

Belford Neighbourhood Plan Meeting

Monday 11th April 2016 in Bell View Resource Centre West Street Belford 2 pm

Attendees : Chairman County Councillor J Woodman

Vice-Chairman Mrs. B Stanton

I Graham Steering Group Member

G O'Connell Press Officer

Mrs I Hunter Parish Clerk

Apologies: Parish Councillor Mrs T Bell & D Holness Northumberland County Council (Link Officer)

Minutes: The meeting agreed the minutes from the meeting held on 15th February 2016.

Website: The Vice-Chairman updated the meeting that the website e-mail address is not being used so far by the public

Business Surveys: The meeting received the following updates:

- The Vice Chairman & the Clerk meet with Steve Wilkes at the Berwick Academy on 12th April 2016. The list of questions were agreed.
- The Chairman reported back from his meeting with the Belford Business Group held on 29th February, where the following points were raised:

- *The plan needed to promote business in Belford: the employment prospects and prosperity of the village depended on it. Although there were other important employment sites identified in the draft core strategy, Belford's location adjacent to the A1 gave it significant potential.*
- *For this reason, the plan should indicate sites where commercial development would be supported.*
- *Recruiting skilled and semi-skilled workers was a perennial problem. For this reason, additional housing ideally for permanent use and suitable for family occupancy should be encouraged in the plan.*

The businesses also discussed the opportunity for sharing support for the management of apprenticeships and the possibility of meeting the Chief Executive of NCC to generally discuss the business situation in the County.

- It was agreed a bunk house type of accommodation in the Belford area for apprentices could both help local businesses and the local economy.
- It was agreed rural apprenticeships for the Belford area maybe needs to be extended to the surrounding rural areas. The Chairman agreed to speak to the Coastal Group, and the Clerk agreed to speak to the Norham & Islandshire Group.
- The Vice-Chairman agreed to contact Parish Councillor S White and ask him to lead on the Tourism element of the survey.

- The Vice-Chairman reported back from her survey with the small businesses on the High Street and the Caravan Park at the south end of the village. The points the respondents made were:
 - *Too few businesses on the High Street.*
 - *Belford is a drive through village.*
 - *New residents not always using Belford shops.*
 - *A need for local employment and affordable housing.*
- The Vice-Chairman agreed to circulate the survey she used to all members
- The meeting agreed to use facebook, the local press & village newsletters to promote the business survey. Hard copies are to be delivered to the outlying businesses.
- It was agreed the plan should be generic when identifying areas where business development would be accepted within the plan rather than being site specific.
- It was agreed that changes to the road layout on the High Street could encourage more businesses to the High Street and help the economy. I Graham agreed to draft a report on options which could be considered.
- It was agreed a facelift of the High Street could be an aspiration within the plan.

Housing Survey: The Chairman informed the meeting that an e-mail has been received today from Northumberland County Council stating they are not happy with the draft survey, he concluded to say he has no details but will receive an update on 13th April and a draft survey when he meets with Northumberland County Council Officers. The members agreed the survey was not to be a full housing needs survey.

Next meeting: To receive any updates.

Date of next meeting 23rd May 2016 2pm in Bell View Belford