

North Tyne and Redesdale Community Partnership Annual Report 2010 - 2011

Trustees

Year Ending 31st August 2011

Peter Loyd Esq	President
Mr Phil Biggs	Chairman
Mr Ken Irving	Vice Chairman (resigned during 2011)
Mr Pete Saunders	Treasurer, Corsenside Parish Council
Cllr John Riddle	NCC & Chairman of NNPA
Dr Ian Roberts	WEA, Upper Redesdale resident
Revd Dr Dagmar Winter	Bishop's advisor – Rural Affairs & Kirkwelpington resident
Mrs Vicky Crofton	Bellingham resident
Cllr Frank Mattinson	Bellingham Parish Council
Mrs Christine Bragg	Bellingham resident

Officers

Year Ending 31st August 2011

Rachel Pearson	Partnership Officer, Tel. 01434 220714, rachelpearson@ntandrcp.org.uk
Lesley Allen	Partnership Officer (Until June 2011)
Claire Brookbanks	Administration Assistant (Contract ended, March 2011)

Bankers	Co-operative Bank
Auditors	Heritage Accountancy, Station Yard, Bellingham
Charity Number	1140932
Company Number	7348393

Chairman's Report 2010-2011

This has been a challenging year for the Partnership. As with many community organisations, the impact of cuts in public sector spending and increased competition from other sources has had a significant impact on our financial security.

I am happy to report that the Partnership has risen to the challenges it has faced and as a result has emerged a stronger and more focused organisation.

Funding for the employability programme which supported people back to work came to an end on 31st March, and with it the end of the fixed term contract for Administrative Assistant Claire Brookbanks. The programme enabled us to support a number of local residents taking the first tentative steps to self employment, to pay for training courses for others to enable them to achieve employment related qualifications, and for others help with job searches and writing or improving their CV's. The replacement programme is now being administered by the County Council with the nearest help point in Hexham, so the Partnership has taken the decision to continue to provide support

from our Bellingham base so far as we are able without the benefit of funding. As other sources of funding also came to an end Trustees took some difficult decisions to safeguard the future of the Partnership and its work in the communities. Redundancy notices were issued to both Partnership Officers, and by mutual agreement Lesley Allan left a month earlier than planned which enabled us to extend the period of notice to Rachel Pearson.

With reduced officer time and availability, Trustees have covered the shortfall by manning the office, representing and promoting the Partnership at meetings, and supporting clients.

I am happy to report that during this time we have also undertaken a radical review of our Business Plan and our methods of operating. This review is based on the results of a survey we made earlier in the year and is not a knee-jerk reaction to the financial situation. Our new approach is rooted in the aims and objectives of the Partnership. Actions are now focused where need is clearly established, providing support for our older residents and young people, particularly in the more isolated communities, as well as supporting measures to boost the local economy and encourage tourism.

Since its inauguration in the 1990's The Partnership has supplemented the rôle of our Parish Council's and its charitable status affords opportunities to apply and secure funding for projects that may not be open to Parish Council's. At the same time we have forged partnerships with many other local organisations such as the Northumberland National Park and the Army Cadets. We intend to continue this work so that on a regular basis we will:

- Continue to provide an affordable printing resource for small scale printing work and copying for residents and community organisations
- Provide advice and information for community organisations and groups from setting up appropriate constitutions or terms of reference as well as advice about funding sources and fund raising
- Provide a facility for Northumberland Business Services Ltd. (NBSL) to support residents taking the first steps to business set up or self employment
- Directly support those seeking employment with links to Job Centre Plus and Work Clubs
- Ensure that the Station House complex offers affordable rented office accommodation. The Partnership is also landlord to the Heritage Centre
- Manage the Drop in Centre, providing free Youth Club facilities and accommodation for the Army Cadet Force. We also fund the day to day costs associated with the heating, maintenance and general upkeep of the building
- Facilitate a regular coffee morning meeting for older residents in the Tarsset area and the luncheon club for over 60's in Bellingham.

In addition this year we have:

- Provided Map Reference Cards to enable quick and easy location for the emergency services. This has been very much appreciated by residents in the more isolated areas of the Partnership.
- Provided a Rural Isolation Survey which has been undertaken and a report collated. The survey highlights the impact and problems of living in remote areas, particularly in relation to the cost and time associated with travelling both for work, education, training and social and community events. It has also highlighted the difficulties business and families experience with poor

connectivity.

The report has been used to inform the County Council's programme in funding improved Broadband services and speeds in rural areas. It has also been used by the Partnership to apply for and secure funding to help resolve some of the problems identified through training and skills exchange

- Delivered the quarterly edition of the North Tyne Good Rede which is distributed to residents of Bellingham and Corsenside.

The Partnership has also taken the initiative, working with partner organisations, to introduce and manage a major new cycling event to the area, The Bellingham Blast. This is aimed at attracting cyclists and families to visit this beautiful part of Northumberland and take part in an exciting and healthy activity.

Our first Blast in September was a great success and will now become an annual event with numbers expected to increase each year which should provide a real boost to the local economy. With the help of Northumberland National Parks, 5 new cycling leaflets have also been researched and produced to encourage visitors throughout the year. We have also updated our Website which is now more accessible and user friendly. It has also been designed to accommodate and showcase information relating to other community organisations in the area.

The Over 60's Christmas Party has been an annual event in Bellingham for many years. The Partnership has overseen it for the past two years; finding funding as well as volunteering. This year the event was held at the Golf Club with a full, two course Christmas dinner, entertainment and presents. Numbers have nearly trebled from the previous year. Many thanks to all those businesses that donated the ingredients, venue and presents, and to all those who volunteered to make this event a success.

Finally a word of thanks for those involved in delivering this challenging programme.

As stated earlier, during the year we lost two employees; Lesley Allen, our Partnership Officer who had worked for the Partnership with such commitment since its inception and Claire Brookbanks, our Admin Assistant who only worked for us for a short time but had such a positive impact on all she had contact with.

Last but not least Ken Irving one of the Partnerships founding Trustees who left due to other commitments. Ken will be missed and I thank him for his commitment and support to me, the Partnership and the community over many years.

I would also like to thank our Trustees for their time and commitment over this difficult year and for putting in so much more time and effort than any of us would have expected to be necessary. It has however reaped dividends and we are all much more involved and informed than had previously been the case.

Also thanks to Rachel Pearson our Partnership Officer who has worked tirelessly to deliver services, for her support to the trustees and the unusual working arrangements and for securing the funding needed to maintain and develop the service we provide to the communities.

I would also like to express our thanks to the many partner organisations we have worked with throughout the year. Northumberland National Park Authority who have supported projects both in terms of funding and sharing experience and expertise. Particular mention and thanks must go to Colin Earnshaw, Community Enterprise Officer and Richard Austin, Funding and Climate Change Officer. The Federation of Northumberland Development Trusts, our membership has provided networking opportunities, contacts and information to help us to better manage our

organisation.

Chris Beety CEO of Community Ventures Ltd. (CVL) who has acted as a critical friend in reviewing our action plan and our approach to projects and funders. The Forestry Commission and Alex McClennan for the initial approach in relation to the Bellingham Blast and his commitment to making it such a successful event. Chris Gillies from Heritage Accountancy for auditing our accounts and giving advice over the year. We now look forward positively to 2012 and beyond and to the exciting challenges ahead. Being a Trustee of the Partnership is interesting, and challenging. It does need commitment, but in terms of the satisfaction for a job well done that has a positive benefit to the communities it is extremely rewarding. We do have vacancies for Trustees, if you do have some time and a particular area of experience or expertise why not consider joining us?

Finally thanks go to you, the community. I feel very proud to have worked with and for such a great bunch of people.

Phil Biggs, Chairman

North Tyne and Redesdale Community Partnership

The Partnership is supported by a Partnership Officer. The Partnership Office is based in Bellingham in the Station House, which is now owned by the Partnership, and provides office accommodation at affordable rents to small local businesses. The Partnership is also landlord to Bellingham Heritage Centre and the old Magistrate's Court now the Drop In Centre which provides a facility for youth groups including the Army Cadet Force and Youth Clubs. The Partnership covers a very rural and sparsely dispersed community. 0.22 persons per ha. compared with 3.77 for England. The partnership supports small and isolated communities as far north as Kielder the most remote village in England, 20 miles north of Bellingham.

The Workplan

In response to reduced officer hours in 2011 the Trustees agreed to focus initially on the following three objectives: tackling rural isolation, expanding provision for the elderly and developing projects which support and benefit young people as well as encouraging tourism and where possible improving access to training and work opportunities.

Rural Isolation Survey

In the winter of 2010/11 the Partnership carried out a survey of rural isolation in the outlying areas of the partnership. The information gathered has enabled us to build up a detailed picture of rural isolation that will assist the Partnership and the Parish Councils in campaigning for better facilities for residents. The pilot area for this survey was Tasset and Greystead Parish.

The material gleaned from the survey has been supplemented with information taken from the County Council's InfoNet website, Northumberland National Park publications and also from a number of central government websites. The focus of the exercise was employment, transport and communications, including the provision of mobile phone and computer services and local initiatives in these areas. The survey helped to inform the Partnership of the current situation and to identify priorities for the next twelve months. These will include extending and refining the survey to provide more detailed information and help the Partnership to plan projects to bring tangible benefits to the

residents of the whole of the Partnership area. In addition we will be exploring partnership working with other bodies such as the Workers Educational Association who are already planning complimentary initiatives in this and other parts of rural Northumberland.

Improve access to training and work opportunities, and support business development

Rural Employability

The Partnership secured a grant from January 2010 to March 2011 through NCC to lead a Rural Employability project. The project was being overseen by Lymemouth Development Trust and carried out in partnership with Haltwistle Community Partnership. North Tyne and Redesdale Community Partnership was acting as an employability hub, offering a brokerage service for information, advice and guidance about jobs, self –employment, business start up and training which meets priority one. The aim of this project was to:-

- Secure work for unemployed and under employed people in rural areas
- Help people into self-employment
- Improve the skills of people in rural areas.

Information screens displaying this information were installed throughout the area. They were updated regularly with job vacancies, training and volunteering opportunities. Businesses could also advertise jobs, apprenticeship and training opportunities by contacting the Partnership Office.

This funding stream and programme came to an end in March 2011 and was replaced by the WorkPlan, a government initiative contracted to the private sector based on payment by results. The nearest work Plan contact for residents of the North Tyne and Redesdale is now Hexham. The Trustees have therefore taken the decision as funds allow to provide support where possible for unemployed residents. This includes access to internet and printing.

Work Club

In partnership with Sure Start Children’s Centre North Tynies and Northumberland County Council Adult learning, the North Tyne and Redesdale Partnership host a work club at Bellingham Fire station. This is held on the first Thursday of every month between 9:30 -11:30 am. The aim of the work club is to offer an opportunity for people who are out of work to come together to discuss shared experiences, problems and provide a support network. All three organisations recognise that unemployment can cause a detrimental impact on the wellbeing of individuals and families. By providing a platform for further networking, training and assistance the partnership organisations hope to assist members of our community back into the workforce.

Drop in service

Also in conjunction with Sure Start Children’s Centre North Tynies, Northumberland County Council Adult learning and in addition to the Work Club, support and advice is offered on different employment routes or training opportunities. This advice is tailored to the needs of individuals. Drop in sessions are provided at North Tyne Sure Start Childrens Centre at North Tynies in Bellingham 8-6 Mon-Fri, Adult Learning provides drop in sessions on Thursdays 10-12, 12.30 - 2.30pm at Bellingham middle School site.

The Partnership offers an evening session Wednesday 6-8pm.

Northumberland Business Services Ltd

Starting and developing local businesses

The Partnership has worked with NBSL to provide an outreach service for the local community. NBSL is a BIS approved Enterprise Agency and works to assist pre-start, new and existing business by providing information, advice and support on running and developing a business.

Pre-start service is delivered through our network of high-street Business Advice Centres which house dedicated staff to help you with the challenges you may face when starting up and running your business; at no cost to you provided you live in Northumberland. In addition to our high street locations we also offer our pre-start service at 'outreach' centres throughout Northumberland, of which the Station Yard was one (until September 2011).

Referrals between the NBSL for people considering self-employment and Job Centre +, for those looking for employment and the Partnership help to ensure that clients get the best possible service.

Encourage and support projects to benefit young people

North Tyne and Redesdale Community Partnership fund and maintain the Drop in Centre in Bellingham. This enables the Youth Service and the Army Cadets to have a base in the village.

Youth club report for Bell City Drop in 2012

Julie Hume

Since the youth service restructure of April 2011, activities in the area of the Haydon Bridge catchment area have continued more or less as before. Julie Humes continues to be the senior worker for the Haydon Bridge area, reporting directly to the area manager: Ashley Brown. Ashley has responsibility for local authority delivered youth work in the whole of the Tynedale area and both Julie and Ash report into Northumberland Youth Service, which is funded by Northumberland County Council.

The Bell City Youth Project continues each Tuesday and Thursday evening at the Drop In. Tuesdays are allocated to the 9-13 age range from Bellingham Middle School (although young people from nearby communities are also welcome) and large numbers of young people attend to take part in planned activities provided by youth workers Michael Turner and Suzanne Loughhead. Northumberland Youth Service employs 2 youth workers for one session of youth work for 13-19 year olds in Bellingham each week supported by Julie. This age range is the nominated age group by the government for publicly funded youth work.

Bell City Juniors

The junior night is funded by external sources, but the staff and project still receive ongoing support from Julie who continues the quest for funding for the sustainability of

the juniors sessions. We are supported presently by a benefactor who lives in Slaley and likes to help young people in the Tynedale area.

Sessions include quiz nights, music nights, cookery and food tasting (with blindfolds) to see if the young people can identify different tastes and textures. In December, all the young people went to the Life Centre for an Ice Skating Party as their Christmas treat. This was a joint party with other youth groups in the Haydon Bridge catchment and 100 young people were in attendance.

The young people's behaviour was a credit to the community, so well behaved and respectful. The staff at the Life Centre were very complementary about our group and said they always look forward to bookings from our area!

Plans for a visit to the Hexham Bowling Alley are underway and a graffiti artist will work with the young people at the Drop In to plan a design for the walls. Providing permission is granted, the young people would like to paint the kitchen wall with a carefully planned design; otherwise the artwork will be placed on boards and placed on the wall that is currently disfigured by random graffiti. This project is planned to take place at Easter and ideas for the wall will include honouring our benefactor Joe Carroll, and also refer to the Jubilee and/or Olympics. The young people will have the final say.

Bell City Seniors

Numbers for senior nights in the 13-19 age group held on Thursdays are dropping, due to the age of the existing members. Until quite recently, we had 20 young people attending from the 13-19 age group, but now aged 17 and above, most are driving - and tend not to need the drop in as they once did. However, they are always popping in and out to get advice and sometimes just to say hello to Michael, Suzanne and Emma (Watson) plan to tackle this issue with a recruitment drive for more members in this age group and if a demographic search on the area illustrates a drop in numbers, then the extra night will be offered to the Tuesday members, who will then benefit from two sessions a week. After all, these young people will soon fall into the 13-19 age groups before we know it!

Thank you!

We would like to express our ongoing thanks to the community of Bellingham, to the family of Joe Carroll and the Partnership Trustees on behalf of us all, Julie, Michael, Emma, Suzanne and all the young people of Bellingham - for the use of the wonderful facility that is the Bell City Drop In.

Army Cadets

The Army Cadet Force is now well established in Bellingham. The group have a core membership of 17 members and have taken part in 3 weekend camps and a two week summer camp. The group have also successfully won awards competing in shooting and cross country competitions.

Since the detachment opened they have been involved in one major project in Bellingham at the local Chapel. After visiting the Chapel on Remembrance Day 2010

and laying a wreath on behalf of the Army Cadet Force. The chapel was in a state of disrepair and in need of some serious tender loving care. Over the last year the force have committed over 100 hours of community service to the chapel, by way of sweeping floor, cleaning the pews and floor mats. Also cleaning the windows, doors and door frames.

The cadets have also been involved in the parish area helping at various community fairs and litter picking on the local training area.

Encourage and support projects that expand provision for the elderly

Over Fifties Club, Bellingham

This lunch club has been going for many years. It has been run in association with Bellingham Community Middle School, who have provided the lunches and the room for activities. The lunch club has been held every week during term time. Transport was provided by local volunteers for those who need it. It provided another avenue for regular social contact. Due to reduced staffing hours this club was temporarily suspended in August 2011. The Partnership plans to resume this service in 2012. The lunch club will be revamped, in response to surveys with more varied activities.

Tarset Social Club

The Partnership took on the role of coordinating this club. It is held on the first Wednesday of every month. It is open to any resident of the Parish or any visiting relatives. As many less able residents move out of the area, it also provides an opportunity for people who have left to see old friends. Refreshments are available.

Over 60's Christmas Party

This party has been held in Bellingham Town Hall for many years. It provides a social occasion for many elderly people in the parish, who may not otherwise have a festive Christmas. There are refreshments, entertainment and presents for all, as well as transport to and from the event provided by local volunteers. For the last two years the coordination of this event was taken on by the Partnership. Financial support was received from Bellingham Parish Council and a fund raising race evening organised and shared with Bellingham In Bloom.

The Partnership was fortunate to gain the support of the Bellingham Golf Club so that it was possible to hold the event at the Club where there were excellent facilities to cook and serve a meal to over 80 people as well as to provide entertainment and bar facilities for the guests.

In addition to this support the Partnership is also grateful to the following businesses and organisations:- Waitrose, Tesco, Marks and Spencers, Iceland, North Tynies, Bellingham News, Co-op, Arnups, North Tyne Veg, George Jennings Veg Merchant, New Horizons, Hugh Thompson, Cheviot Hotel, Black Bull, Town Hall and Bellingham Chemists for donations of ingredients, presents and loaning furniture and crockery. The Trustees are also grateful to the members of the local community who gave up their time to come and help with all the cooking, serving setting up and clearing during this memorable and happy event.

Future plans

When the Partnership carried out a Rural Isolation survey (January 2011) provision for the elderly was identified as a priority by the residents of the Partnership area. The area has a significant ageing population with 36% over 60 and 12% over 80 years. The community has double the number of all pensioner households compared with the rest of Northumberland. The area suffers from major fuel poverty. Much of the area has little or no public transport provision. Kielder only has three buses a week to Bellingham, a distance 20 miles, a daytime service. North of Otterburn, there are only two buses a day to Newcastle (35 miles) on weekdays and Saturday's. Buses between Bellingham and Hexham (17 miles), the nearest town cease at 6.30pm.

All these factors limit the opportunity to participate fully in the community. Rural isolation limits social inclusion, access to services and other opportunities. Enabling elderly residents to participate in a variety of activities will strengthen community bonds, and improve mental and physical wellbeing of the participants.

In response to this the Partnership has secured funding from the Triangle Trust to provide transport for the elderly in the area. This can be transport to classes, social events or trips – whatever the local community wish to participate in.

Skills Exchange

This pilot project fits in with several of our main objectives; tackling rural isolation, expanding provision for the elderly and expanding provisions for the youth of the area. We have received support from Awards for All; one of the Big Lottery funding streams. Our project is to develop a skills exchange within the isolated communities of the North Tyne and Rede valleys. This will enable independence and choice for the community in the following ways:-

- Strengthen inter generational mix and mutual respect in the rural communities
- Keep older residents active and involved within communities
- Give both young and old a sense of value and worth
- Provide skill exchange locally, within the community, increasing access and reducing travel times and costs
- Give young people a sense of responsibility and presence within the community
- Improve access to information and connectivity within the community
- Furnish both generations with social and employment life skills that will enable them to participate fully in their local communities and in the wider world
- Increase opportunity for young and elderly to choose to remain in traditional communities.

The Partnership will identify skills that the local community wish to develop and find local champions who are willing to share these skills. Traditional crafts and knowledge will be retained, as well as giving people the opportunity to learn new technologies. The skills exchange will empower the community to learn in a sociable, safe environment.

Become a more or self-sustaining organisation

The Partnership owns the Station House, Station Yard and the Heritage Centre. The

rental income received from the Heritage Centre and offices within the Station House provides the organisation with 10% of its earned income.

The Trustees are pleased to announce that during the year we have been able to provide office accommodation for an additional business in Station House on the form of Heritage Accountancy. We have also supported the latest project undertaken by the Trustees of the Heritage Centre – installation of two railway carriages in front of the former railway platform in Station Yard. The carriages will add to the range of exhibits provided by the Centre and will also contain a tea room that will add to the provision of facilities for tourists to the village and help create Bellingham as a destination to be visited rather than a place through which people pass.

The Partnership provides a printing service to the community which generates a small income. This service is available to businesses and individuals in the area and provides good quality printing in small batches.

Membership of Fondt

The Partnership is a member of the Federation of Northumberland Development Trusts, 24 Community based trusts in rural and urban communities throughout Northumberland. Although a member for some years, this year we have taken a more active role, and this has provided networking opportunities with other trusts and information and advice to enable us to be more aware of local and central government plans and to secure support and advice when needed.

Through Fondt we were introduced to CVL (Community Ventures Ltd), a successful community organisation based in Middlesborough. They have worked with us as a critical friend to review our business plan and advise on becoming a more sustainable organisation. This collaboration has enabled us to be much more focused and successful with funding applications.

Future Plans

The Partnership has been successful in securing funding for the post of Partnership Officer for the next two years from the Lloyds TSB Foundation. This will enable the Partnership to maintain and extend its services and in addition to enable the Partnership to use its earned income to provide increased, improved services for the young and provide transport to enable both young and older residents to take part in and benefit from the services and activities.

The Partnership intends to develop a calendar of events throughout the year. These events will encourage tourism and economic development, as well as provide opportunities for the local community to enjoy more social events.

Support Local Businesses and encourage Tourism

Bellingham Blast

In partnership with the Forestry Commission, British Cycling, Northumberland National Parks the Partnership coordinated the inaugural Bellingham Blast in 2011. The event is designed to appeal to all cyclists from the more experienced to leisure cyclists, attracting people to the area and promoting cycling. The Bellingham Blast consists of one route of over 61 miles of contrasting road surface from tarmac road, Kielder's Lakeside Way

through to forest logging roads taking in stunning scenery. The second day is a family event with a shorter, less gruelling route.

The Partnership is involved in identifying and securing funding as well as coordinating the event.

The Partnership also provides support for the website www.bellinghamblast.com and the promotion of the event through social media.

Future Plans

The Bellingham Blast will become an annual event, attracting visitors to the area and generating income for service providers in the local area.

A Guide to Bellingham

Churches Together have produced this guide to the services, amenities and community activities available to residents in the locality. It is aimed at people who have recently moved to the area but there has been a wide take up by both visitors and existing residents too. The Partnership assists in keeping this guide up to date and the short run printing facility at the Partnership enables Churches Together to only print enough for their requirements. The guide is also available online and can be downloaded from the Partnership website. www.ntandrcp.org.uk

Business Plan Review and Monitoring

The progress towards actions identified in the work plan against each objective have been monitored on an ongoing basis with a report on each objective presented to Trustees at monthly meetings. This has allowed the Trustees to properly evaluate and review progress against objectives and revise targets as necessary.

With the help of CVL acting as critical friend and funding restrictions, Trustees reviewed the Business Plan in the summer of 2011, as reported earlier. They agreed to concentrate on fewer main activities and focus on areas where the Partnership can make significant impact.

This approach has enabled the Partnership to secure funding to support those objectives and 2012 will see the implementation of these plans. The Partnership will also be looking at innovative ways of generating income for the benefit of the community.