

# DERWENT VALLEY PARTNERSHIP (DVP) BOARD MEETING MINUTES

17 July 2024, Salvation Army Hall, Consett at 6pm



## **Present:**

### **Elected Representatives**

Cllrs Stephen Robinson (Chair), Alan Shield (stand in for Cllr Stelling) and Michelle Walton.

### **Partner Organisations**

Mark Clelland (Derwentside Trust) and Alison Lazazzera, Durham County Council (DCC).

### **Public Representatives**

Helen Marley, Lea McConnell and Rosemary Morris (Vice Chair).

## **DVP**

Corinne Walton (AAP Co-ordinator), Lynn Dougal (Support Officer) and Laura Sloan (Community Development Project Officer).

## **Members of the Public: 13**

**Presenters:** Corrine Walton, DCC; Patrick Hetherington, DCC and Emma Hawthorne, OASES (Outdoor and Sustainability Educational Specialists).

## **Apologies:**

Elected Reps: Cllrs Veronica Andrews, Kevin Earley, Kathryn Rooney and Alex Watson.

Partner Rep: Donna Tunney (Vice Chair) (The Hub). Public Rep: Linda Acres.

## **1. Meeting opened by the Coordinator**

Corinne Walton welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through housekeeping.

Board members introduced themselves and apologies were noted as above. Patrick Hetherington and Emma Hawthorne were welcomed to the meeting as they were both giving a presentation.

Cllr Shield declared an interest in being a trustee board member with Citizens Advice and Durham Christian Partnership, in relation to the Advice Services presentation at Agenda Item 3.

## **2. Minutes of Previous Board Meeting (22 May 2024)**

### *Matters arising*

P6. Regarding OPSIF money allocated to Consett Memory Makers, Susan Mellor, on behalf of Consett Rotary Club and Consett Memory Makers thanked the Board for the additional funding. The funding will allow the project to continue for a further 18 months and on average 25 people attend every week.

P7/8. Corinne gave an update on the BRASS event which was held in Consett on 12 July. It was well attended, and the team had received positive comments about the event.

P8. Regarding Consett Cycling Festival, a Forum member asked if the car park for residents coming into Consett can remain open during the event. Last time it was a nightmare getting parked and for local residents in the surrounding streets.

There were no further comments/matters arising and the minutes were AGREED.

### **3. Partner Updates**

*Corinne Walton, AAP Coordinator, DCC gave a presentation on the Local Network Boundary Consultation*

Following the Community Engagement Review in 2022/23 and Cabinet's approval for the new Local Networks (LN) to replace AAPs, DCC is consulting on the LN boundaries which will align with the new electoral division boundaries in County Durham (a copy of the presentation can be requested).

Currently there are 14 AAP areas, the proposal is for 12 LN areas which will give a more consistent population size and county councillor representation.

The DVP area currently has 6 electoral divisions, 11 local councillors and an estimated population of 46,447. The proposed changes would see the areas around Rowley and Castleside incorporated into the DVP area (LN name to be decided at a later date), with 5 electoral divisions, 9 local councillors and an estimated population of 47,900.

DCC would like the public's views on the proposed changes. The survey can be completed online at <https://online1.snapsurveys.com/LocalNetworks> or by email to: [cer@durham.gov.uk](mailto:cer@durham.gov.uk).

The survey closes on 18 August 2024.

All feedback will be considered by Cabinet before implementation of the new LN in April 2025.

Cllr Shield said the boundary changes are a requirement by the Boundary Commission. He appreciates that not everyone will be happy with the changes, but he asked people to make constructive comments rather than saying that they do not want this.

Cllr Robinson thanked Corinne for the presentation.

*Patrick Hetherington, Assessment and Awards Manager, DCC gave a presentation on the Advice and Guidance Consultation*

DCC is seeking the views from the public on how advice and guidance services are offered to County Durham residents in the future. These services include managing money, debt management and access to benefits, as well as welfare, employment, housing, consumer rights and health and social care (a copy of the presentation can be requested).

The survey is available online at <https://www.durham.gov.uk/consultation>. Paper copies are also available in libraries and Customer Access Points (CAPs).

The survey closes on 20 September 2024.

The feedback received will help to inform the services DCC fund from 2025/26.

Following the presentation, questions/comments below were noted:

- How much has been brought in annually regarding the advice and information you give to local people?  
Last year we did a Cost of Living Project and that brought in over 4 times the investment return.
- How do you measure your effectiveness?  
In multiple ways such as collecting information from partners, service user feedback and we track whether they are expected or anticipated gains.
- How will you reach those people who are not online/not aware of support available/do not know where and how to access support?  
One of the priorities for DCC is to try and find those excluded people. We are attending AAP Board meetings so we can spread awareness about the consultation. The feedback we get from residents/service users will help shape the direction we go in.
- In the northeast there is approximately £1.3bn of unspent benefits and part of the advice services' role is to ensure that that opportunity is grasped and taken. How we get people to complete surveys or cannot or will not engage with services is a concern and needs to be addressed. The North East Child Poverty Commission conference is being held on 16 October in County Hall and the North East Mayor Kim McGuinness will be attending.
- As face to face services diminish, the skills that staff and volunteers have will be lost. People may go in for one thing and could end up getting other advice and support, that online may not provide.
- Restricting face to face access could miss the opportunity to help those in crisis.
- Many older people and vulnerable people do not know how to use the internet and miss out on a lot of information.
- Advice and support advisers could go out in the community to the places where people go, eg doctor's surgeries.
- In Northern Ireland, cashpoint machines, post offices, banks, etc have debt advice stickers with telephone numbers to call for support.
- Local businesses, eg hairdressers and care workers, who come into contact regularly with customers, could be given training on signposting people who need support and how to access it.

Stephen thanked Patrick for his presentation.

#### **4. Derwent Valley Partnership Project Showcase**

*Emma Hawthorne from OASES gave a presentation on the DVP funded Climate Friendly Schools project.*

Whilst it is important that we tackle all the environmental crises, Climate Friendly Schools focuses on The Climate Crisis. It has been designed to:

- ✓ Help schools to assess what they are already doing to reduce their impact on our climate.
- ✓ Explore what additional measures they can take to reduce their impact even further.
- ✓ Help schools to improve climate education and take climate action.
- ✓ It has been designed to complement the Department for Education's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy.

Firstly, the schools are recommended to form a Climate Friendly Action Team and ideally contain pupils, teachers, senior leaders, business managers, caretakers, governors, community members and parents.

To help schools identify what they are doing well/areas for improvement, each school begins by completing a Climate Friendly Schools Audit. The audit answers are used to generate a Climate Friendly Action Plan, covering a number of themes.

To be recognised as a Climate Friendly School, they must be able to demonstrate that they have taken at least 10 steps towards delivering their Climate Friendly Action Plan every year.

A Climate Friendly Schools website offers free resources to help schools reduce their impact on the climate, including an auditing tool, lesson plans, assemblies, training and more.

Emma thanked the DVP for the funding OASES received. The project will run over a 2 year period with 10 schools in the DVP area supported through the Climate Friendly Schools Process.

The schools taking part this year are Bishop Ian Ramsey Primary School, Burnopfield Primary School, Ebchester Primary School and The Grove Primary School. Each school has identified their 10 actions towards becoming more climate friendly and are at different stages in the process.

Recruited for September 2024 is Delves Lane Primary School, Moorside Primary School, St Patricks RC Primary School and St Pius RC Primary School. There are 2 more spaces to fill and if anyone knows of a school that would be interested, please ask the school to get in touch with OASES.

Cllr Robinson thanked Emma for her presentation.

## **5. Community Resilience Task Group Update**

Corinne gave an update on the task group. The meeting scheduled for 5 June was cancelled, due to the pre-election publicity period.

The group met on 10 July and received a presentation from Mark Clelland, Derwentside Trust on the Mini Medics project.

They also received updates on:

The Walking Bus project which now has support from DCC's Road Safety Team and the WoW

(Walk Once a Week) initiative.

The Pre-Loved Fashion Show project has had limited work done due to partners not able to work with us and limited capacity within the DVP Team.

The DVP Environment Conference is on 27 September at Consett Rugby Club and is progressing well. The conference will have guest speakers, a workshop and information stalls. Invitation is open to all, but spaces are limited, and booking is essential.

The next task group meeting is on 11 September and will focus solely on reviewing and scoring eligible expressions of interest (EOI) forms from the call out for projects (more information at Agenda Item 6).

## 6. DVP Financial Update

### *DVP Project Call Out*

The DVP has an Area Budget of £116,956 (which includes Youth Fund, Poverty Action Fund and underspend monies from previous years) to support projects in the DVP area.

At the last Board meeting, the Board agreed to a project call out which went out on the evening of 22 May 2024 (before the Pre-Election Publicity Period was announced). The deadline for completed EOIs is 2 August 2024. The DVP will check the forms for eligibility in readiness for the task group meeting on 11 September where task group members will review and score the proposals. Recommended projects will be presented at the next Board meeting on 25 September.

### *Neighbourhood Budgets*

In addition to the Area Budget, the DVP also manages the 11 local councillors' Neighbourhood Budgets and Neighbourhood Budget Small Grants (NBSG). Projects supported/contributed to (April-June 2024) by local councillors:

- **Cllr Kathryn Rooney**

Foundation For Good - Food Bank, £1,200. To expand capacity to distribute nutritious food to those in need.

DCC Highways - A691 Villa Real Road, Consett, £12,532.45. Kerb, verge and footway improvements.

- **Cllr Alan Shield**

The Roxy Theatre - The Roxy Theatre Regeneration, £4,000. Reupholstering 360 seats with durable material and fire-retardant foam.

Cllr Shield added context to this by saying that the project received a £30k cultural grant which he made up the shortfall of £4k.

Hamsterley and Low Westwood Community Association - Community Activities at Hamsterley and Low Westwood, £2,000. Running costs for youth club.

Ebchester Community Association - Ebchester Flower tubs. NBSG Allocated: £500.

- **Cllr Kevin Earley**  
Blackfyne Allotment Association - Blackfyne Allotment hedgerow fund, £1,275.84.  
Sustainable hedgerow for security and x2 cameras to monitor wildlife and security on the site.
- **Cllr Alex Watson**  
The Friends of Consett and Blackhill Park - New Community Allotment, £3,000. Outdoor structure in the new community allotment space on Plot 2a, Blackfyne Allotment Association site.
- **Cllr Stephen Robinson**  
DCC Highways - Shotley Bridge Christmas Tree, £1,746.78. Supply, install and remove Christmas Tree.
- **Cllr Declan Mulholland**  
DCC Highways - Dipton Christmas Tree, £1,846.78. Supply, install and remove Christmas Tree, plus electricity costs.
- **Cllr Veronica Andrews**  
Dipton Community Association - Solid Foundations, £10,000. Foundation work for installation of a replacement balcony at Dipton Community Centre.  
DCC Highways - Dipton Christmas Tree, £1,846.78. Supply, install and remove Christmas Tree, plus electricity costs.
- **Cllr Dominic Haney**  
DCC Highways - Salt bin, £5,620. Supply and install 1 salt bin and 9 refills (3-year Service Level Agreement).  
DCC Highways - Consett Park Terrace Vehicle Activated Sign, £11,693.18. Supply and installation of vehicle activated sign.
- **Cllrs Kevin Earley, Stephen Robinson and Alex Watson**  
Benfieldside, Blackhill, Bridgehill and Shotley Bridge Partnership - 15th Anniversary Family Open Day, £9,000 (£3k per Cllr). To bring the community together to show case a wide range of groups that operate in the local area.
- **Cllrs Kevin Earley and Stephen Robinson**  
Blackhill and Shotley Bridge Uniting Methodist Church - Blackhill Beacon Hill Community Garden, £10,000 (£5k per Cllr). Development of community garden on the Methodist Church in Blackhill site.
- **Cllrs Kevin Earley, Dominic Haney, Kathryn Rooney, Alan Shield and Alex Watson**  
Durham Pride UK - Durham Pride 2024, £1,500 (£300 per Cllr). Costs towards Durham Pride 2024 event.
- **Cllrs Kevin Earley and Alex Watson**  
DCC Highways - St Mary's Christmas Tree, £1,746.78 (£873.39 per Cllr). Supply, install and remove tree.
- **Cllrs Angela Sterling and Michelle Walton**

Citizen's House - Citizen's House Improvements, £8,663 (£4,331.50 per Cllr). Glazed porch and export diversion device to help reduce utility bills costs.

Consett Gospel Hall - Consett Gospel Hall Roof, £8,750 (£4,375 per Cllr). To remove and replace damaged plaster following the replacement of the roof.

DCC Highways - 5 Grit Bins, £7,025 (£3,512.50 per Cllr). Supply and install 1 salt bin at 5 locations and 9 refills (3-year Service Level Agreement).

- **Cllr Angela Sterling**

Consett Gospel Hall - Refreshments for Coffee Morning (Warm Hub) and Toddler Group. NBSG Allocated: £300.

- **Cllr Dominic Haney**

Derwentside Detached Youth Project - Jubilee Court Afternoon Tea. NBSG Allocated: £100.

- **Cllr Kevin Earley**

Youth Ministry Trust - Emmaus Youth Village. CAD Drawing for tree planting and ecology project. NBSG Allocated: £600.

- **Cllr Dominic Haney**

Derwentside Detached Youth Project - Jubilee Court Afternoon Tea. NBSG Allocated: £100.

- **Cllr Stephen Robinson**

JFK Care Centre - St Mary's Fete. NBSG Allocated: £400.

- **Cllrs Angela Sterling and Michelle Walton**

Cruse Bereavement Support Durham - Cruse Bereavement. 1-2-1 bereavement support sessions. NBSG Allocated: £149 (£74.50 per Cllr).

### *St John's Ambulance Project*

As the Board were not quorate (at least 3 members from each of the 3 rep categories need to be present), Corinne advised that discussions could take place for this item, but a decision cannot be made. Therefore, an email will be sent to all Board members for a collective response.

Corinne said she is disappointed with the lack of Board member attendees and an email will be sent out to Board members reiterating the importance of attending Board meetings, especially when decisions need to be made.

St John's Ambulance received £6,120 (via 2023/24 Health and Wellbeing Task Group) for a Basic First Aid Training project in 18 primary schools. The applicant contacted the DVP team in May to advise that they were unable to deliver the original project due to changes in personnel and a new strategy for their organisation. However, they have an alternative project that they would like to use the funding for.

The new proposal is called Young Responders which focuses on street first aid. It will be delivered in schools, targeted at Years 5 and 6 in the Consett, Leadgate and Delves Lane areas and Consett Academy and will teach young people from underserved communities lifesaving skills.

The DVP is already funding a Mini Medics project which teaches young people lifesaving skills outside of a classroom environment, so this project could be seen as a duplication. The DVP Team raised a number of questions with the applicant, which the applicant responded to (Board members were sent a copy of these prior to the Board meeting).

The Board were asked to discuss the options which were to fund the new proposal at a cost of £6,120 or not to fund the new proposal and either add the amount to the project call out or to fund the next ranked project from the Contingency Fund.

A brief discussion ensued with the following comments noted:

- Consett Academy is unlikely to engage as they do not have capacity.
- We would not offer this option to other applicants; therefore, we should not make allowances for this one.
- As the terms and conditions have not been met relating to the original project, could the project be withdrawn.
- The applicant may apply via the project call out (if the new proposal is not supported).
- Not to fund the project and the money go back to the DVP.

Corinne summarised the discussion with the general consensus being not to support the new proposal. Therefore, an email will be sent to all Board members asking for them to either support or not to support the new proposal. The final decision needs to be based on a minimum of 3 responses from each of the 3 rep categories.

## **7. DVP Staffing Update**

Corinne advised that the Community Development Project Officer vacancy has been filled and Hayley Gowland will be joining the team mid-August.

## **8. Meeting Close and Date of Next Meeting**

Before the meeting closed Cllr Shield asked for an update on the Community Speedwatch vehicle and the 20mph school zones speed visors for Medomsley and Burnopfield. Corinne said she is awaiting an update on the speed visors from Highways and will continue to chase that up. Regarding the Speedwatch van, it is at Peterlee getting the branding on the van and should be with us within the next 2 weeks. More information will be forthcoming regarding an official launch on the vehicle.

Cllr Robinson thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The next Board meeting will be on Wednesday 25 September 2024, 6pm at The Salvation Army Hall, Consett.