

Chester-le-Street & District Area Action Partnership (AAP) Board Meeting – Minutes of Monday 13th September 2021 at 6.00pm Teams Virtual Meeting

Elected Councillors

Councillor Craig Martin
Councillor Alison Batey
Councillor Alan Bell
Councillor Bill Moist
Councillor Emma Waldock
Councillor Tracie Smith
Elsie Forrester (Parish Council Representative)

Partner Organisations

Graeme Carr (Durham & Darlington Fire and Rescue Service)
Jon Quine (North Durham Clinical Commissioning Group)
Suzanne Jobson (Karbon Homes)
Victoria Murray (Head of Digital & Communication, DCC)
Joanne Malki (Business Sector)
Kay Howarth (Durham Constabulary)
Vicky Murray (DCC Representative)

Public Representatives

Derek Briggs
Khaled Malki
Clare Todd
Howell Davies
Jake Rollings

Officer Attendance:

Michael Wilkes (AAP Principal AAP Co-ordinator)
Fiona Kelly, (Principal Community Development Project Officer)
Allyson Rose (Community Development Project Officer)
Laura Slone (Community Development Project Officer)
Bill Lightburn (Town & Villages, Project Officer)
Lesley Lines (Community Development Support Officer)

Presenters:

Graeme Wood (DCC, Economic Development Manager)
Graeme Soult (Canny Insights)

Apologies:

Joanne Pugh (Community Representative), Janice Rokni (Public Representative)

Public Attendance:

7 members of the AAP Public Forum were present at the meeting.

Introductions, Apologies and Virtual Housekeeping Code of Conduct/Protocols

Jake welcomed members to the virtual meeting and introductions were made

2. Agreement of minutes of the previous meeting, held 4th August & matters arising

The Chair went through the minutes page by page for clarity.

The Board then agreed the minutes were a true and accurate record.

Agreed

Matters Arising

Page 3: Item 4.10 – Cllr Bell asked for clarity from Cllr Moist that he was happy with this item. Cllr Moist was happy to move on.

Page 4: Item 6.1 – Michael highlighted Bill Lightburn's details had been circulated to Councillors.

Page 8 – Water Safety Issues – Michael advised a meeting had been arranged for Monday 20th September.

Page 8: Item 8.6 - Michael highlighted that the CVS Representative was a vacant position and would be advertised as soon as possible. He also added that the Public Representative recruitment would also be advertised in order to have people interviewed and in place for March 2022. This had been agreed with the Chair and Vice Chairs.

Neighbourhood Issues

Michael highlighted that no advance issues had been received.

Cllr Alan Bell took the opportunity to highlight that Councillors had been approached by the Community Protection Officer at DCC re -funding. He advised he did not know of this department.

Cllr Moist highlighted that a virtual meeting had took place with Gary Jackson. Cllr Moist advised that he hoped ASB issues highlighted to Gary would be addressed.

The Chair highlighted that he also had not heard of the Community Protection Team.

Presentations

Graeme Wood (DCC, Economic Development Manager)

Graeme introduced himself and gave an overview of the Town & Villages Programme:

Town & Villages Strategy

- Increased recognition of the issues / challenges facing communities
- Investment Plan - £20million
- £210k for each AAP

Focus on:

- Partnership Working
- Aligning activities and budgets
- Focus on disadvantaged communities – equitable approach

Five themes

- **Strategic Investments** – support for town and neighbourhood centres
- **Housing and Community** - to support the accelerated delivery of the Housing Strategy, creating resilient communities
- **Environment and Health** - to create local opportunities through high quality environment.
- **Built Environment** - to support regeneration activities within our towns and villages; find innovative solutions to underused / derelict land and buildings; support independent retailers and businesses; and to provide clean and attractive built environments that communities are proud of
- **Transport and Connectivity** - to ensure connected communities through excellent connectivity for businesses and the workforce

Highlighting Chester-le-Street

- Chester-le-Street Masterplan – Levelling Up
- De-culverting Scheme in CLS
- Selective licensing – Grange Villa, Chester central and west, Pelton Fell and Pelton North
- Tackling empty properties – concentrations at CLS, Sacriston, Pelton, Ouston, Grange Villa, Great Lumley
- Popular location for new housing developments – Lambton, Pelton, former BOC site, Great Lumley
- Sacriston Front Street – area support package, former Lloyds bank and Co-op back into use
- Spruce Up Scheme – Grange Villa, Pelton, Sacriston

- Community Action Team – Grange Villa
- Targeted Business Improvements – CLS, Pelton and Sacriston
- Neighbourhood Retail Parade scoped - Pelton
- Tackling empty problem buildings e.g. fertiliser sheds, Village Inn, Ivy House

Consultation 2020

- Support for small, independent, shops
- Greater signage and promotion of town centres – wifi opportunities
- De-culverting is a positive
- Electric charging points
- Walking and cycling opportunities
- Improve pathways at Riverside
- Better linkages to the train station
- The quality of playgrounds
- Improvements to Cong Burns Woods e.g. drainage of pathways

AAP Funding

- Each AAP has received £210,000 – can join across areas.
- County Councillors have £10,000 for area budgets
- Unless there are exceptional circumstances, projects supported should have a minimum contribution from this fund of £10,000 and seek to achieve an external match funding rate of at least 30%
- AAPs should cap any spend on feasibility studies to a maximum of £30,000
- Meet a clear identified local need linking to the revitalisation of towns and villages within the AAP area.
- Improve social, economic, and/or environmental well-being
- Be lawful and not undermine Council or partners' policies or delivery
- Not incur ongoing revenue costs without the approval of the relevant service provider
- Have a clear exit plan and not create an on-going expectation of support longer term

- Only not for profit constituted organisations are eligible

The Chair thanked Graham for the presentation and opened the floor to questions.

Q. Cllr Alyson Batey – how and when will you engage with constituents?

A. We are working with the established Task & Finish Groups

Q. Cllr Alan Bell – A rethink is needed in relation to retail as the pandemic has moved businesses online.

A. Graham agreed there was not the same demand as there was. A move to changing retail to housing stock was needed.

Q. Cllr. Bell also highlighted the problem with overcrowding of places at Secondary Schools

A. Graham advised this was outside of the scope of Town & Villages

Q. Clare Todd highlighted the problems re Transport & Connectivity - Public Transport needed looking at as there has been a reduction in services in outlining villages.

A. Graham agreed. This matter to be looked at through the Task Group.

Q. Cllr Moist asked for clarity on the Investment Plan – He asked Is the £20M across the County and £210k Towns & Villages monies for Chester-le-Street.

A. Michael clarified.

Q. Cllr. Moist queried why 'Not for Profit Organisations' were excluded from applying for funding – Could the AAP Team not be looking for projects and delivers.

A. Michael highlighted that the Town & Villages Task Group will be looking at projects and who the delivers would be.

Q. Cllr Tracey Smith thanked Graham for his presentation and highlighted that the cycling routes were a great idea which supported the Health Agenda.

She advised that just because we as an AAP do not want to have empty shops, we cannot make people rent the premises on the Front Street.

Q. Belinda Lewis asked for more information on the Levelling Up Programme.

A. Graham advised submissions to the programme are one per Parliamentary Constituency. He advised they are currently looking at what the best mix of projects would be. Once the information on what the issues are in Towns & Villages reaches them, they will then be in a better position.

The Chair once again thanked Graham for the presentation.

Graham Soult – Canny Insights – Shop Chester-le-Street Update

Graham gave a recap of the project:

- Mentoring/Marketing for local retailers and other business since 2017
- Focus on digital skills – more important now than ever
- Graham working with Andrew Bartlett from Roam digital high street app
- Funded by AAP via Chester-le-Street Business association
- Join CLSBA for £10 per year to access free 1-1 support
- Promotion via the @chesterlest social channels – Twitter, Facebook, Instagram
- Encouraging businesses and shoppers to #GetOnRoam
- Using Graham’s network to push positive messages and facilitate connections
- See shopchesterlestreet.co.uk for overview of project and how to get involved

Graham explained “his focus is telling positive stories about Chester-le-Street and it’s businesses, and every person who sees something they like via our online channels is a person likely to visit and spend a little more in the town”

Project Headlines – work since February

- 35,822 reach for @ShopChesterleSt on Facebook in last 28 days
- 47,800 @ShopChesterlest tweet views in August
- 4,600 Roam app downloads in CLS – driven by banners
- 59,091 CLS business impressions within the app

Since February 2021, 101 business or organisations have featured on @ChesterleSt social media, and /or had 1-1 engagement (electronically or in person). Greater focus on social during lockdown and reopening - #CLSIsOpen.

Key activities

- Welcoming and promoting newly opened businesses
- Matching up businesses with premises – point of contact for the town
- Growing CLSBA membership – build town-wide business community
- Emirates Riverside Events Promotion
- 30+ businesses proactively updated on Google
 - Correcting typos
 - Adding photos
 - Removing closed shops
 - Updating categories
- Amplifying CLS in Bloom, Fiver Fest and Minifigure Trail messages

Next steps

- Proactively contacting businesses already engaged with via social media

- Tackling empty shops (mostly national closures) – contact agents, and showcase available premises online – but more mixed uses needed too
- Complete new CLSBA website – grow awareness and membership
- Coordinate with other AAP initiatives – e.g., Town Map

graham@cannyinsights.com

The Chair opened the floor to questions:

Q. Cllr Martin asked Graham what he would spend £210k on?

A. Making the place clean and attractive – a place full of events, experiences, and activities. Transport to the town is important and free parking after 2pm has been good for the town.

Q. Howell suggested more traditional retailers i.e., Bookshops, Shoes Shops

A. Graham agreed and suggested a Micro pub

Graeme Wood added that as part of the Master Planning work, his Team are looking at gaps for the size of the town.

The Chair thanked Graeme for his presentation.

Update on AAP Task Groups

Fiona talked to the report giving details of proposed arrangements for 2021/22 financial year.

She highlighted at the July Board meeting Board Members confirmed that designated Task & Finish Groups should be set up to focus on the themes of:

- Towns and Villages
- Community Recovery
- Holiday Activities with Healthy Food.

These task groups will replace the former AAP task groups known as Thriving Chester-le-Street, Supporting Chester-le-Street, the Environment, Crime and Community Safety Task Group, the Data and Priorities Task Group and the Appraisal Panel.

It's anticipated that most of the work of the AAP over this current financial year will be able to be channelled through one of the current working groups, but it is worth noting that from time to time, should the need arise, time limited, issue-based groups may also take place. For example, there are currently plans to hold a meeting specifically to discuss issues relating to water safety in Chester-le-Street Riverside Park.

Town & Villages Task Group

Fiona advised the inaugural Towns and Villages Task Group will take place on Tuesday 14th September 6-8pm via Teams. She added, it is anticipated that the Towns and Villages Task Group will play a pivotal role in directing the additional resources provided by the Towns and Villages programme. She highlighted that it is suggested that the Towns and Villages Task Group also deal with any legacy issues or projects from the Thriving Chester-le-Street and the Local Environment and Community Safety Task Groups, for example, the town centre public art scheme.

Community Recovery Task Group

The inaugural Community Recovery Task Group will take place on Monday 20th September 6-8pm via Teams. The purpose of the first meeting is likely to be the scoring and appraisal of the projects received in response to the call for Covid Restoration projects. It is anticipated that the Community Recovery Task Group will consider the action plan developed by the former Data and Priorities Task Group and deal with any legacy projects or issues arising from that group, including the establishment of the Food Network group. Fiona also suggested that the group may also consider any legacy issues or projects from the Supporting Task Group.

Holiday Activities with Healthy Food (HAWHF)

The HAWHF Task Group will meet on Friday 17th September at 10am via Teams to assess any applications received for the October half-term holidays. It's anticipated that the assessment of bids to the Holiday Activities with Healthy Food (Fun and Food) programme will be the main function of this group.

The Board Agreed the report.

Neighbourhood Budget Report

Councillors Beaty Bainbridge, Karen Fantarrow-Darby, Simon Henig, Craig Martin, Bill Moist, Paul Sexton and Tracie Smith – Chester-le-Street & District War Memorial Group – Remembrance Parade & Service 2021 – 2024.

The aim of this project is to financially support the organisation of the Remembrance Parade & Service for years 2021, 2022, 2023 & 2024. This will ensure that those who paid the ultimate price by laying down their lives are remembered.

Declaration of Interest: None

NB Allocation: £9,800 (each Councillor committing £1,400)

Councillors Beaty Bainbridge, Karen Fantarrow-Darby, Simon Henig, Craig Martin, Bill Moist, Paul Sexton and Tracie Smith – North Lodge Remembrance Group – Remembrance Poppies on Streetlights 2021

The aim of this project is to place poppies on lampposts across Councillor wards. The poppies will be tied to the lampposts a week or two prior to Remembrance Day and then removed after Remembrance Day and stored by North Lodge Remembrance Group for future use.

Declaration of Interest: None

NB Allocation: £1,686 (Councillors Beaty Bainbridge, Karen Fantarrow-Darby, Simon Wilson, Craig Martin and Tracie Smith committing £240.82 and Councillors Bill Moist & Paul Sexton committing £241)

Neighbourhood Budget Small Grant Allocations

Councillors Allan Bell & Philip Heaviside – Great Lumley Parish Council – Keep Great Lumley Tidy

The aim of this project is to support the Parish Council with the purchase of both adult and childrens litter pickers and bags.

Declaration of Interest: None

NBSG Allocation: £352 (each Councillor committing £176)

The above projects were all supported

Monitoring Update Report

Fiona provided an update on current Chester-le-Street & District AAP projects funded through the Area Budget, Youth Fund, Older Person's Social Isolation Fund and Welfare Reform monies.

Great Lumley Community Centre - Positive Projects, Positive Young People Lumley

Great Lumley Parish Council have now assumed responsibility for this funding. The revised offer letter was granted in July and the AAP team will begin requesting quarterly monitoring from the end of quarter two.

Durham Christian Partnership – Press A Different Button (PAD B)

Durham Christian Partnership have submitted a refreshed application detailing how they propose to spend the remaining funding they we're allocated for this project. This is currently being appraised by the AAP Funding Team and will be taken to the appropriate AAP Task Group for ratification.

In total £5,649 out of the £10,263 awarded by the AAP has been spent to date.

Do Business Network - Chester-le-Street Leading Business Programme

Do Business Network were awarded funding shortly before the first lockdown commenced in March 2020, they resolved to deliver some of the mentoring remotely so that the project could continue during the pandemic with some success as outlined below. The project was due to be complete by March 2021, an extension until September 2021 has been requested.

In total £5,040 of the £6,850 awarded by the AAP has been spent to date.

Park View School - Mini Medics

The Mini Medics project was approved by the Board in January 2020 but was not able to get underway prior to lockdown commencing in March 2020. The school have communicated that they would be able to commence delivery of the sessions after the Easter 2021 school holidays. The Board can expect to receive an update on the progress of the scheme in the next monitoring report (quarter 2, 2021/22).

Red Sky Foundation – Chester-le-Street Town Centre Defibrillators

The application has been submitted to place three publicly accessible defibrillators in Chester-le-Street town centre. One at the Library, one at the One Point Hub and one outside of the Newcastle Building Society. Permissions have been forthcoming for the two to be installed on DCC buildings, permission to install at the Newcastle Building Society is still outstanding and the applicant is working to obtain this. Once this is obtained, the funding will be able to be released and the defibrillators installed.

Chester-le-Street & District AAP – Chester-le-Street Town Centre Public Art

In early 2020, prior to lockdown, an artist was selected by the Thriving Chester-le-Street Task Group to submit designs for the town centre artwork. Those designs are still yet to be submitted. £10,000 of AAP funding plus the £34,500 of funding that was attached the flood defence works remains. It is suggested that the project is addressed by the new Town and Villages Task Group with a view to agreeing a way forward.

DCC Clean and Green – A167 Roundabout Artwork

Planning consent has been granted for the artwork but there have been changes in personnel since then and the project has not progressed. This is to be addressed with the applicant imminently with a view to moving the project forward.

Bullion Community Resource Centre - Consortium Bid at Bullion Hall

The Finance Officer post was advertised via VCS networks and the regional umbrella body-VONNE. Following interviews, an individual was appointed who started work on 17th May. The

post holder has begun to provide direct support to each of the four charities in this project based at Bullion Hall.

In total £2,430 of the £11,620 awarded by the AAP has been spent to date. This included the initial outlay for office equipment so spending is on target.

The Community Network - New Girls Code

Despite some difficulties with engaging during lockdown, a launch evening has taken place as well as a full term of Friday night sessions. The programme has been rebranded as Fierce Female Fridays which has been well received by the participants

In total £2,750 of the £14,450 awarded by the AAP has been spent to date.

Cornerstones Centre for the Community – Employability Courses

The courses have been postponed due to lack of participants, the first one will take place in September.

Funding - None of the funding has been spent to date

Covid Recovery 2020 projects

The following projects will be approached to provide quarterly monitoring updates at the end of quarter two having not received their funding in time to make any meaningful impact by the end of quarter one:

- CDC Enterprise Agency - PLAN B
- Cuture4Kids – Arts Awards Chester-le-Street
- Pelton Community Centre – Covid Recovery
- Woodshed Workshop – Back from the Edge
- Live Well North East – Community Wellbeing Centre
- Chester-le-Street & District Business Association – Shop Chester-le-Street
- Chester-le-Street and Durham School Sports Partnership – Walk n Talk
- Changing Lives – Sporting Apparatus for The Fells
- Girls Friendly Society – GFS Chester-le-Street.
- Heartwood Skills – The Beacon Community Hub
- PACT House – Post Covid Support

Update – Youth Fund Projects

Below is an update on the position of the current projects funded through the Youth Fund

1st Bournmoor Scouts - Expedition Kayaking

1st Bournmoor Scouts requested an extension until October 2020 to allow them to deliver this project, end of project monitoring has been requested.

Update - Older People's Social Isolation Fund Project

All existing OPSIF projects were approached to submit monitoring at the end of quarter one but few were able to offer any updates having only recently recommenced following the easing of Covid restrictions earlier this summer. All the following OPSIF projects will be requested to submit monitoring at the end of quarter two (end of September).

- Supportive SRC – Social Transport Scheme,
- Rhythm not Blues
- Woodshed Workshop - Knockin' on Wood
- Cornerstones – Memory Lane Crafts
- Chester-le-Street Pensioners Against Loneliness CIC – Pensioners Against Loneliness
- Pelton Community Centre – Hawthorn Project Year 2

The Evergreen Elders Project led by Bullion Community Resource Centre has now concluded and exceeded all targets.

Update – Welfare Reform Projects

Durham Christian Partnership - Chester le Street Foodbank – Money Advice - Debt & Benefits

Durham Christian Partnership were awarded £10,000 from the AAP in July 2020 to allow them to continue the debt advice service associated with the three County Durham Foodbank sessions held in Chester-le-Street each week. The project has been on hold owing to the pandemic and has a revised start date of 1st August 2021.

Way Forward

Fiona highlighted that normally projects are delivered in line with their original agreed application form however, taking into consideration the above information, it can be clearly viewed that many of the projects funded prior to and during the pandemic, are currently delayed in their delivery. It is therefore anticipated that we will need to have their end dates extended. Given the exceptional circumstances, it is possible to give some flexibility over end dates, however, it is imperative that we continue to work with those organisations to ensure we monitor and deliver the projects as outlined within the applications approved by the Board as soon as

conditions will allow.

The Board agreed to continue to monitor the above projects as they are delivered

Partner Updates

Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

Jon Quine gave an update on an initiative the Medicine Optimisation Team were working on. Painkillers Don't Exist Addiction Campaign. He highlighted the team were requesting 'people's lived experiences' to share their stories.

Due to bad connectivity, he advised he would circulate information to Board members.

Fire & Rescue Service

Graeme highlighted the services had Increased activity in the area resuming Safe & Wellbeing visits. Working with partners to identify vulnerable people.

Police

Insp. Kay Howarth gave an updated on:

Project Edward – (Every Day Without a Road Death Campaign) – Making people aware of speeding, mobile phone usage, off road bikes.

Keeping the know – will be starting up again. Extra funding from the Home Office to support this. Monitoring issues such as County Lines, drug dealing/intelligence. Increase in mental health incidents such as missing from home persons.

101 system alternative ways to contact officers such as work mobile phones for officers, e mail, PCSO reporting. Direct lines such as Pelton Office. These details will become available to Councillors' and Neighbourhood Watch Wardens.

Operation Endurance - DCC Neighbourhood Intervention Officer Gary Jackson will be working with Police Officers and Multi Agencies to look at urgent issues. New system in place for urgent issues COASBRAC (Crime or Anti-Social Behavior Risk Assessment Conference) rather than waiting 4 weeks to bring issues to the MAPS (Multi Agency Problems Group) meeting urgent issues can be dealt with quicker.

Cllr Tracie Smith asked for an Officer to contact her re letters posted within Pelaw Division asking for people to download an app. She believed this was illegal activity.

Insp. Howarth advised she would speak to Cllr. Smith outside of this meeting.

Business Association

Joanne highlighted that the submission of applications to the Mini Trail had now closed, the winner would be contacted soon.

Christmas - The Businesses Window competition would be getting underway soon along with a Christmas Trail.

Holiday Activity with Healthy Food – Monitoring Visits

During Summer 2021 AAP staff visited seven local community & voluntary organisations, and two schools, these are as follows:

- Active2 Learn – Holiday Activity Sports Club
- Chester-le-Street United – Multi Sports Week
- Cornerstones Centre for the Community – Make Lunch Chester-le-Street
- Culture for Kids – Food Heritage & Skills
- Pelton Fell Community Partnership – The Youth Café
- Sacriston Youth & Community Project – Summer Holiday Club
- Selby Cottage Childcare Centre – Healthy Holiday Summer Festival
- Park View School – Summer Holiday Camp (2 weeks)
- Chester-le-Street C of E Primary School – Summer Holiday Camp

Feedback from all organisation who received HAWHF funding was very positive. All organisations taking part in the programme are either achieving or overachieving in terms of the number of beneficiaries involved in their respective projects.

Organisations were asked to ensure that all information from their project was captured in their end of project monitoring report, as this would help shape any future programme/ provision.

AAP Co-ordinators Update

Covid Restoration Call Out – Deadline today at 5pm – 21 projects received totalling £285,000. Staff will look at the projects before taking to the task group for

Riverside Park Sub-Group Meeting – First meeting Monday 20th September. Multi Agency approach to look at safety issues.

VCS Representative – Michael advised the deadline for applications was the end of the month.

Date and time of next meeting

Monday 18th October 2021 (6pm – 8pm) Virtual Board Meeting