give this to. This funding would help look at where the priorities were (play parks etc), and where funding could be allocated within the Consett Area.

**7. Next Meeting**

Agreed that the next meeting will be in person on Thursday 16 March at 7.00pm at The Grove Club. This will also give us the opportunity to invite other residents along and start the Consultation/membership process and try and get representation from as many local areas as possible.

Michelle said that the news of this group is circulating, and it was agreed that she can share details of our next meeting at their next ARP meeting.

**ACTIONS:**

- Send links for resources regarding Neighbourhood Plans – Stuart
- Send copy of minutes to Stuart – Christine
- Website – see if Tech fund will help support this – Christine
- Set-up an Event Bright link for the next meeting – Christine
- Send details of anyone/business who may be interested in joining this group to Christine (criteria for joining the group is - living or working in Consett) - ALL

| <b><u>Date/Time of Next Meeting</u></b> | <b><u>Venue</u></b> |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Thursday 16 March 2023 at 7.30pm        | The Grove Club      |