

Hoyland Milton & Rockingham Joint Ward Alliance
Notes of meeting held Thursday, 21st November, 2013.
The Hoyland Centre

Present: Cllrs Andrews, Stowe, Lamb. Dures & Franklin, Joan Whittaker, Andy Hodgkinson, Albert Bishop, Janet Cartwright, Neil Spencer, Tom Banham, Andrew Ralph, Elaine Equeall.

Kate Faulkes (Area Council Manager), Fiona O'Brien (Locality Support Officer)

Apologies: Cllr. Shepherd, Dave Graham, Ann Edgar, Ian Warhurst, June Walker, Fiona Tennyson

Cllr Lamb chaired the meeting.

1. Apologies, Welcomes and Introductions.

Apologies were received from Cllr. Shepherd, Ian Warhurst, June Walker and Ann Edgar.

Elaine Equeall, who is to give an introduction to Community Organising, was welcomed to the meeting, as were new attendees Tom Brannon of Hoyland Primary School and Andrew Ralph of Greenfield Primary School.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Kate apologised for the fact that notification of the additional HS2 meeting was not circulated to all members of the Ward Alliance.

Dave Graham is still endeavouring to find out which land is under the management of Berneslai Homes.

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting held on 1st October 2013.

3. Community Organiser

Elaine Equeall thanked the Alliance for the opportunity to address this meeting. She wanted to take this opportunity to talk about the possibility of having a Community Organiser to support the Ward Alliance.

This is not a new idea and it is all about bringing people forward from the community who are interested in getting involved and giving them an opportunity to have some training and development so that they can have a bit more of an impact in that community and try and get things done. There are probably a few people sat around this table with a lot of experience who already are community organisers. They are basically people who care enough about their community and who want to make a difference. They will be people who are known in their community, either formally or informally. They know a lot of people and may already be involved in groups or they might not be involved in any groups but are people who everybody knows.

Why, as a Ward Alliance, might you need a Community Organiser?

- Supporting the Alliance with the Community networks.
- Signposting people and putting them in touch with each other.
- Using organisers to do consultation for the Alliance, i.e. do we think we have the right priorities on the ward plan.
- Attend group meetings to ask people for their views
- Talking to residents on behalf of the Alliance as to what they see as important issues
- Promoting people to become involved

Essentially, the Community Organiser is a voluntary position and is not paid.

If you decide that you do want to go ahead with the idea of a Community Organiser, there are two things I can do to help you, through the Area Team. One is to recruit those people and then, more importantly, is providing them with some training and development. I have been working with some colleagues who are part of the Barnsley Learning Consortium. That is a group of people and organisations who deliver training, such as Northern College, Workers Education Association and quite a number of small training providers. This is a new entity that has just come together, this Community Learning Trust and I have gone to them and said that we are looking at the idea of having some training and support to get Community Organisers off the ground and they will be delivering a bespoke tailored training according to what we ask them to deliver. At a bare minimum she has suggested that every Ward Alliance has five elements of core training, such as:

- Helping them to understand a bit more about how their area works,
- Local decision making,
- Planning
- Building networks
- Introduction to community based information and advice
- Signposting
- Supporting Community Groups
- Fund raising
- Communication
- Looking at their role as a Community Adviser

The next bit of training is over to the Alliance. You might want them to do a bit of training around research skills, marketing and communication, or other skills dependent upon the priorities in the Ward Plan.

It will not impact upon the Alliance budget because BMBC have negotiated through the Learning Consortium and they are offering the training free of charge. The only cost might be travelling expenses, child care or anything they might need to access the training.

Joan asked how many Community Organisers would be needed in each Alliance. She pointed out that the Hoyland Milton/Rockingham area covered two wards, which each consisted of small communities or villages, i.e. Hoyland, Hoyland Common, Birdwell, Blacker Hill, Jump, Hemingfield, Elsecar, Platts Common and it is quite possible that although someone might be well known in one village, they are totally unknown in another.

Elaine took the point but said that this was something that the Alliance must consider and decide upon. She did, however, stress that we must not feel constrained about the number of people we put forward for training.

Cllr Stowe said that it was important that we do create these networks and it will give the general populace confidence that they are being listened to.

Cllr. Lamb thanked Elaine for her input and said that this will be taken under advisement and he asked for it to be an agenda item for the next meeting.

4. Discussion on Ward Plan

Cllr. Lamb recalled that at the last Ward Alliance meeting a decision was taken that a small group would be formed to discuss what we need to include in our Ward Plan. A draft copy has been forwarded to all members. The ward plan addresses the priorities we previously identified.

Kate outlined the priorities that came out of the early workshops that we all took part in. Basically what we did was look at the statistical information for the area and what we knew. What we came up with were some headline priorities. We then went out and did some consultation, not as much as we would have liked because it was a bit late in the year. As a result of the consultation, we realigned the priorities accordingly.

The small working group was Kate, Joan and Emma and the first thing that we noticed was that some of these are in our gift to do and some are not, for instance, the one that says "Working towards achieving apprenticeship opportunities for our young people". That is a bit bigger than us. We can have a role in it, but we cannot do it all. We need to go up to the Area Council, which has all our Councillors on and has a big devolved budget from next year. In many cases, we will not be the lead on a project, but we can feed in the necessary information to the Area Council who do have the facilities and partners to work through to a solution.

Keeping the environment well cared for came out really strongly and this is one we can lead on. We can work with a range of local groups and volunteers to improve the environment.

Cllr. Franklin reiterated the fact that even in projects where the lead would come from the Area Council; this would not preclude us having a strong input into their discussions.

Joan informed the meeting that she had been appointed a Trustee of Voluntary Action Barnsley and they are very keen on becoming involved with the Ward Alliances and they would like to send someone along to talk to us.

Cllr. Lamb thanked the working group.

5. Discussion on potential projects to address priorities

Kate pointed out to the meeting that we have representatives of local schools and perhaps tonight we ought to concentrate on two or three projects that we can involve young people in.

2 main themes emerged from the discussion: (Thanks to Kate for these notes which were sent out on the 25th November 2013, just after the last meeting).

- Making sure that children and young people's voices are heard and can influence future plans being made for the area they live in
- Working to develop specific projects which bring children and young people together with people and groups of all ages for the benefit of everyone – young people seem to be particularly interested in environmental/growing projects, and this is also one of the Ward Alliance's priorities

We focused on a possible project which might meet all of these – the development of a school and community allotment on spare land adjacent to the school, where young people work alongside community members to grow (and possibly also eat) fresh food. This would potentially have a wide impact, including:

- Strengthen inter-generational relationships & relationships within the community generally
- Pass on skills and knowledge which may be in danger of being lost
- Contribute to healthy eating and exercise for everyone!
- Build aspirations and confidence amongst young people taking part
- Reduce possible isolation amongst older people taking part
- Bring in older people, local businesses and/or ex-pupils who can act as positive role models for young people

We were all very clear that this plan shouldn't be developed much further until we had had a chance to discuss it with young people themselves to see what they thought!

We looked at the assets (people, groups, organisations, buildings, skills etc) we had in the area:

- The schools in the area already work very well together and collaborate regularly
- School Councils and Learning Councils already in existence which could easily be linked to the Ward Alliance and the new Neighbourhood Network currently being developed
- The schools already work well with local churches in the community
- Junior Wardens programmes which are always a great success, bringing together organisations & building the confidence of young people
- A bid is currently in to revive the highly successful Hoyland Youth Forum (Forge Community Partnership) by employing a facilitator – this worked on both 'voice and influence' and also specific environmental and green activities
- Strong existing Parents' Groups in most of the schools who get involved in events, fundraising, maintenance and also getting positive messages out to the wider community – links to Ward Alliance and Neighbourhood Network could easily be forged
- Many other organisations also fund young people's activities or give time in kind – Police, SY Fire, Ward Alliance Fund, local businesses

- Elsecar Park Spring Nature Day in March could be used as a focus
- Kirk Balk and the Komplex Youth Club both actively seek opportunities to get their young people involved in community activities
- Ditto Army Cadets, Scouts, Guides etc.
- Volunteers at Rockingham Centre who do grounds maintenance could also help out
- Need to identify people with expertise and passion who could help us get a project started, including:
 - Gary Donald at Jump Allotments
 - Ian Warhurst at Hemingfield Allotments
 - Possible group at Regent Street Allotments at Hoyland Common?
 - Janet from Friends of Elsecar Park has an allotment and may be able to help out
 - Cllr Chris Lamb has a family member who would be able to help with initial rotivation if an allotment project was decided upon
 - Possible student's placement from Wigfield Farm or the College might also offer help?
- Neighbourhood Watch, Friends Of and Crime/Safety groups could also be approached

Actions to take this forward:

- Kate to write up these notes in bullet form & circulate to Ward Alliance so everyone can consider how they might be able to help (or who else they know who could help too!) (DONE)
- Notes also to be taken by the Primary Heads to their next meeting on Tuesday 26th November for discussion (DONE)
- We then need to speak to young people and see what they think about the idea – or maybe they might have a better one!
- If an allotment project is decided upon, there will need to be some consultation done with the site's immediate neighbours – the South Area team is quite happy to help the schools with this if needed
- The owner of the land will also need to be confirmed
- A small temporary working group (including young people) will probably be needed to get the project off the ground once decided upon
- Councillors and/or Ward Alliance members were very happy to come and speak to young people about the Ward Alliance and to build up links with the School and Youth Councils.

Councillor Lamb thanked all who attended tonight and contributed to what has been a most interesting discussion.

6. Date and time of next meeting

Tuesday 18th March 2014 at 5pm at the Hoyland Centre (Community Rooms 1, 2 & 3)