

DT11 Forum Community Partnership minutes

Date: 8 February 2011

Venue: Blandford Parish Centre

1. Apologies: Simon Evans, Peter Webb, Hugh de longh

Attending: Scott Norman (Chair), Peter Slocombe (treasurer), Diane Cooper (Vice Chair / Volunteer Centre), Geoff Jones (DT11 green group / Cinnabar Eco Creative), Carole Fornachon (POPPS / the Tarrants), Jackie Bolson (POPPS / Winterbornes), Dave Aitkins (Age Concern Blandford), Tony Tombs (Signpost Housing), Mark Williams (TREADS), Steve Adamson (CPEND broadband project), Bob Brannigan (Blandford Camp / BFTC - Blandford Forum Town Council), Esme Butler (BFTC), Haydn White (BFTC), Mike Wills (Bryanston PC), Mike Jones (Iwerne Minster PC), Carrie Lewis (Child Okeford PC), Cllr Malcolm Albery (Blandford St Mary PC), Nicci Brown (Western Gazette), , Graham Rains (NDTC), Keith Yarwood (Stourpaine PC), Tony Gibb (Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils), Dave Astin (Milldowners), Susan Bennett (Durweston PC), Cllr Barrie Cooper (DCC), Sara Loch (BFTC), Cllr Joseph Hickish (NDDC)

Guests: Simon Thompson (Dorset Community Action), Paul McIntosh (NDDC / da21), Hilary Ritchie (NDDC)

In Attendance: Hannah Solloway (DT11 Community Resource Worker)

Agenda item	Discussion points	Action
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 August 2010, Child Okeford Community Centre	Minutes agreed. No discussion points.	
3. Matters arising	None.	
4. Treasurers Report	Peter Slocombe (DT11 Treasurer) presented the figures for 1 April to 7 February 2010. The current account balance is £18,298.47, and there is £16.58 in petty cash, giving a total of £18,315.05.	
5. Chair's Report	Scott Norman presented his report.	
6. Update and questions on projects	Three Choughs (Community Resource Centre) The lease document has been with a NDDC lawyer who has raised some issues, but these are only minor and it is expected that changes will be made in the next few days. NDDC is looking into underwriting it for three years, and there will be a three year break clause. The forum agreed that Scott, Peter and Diane will liaise with NDDC over the agreement and make changes as necessary.	Scott, Peter and Diane

Trailway

Discussions are now taking place with three landowners about the next stretch. The DCC rangers are applying to Sustrans for funding.

Graham Rains explained that the type of surfacing is likely to be road planings, and it was pointed out that tarmac can create problems for horse riders (though they do tend to use the grass verge).

More signage is needed to keep cars off the Trailway.

There was also concern about illegal shooting which has taken place too close to the track at Gains Cross, but Scott confirmed this shouldn't be an ongoing problem as there is not going to be another shooting season there.

CPEND Broadband project

The promised BT upgrade in Blandford will only affect the area within the bypass, and not all properties within that area.

A joint bid is being developed by CPEND with DCC for funding from BDUK (bid has to be in by March), with match funding from Sowing Seeds.

Scott thanked Steve and his team for their work, which demonstrates what can be achieved when there is co-operation across North Dorset.

Trailway centre/Milldown

It has now been decided that the DT11 Forum will not get the school site, which is disappointing, but there is ongoing discussion about the site as a whole, including the playing fields, so it is still possible that land may be made available for a trailway /heritage centre.

Arts Centre

Keith Yarwood and Scott attended a meeting hosted by Blandford Town Council. Keith and Jon Ivay have concerns about the council's proposals for the Corn Exchange. In particular they feel it would not make a viable theatre or cinema space due mainly to technical problems including poor access. It would therefore be better if the building had other uses eg banqueting and music (if the acoustics problems can be resolved).

Meanwhile, Jon Ivay has proposed that a small, intimate venue could be developed behind the Blandford museum. His proposals could be complementary to those for the Corn Exchange rather than competitive and it should be feasible to develop both. Esmé Butler pointed out that it is in DT11's Community Strategic Plan that the forum will support BFTC in their plans to refurbish the Corn Exchange as a cultural venue. Scott committed to keeping BFTC informed of DT11's plans.

	<p>Milldown building</p> <p>Haydn White raised the subject of the Milldown Building, and the futility of knocking it down. It was pointed out that this was part of the planning approval for open spaces and is not a reversible decision, and Scott explained that DT11 had raised concerns earlier in the process. It was also pointed out that there were serious maintenance concerns, and the issue of energy efficiency was discussed. Scott will shortly be attending a DCC property meeting so agreed to raise the issue again there.</p>	<p>Scott to bring up at DCC meeting</p>
<p>7. Presentation on the localism bill by Hilary Ritchie, NDDC</p>	<p>Hilary Ritchie (HR) gave a presentation about the localism bill and its likely impact in North Dorset. Handouts were made available which summarised the bill and presentation. The main points she made about the impact locally were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bill offers big opportunities in North Dorset because of the community planning process • It's up to all of us to make it work and remove barriers • NDDC has identified savings for the coming year, and partially for the following year. The number of staff will shrink, but due to the mixed way the council will be doing business, some staff members will be employed elsewhere. Some services will be bought, others will be sold, and in some cases services will be shared with other authorities • In general, the process is about sustaining facilities and services, but NDDC will have an enabling and facilitating role • NDDC has been through similar processes before eg with the leisure centre, grass cutting and public toilets <p>HR also pointed out that there are some aspects to be wary of in the bill eg the 50:50 referendum vote which she felt could be divisive within communities.</p> <p>Questions and comments from the floor included: Whether 'removing the burden of bureaucracy' also meant lack of funding, and how services would be funded (Steve Adamson): HR confirmed that there would be no extra resources, but that resources would be targeted at the 'prevention end' rather than the 'cure end' eg healthy living projects.</p> <p>How savings would be made by people working elsewhere, and whether the council offices will be sold (Dave Astin): HR said central contracts could mean sharing of eg ITC and office space, and amalgamating staff teams. It is possible that the council offices could be sold.</p>	

	<p>When the changes would take place (Carrie Lewis): The Localism bill is expected to go through this Autumn, though some services eg Business Link will be affected earlier.</p> <p>Whether organisations doing work ‘at the prevention end’ eg POPPS will get funding (Jackie Bolson): HR said no, although the situation is changing daily, and there may be a limited amount of funding from central government.</p> <p>What consultation would be carried out (Mike Jones): NDDC won’t have to go through a ‘Tough Choices’ type of exercise but there will be some public consultation. It was also pointed out by Barrie Cooper that referendums can be expensive.</p> <p>Scott Norman thanked Hilary and conclude that everyone needs to think smartly and work together to create better services.</p>	
<p>8. Presentation by Simon Thompson of Dorset Community Management on Integrated Offender Management</p>	<p>Simon Thompson (ST), who had come in place of his colleague Rachelle Smith who was unable to attend, gave a presentation about this new way of working with offenders which has come from central government, and brings together different agencies working with offenders.</p> <p>Dorset Community Action has been commissioned to carry out research to assess the interest in the scheme in rural Dorset.</p> <p>Handouts of the presentation, and a summary of the project were made available.</p> <p>ST wanted to know from the members whether they felt Integrated Offender Management (IOM) was a good idea, whether it relates to DT11’s concerns, and whether people felt that volunteers could be recruited to assist with the programme locally, by working as mentors with the offenders, and maintaining close, regular contact with them.</p> <p>Diane Cooper from the Volunteer Centre Dorset said it linked in with their work in taking on volunteers from the probation service, and they would be interested in the scheme. She feels volunteers would come forward to assist, but that there would need to be a very good training programme for them. Susan Bennett agreed that training would need to be of a high standard - like that taken by magistrates who become amateur voluntary probation officers.</p> <p>ST confirmed that around 150 offenders could be involved in Dorset, and that the age range is from 18 to 65.</p> <p>Scott suggested that Charlie Motcombe of Citizens Advice Dorset (CAID) should be approached as its likely he would be interested, as would Tony Molloy of CAB in Gillingham.</p> <p>Hilary Ritchie pointed out that existing agencies including the Friends of Guys Marsh carry out similar work and that it would be important not to duplicate.</p>	

	<p>Graham Rains said that volunteering opportunities could be provided on the Trailway if the offenders were properly supervised.</p> <p>Mark Williams of TREADS said he felt the scheme would be a good idea, and Barrie Cooper felt the effectiveness of the scheme would depend on the offender, as some would need more time and supervision.</p>	Scott
<p>9. Presentation from the DT11 Green Group</p>	<p>Carrie Lewis introduced the project and presenters / members of the group.</p> <p>The Transition Town movement - Paul McIntosh</p> <p>Paul McIntosh presented an overview of this international movement. Amongst the key points made were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Transition initiative is a community-led response to the pressures of climate change, fossil fuel depletion and economic contraction • Initiatives in Dorset include those in Sturminster, Shaftesbury and Gillingham • The concept of peak oil refers to the end of cheap, plentiful oil and the need to plan for 'power down' of the systems of food, energy, transport etc which rely heavily on oil • There are four levels of energy descent: global, national, community and personal. The Transition movement works at the community level • Transition initiatives can cover a village, town, wider area or even a county, like Somerset which has become a transition county, with endorsement from the County Council • The DT11 Community Strategy acknowledges that there is a need 'to create a DT11-wide carbon neutral lifestyle, based around the Transition Towns etc....' Other relevant actions identified include the commitment to supporting 'the development of schemes to reduce or generate energy which benefit the local community and encourage greater energy efficiency in business and by local residents' • The concepts of Transition, resilience, peak oil, localism, re-skilling, and 'energy descent planning' all fit with DT11's aim of creating 'a thriving, vibrant and environmentally sustainable future for the town and villages of the DT11 area set in accessible and well-managed countryside.' • Activities co-ordinated by transition initiatives elsewhere have included skill sharing, films and discussions, local currencies, planting, energy saving advice 	

<p>Paul McIntosh suggested that DT11 members should consider whether the Transition principles could be adopted by the DT11 Forum to meet its aim, and whether the DT11 area could become a transition area.</p> <p>Graham Rains pointed out that the Trailway provides a sustainable transport route, and said they would like to know of any additional funding for it.</p> <p>Scott asked Esme Butler what Blandford Town Council's position was on the idea of becoming a transition town or area, but she said it had not been discussed yet.</p> <p>Business plan - Sara Loch</p> <p>Sara Loch presented the Green Group's business plan (which had been circulated beforehand). She pointed out that the group is there to facilitate the movement towards Transition, and that more groups and individuals need to be involved.</p> <p>One of the main projects for the group is Green Week which will take place between 3 and 8 July and is set to be bigger and better than last year. The group is already getting considerable publicity through the Blackmore Vale magazine, which is publicising 12 monthly actions/events that the group is co-ordinating this year. The actions themselves will help to publicise green week - in particular a big Dorset Wildlife Trust event due to take place in June in Blandford.</p> <p>Sara asked for people to come forward to get involved, and to take photos of events, and requested that information about the monthly events is put on DT11's website.</p> <p>The South West Foundation is awarding £500 for the project to go towards publicity costs and the setting up of a DT11 wide green network and other grant applications are being made.</p> <p>12 monthly steps - Geoff Jones</p> <p>Geoff Jones explained that the green group is not organising these monthly activities but is providing an extra mouthpiece for events and activities that are being put on by other organisations, such as Fairtrade Fortnight this month.</p> <p>In October, there are plans to hold a public meeting to consider a greener future for the DT11 Forum, which could be the beginning of a transition movement for the DT11 area.</p> <p>Geoff works in environmental education at Holton Lee, and has a business called Cinnabar Eco Creative.</p> <p>It was pointed out that POPP is holding a 'make do and mend' activity which could be linked.</p> <p>Scott thanked the presenters and suggested that everyone should consider the impact of their own actions.</p>	<p>Hannah to add information about monthly events to DT11 website</p>
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<p>10. Any other business/Questions from the floor</p>	<p>A meeting is to be held on 9 February on proposed changes to parking arrangements in Blandford, and DT11 has been invited to take part. Peter Slocombe plans to attend but will arrive late, so volunteers were asked for. Haydn White said he would be there, and Steve Adamson offered to go, and represent the DT11 Forum.</p> <p>Scott said that he hopes members will consider taking on officer posts at the DT11 Forum's AGM on 6 April.</p> <p>Bob Brannigan encouraged people to take part in PACT (Partners and Communities Together). The next meeting is on 8 April at Woodhouse Gardens.</p> <p>He also pointed out that Blandford Camp has been carrying out work which fits with the green group's aims. They signed up to the 10:10 energy reduction initiative, have continued with their efforts, and have a dedicated energy officer. Up to 10 November they made a 15.5% save in energy use, and an 11.2% reduction in carbon levels. They have a comprehensive system for monitoring energy use.</p> <p>Scott encouraged anyone with suggestions for future presentations or discussion topics to let Hannah or Pauline know.</p>	
<p>11. Date of next meeting</p>	<p>Wednesday 6 April - AGM at Iwerne Minster Village Club</p>	