



Regenerating & Supported by the Parishes of:  
Arlecdon & Frizington, Cleator Moor,  
Ennerdale & Kinniside, Lamplugh and Weddicar



## **Business Forum**

### **Minutes of meeting Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

**Meeting Commenced:** 1300hrs

#### **Apologies:**

**Present:** Richard Mulholland (Chairman), Sarah Mitchell (Locality Manager), Alan Hurton (RNEC), Carol Robertson (CBC), Diane Ward (CBC), Adam Ross (AS Design), Hazel Duhy (Woodrow Services), Ian Topping (KBC Ltd), Keith Purkiss (Printpoint), Yvonne Wilkinson (H.F.T. Gough), Julia Shama (ECO-Blitz Ltd), John Vincent (ECO Blitz Ltd), Andy Hardy (Lakestyle), Diane Richardson (Lakes College), Mike Stuart (Black Phase), Sarah Asquith-Vallance), Barbara Davies (Gosforth Hall), Kathryn O'Brien (Gosforth Hall), Simon Cook (Thistle Wood Carpentry), John Vincent (Thistle Wood Carpentry), Julie Betteridge (CBC), Geoff Nugent (Lakeland Wealth Management Ltd), Carolyn Williams (Green Design Group), Roger Gurney (CBC), William Moore (Saint & Co), Sheena Mounsey (SMHRC), Linda Jones-Bulman (Counselling Cumbria), Ian Scott (Saint & Co), David Farrell (Farrell's Sports), Mike Little (H.R.T.Gough), J.E.Mitchell (Eco-Blitz Ltd), Hugh Branney (CBC), Karen Kenmare (Kenmare's Tyres), John Bruckshaw (Parkside Hotel), David Halliday (West Lakes Academy), Andrew Barnes (West Lakes Academy), Cathy McCormack (West Lakes Academy), Jodie Rosewarne (West Lakes Academy), Janice Harrington (West Lakes Academy), M Nuttall (M/N Training /Consultancy).

**Introduction:** Richard welcomed everybody to the meeting and introduced Hazel Duhy (Woodrow Services), Julie Betteridge (CBC), Diane Ward (CBC), Carol Robertson (CBC) as speakers invited to the meeting to give information on Copeland's Future job Initiative and a government scheme aimed at Looking After Our Town Centres. Richard gave apologies for Don Graham (Chamber of Commerce) who could not attend the meeting due to other pressing business matters and explained that the Business Forum Meetings are a joint enterprise venture between RNEC and the Chamber of Commerce and are proving to be a very successful event.

## **Regen Update:**

Richard introduced Sarah Mitchell (Locality Manager) to the meeting to give an update on Regen North East Copeland.

Sarah explained that the regeneration area covers the five parishes of Cleator Moor, Arlecdon and Frizington, Lamplugh, Ennerdale and Kinniside and Weddicar. The main topic of note at this time is the selecting of the Lift Company (preferred contractor for full development) by the Primary Care Trust, to develop the new medical centre at Birks Road at Cleator Moor. The PCT have gone into partnership with the private sector in selecting this company and it is hoped that the land outlined for the project is purchased and that work commences at the latest by early next year.

Sarah outlined that she now has a second role as locality manager in the area and this involves looking at, amongst other things, the area and surrounding parish action plans and refreshing them and taking them forward and helping to develop the area and key service provider. An important part of this will be input from the business sector so we will be looking to the likes of the Business Forum for ideas and thoughts on how to make this work.

Ehenside School has now been demolished and the site secured and we are presently awaiting funding to carry out a feasibility study on the site.

## **The Chairman's Report.**

Richard welcomed David Halliday who is the Associate Leader at West Lakes Academy, who is attending the Forum meeting for the first time and had brought along four of the Academy's pupils. Richard highlighted that the pupils may have thought that they had been brought along as observers, but they were our future and if any of the members present could assist them in their studies or in their future then they were free to ask.

Richard highlighted the Forums website [www.necopeland.co.uk](http://www.necopeland.co.uk) and invited those businesses not already using the service, to contact Alan Hurton (RNEC) 01946 816708, if they would like to take advantage of the free service provided. The site is expanding and is now being used by many as a source of information as well as reference. There are articles regularly being put onto the site and as an information site it is very up to date.

Carole Robertson introduced Julie Betteridge, Diane Ward and Rob Gurney a new Economic Development Manager with CBC to the meeting. Diane is to talk about a new Government initiative to help enhance our empty shops and businesses within our town centres and Julie will talk about new business within the borough.

Diane Ward explained that there is a new Government initiative whereby a package of funding to assist in keeping town centres attractive through the recession has been announced. Copeland Borough Council has been successful in attracting a portion of this funding. The amount is £53-000 which has to be spent across the borough. A plan of action has been approved that the money will be spent at Whitehaven, Egremont, Cleator Moor and Millom. The funding will not be allocated to each of the towns but will be allocated to schemes within those towns that come forward and apply for the money. The hope is that Business Forums and networks along with Community organisations will get together to develop creative ideas for each of the town centres to maintain an attractive environment for locals and visitors alike to enjoy.

One of the main areas of attention will be the empty, vacant shops. It is hoped that a large amount of this money will be spent on improving their appearance. The funding is not available as a face lift scheme but to be used to make the shops look more attractive and used by means of shop window displays. There is also an idea that the premises could be used for some form of community purpose such as art galleries or community group work. All of these schemes would be of a temporary nature and could only be done with the blessing of the shop or business owner. Agreements would be made with the owners and if the premises were to be required for other purpose then Copeland's use of it would end. There would be assistance from CBC regarding any temporary refit to make the display or use of the premises feasible, again this would be removed when the business reverts back to use. Letters have been sent out to the owners of empty premises and returns are awaited.

Richard introduced Julie Betteridge who is the head of Development Strategy at Copeland Borough Council. Julie is to highlight Copeland's Future Jobs Initiative and funding to support local businesses within the area.

Julie explained that Copeland have commissioned relatively recently a number of initiatives to help local businesses, business development and tourism ventures. One initiative is LABGI (Local Authority Business Growth Incentive) this money that comes in from a national government scheme. From this West Cumbria Development Agency have been commissioned to run a scheme called Backing Businesses, this is an initiative running until March 2011 to help existing small and medium business in Copeland and there is £125-000 to be used in this period. There are other projects i.e. The Business Start up project through the NWDA has been part funded by CBC and also the Working Neighbourhood Fund is available throughout the Borough. CBC have also topped up the North West Developments Agency's money around business start up and throughout Cumbria as a commune group a number of local authorities have commissioned the Chamber of Commerce to provide a Business Start Up package on a programme of support for Copeland for the next three years and all of this is linked into Business Link. Another area CBC are putting money into is into further business grants. There used to be a scheme whereby every business that employed

new labour received a grant of £500. CBC have set aside around £70-000 for a similar scheme although this is still being finalise but as soon as it is available then the information will be put out through the Regen office.

CBC have set aside a £10-000 pot of money each to Egremont, Cleator Moor and Millom to go to the Business Forum to use as is seen fit and this money is available until March 2011, there are no conditions placed on these funds.

CBC have also set aside a small pot of money to go to the tourist sector. A new post has been taken by Katie Reed who is to drive forward the tourist aspect in Copeland and form further links with Allerdale. There is now money available for initiatives in this area to take advantage of the tourist influx.

Finally Copeland have been successful in a bid to the Future Jobs Fund through a government initiative, this will help to generate jobs for those in greatest need who live in areas of high unemployment in the Copeland area. The aim is to create 48 jobs for a 12 month period, created for 18-24year olds who have been unemployed for around 10 months from the unemployment hotspots in Copeland. Alongside the employment will be training skills and one to one support for the candidates and a chance of full time employment upon its completion. Businesses interested in assisting in this initiative will be asked to complete monthly monitoring forms in order to manage the performance of the program.

### **Hazel Duhy**

Richard introduced Hazel Duhy who was to discuss the advantages of Marketing and Networking.

Hazel stated that she was going to talk about networking skills and ways to help develop business. Hazel explained that she has never paid for advertising in the three and a half years she has been in business and yet her business is growing daily and has now taken on overseas contracts. That's not to say that networking isn't free because it takes time and it takes effort and you need to work hard at it to be successful. Passion is a fore most asset to any persons business, "How can you sell your business if you are not passionate about it. You need to convey that passion to others to make them either want your product or to come to support you."

Hazel explained that she has been in Cumbria for seven years, but running her own business for three and a half years. During all of this time she has appeared on the radio and on TV and is the North West Women's Forum member, representing women's business and micro businesses across the northwest. All of this is through Networking, networking links and

because she is passionate about what she does. Hazel then offered the floor to anybody who wanted to stand up and explain what they did and what their business was about.

Linda Bowman stood up and talked briefly about her business and explained that she was looking for ways to expand her business and was hoping to utilise some of the advice given by Hazel to achieve this goal. Hazel pointed out that Linda had just advertised her business to all the people within the room for free. She had taken advantage of an opportunity offered to her to let everybody know what she was about. Chances like this don't come along too often and yet by having the nerve and the presence of mind she had taken the chance to expand her business catchment. Hazel explained that she herself had been to large meeting in Manchester some years ago and a similar opportunity had presented itself. At the time she did not take advantage of this opportunity but, by considering the chance missed she began preparing a talk through of her own business and was in a position the following year to stand up at a similar meeting. The offer was again made for somebody to stand up and talk about their business and this time Hazel accepted the chance and in front of 160 people she gave her prepared speech describing her business and what she was about to the crowd. Out of that meeting six contracts were gained. Those were six contracts that would never have been considered if not for having the nerve, being rehearsed and being prepared to stand up and tell everybody what her business could provide. How much could have been paid to advertise a business in such a way and to gain those contracts?

Confidence is a further asset. Not everybody is blessed with the confidence to stand in front of a crowd of strangers and blow their own trumpet. But confidence can be gained. It doesn't come over night, but by attending networking and similar events you can learn how to talk to people, how to strike up conversations and very importantly, how to listen to other people, you can gain that confidence required to stand up and sell your product or services. You can listen to what is being said without hearing what you are being told. You can be so wrapped up in what you know you need to say that you aren't taking in what is being given to you, what could you be missing?

Go to meetings prepared, take a notepad and pencil, don't be frightened to take it out and make notes, that way you won't forget that precise detail or snippet of information. Take with you your business cards and any other literature highlighting your craft or business. Leave some in prominent places for people to take with them, don't be afraid to offer people your card that is why you have them. Get a good sized name badge saying who you are and what you do or have to offer. That way you are a walking notice board, this is also a good form of ice breaker as one of the early questions, "What do you do?", has been answered without saying a word.

Many times at business forums or networking events it is the contacts made that pay dividends. It is not always the product sold on the day that is the most bountiful. How many times do we hear the phrase, "I know somebody that can.....". Always be open to

any and every opportunity to gain knowledge and a good circle of contacts. Anybody can be an ambassador for your business whether they know it or not.

Always be yourself, never put on 'airs and graces', or make yourself out to be something that you aren't, because you will be found out and damaged credibility is often non-repairable. You will be judged on whether you can deliver your promises on time and not who you are or who you pretend to be.

Dress is important, consider how you want to appear, how you want to be seen, do you want to stand out in the crowd so that you are instantly recognisable. Smile be happy, would you like to deal with somebody with a long sour face? Smile as you walk into the room, as hard as it may be sometimes look happy, people want to deal with happy people not the grump in the corner. Always be pleasant and courteous, bad manners and ignorance will not be tolerated by most people. You must always remain approachable.

One final key point is as well as keeping notes, business cards and literature, try and keep some kind of data base from which you can readily extract information in the future, remember the phrase, "I know somebody who can.....". Keep promises, if you have said you will do something for somebody, then do it, if you don't you are letting yourself down as well as them, remember you are that other person that they met at the event and you let them down.....

Richard thanked the speakers for their presentation and again explained that the Business Forum website [www.necopeland.org.uk](http://www.necopeland.org.uk) is a website open to all forms of business and if any information on the website was required to contact Alan Hurton on 01946 816708 who will be happy to assist.

The meeting was closed.

**Meeting closed 1425hrs.**