



**Distington Big Local Ltd /Partnership Board Meeting**

**Board Meeting held on Tuesday 16 June 2020 at 11 am, via Zoom**

**ATTENDEES:**

Rhoda Robinson (Chair) (RR), Ingrid Morris (IM), Sue Hunter (SH), Pete Duncan (PD), Alison Boyd (AB), Josephine Greggain (JG), Julia Powley (JP), Paula Speight (PS), Vic Askew (VA), Lindsay Bodman (LB) (Notes) NB: Norma Pritt (NP), Annette Whitehead (AW) and Karen Hodgson (KH) were unable to attend the meeting due to IT problems

**APOLOGIES**

Elaine Ismay and Jean Skelly

**291.20 RR welcomed everyone to the meeting.**

**292.20 Minutes of Previous Board Meeting**

The minutes of the Board Meeting on 28 April 2020 were accepted as a true record.

**293.20 Next Board Meeting**

The next Board meeting will be held on Tuesday 18 August 2020 at **10 am (VIA ZOOM)**.

**294.20 Treasurer's Report (JP)**

JP explained that the Profit and Loss shows a £51,000 loss. Not all the Homes England (HE) grant is shown here as we were paid some of the grant last financial year. We know what we are doing and have submitted our plan. Money going out is for spend we have already agreed to.

**295.20 Fareshare / Distington Action Against Hunger**

The team continues to work hard ensuring those in need in our community do not go hungry. The number of bags they are delivering has increased to about 100 per week which means at times they are struggling with the workload. Other community groups providing food in Copeland have reported a decrease in their delivery since lock down restrictions have started to ease, and some people are no longer in need of the food. It is worth noting that the group are also delivering to Pica & Gilgarran, which was not the case when they were only running the Fareshare scheme which is adding to increased deliveries. Both VA and IM have been working with the group to help them reduce the number of deliveries where the food is no longer needed.

On 9th June a note went into each food bag asking people to let them know if: a) They no longer need food & don't need help with shopping. b) They no longer need the food provided but do need help with shopping. c) They are struggling and continue to need the food that is being delivered. The message is clear that help with providing free food will continue to be available. The note was also posted on Distington's Action Against Hunger Facebook page. At the beginning of June, the group delivered 220 afternoon teas to residents. They continue to get extra food from Fareshare free of charge (to top up their paid for amount) and food from Morrisons and Tesco's. Due to concern about having enough supplies, they applied for funding (with help from DBL) from Copeland Community Fund and were awarded £800 in May. The team is made up of 8 -10 volunteers putting in a lot of hours and work to get food to the community, which is a fantastic effort. They continue to use the Community Centre to bag up the food for distribution. Left-over food

was also collected from Cockermouth Foodbank this week which has been used to top up Distington's store cupboard.

Foodbank – In the media today it was mentioned that free school meals would now be provided and will include secondary school pupils due to the campaigning by footballer Marcus Rashford. Everyone agreed that it was great news.

JP – Foodbanks are quieter now. To access a Foodbank, you need a voucher. In Distington the School were providing food packs for the children who were normally on free school meals. They ran the school lunches that way because the school remained open, as a Hub school. Some parents ordered lunch packs but then did not turn up for them so there was some waste. It is the fear of creating dependency.

SH – Are there any volunteers helping from Pica and Gilgarran? RR – Not that I am aware of. IM – It is a balancing act letting people know that they can still get food help from the group, if needed. The note in last week's bags aimed to cut down numbers to only those that need the help. VA – Some people have responded to the note in the food packs last week and replied that they don't need it.

#### **296.20 Friends not Foe**

The group has supported residents in collaboration with the surgery by helping with prescription collections, paying bills, posting letters and helping with isolation and loneliness by lending a friendly ear and having a chat. On 25 May Distington ARL and CASC delivered 65 Chippie Teas to elderly residents. Thanks to Anthony's Chippie for providing the discounted food. Thanks to Gary Hewer, who helped to raise funds, by auctioning a collection of Rugby League shirts. The majority of people being helped are elderly living on their own. SH – Brilliant. RR – It's been amazing – the younger end of the village has stepped up to help. The work that they have done and continue to do is fantastic. SH – It will be good for volunteers for both confidence and experience. RR – The interaction between age groups has been so positive. PD – Do you think they can pick up in autumn, if necessary? RR – Yes. I believe this work has given them a purpose. We are really seeing the wonderful spirit of Distington shining through the work the community groups are doing. Since the meeting, Friends not Foe have wound down their work as demand has greatly reduced, anyone on the list still needing food has been sign posted to the Fareshare group.

#### **297.20 Village Maintenance**

Ronnie continues to be busy with gardening work for both resident and local groups, while maintaining social distancing and safe working practice. We continue to cut the grass, free of charge, for CASC and Grass Road Sharks (as they currently do not have any income from the subs). The warmth and rain are making everything grow. Ronnie has advised that the small petrol mower is broken. He researched the cost of a new one and it would be in the region of £300. IM – Do you agree on the spend for a new mower? ALL – Yes. NB since the meeting a new has been bought for £249.99

#### **298.20 Newsletter**

The newsletters were issued on Facebook and Twitter, with hard copies available from McColl's, on 7 May. AB – It was cheery and bright. JG – Yes, it came over as bright.

#### **299.20 Converting to a Community Benefit Society (CBS)**

Trowers and Hamlin require the Board to pass a resolution regarding our application to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to convert DBL Ltd to a charitable CBS. The DBL Ltd Board voted in favour of this at today's meeting. DBL Ltd Members also voted in favour of this at today's meeting.

Once the application is submitted to the FCA, it may take about a month to get completed. As previously decided, the name will change from Distington Big Local Ltd to Distington Community Trust. We will need let the bank, suppliers and other organisations know about the name change. We will need to make relevant in-house changes. It is good to see things

are finally moving towards completion on this conversion. We will need to send a letter out to the bank/Local Trust/suppliers. The logo was discussed and it was decided to keep the same one and change the name underneath it.

We are required to name anyone on our Board who has close links to other organisations. JP – RR and KH (Karen Hodgson) are on the Parish Council. NP (Norma Pritt) and Annette Whitehead are on the Community Centre Board.

### **300.20 Land Development**

On 4 June HLP were advised by planning that due to the current situation, a wider consultation process with local residents has been delayed. Following further work by M&E engineers, it has come to light that an electricity substation will be needed on the site. HLP have accommodated the substation (near one of the parking spaces) and submitted an additional drawing to planning who have accepted this change as part of the current application, meaning no additional planning applications will be needed further down the line. Elliot's advised they will work out the additional cost of substation.

Following our last Land Development meeting on 10th March we have had no communication from H21. PD advised that he could speak to Matt Leach, Local Trust to ask if he knows anyone else in H21 as he worked in housing. PD – You may need a 'plan B'. Covid 19 will be having an impact on H21. Local authorities are having to provide figures to government about the housing schemes that are "shovel ready" which is a good sign. PD – Are Copeland Borough Council Registered Providers? SH – I think we asked this, and the answer is no. JP – What about Cumbria County Council (CCC)? PD – I don't think so. PD – Covid-19 may have an impact on any communal areas on new builds. We may need to rethink designs. SH – HLP's next invoice is due at planning approval stage (£20,721). It would be good if H21 agreed to pay it. Unless this is novated across to H21 (or a different RP), DBL will be liable for paying this. SH – My major worry is commitment to finance.

PD – Would DBL reconsider becoming a registered provider SH? SH – I am not convinced that with our Board we would be able to. We would need a relevant professional on the Board and even then it is a very long and difficult process to achieve RP status. PD – You are right. You would need to strengthen the Board with perhaps two professionals. SH – You must bear in mind that there are only 2-3 years left of DBL. SH – Would they have to be paid professionals on the Board? PD – No. AB – Does Trudy Harrison have any strings she can pull? SH – I have her an update on the build and got a reply and thank you but currently she is obviously busy in Government. PD – I think that there are lots of strings which we can pull. SH – Copeland have been behind it so perhaps they can help. SH/AB – You would think that H21 would reply. JP – It may be that a lack of contact still means that they are interested.

On 19 May HLP sent them Design Audit of our scheme against H21's Design Brief and, to date HLP have not had any feedback on this from H21.

IM has not had a response to phone calls and emails to Rebecca, neither have Elliots' or Damian. We are waiting to hear from them regarding the Heads of Terms. IM spoke to Ward Hathaway this week, they have been unable to get a response from H21. IM - Let us hope that H21 are working on taking on our scheme, applying to Homes England for funding for the build etc and we can soon get a response from them.

**ACTION: PD to ask Matt Leach for a H21 Contact and contacts for other RP's.**

**NB : Since the meeting H21 have made contact with us again.**

IM – We will owe Elliot’s approximately £17,000. I have made inquiries with Copeland about a 4<sup>th</sup> application to their Community Housing Fund to help cover these costs. They advised that they would need speak to Homes England about it. We have not yet received the funding our Claim 3 as some the work covered by this has yet to be out.

### **301.20 Local Trust New Plan Submission**

Following submission of our new Proposal /Plan on 30 April, we had an Assessor’s meeting and some enquiries by phone, after which we were advised that our Plan had been passed by the assessor. Local Trust got in touch sometime later to advise they require additional information. IM has been waiting several weeks to speak to Local Trust to ensure that all the additional information they are looking for is covered.

Any news on this? PD advised that the relevant staff member is extremely busy at the moment.

**NB Since the meeting we have had confirmation that our plan has been accepted.**

### **302.20 Postcards**

At the last meeting on 6th April 2020 we discussed the possibility of sending postcards of encouragements to elderly residents living on their own who are not on social media. We need to work out the postage cost of sending monthly postcards. Can everybody please have a think if we need to include anyone else on the list and feed that information to VA. IM – What are the thoughts on getting post cards printed our logo and a picture on? The Board decided it was a good idea (especially a village one). RR – it will be good to have some in stock for other occasions. VA – Fareshare have let me know those who are alone, if anybody else should be included on that list please let VA know. **(Action complete 24/6/20)**  
**ACTION: LB to ring Covid Support, VA get quote from printers.** (Update since meeting – 300 postcards printed for £44. 30-40 cards written already and posted on 24 June).

### **303.20 Children’s Writing Competition – DBL Covid-19 Memories**

Posters for this have been distributed and to date we have had about 12 submissions. Spend for this was agreed by RR to go up to £150 to accommodate 1st prize £25, 2nd prize £15 and 3rd prize £10 for 3 age categories. The closing date is 30th June 2020. Christine Pattinson has been encouraging DCYP members to enter the competition. VA has been in touch with Distington school to ask if they will promote the competition to pupils. VA – I have spoken to Angela, Head Teacher. The school ran a similar competition and the school will publicise that it’s a good opportunity to enter the DBL competition. We will also be making a poster asking adults to submit their memories of Covid-19 (no prize money for). Sometime in the future, we aim to mount a display of the information gathered, telling the story of how it affected those living in Distington. IM – I’ve heard in the media that The British Library have are gathering ‘Covid Chronicles’. It may be that some of the information gathered in Distington can be used for their project.

### **304.20 Covid-19**

We continue to monitor the effects the pandemic is having on our community and how we can respond in a positive way to help those in need and make changes to the way we are working. We are keeping up to date with developments on lock down easing and considering when groups might be able to start meeting again in person once it is safe to do so. Currently the Community Centre is still shut, and no doubt will continue to be, until it is deemed safe to use.

Fareshare will continue to work out of the Community Centre. We will see how that develops. AB – It is national that there was funding for community centres to cover lost rentals. PD – Has the Community Centre got a plan on how to re-open as government

suddenly announce that community centres can open. They need to have it planned. JP – Individual groups will need their own plan. PD – How do you feel about a non-Zoom Board meeting (real-in-person) at some time? Perhaps in September we will be able to meet up? JP – People can forget about the distancing, that is the problem. PD – Some people think that Lockdown is over. RR – I wouldn't be happy to attend a 'real' meeting AB – We have moved forward so far, and we don't want the virus back. JG – Queues of people were trying to shop yesterday. It is not all over. RR – A spike may reoccur. PD – You need to do a personal risk assessment. Everyone's circumstances are different. So, for the foreseeable future, you will meet virtually as a Board. You are doing so well with how you are set up with technology.

Board members who were unable to attend the meeting will be kept in the loop on what was discussed.

**305.20 Black Lives Matter** Local Trust raised the issue of Black Lives Matter asking all Big Local areas to consider the issues around this. How does this impact our community in Distington and the work that we do? JP – With isolation comes bigotry, there is the fear of what we don't know. SH – a family member has experienced racial bullying at school in a small village in Yorkshire. PD – It is important to carry on being aware of this subject. If a refugee family came to live in the village, we need to be aware of the issues and what DBL could do to support them. JP – West Cumbria Hospital has the most multi-cultural diversity locally. We are aware of the issues and know they are often based on ignorance.

#### **306.20 Any Other Business**

IM – The annual Big Local Connect will be held on 9-11 July this year. It will take place on-line. I'd encourage you to sign up if you can. PD – As it's on-line, you can join parts that are relevant. **ACTION: IM to e-mail link to Board members**

PD – RR have you managed to join the Big Local Chairs Zoom meeting? RR – No, it was full. PD – JP did you manage to join your group? JP – No. **ACTION: PD to chase for JP**

Discussion was held regarding the recent Big Locals virtual meeting in North East. There will be one on 'incorporation' so people would be interested in hearing DBL. IM – Bridlington have been in touch asking me to attend a meeting to share learning of our experiences of it, this has since been cancelled. I have advised to Jeanette that I am happy to feed into this if I have the capacity.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending.