

Notes of the Weardale Area Action Partnership Board Meeting – 29th February 2024



Venue Eastgate Village Hall

ATTENDEES

Board Members

Public Representatives: Richard Lawrie (RL) – **CHAIR**
Kevin Roddam (KR)
Stephen Thomas (ST)
Will Wearmouth (WW)
Alison Humble (AH)

Partner Representatives: Damian Pearson (DP) – Believe Housing
Sarah Lee (SL) – Health
Julian Haynes (JH) – Voluntary Sector
Michael Laing (ML) - Durham County Council
Dan Wootton (DW) – Fire & Rescue Service

Elected Members: Cllr Anita Savory (AS)
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)
Bill Lightburn (BL)

APOLOGIES

Public Representatives: Caroline Ford
Adrian Holden

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

Partner Representatives: Insp Ed Turner – Durham Constabulary
Jeff Bell – Business Representative
Michael Kelleher - Durham County Council

Officers: Fiona Barber

BOARD MEETING

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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

3. Agreement of Notes from Board Meeting held on 18th January 2024 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. Presentation

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority - Community Risk Management Plan 2024-2027

DW gave the presentation to Board members. A copy of the full presentation is held on file – if you would like us to send you one, please contact the WAP office at weardaleaap@durham.gov.uk

To take part in the consultation visit: www.ddfire.gov.uk

The Board were invited to make comments and to ask questions:

- Query re staffing levels at Stanhope. DW advised that there is an aspirational target of personnel based on a full contract but due to the variation in contracts (committed availability), this can be a little complex. At present, numbers are good and close to where they should be. Numbers are improved on previous years.
- Query re support for staff who have experiences traumatic scenes/situations. DW advised that there is a 'trauma support' provision for staff, an employee assistance programme, occupational health and the firefighters charity.

5. Weardale Action Partnership Update

WAP Office Accommodation (AM)

AM explained the accommodation budget for AAP's has been given up as a MTFP saving, this resulting in the AAP's being displaced into DCC buildings. Currently 3 options are being explored: Weardale Hospital; Weardale Community Partnership Hub and Wolsingham Parish Council office (Town Hall). AM explained that confirmation in writing was required that facilities would be free of charge. It is also necessary that DCC are satisfied with any Health and Safety implications and a lease confirming the aspects of the offer is obtained and understood.

Planning forward for a presence in Weardale having the library in the Town Hall allows access to DCC network, to date no confirmation of the offer has been forwarded. Weardale Community Partnership have confirmed their offer. In terms of the Weardale Community Hospital the needs of patients and family must be prioritised in any plan.

AH said the team must be happy to have options in the dale. AM said it would also be beneficial to remain in the area with the move towards Community Networks from 2025 as the momentum from the work to date with groups and communities will not be lost. RL said that it is important to keep the team in the dale and AS has worked hard on this. AS confirmed that she had made representation and this included to the Chief Executive for the team to remain in the dale, noting that Crook is very different to Weardale and the travel and access to staff are an issue at this location.

AM said she was grateful for the support and offers to date and expressed her hope that we can continue to move forward and work towards establishing Community Networks in 2025. AM advised that she is working with the Teesdale AAP Coordinator to ensure that rural areas are highlighted to ensure that in these fiscally challenging times, rural proofing is a consideration. AM advised she had that morning delivered a presentation to the County Durham Partnership in respect to this. AM understands the benefits of working in urban areas for hitting targets but with rural uplift there is the ability to ensure that everyone can benefit.

Weardale Activity Programme

AM gave a brief update on the programme being developed with the Move team.

1. Personal Trainer

- Currently delivering a well-received session at Barrington Bites lunch club these sessions aim to increase stability reducing trips and falls.
- Westgate and Witton-le-wear are being investigated as possible locations for delivery and AM asked if there were other potential venues to investigate.

2. ManHealth

- Peer support session run by an organisation who has the information to signpost and refer on as required by individuals.
- The group plan and develop sessions based on group attendees
- Pilot at Stanhope and there is interest in similar types of sessions in other locations, other funding is being reviewed for this.

3. Durham Dales Hockey

- Pitch and Hall hire is being supported to enable the group to become sustainable in the future.

4. Health & Safety Risk Assessments

- After Covid, a lot of volunteers (and their knowledge) has been lost from community organisations and buildings.
- This funding will provide someone to conduct assessments and help with the paperwork process ensuring that all paperwork is up-to-date in order to help achieve long-term sustainability.

5. Training and Development

- To support delivery of the sessions needed. Couch to 5k training.

6. Forward Development

- Currently working with Wolsingham Leisure Centre to look into a splash session recognising the importance of water confidence in a river area.

6. Towns & Villages Funding Update

BL advised that the Towns & Villages programme will end at the end of March 2024. BL gave a short overview of the Towns & Villages funding in Weardale.

Ashcroft MUGA Refurbishment - £32,000 (Total £42,000).

This project has completed and photographic evidence has been circulated to the Board.

Killhope Interpretation - £27,000 (Total £32,000)

Work has started on this project and the applicant anticipates completion date around summer 2024.

Frosterley Village Christmas Lighting Infrastructure - £10,668 (Total £17,258)

This project is now in the hands of the Street Lighting team and wider partners to complete the delivery of the project.

Weardale Way Works - £44,000 (Total £63,610)

Having recently received funding the project will start shortly.

Muggleswick Church Camping Project - £50,000 (Total £220,000)

This project has been a long haul for all involved and now has the funding in place to start delivery of the project.

Frosterley Play Area (Phase 1) - £46,332

This project - as agreed by the Board - utilised the remaining Towns & Villages budget and has been circulated by the team for ratification at this meeting.

- BL explained that 11 projects had been explored by WAP which took a lot of work by the Board and team to deliver six projects.
- BL acknowledged (having worked with another 2 AAP's) that the WAP Board had not taken an easy option in delivery of the T&V budget in not choosing to do a call out and do the easy hit. The projects were not all straightforward and much partnership working was required - both professional and community. BL recognised the Board for their perseverance with Muggleswick which was very close to the line and forward planning for the Frosterley Play Area project.
- BL thanked the Board for their patience over the duration of the programme and expressed his pleasure at being involved with the Board and projects and although he will leave this role at the end of March 2024, he will continue his role as Community Development Project Officer at another AAP.
- RL thanked BL for his work in the programme to achieve the projects of the WAP Board. The Board members supported the Chairs comments.

- HB thanked the Board, WAP team and BL for sticking with the Muggleswick project and hoped a visit in the future could be arranged to recognise the hard work.
- AH gave her thanks also and said when Muggleswick funding was confirmed she gave a little cheer.
- AM asked if there was any funding unspent that was available from T&V pot? BL advised he was not aware but would ask the question.
- AS noted that in Weardale we can easily spend our budget and thanked the team and BL for their work on T&V projects and wished BL good luck.
- TE acknowledged the play area team lead James Young who quickly prepared an application once the Muggleswick funding offer was confirmed and thanked the Board for their swift responses to the submitted application summary. TE advised that once all funding is in place as with the St Johns Chapel play area (which received £10k from Cllr Shuttleworth T&V budget) the tender process will result in updated designs of what can be achieved in the space. AM noted to the Board how funding increases to play area project can achieve vastly improved designs/ specification/ results.
- AM advised that James would be asked to come along to a future Board meeting.

Frosterley Play Area (Phase 1)- The Board ratified the application previously circulated by email.

7. Area Budget Overview

2023/24 Area Budget - £100,000

AB Overview

£100,000 allocation.

AM advised the Board of the projects supported through the 2023/24 allocation and the support this funding has made to newer groups to work on sustaining the project into the future.

Weardale Together CIC have developed the youth club in Stanhope utilising both funding from the Youth Budget and Area Budget and benefitted from the Youth Worker Training made available through UTASS. AM noted that there is also interest from Frosterley in developing a youth club with initial discussions with the YMCA. The AAP will be advised of any support that may be required in the development of new youth facilities. AM noted the importance of supporting local groups to develop and to encourage the utilisation of local partners.

AM reiterated the importance of the updates at St Thomas' Church Hall benefitting users with installation of wi-fi, and audio-visual upgrades. The Close-Knit Community focus their activity in the Upper Dale but the project arms reach out through the knitting element to the wider community. Other projects funded include NorthPens, The Story Train, Citizen Songwriters, Citizens Advice County Durham and Lydgate Lane road safety developments. Two projects are in appraisal – Wolsingham Wayfarers and Witton-le-Wear Youth Club.

Angelina acknowledged the good working relationship between believe housing and Lakes and Dales Co-op who add to WAP funding or are able to offer small funding grants of their own.

8. Other WAP Funding Streams

Welfare Reform Budget

Allocated to Citizens Advice County Durham (CACD) for the Weardale Income Maximisation Project to employ a worker to support residents in Weardale to find out about and access funding and benefits available to them.

Youth Budget

As detailed above - allocated to Weardale Together for the Stanhope Youth Club at St Thomas' Church Hall.

Fun & Food

AM explained how the budget this year had consisted of Public Health funding for half term holidays and Department for Education (DfE) funding for Easter Summer and Christmas 2023. The Public Health budget had been spent but less groups came forward for funding at Christmas and so this budget was slightly underspent. The sessions had been well received from those attending and there has been encouragement and support to new groups to deliver sessions. Slides were shared of the activities on offer in February.

AM explained that the Fun & Food funding is changing in the future following updated guidance from the DfE following a recent review of delivery in County Durham leading to a stronger focus for the funding to reach children in receipt of Free School Meals and vulnerable children. The Fun & Food team are looking at how this can be achieved within the new guidance. AM explained that we have worked to achieve good relationships with schools to ensure they receive information on the projects to be delivered to help them advise these families early and enable face to face encouragement by staff.

AH asked how do you know who the FSM are who have attended? AM explained this is not known until the person identifies as FSM, and this is confirmed when the provider inputs data on attendees after the session but should any of the data have been incorrectly input on the attendance form or parent puts a name the child is known by and not the official registered name on the school record then this will not be recognised by the system. AM added that a golden ticket system was advised by the Fun & Food team which would mean that parents requesting places would input their code to book sessions. AH queried difficulties in engaging for Weardale with lower FSM numbers and system issues. AM confirmed the difficulties for the Fun & Food team also and how where there are higher numbers of FSM then they are more likely to hit the targets set by DfE. AM also noted that the need for rural uplift is still necessary to support groups.

WW asked about FSM eligibility and was this just to those accessing FSM. AM advised that this was for those registered as FSM and working with schools, information has been shared to encourage take up of our Rural Advice Worker to support families in accessing benefits.

AS explained families in the area are proud and don't want to be identified as FSM and any stigma perceived with this. Children accessing services in friendship groups is likely to result in more children attending.

ML echoed the difficulties facing both the AAP team and the Fun and Food team, to meet a criterion.

TE advised the Board that due to the guidance updates/ changes there had been no groups come forward for funding for Easter in Weardale, one change is the session to be for minimum 4 hours.

AM advised that we will continue to work with the Fun & Food team and potential providers and keep the Board updated, recognising that any funding coming into County Durham has to be utilised to ensure additional options for our communities.

9. Neighbourhood Budget

Cllr Savory

2023/24 Neighbourhood Budget

- Tables – Wolsingham St Thomas' Centre
- Frosterley Seating Area x 2 - Durham County Council
- (In process) Lydgate Lane 20mph – linked to Area Budget

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

- Cowshill Dominoes – Cowshill Village Hall
- Wearhead Bowls Club – Wearhead Bowls Club

Coronation Fund

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

AM updated the Board on the spend to date as outlined above and, that Cllr Shuttleworth did have a project, but it is currently being remodelled.

ML asked if this budget was rolled over? AM explained that all councillors had received an email from Gordon Elliott (Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement) advising of the need to allocate Neighbourhood Budget as they near the final year of the current term of office as it cannot be carried forward beyond 31 March 2025. With this came a request to have the applications completed and with the funding team for December to give enough time for completion of the appraisal process.

AS confirmed the spend/allocation email sent to councillors and the importance of the projects being in place as there are 126 councillors who could potentially be submitting applications before this pre-election period. AS recognised the support of the team and the funding team to support the councillors achieving their outcomes.

AS noted that in regard to the Lydgate Lane project around road safety she has been in discussions with Hargreaves haulage who will visit both schools in Wolsingham to support the road safety messages to young people.

10. Neighbourhood Issues

RL noted that the following day would be the Stars In Their Eyes event held by Cllr Anita Savory and invited Cllr AS to speak on this. Cllr AS informed the Board that this was an event she held to raise both funds and awareness for the Weardale Community Hospital and the local MS charity as there is a high prevalence of this condition in the dale.

11. Countywide Partner Issues

AM as mentioned earlier noted her attendance at the County Durham Partnership meeting where she raised the importance of rural uplift for the Dales areas.

12. Dates and Times of Future Meetings

The Chair confirmed the next meeting of the Weardale Action Partnership Board will take place on Thursday **25th April 2024 at 6:00pm – Venue TBC**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.