

LAKES NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Summary of meeting held on 22nd June 2009 at the Kelsick Centre, St. Mary's Lane, Ambleside

Donald Cook kindly agreed to chair the meeting, welcomed everyone to the Forum and introduced the new County Councillor for the Lakes, David Earnshaw. David assured people that he will work for the benefit of the Lakes community and that one of his first priorities will be highways.

WATERHEAD ENHANCEMENT SCHEME

Francesca Moore explained that she represented the team of consultants employed by South Lakeland District Council and partners to develop new ideas for improving Waterhead.

Francesca suggested the original consultation did not consult sufficiently with residents, whereas the new consultation aims to consult fairly and democratically with residents, businesses, visitors, schools, organisations etc. She gave details of planned events looking at the local economy and tourism: and transport mobility and parking, stressing that the views of local people are extremely important. An event looking at the environment and public realm was held previously.

The criteria for the consultation will include:-

- Design improvements
- Enhancement of public space
- Residents, businesses and visitors
- Need based (is change needed?)
- Achieving a consensus

Francesca explained that three plans will be designed based on ideas put forward. The community will then be asked to comment on them in August/September and to select the preferred ideas. There will be an independent analysis of the comments and a final design will be exhibited in Ambleside and Waterhead in September/October. The final selection will be made by the Steering Group on the recommendations of the consultants.

David Vatcher suggested that the intention of the workshops is to produce three separate plans – one with minimum change, one with full pedestrianisation and one mid-way, although the specific content is not yet known. Jayne Kendall, SLDC's Regeneration Programme Manager, confirmed there will be three options, but what people get will be what they want. Francesca confirmed that whatever is chosen needs to be appropriate to Waterhead.

Concerns over funding were raised, including the suggested increase in private investment to £10m. Councillor Earnshaw queried whether this figure heralded major developments? Jayne confirmed that the North West Development Agency (NWDA) asked for match funding and said that this figure was not necessarily new developments, but improvements to what was already there. It was suggested that the NWDA is only interested in 'transformational' projects and that it would be wise to check in principle with the NWDA what it would be prepared to fund before going further. Jayne confirmed this had already been raised with the NWDA, which is part of the Steering Group. She confirmed funding would have to be applied for, but hoped most would come from the NWDA, though other funding pots are available.

It was requested that updates and information on the scheme be circulated by other means, as well as by the internet.

UPDATES

Wordsworth Trust

Geoff Cowton, Curator of the Wordsworth Trust, extended an invitation to any group in the Lakes Parish to visit the Jerwood Centre free of charge. He said the Centre holds 90% of Wordsworth's papers as well as an impressive art collection and they may even offer a free cup of tea! Contact Geoff on 015394 35544 to arrange.

Lakes Parish Council

Leslie Johnson explained that parish councils are the oldest form of grass roots democracy in this country. There are 270 Parish Councils in Cumbria, all elected. The Lakes Parish covers 52 square miles and its councillors are totally unpaid and un-party political. The Lakes Parish Council has a professional clerk and is recognised as a pro-active council, though Leslie suggested, "it's the best!"

Post Office Services in Langdale

The Post Office has been working to create a hosted outreach service at the Village Hall in Chapel Stile. This will be open Monday and Friday mornings.

DIARY DATE



The next Lakes Neighbourhood Forum will be held at Troutbeck Institute, 7pm on Monday 21st September.

All welcome

THE NEW 'WORLD OF PLANTS' DEVELOPMENT AT HAYES GARDENWORLD

Richard Hayes explained that at one time Hayes Gardenworld was one of the premier garden centres in the country, but is now very dated. Since the speed limit on Windermere was introduced, the garden centre has seen a decrease in footfall and plans for a drastic change to the image of the garden centre have been in the pipeline for three years. The Lake District National Park Authority asked for a design with 'WOW' factor and planning permission has now been granted for a major development which will take about 3 years to complete.

Richard explained that the business is very susceptible to the elements and a lot of the development is planned to bring the outside in, though plans for a new outdoor eating area will provide seating for about 160. Plans also include a pets section with 164 tropical fish tanks and 68 marine tanks, rabbits, guinea pigs etc.; a tunnelled walkway around the extremities of the garden centre and a secondary external eating area.

The last phase of the development will create an open skies greenhouse to bring as much of the operation under cover as possible. The plans include a water harvesting system and fully insulated tunnels to reduce energy costs and existing building material will be crushed on site to form hard core for the car park extension. Richard confirmed there are no changes planned to the north entrance, but the wall height will be reduced by 3' on the south car park. Local contractors are being used throughout the development which will also have its own electricity substation.

In response to queries, Richard confirmed roofs will be glass or steel grey and explained why a grass roof was not really a consideration. Comments were passed about the 'chairs', some favourable, some not!

OTHER ISSUES

A request was made that the Forum invite Bob Cartwright back to give an update on plans for Brockhole. Leslie Johnson said the Lakes Parish Council has met with Adam Thomas and suggested that he be invited to speak at the next Forum in Ambleside. See the LDNPA website: www.lake-district.gov.uk for updates on Brockhole.

Concerns were raised over the number of A boards appearing in Ambleside and tables and chairs on public realm property. Leslie Johnson added that the Parish Council is also very concerned about this. Concerns were also raised over the state of the Ambleside – Skelwith road – Councillor Earnshaw undertook to take this up as a matter of urgency and will do his utmost to get a fairer distribution of highway funding for South Lakeland. Also causing concern is the chaotic situation caused by service digging up of roads, especially in the summer.

FEEDBACK FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS AND UPDATES ON LOCAL PROJECTS

Allotments in Ambleside

Jane Durant explained that arising out of a Go Green event organised by Ambleside Climate Change Forum in conjunction with the University of Cumbria, a lot of interest was expressed in allotments in Ambleside. She has since spoken to Michael Johnson, Clerk to Lakes Parish Council, to inform him of this interest and said she would be grateful for any support or help anyone could offer.

(Richard Hayes mentioned an 86% increase in sales of 'grow your own' this season at Hayes Gardenworld).

Chris Jamieson, Environmental Officer of the Students Union at the University of Cumbria Ambleside Campus, said one of the University's community outreach projects was to provide a carton recycling cage for both student and community use and another was to look into the possible use for allotments of a piece of waste land by the Armit Museum.

Leslie Johnson added that it was a statutory duty of Parish Councils' to find appropriate allotment sites if there is sufficient demand.

Richard Hayes offered some unused land for allotments at the garden centre. He will check this with the planning authority and get back to the Parish Council.

Lake District National Park Authority

Steve Gaskell, Park Ranger, explained the area he covers and said that he had been working with farmers and Natural England drawing up cultivation plans and working out what grants are available for conservation. He provided an update on work to eradicate Himalayan Balsam and the Fix the Fells project.

Steve showed the new 'Miles without Stiles' booklet detailing 39 routes for buggies, wheelchairs, people with limited mobility etc. and said this was now available in all good bookshops! He also urged people to check the new website for the Park Authority and possibly win goods to the value of £150.

Steve then responded to concerns over trees blocking the view of the lake at Waterhead car park; gates and fencing on Stoney Lane and balsam in Greenbank beck.

You can contact Steve on 01539 724555.

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

6 July – judging of Cumbria in Bloom

24 – 26 July - Ambleside Flower & Craft Show