



Better for everyone

**GREAT AYCLIFFE & MIDDRIDGE PARTNERSHIP (GAMP)  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING  
TUESDAY 28 MARCH 2023, 6:00PM (VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS)**

**PRESENT:**

Cllr Eddy Adam – DCC, Cllr Neville Jones – DCC, Cllr Ken Robson – DCC, Cllr Tony Stubbs – DCC, Cllr David Sutton-Lloyd – DCC, Julie Dudley, Simon Hocking, Sue Hughes, Chris Hutchinson, Peter Shovlin, Natalie Whitworth (Vice Chair), Andy Coulthard – Livin Housing Representative (Vice Chair), Insp Sarah Honeyman – Police, Andy Kerr – DCC Head of Service Representative, Malcolm Woodward – Fire Service Representative, Brian Riley – GAMP Coordinator, Victoria Grieves – GAMP Community Development Project Officer, Paula Stockport – GAMP Support Officer, Angela Blanchard – GAMP Towns & Villages Community Development Project Officer

**APOLOGIES:**

Sue Cooke, Daniel Blagdon, Cllr Tony Towers, Cllr Jim Atkinson, Carol Gaskarth, Rosie Woodward

**OBSERVERS:**

Mr B Adamson, Ms K Ward

**Standard Board Meeting**

**1. Introductions & Apologies**

AC chaired the meeting in Cllr Atkinson's absence. AC opened the meeting, reminding Board members of the standard Declaration of Interest item on the agenda. AC informed observers they would be welcome to comment under Items 3 and 4 on the agenda.

Insp SH brought some sad news to the Board, confirming that Sue Cooke, one of our Public Representatives and a friend to many, sadly lost her husband, Nick, who passed away very suddenly on Sunday 19 March. Both Sue and Nick have always been very supportive of GAMP and the wider local community and Nick will be greatly missed. BR has passed on condolences to Sue on behalf of the GAMP Board and team.

AC confirmed that apologies for absence had been received, as noted above.

**2. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 31.1.23 – Matters Arising**

BR confirmed that the draft minutes from the Board meeting held on 31.1.23 had been circulated in advance with the meeting papers; there were no outstanding actions.

In relation to one of the previous actions (to set up a subgroup of interested Board members to look at the Fun & Food funding in some more detail), BR clarified that only a couple of attendees were able to make the meeting (thank you to Andy Coulthard & Cllr Tony Towers). There was discussion around the criteria and process for this funding, with an agreement for the GAMP team to liaise with the central Fun & Food programme team in relation to their countywide application process, and to liaise with potential local groups who may be able to apply for future funding. BR highlighted that the May half-term funding round is now open – please signpost any interested parties to the GAMP team.

There were no further matters arising, and the minutes of the last meeting were **AGREED** by the Board as a true and accurate record.

### **3. Countywide Partner Issues**

AC confirmed there were no specific partner presentations scheduled for this evening's meeting, but some space is available on the agenda for any partner reps to give a relevant service update.

AC gave Board members a quick update on Livin's ongoing work in the Western area. With funding from Lottery and contributions from Cllrs Adam & Robson, the Western Community Partnership are bringing in a development worker for the Western area. The post will be managed by Lifeline Community Action, starting next week for a two-year period. The development worker will work alongside the Partnership, to deliver on a community led action plan. A new housing advisor will also be working from The Ark, and it's hoped that this should provide a good support infrastructure for the estate going forward.

BR confirmed, for the minutes, all information circulated by email from the GAMP team since the last meeting:

- North East Devolution consultation info from DCC (6.2.23);
- Home to School Transport consultation info from DCC (1.3.23);
- Community Engagement Review consultation info from DCC (14.3.23);
- Local Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy consultation (27.3.23).

There were no additional partner updates. BR reminded partners to get in touch if they need space on a future meeting agenda.

### **4. Local Neighbourhood Issues**

#### **4.1 Neighbourhood Policing Update**

Insp SH updated Board members in relation to local PACT priorities, PACT meeting dates and current/emerging issues. Insp SH highlighted that the Home Office brought out a diktat last year around recording antisocial behaviour incidents as crimes. This creates some difficulty around the figures, as it gives a perception that ASB has dropped significantly but that crime has risen because of how things are recorded. All detailed crime figures are available via [www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk)

Insp SH advised that, following a spike in crimes on the industrial park at the start of the year, the team is launching BPACT on 28 April. This is to encourage businesses there to work more closely with police to tackle crime and also to encourage and forge greater links with the community following the success of the Grotto at Christmas with PALRAM. BR will highlight this to our Business Rep, Rosie, and also to Cllr Atkinson who has close links with the Business Park, for information (**Action 1: BR**).

Cllr EA highlighted some discussion at a recent PACT meeting relating to ongoing ASB issues with the blue bridge. Cllr EA advised that DCC Highways have advised that the ongoing issues would be deemed a police matter and should be dealt with as such. Cllr EA has investigated the possibility of installing some barriers on top of the bridge to try and mitigate against the ASB issues but has struggled to establish clear ownership of the bridge itself. Cllr EA will put this on a future GATC meeting agenda for further discussion. Insp SH commented that her team will be patrolling the bridge, and will look to install cameras if this is deemed necessary. Cllr KR commented that he understands DCC own the bridge; he will try and dig out the relevant info on this for Cllr EA.

Cllr EA commented that he had attended a GATC meeting recently, along with DCC highways, assets and safety officers, in relation to school parking. Cllr EA asked whether Insp SH had any further update on the work Sgt Boyd has been doing around this. Insp SH confirmed that Road Safety Week will be taking place with schools towards the end of May. Sgt Boyd is looking at the possibility of producing a video using drone footage to help educate both parents and children on the issues around school parking. There has also been discussion around Council wardens patrolling the areas in vans to capture evidence 'at the time' as tickets cannot be issued retrospectively. There's ongoing discussion with the neighbourhood policing team around further education in this area.

Insp SH confirmed that a copy of her update report will be circulated with the minutes, for information.

## **5. GAMP Coordinator's Update**

### **5.1 GAMP Priorities for 2023/24 / Project Callout**

BR highlighted that Board members had previously agreed we would continue our focus on the overarching 'Community Recovery' priority for the coming financial year, which encompasses a range of subthemes, including employability, health and wellbeing, organisational sustainability, tackling antisocial behaviour, as well as any other emerging community issues.

BR stated that at a recent AAP Coordinators meeting in March, the Area Budget allocation for 2023-24 for all AAPs was confirmed; this will be a total of £119,902 (£100k Area Budget, £10k for Welfare Reform and £9,902 for Youth Fund). AAPs will not be receiving an additional Older Peoples Social Isolation Fund or Healthy Relationships allocation this year, which we have previously.

BR asked the Board's permission to progress with a Project Callout, following the same process as last year, at the start of the new financial year, under the Community Recovery priority. This would see an open call for Expressions of Interest, and then a ranking panel subgroup of Board members would meet to determine which projects are successful, assuming oversubscription as in previous years. BR added that the ongoing Community Engagement Review and any resultant changes arising from the Review would not impact on arrangements for the coming financial year.

Board members **AGREED** with BR's proposal to launch a project callout early in the new financial year.

## 5.2 2022-23 Area Budget (AB) Funding Update

BR confirmed that a summary had been circulated in advance with the meeting papers, listing all AB-funded projects, for information.

## 5.3 2022-23 Towns & Villages (T&V) Funding Update

As above, for information.

AC asked about the balance of T&V funding (£39k). BR clarified that a scheme for some new footpaths and a bridge is in the pipeline at the moment. We're awaiting final costings on this, and there will be financial contributions from the Neighbourhood Budgets of Cllrs DSL and TS towards the scheme. This should see the T&V balance fully allocated. Board members will be kept updated during the process.

## 5.4 2022-23 Neighbourhood Budget (NB) Funding Update

BR confirmed that a summary had been circulated in advance with the meeting papers, listing all NB-funded projects, for information.

BR highlighted that some Cllrs are showing various funding balances. BR confirmed that the year-end arrangements for this year stipulated that Cllrs must provide a clear 'expression of intent to fund' for any remaining NB balances so that the funding could be ringfenced for carry forward into the new financial year. Any GAMP Cllrs with unallocated funding (as of 21 March) have completed this exercise and all spend has now been pipelined for the new financial year. BR thanked Cllrs and also Victoria for their work on this.

## 5.5 Community Engagement Review

BR reminded Board members that a countywide consultation survey has now been launched (Board members received a copy by email on 14 March). The consultation period is open until 23 April. BR highlighted some of the key proposals from the report:

- replacing AAP Boards with community networks, which would meet every two months and be open to all rather than having a core Board membership;
- focussing community network meetings on 'themed' activities including environment and climate change, the economy and community safety;
- considering options for the geographical boundaries of each community network;
- making it simpler and easier for people to apply for funding;
- introducing a new "Community Chest" fund offering discretionary grants of up to £300 to support smaller scale activities;
- creating a new community network team to encourage even more people to get involved in community action.

BR confirmed that some sessions were arranged specifically for existing Board members to raise any thoughts in relation to the report and subsequent proposals.

BR confirmed that the aim is for DCC Cabinet to receive a report in June 2023 on the outcome of this consultation phase. At that point, DCC Cabinet will agree which, if any, of the proposals they consider should be taken forward, along with an implementation timetable for any agreed changes.

Board members discussed the Review and process, and the following points were noted:

- Cllr EA was surprised to see such major changes being proposed in the report. It would seem at least from the GAMP perspective, that our organisation works well, funding a lot of good projects. ERS have been paid some c.£80k to carry out the review but the report doesn't give much in the way of clear recommendations, rather suggestions of wholesale change. Cllr EA had understood the Review would be about enhancements/improvements to the service.
- Cllr TS commented that GAMP is recognised as fully functioning, and all Board members are very supportive, which was mentioned at previous feedback sessions on the report. The report has a lot of major changes listed, which 'may' or 'may not' be able to be taken forward. Cllr TS expressed the view that, if major changes were to be implemented, then certain target areas should be trialled first to see if it works rather than wholesale change across every AAP.
- Cllr DSL is very passionate about GAMP, and feels that some parts of the consultation document don't necessarily apply to all AAPs. Cllr DSL acknowledged that all organisations should have regular reviews to look for potential improvements.
- Cllr KR expressed the view that not all AAPs are the same, adding that there were some problems in parts of the County when the new administration took over, so they've looked at this and now we've seen the results.
- Insp SH expressed concern at potentially moving to a 'central' pot of funding rather than AAPs holding budgets, which could water things down for local communities. Often things can be very Durham City-centric and over towards the East coast where they have big ASB problems. Insp SH would be concerned that a lot of villages and smaller communities could potentially be 'lost' in the system. Insp SH added that at a recent East Durham Rural AAP meeting she attended, Board members there felt strongly about submitting a joint response to the report from the Board, and asked whether GAMP Board members may wish to consider something similar.
- Cllr EA would welcome a joint Board response; there is general concern at some of the major changes being suggested and ones we're not particularly keen about as a Board, especially in terms of geography, with very little detail in the report on how this would work. Likewise with some of the funding aspects outlined in the report; it would appear to be suggested that Cllrs be taken out of the equation in terms of choosing which areas need to be funded, and rather this would be down to staff to gather information and evidence. Cllr EA feels that the report doesn't give any real recommendations, or show any data/evidence to back up the suggestions, and is uncomfortable with the report.
- Insp SH highlighted that a big issue for discussion at East Durham Rural AAP had been around the suggestion to replace boards with community networks, rather than core board membership. It was acknowledged that the current balance of Board members to include public, Cllrs and partners was one of the main positives about the AAPs, having a really good cross section of experience and knowledge.
- AC commented that the original ethos of the AAPs was to ensure decision-making processes were more inclusive, involving the public, and not just local authority, partners etc.

Going forward, AC proposed that the GAMP Executive pull together an outline response letter based on tonight's comments on behalf of the Board, and circulate to the Board for approval before submitting. Board members **AGREED** with this proposal; AC to coordinate (**Action 2: AC**).

AC encouraged all Board members to respond to the consultations as individuals as well.

5.6 2023-24 GAMP Executive Arrangements

BR highlighted that the Chair for 2023-24 will rotate from Elected Members to Public Representative. BR will contact each sector of the board separately by email after the meeting to seek expressions of interest for the Chair / Vice Chair roles, ready for these to be ratified at the AGM in May (**Action 3: BR**). BR welcomed any Public Reps who may be interested in the role to contact him directly to discuss.

6. **Date/Time of Next Meeting (AGM):**

**Tuesday 23 May 2023, 6:00pm, Woodham Community Centre**

AC/BR thanked all attendees, and the meeting was closed.