

Notes of the Weardale Area Action Partnership Board Meeting – 19th October 2023



Online via Microsoft Teams

(Note: Venue previously confirmed as Eastgate Village Hall but changed to online due to a Met Office Yellow Weather warning being in place.)

ATTENDEES

Board Members

Public Representatives: Richard Lawrie (RL) – **CHAIR**
Alison Humble (AHU)
Stephen Thomas (ST)
Will Wearmouth (WW)
Caroline Ford (CF)

Partner Representatives: Damian Pearson (DP) – Believe Housing
Insp Ed Turner (ET) – Durham Constabulary
Jeff Bell (JB) – Business Representative
Sarah Lee (SL) – Health
Julian Haynes (JH) – Voluntary Sector

Elected Members: Cllr Anita Savory (AS)
Cllr John Shuttleworth (JS)
Cllr David Sugden (DS) – Wolsingham Parish Council
Cllr Helen Barrass (HB) – Muggleswick Parish Council
Cllr Joan Carrick (JC) – Stanhope Parish Council

Officers Angelina Maddison (AM)
Tracy Edwards (TE)
Fiona Barber (FB)
Bill Lightburn (BL)

The meeting was attended by 1 member of the public.

APOLOGIES

Public Representatives: Adrian Holden
Kevin Roddam

Elected Representatives: Cllr Olive Wilson – Witton-le-Wear Parish Council

Partner Representatives: Dan Wootton – Fire & Rescue Service
Michael Laing - Durham County Council
Michael Kelleher - Durham County Council

BOARD MEETING

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting – both Board members and public attendees.

Introductions were made and apologies recorded as above.

2. Declaration of Interest

The Chair asked that Board members declare any interests now or as they arise on the agenda.

The following declarations were made:

- HB – Muggleswick Church Camping Project (Item 5)
- AS – Lydgate Lane 20mph (Item 8 & Item 10)
- DP – Frosterley Village Lighting Infrastructure (Item 5)
- JH – St Thomas' Church Hall (Item 8)

3. Agreement of Notes from Board Meeting held on 7th September 2023 and Matters Arising

The notes of this meeting, as circulated, were **AGREED** and confirmed as a true record by those present.

There were no matters arising.

4. Weardale Action Partnership Update

Frosterley Play Area

Consultation next week in Frosterley – Thursday 26th in Frosterley Village Hall 4:00pm – 6:00pm. There is also some direct consultation being undertaken with the pupils of Frosterley Primary School and their parents earlier that day. Some Towns & Villages funding and some Area Budget funding is available. AM advised that the community is also willing to do some fundraising. She advised that due to the uncertainty over some Towns & Villages projects reaching full application within timescales, that 'gold, silver and bronze' ideas are being developed. She advised that timescales are being looked at and all information will be as realistic as possible.

Wolsingham Beavers & Cubs – Small Grants Fund

The Board were shown some pictures and feedback from Wolsingham Beavers and Cubs who took part in an activity day in July. The day was made possible through funding from our Small Grants Fund.

Small Grants Fund update

FB advised Board members that there is currently £1,500 remaining in the pot. Two applications have been received and will be circulated to Board members for comment and decision. One further application is currently being developed and it is anticipated that this will be submitted soon.

Weardale WordFest

AM reminded Board members of WordFest taking place from 27th – 29th October.

5. Towns & Villages Funding Update

BL gave a short presentation on the status of Towns & Villages funding in Weardale.

Approved Projects

1. Muggleswick Church Camping Project - £50,000 (Total £220,000)
2. Weardale Way Works - £44,000 (Total £63,610)
3. Killhope Interpretation - £27,000 (Total £32,000)
4. Ashcroft MUGA Refurbishment - £32,000 (Total £42,000)

Projects yet to be approved

5. Frosterley Village Christmas Lighting Infrastructure - £10,668 (Total £17,258)
6. Weardale Play Areas (Phase 2) - £46,332

Note: The external match funding target (non DCC) for this programme is 30%. Should all projects progress, the match funding ratio would be approaching 81%.

Muggleswick Church Camping Project (Muggleswick with Edmundbyers PCC)

- Project in technical appraisal.
- EOI for £100,000 to Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) approved- full application to be submitted by 17th November (final decision anticipated by end November).
- Funding obtained to retain services of project consultant to coordinate all revenue elements (appointed architect will oversee capital works)
- Faculty now granted by CofE for works (05/10/2023)
- However, Church is still awaiting outcome of the planning application submitted to Durham County Council on 12/07/2023
- Gap funding application to Benefact Trust (£25,000) cannot be made until planning consent is received – normal turnaround time for this funder is 2-3 months.

Weardale Way Works (DCC - North Pennines AONB Partnership)

- Project in technical appraisal

Killhope Interpretation (Killhope Lead Mining Museum)

- Offer letter issued 18/10/2023

Ashcroft MUGA (Stanhope Parish Council)

- Site works commenced Monday 9th October.
- Main works (tarmac overlay and floodlight upgrade) completed by Friday 13th October.
- Tarmac is in 'curing' period prior to installation of line markings (scheduled for 28th October)
- Lux level survey of LED lighting and independent performance testing of the surface will follow this, with site handover currently planned for 8th November.
- It is expected that the project will be delivered within the £42,000 budget.

Frosterley Village Christmas Lighting Infrastructure (DCC Highways)

- Full application submitted (application summary circulated)

Weardale Play Areas (Phase 2)

- If £46,332 available, the recommendation is that focus should be on Frosterley Play Area – discussions are ongoing with DCC Outdoors Facilities Team.

- If Muggleswick Church Camping Project fails to obtain all funding and approvals, the allocated resource (£50,000) would be released to support a wider programme of play area improvements (detail to be determined).

Board members were asked to:

1. Note the continued progress in implementation of the Towns & Villages Programme – **NOTED**
2. Approve the application from Durham County Council (Highways), for Frosterley Village Christmas Lighting Infrastructure (in the sum of £10,668) - **Email circulation prior to meeting – Board APPROVED the application with no additional comments or queries raised.** (Note: BL advised that one piece of paperwork was outstanding but confirmed that this will be addressed during the appraisal process.)

St John’s Chapel Play Area

In response to a query regarding St John’s Chapel play area, AM advised Board members that this has received Area and Neighbourhood Budget funding as well as (Neighbourhood) Towns and Villages. The project is currently in development. She advised that there was no public consultation due to the very limited ground space available leading to very limited options for play equipment and consequently will be a like-for-like replacement project.

Timescales

AM acknowledged that we are running out of time and that certain factors are beyond our control e.g., Planning department decisions for Muggleswick Church Camping project. The WAP cannot interfere with this process and is not privy to all the information that planning have at their disposal. AM advised the Board that we will be the first authority to ask the Church of England to request planning permission for the project. Planning has the expertise required and WAP will abide by their decision.

AM noted that some objections have been raised by local residents. Although these are valid points, they do not appear to be relevant to the project – i.e. their concerns can be easily answered. AM suggested that it could be helpful for planners to have positive comments submitted by local residents.

AM advised that once WAP has been made aware of the outcome regarding planning permission, Board members will be notified. She stated that it would be a shame if the project runs out of time but that it can’t keep being extended indefinitely.

AM asked if BL would maintain a close watching brief on this project.

8. Area Budget Overview

2023/24 Area Budget - £100,000

Allocated Funding

Close Knit Community	£5,000
Weardale WordFest	£10,000
Weardale Together	£2,485
Citizens Songwriters	£17,932

Application for Board Approval – St Thomas’ Church Hall

There is no meeting facility in Weardale that can deal with online conferencing since the closure of the conference room in the Durham Dales Centre earlier this year. Multiple groups have expressed an interest in having this facility in the local area.

The project was discussed; no additional comments or conditions were made.

Email circulation prior to meeting – APPROVED by Board.

Expressions of Interest

Witton le Wear Youth Club - £13,000

The project was discussed; no additional comments or conditions were made.

Email circulation prior to meeting – Board RECOMMENDED moving to full application.

(As an aside, AM mentioned that the WAP team are working with Witton-le-Wear Community Centre to build community groups and improve sustainability.)

Weardale Income Maximisation Project - £9,635 – (linked with Welfare Reform funding)

The project was discussed; no additional comments or conditions were made.

Email circulation prior to meeting – Board RECOMMENDED moving to full application.

Lydgate Lane 20mph - £11,495 – (linked with Cllr Savory’s Neighbourhood Budget)

Currently no funding available centrally for this project. JH queried why there has apparently been no consideration of solar panel signs. AM said that she understood that having the same format of signage across the county fits the maintenance programme. She advised that the applicant will be asked for a response to this query prior to full application. Board members were advised that this project has been in process for a long time.

Cllr AS declared that she has no Declaration of Interest but is a local resident. Cllr AS advised that the local school has received complaints with regard to traffic and also shared that Lydgate Lane is used by motorists as a shortcut. She also explained that Lydgate Lane serves school children from many local streets and shared that it gets very busy at school times. She also shared that the Highways officer viewed the site at school times and identified the need for a 20mph zone. It was also noted that with the prospect of new houses being built nearby the need will only increase. Cllr AS also explained that the speed limit will also be beneficial for older residents in nearby bungalows.

CF asked whether it will be a 20mph zone all the time or just around school times.

Cllr AS clarified that it will be in force during school morning and evening times when the lights are illuminated.

Email circulation prior to meeting – Board RECOMMENDED moving to full application with the applicants to be asked about solar panel power potential.

9. Other WAP Funding Streams

Welfare Reform Budget

Discussed under Area Budget (Item 8). **Email circulation prior to meeting – Board RECOMMENDED moving to full application.**

Fun & Food

October half-term provision will be held in Witton-le-Wear Youth Group. Some previous underspend is being utilised by Weardale Together. Applications are now open for Christmas delivery with a deadline of 15th November. The WAP team welcomes applications from any group and is happy to work with them to develop both their provision and their application.

Summer Fun & Food Delivery Feedback – Story Train

The Board were shown a video prepared by the organisers of the Story Train – ‘All Aboard’ so that everyone can see what the project is about. AM welcomed feedback. HB commented that it would be good to see more children involved as it looked great fun (this was echoed by other Board members). AM explained that this may have been determined by those who were allowed to be filmed. ST stated that when he visited as Board Ambassador, he felt it was a great scheme and that both parents and children enjoyed it. He echoed HB’s comment regarding attendance and suggested that more thought is needed for future promotion. He stressed that he thought this is an excellent initiative and would like to see more children enjoy it. DS stated that the video was an exceptionally effective way of obtaining feedback and suggested that it would be good to see this method used more by other projects. Cllr AS shared that she enjoyed the video and said that it was clear to see that the children enjoyed it too. She also commented that it was good to see that in amongst the fun, a serious message was being shared e.g. don’t go on the railway lines. AM advised that the Story train is delivering different projects with different funding streams and is sometimes full of children. As the project establishes itself, more and more people are becoming involved. ST reiterated that the video is an excellent vehicle for promoting their work as it shows the enjoyment and how good the project is.

10. Neighbourhood Budget

Cllr Savory

2023/24 Neighbourhood Budget

- Tables – Wolsingham St Thomas’ Centre
- Frosterley Seating Area x 2 - Durham County Council

(Under consideration) Lydgate Lane 20mph – linked to Area Budget Expression of Interest ‘**Lydgate Lane 20mph**’. The project was discussed during Item 8 – Area Budget; no additional comments or conditions were made under this item. See above for Board decision.

2023/24 Small Grant Fund

- Hurdles – Eastgate Sheep Show
- Marquee – Wolsingham Parish Council

Coronation Fund

- Summer concert – Wolsingham Parish Council

Cllr Shuttleworth

2023/24 Neighbourhood Budget

- Frosterley Seating Area x 2 - Durham County Council

Small Grant Fund

- No current spend.

Coronation Fund

- Coronation Lunch Event – Rookhope Village Hall
- Coronation Lunch Event – Barrington Bites

11. Neighbourhood Issues

None raised.

12. Countywide Partner Issues

Uppertown Traffic in Wolsingham

AM mentioned a parish meeting held in Wolsingham recently which had been convened to discuss the impact of traffic in Uppertown, Wolsingham. Cllr Savory advised that County Highways make the decisions on the road – there are no restrictions and traffic can move freely. DS advised that Wolsingham Parish Council have set up a road safety group and people are welcome to join. DS advised that the meeting had a very good turnout of approximately 130 people.

13. Dates and Times of Future Meetings

The next meeting of the Weardale Action Partnership Board will take place on Thursday **30th November at 6:00pm – Eastgate Village Hall** (weather permitting).

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

AS thanked the team for making the decision to move to Teams tonight. She said that it wasn't just about the weather but about the safety of Board members travelling and she appreciated that consideration.