

**Distington Big Local**  
**Distington Community Centre, Church Road, Distington CA14 5TE**



**Distington Big Local Ltd /Partnership Board Meeting**  
**Tuesday 12 December 2019, at 5pm**  
**Distington Community Centre**

**Present:** Rhoda Robinson (Chair), Julia Powley, Norma Pritt, Josephine Greggain, Annette Whitehead, Karen Hodgson, Sue Hunter, Elaine Ismay, Margaret Hildrop, Paula Speight, Jean Skelly, Vic Askew, Ingrid Morris

**Apologies:** Pete Duncan, Lindsay Bodman, Alison Boyd, Alan Hunter, Joy Jones

**Not Present :** Jason Scott

**218.19 Welcome** The Chair welcomed everybody, especially new members: Antoni Logan, Jean Skelly, Paula Speight

**219.19 Conflict of Interests** Karen Hodgson, Paula Speight CASC funding request

**220.19 Minutes of Augusts' Meeting and the AGM** Were passed as a true record

**221.09 Date & time of next Board Meeting** Wednesday 19 February 2020 at 12 noon

**222.19 Treasurer's Report** JP talked through the reports, which run from April 2019 to date. We recently submitted a spend report to Local Trust for the £50k contingency money for the land development.

**223.19 Next Plan, Review & End of Programme Vision** Costed Vision – to include what we want to have achieved with the money, and whether this is different from our first plan. We must evidence need for the spend which is to be costed on total amount left. The costed vision can be updated every time we submit a new Action Plan. The Action Plan needs to be more detailed than in the past and should include: 'what we will do, how we will work, who will be involved, what resources will be needed and how these will be used'. Community involvement and buy-in must be evidenced, along with what the community's needs & opportunities are. It must relate to the Big Local outcomes and show how it will bring about lasting change. Plans can be for how ever many years we want, up to March 2026. (our current one is a 2 year plan, ending in March 2020.) Legacy Statement outlining the impact we will have had, what remains once funding has ended, what will it mean for Distington's future. Do we wish to continue in some form in the future and if so how will we achieve this? The board will meet on 30 January 2020 to work on the above.

**224.19 Company Structure** We are being advised by lawyers with a specialism in community led housing on the best legal structure for us moving forward in our work. This is necessary due to the complexities of the land development project. It may be that we need to change our legal structure. JP, SH & IM are meeting on 12/12/19 to discuss the outcome of the report.

**225.19 CASC Funding Request** Distington Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) are carrying out major renovation works to their club. They have drawn up a Facility Improvement Project Plan, and still need £19k of funding, without which some of the other funding will not be released. Approximately £7k of this is contingency funding. DBL have agreed to fund them the £19k as the

work is much needed to modernise the club. It was agreed to first release £12k followed by up to £6,998 for contingency if needed. Credit to CASC, as they have worked hard to get funding in from different sources for their project.

**226.19 Land Development** The following reports are in the process of being done : Drainage Strategy, Transport Assessment, Ground Investigation Report. The planning Pre Application has been done and as a result HLP are tweaking their design to address issues raised. A 'Red Book' valuation that inform rent levels and values of the proposed properties has been completed. These figures will help our consultant to carry out viability studies of the scheme. Elliott's will also appoint Structural Engineers and Mechanical and Electrical Engineers, these are needed by the design team.

Access Road & Leasehold The Land Agents' solicitors and Milburn's are still working on this. We are essentially being gifted the land. The solicitors' fees, which DBL will pay are in the region of £4,350 inc VAT.

We held an Open Day on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2 – 7 pm for people to come and see the plans. HLP brought drawings and models of the scheme and talked people through any queries they had. Board members were also on hand to answer any question. 15 people attended the event and feedback on the design was very positive.

SH & IM gave a presentation at the North East Community Led Housing Conference on 25 November. One of the organisations attending, *Power To Change*, said they may be able to help fund our project due to its innovative design. Several Registered Providers were also at the event, As was a worker from Gateshead Big Local. Gateshead are keen to visit Distington to see the site and talk to us about land development, as they are also looking at a doing housing project.

Partnering with a Registered Provider We are hoping to interview potential RP's on 9<sup>th</sup> January. This is being led by DS. SH, RR & IM will be on the interview panel.

Social housing and shared ownership were discussed. The aim is that some properties will be for shared ownership and others for social rent. DBL's aim from the outset has been to provide affordable homes and the funding we have received for this project is for just that. The financial viability of the scheme very much determines the mix of shared ownership and rental.

**227.19 Village Maintenance** RH advises that the Hinnings Rd bus stop continues to be used as a bin and toilet and that the extent of it is getting worse. We put a sign up saying that unless this stops, the seat will to be removed. The sign was pulled off and peed on, things haven't improved. The board decided to remove the seat. **Action: RH to implement.**

RH is having to limit his number of visits to the Workington tip and is looking into the possibility of using the landfill site in Lillyhall for litter collected etc. The clearing up of fly tipping is the responsibility of the council. **Action: RH & IM to set up meeting with Lillyhall site**, RR said she could attend meeting if needed due to staff being off.

The 2 year agreement that DBL had with Grassroad Sharks (GRS) for maintaining the football pitch came to an end on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2019. GRS were provided with the use of the Kubota mower to cut the grass, it was agreed that RH would cut the grass when needed to ensure the pitch was looked after as best as possible. GRS did not make use of the mower & it was left to RH to cut the pitch. The board voted that in future DBL would charge for the cutting of the grass. It will work out at about £20 per cut, or it may take longer and cost more if it is not done regularly. This is in line with what we do for the rugby club.

**228.17 Computer in the Library** The Raspberry Pi part has disappeared meaning it no longer works. We will try and get another one through Cumbria Exchange, and add that to the System IT contract to get a computer up and running again in the library. We may also need a booster for the wifi router to reach it from the office. Associated costs for this were agreed by the board.

**229.19 Men's Group** Attendance to this has increased. Some men who used to go to *Men in Sheds* that was run by Age UK in Distington (and moved to Workington) now attend our Men's Group. They are keen to get the woodworking up and running again. This will first need to be risk assessed and run past our insurers. We had a contact at Mirehouse *Men in Sheds* who was going to help with this but he has not come forward. RR advised that a family member may be able to do it **Action RR** to follow up. Failing that JS & AL said they knew people who may be able to help.

**230.19 New Colouring Project** At the last Residents Wellbeing & Community group meeting it was decided to set up a colouring project to help combat loneliness. MH is happy to help out with this group. JP has colouring pencils that we can use. We are aiming for a start date of Monday 24 February from 1-3pm. VA will be back from maternity leave then. It was suggested that the group could also meet in the Chapel. Venue to be decided.

**231.19 Fareshare & Foodbank** With funding received from Cumbria Exchange, CAB have helped the group to provide hygiene bags. The toiletry bags (Shower gel, shampoo, deodorant, tooth brush) are predominantly for people in crisis, and as a rule, CAB will monitor eligibility for these, as unlike the Fareshare food, the group do not receive these each week, so the group has a limited supply of them. Kitchen bags (Washing up liquid, toilet roll, sponge) are also currently available as are sanitary products. From early 2020 the government are providing sanitary products for all schools and colleges. Due to this the 'Red Box' project in our area has donated their surplus stock of sanitary products to the Fareshare group, which is fantastic. The school holiday Foodbank bags will also be distributed before Christmas. CAB have arranged emergency food parcels for those in crisis to cover the Christmas period when Fareshare won't be operating. Jackie Bowman has donated surplus Christmas food parcels from the Good Neighbourhood scheme to the Distington Fareshare scheme. The Fareshare group are holding a Christmas party on Tuesday 17 December, their last session before Christmas. Everybody is welcome to come along.

**232.19 Newcastle Shopping Trip** DBL's Christmas shopping trip on 11 November to the Metro Centre was well received. Tickets were £5. The cost of the bus was £450, ticket sales came to £135 making the cost DBL £315. The Board agreed to run the project again next year with a weekday trip and a Saturday trip in November or December. Numbers will no doubt increase as word is spread by those who went on the trip this year.

**233.19 Christmas Community Event** This was held on Sunday 8 December with the tree lights being switched on at 5:30pm followed by drinks, mince pies and a visit from Santa at DCYP. There was Christmas music on the PA system and The Bait Cabin sold festive fare and mulled wine. The tree looks wonderful and lots of people braved the cold weather. Many thanks to all the volunteers without whom, this event would not be possible. The decorated window / front of house competition will be judged on Friday 13 December by four members of the community.

**234.19 History Pin Alternative** Local Trust has found an alternative organisation to work with and we are aiming to set up a visit with them sometime in the new year.

**235.19 DBL Grants** The following were awarded at the last panel meeting in October. Community Chest: Westhouse £300, Evergreens £130, Wednesday Coffee & Crack Co £100 in principle (they

need to get set up as a community group). Transport Grant: Fareshare Project £374. The next closing date for applications is 14 January 2020.

**236.19 Big Local Connects 13 & 14 September 2019** KH, EI & LB attended the event Nottingham. <https://localtrust.org.uk/big-local/events/big-local-connects-2019/> Travel to the event by train took a long time and some workshops were missed due to having to leave early to get back. KH reported that due to the event structure they were not able to mingle in the same way that they did last year. EI felt that the workshop on mental health was not what she expected but the food recipe one was very good and they had cook books on what you can make on a budget. It appears that no other Big Locals were doing big projects like our land development. The event was enjoyable, but , it was felt, in parts irrelevant.

**237.19 Afternoon Tea** The 'Lunch Club' ladies put on an Afternoon Tea on Wednesday 14 August 2019. As ever the food & tables were beautifully done. Money raised at the event was donated to the community centre for their extension.

**238.19 Citizens Advice** have submitted their latest report outlining the help and advice they have provided to Distington residents. Areas covered are disability benefits, means tested benefits, grants, warm home discounts and arrears following appeal hearings. They continue their fantastic work to help improve our resident's lives.

**239.19 Staffing** [REDACTED] VA returns from maternity leave on 18 February 2020. The office will be shut over the Christmas period from Friday 20 December – Thursday 2 January 2020.

**240.19 Any Other Business** SH will soon be moving out of the area but is committed to give her continuing support and time on the Land Development project which she heads up. The board agreed to pay travel costs and any associated costs incurred for attending meetings. We are very grateful to SH for her continued commitment to DBL and wish her all the best in her new home!

#### **Meeting Dates**

Young People & Families Group – Wednesday 26 February 2020, 6:30pm at DCYP  
Residents Wellbeing & Community Group – Tuesday 25 February 2020 at 11am  
Land Development Group – Thursday 9 January 2020, at 2pm  
The next Grants Panel meeting takes place on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020

**Date of next Big Local Plan Meeting : Thursday 30 January 2020 at 10:30 am in the Main Hall**  
**Date of next Board Meeting: Wednesday 19 February at 12 pm in the Mabel Knowles room**

**Wishing you all a very restful, merry festive season and a happy, healthy 2020!**