



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



Business Forum

Minutes of meeting 25th March 2009

Meeting commenced: 1300hrs

Apologies: Don Graham. (Cumbria Chamber of Commerce).

Present: Richard Mulholland (Chairman), Tim Knowles (Cumbria County Council), John Cass (Home Group), Muir Lachlan (Ennerdale Parish Council), Brian Kirkbride (White Young Green), Simon Walker (Egremont Regeneration), Carol Roberts (Copeland Borough Council), Sarah Mitchell (Regen North East Copeland [RNEC]), Alan Hurton (RNEC), Christine Vincent-Briggs Cumbria Chamber of Commerce, John Bruckshaw (Parkside Hotel), Sheila Moffat (Works 4 You), David Farrel (Farrel Sports), Louise Stewart (Lowes Court Gallery), Patricia Sharkey (Chair, Cleator Moor Town Council), R Stevens (Bardon Aggregates).

Introduction: Richard Mulholland greeted and welcomed everybody to the meeting, thanking them for attending.

Richard highlighted that the web site; www.necopeland.co.uk is now fully functional and has been set up as a practical instant change site that can immediately highlight news items and other local matters of interest. This is a superb form of advertising and could benefit all businesses. Access to the site can be readily gained though if anybody had any problems then to contact either Alan or Sarah at RNEC. [01946 816708](tel:01946816708)

Richard informed the group that numerous business articles are available on www.necopeland.co.uk including such as: from April of this year the existing Corgi gas service is to be replaced by the 'Gas Safe' procedure and that we had to be aware of this change in status when having repairs or gas work completed. There are also changes to First Aid requirements appertaining to businesses and business premises and that it was in everybody's interest to make themselves aware of the changes.

Richard pointed out that there were handouts explaining the web site and details of the Chamber of Commerce on the table for any interested parties to take away with them.

Regen NE Copeland Updates:

Sarah informed the meeting that the Cleator Moor Square Renaissance steering group were making steady progress. A good number of groups and services had been questioned regarding their interest and possible use of a re-vamped square. How they would utilise the buildings, how to make the buildings work to their full potential and how they could help regenerate the town centre.

RNEC are also to be involved in the Ehenside site. In order to work we need to have the thoughts of local business's, councillors and local people to put together a master plan for the site. The building is due for demolition within the next couple of months.

The business upgrade scheme is coming to a close at the end of March. During its life span a vast amount of work has been complete with many local businesses's having gained benefit from assistance with either buildings in disrepair being brought back into use or external face-lifts and signage being done. A final report will appear on the website at the closure of the scheme.

Cumbria's Economy Today:

Richard introduced Cllr Tim Knowles, Cumbria County Councillor, Copeland Borough Councillor and portfolio holder for Economic Development in the County Council.

Tim explained that Cumbria today was up against a massive issue with regards to the Credit Crunch. The country was going into a recession and entering uncharted waters. The West and the South of the county however were at an enormous advantage with the majority of economy being under pinned by government money with the shipbuilding industry sustaining the South of the County and the nuclear industry sustaining the economy in the West. Other areas of the county are looking less secure and Cumbria County Council are working hard to assist all areas.

The Energy Coast Master Plan

The Energy Coast Master Plan gives, "A Vision for West Cumbria", this states that

“By 2027 West Cumbria will be a confident place that prides itself on its strong economy providing opportunity for all and offering a lifestyle of choice”

At the present moment in time there is a desperate need for a new hospital and possibly a health park. A site adjacent to the existing West Cumberland Hospital is being viewed. There is a need for investment in local schools and higher standards of education with possible links to the West Lakes Science Park, a vast upgrade of public services and of public access to these sites. The infra structure requires modernising, there are plans for an eastern relief road around Workington and a Whitehaven bye pass road going up past Rose Hill and exiting alongside West Lakes. All of this will require funding.

The government has ear marked this area as going to be the Energy Coast of the country. The Prime Minister, Gordon Brown and Lord Mandleson have recently visited the area and both have stated the same principle. That does not just mean nuclear power but also wind power and wave power. This coast is well equipped to deal with this and also capable of supplying all of these needs. With the high levels of skills available in the area there is a real opportunity for West Cumbria to become the leader in nuclear and other energy sectors.

B.N.F.L. have now been taken over by a consortium of business's under the name of N.M.P. (Nuclear Management Partners) and this group have a 5 year contract at Sellafield in which they estimate to spend £1.3 billion per year for each of the 5 years of the contract. N.M.P. (Nuclear Management Partners) is made up of a group of global technological businesses. Arriva (French based), U S Washington (American based) and AMEC (British based).

This supports the need for the area requirements even more so. If the area is to become competitive at these levels then the best of health care, schooling and advanced education need to be paramount. The Energy Coast Master Plan sets out these goals and the levels of sustainability needed to achieve these goals.

West Cumbria Vision is to be a shadow board comprising of public sector organisations. One of the key challenges will be to train young people. To put them through apprenticeships and higher skill levels so that they can take up the new roles and jobs to meet the needs of the employers initiated by the master plan. Secondly how to tackle deprivation in a sustainable way using medium and long term objectives. Short term objectives tend to provide a quick fix, but as many people know these rarely have a sustainable capacity.

Part of the renaissance of West Cumbria would be the addition of an airport. Planning permission has finally been granted for Carlisle's proposed airport and it is believed that the company Stobbard's will champion this project. The airport will make the whole of the west coast more accessible. Thus encouraging new businesses growth and investment into the disadvantaged areas and also help reduce unemployment.

The County Council have just recently increased the budget for road repairs by £3 million, in conjunction with the advent of an airport the infra structure in the County is in serious need of upgrade.

Regeneration in the local area is now of paramount importance. Regen NE Copeland was formed to carry out this type of work in recognition of the lack of movement shown by the C.C.C and C.B.C in this field.

Regen NE Copeland being the local regeneration company are piloting a scheme where they will be the conduit through which all local regeneration work is conducted. High on the list of many major regeneration schemes is the derelict Ehenside school site and its future use. Inter-action with Cumbria County Council, Copeland Borough Council, Cleator Moor Town Council and local people will help form a master plan for the site. Several other projects in the area are also being looked at including Leconfield Industrial Estate and the renaissance of Cleator Moor town square. This regeneration group has worked very closely and assisted the five local parishes of Arlecdon & Frizington, Cleator Moor, Ennerdale & Kinniside, Lamplugh and Weddicar all of which have made a financial contribution to its success. The group has also attracted funding from EU and many other urban regeneration grants.

With hard work and determination by the public, business and private community the Regen North East area can have a bright future

Q & As

“What about Tourism?”

Tim stated that tourism in the area has much to offer and is now attracting additional support. Tourism was a crucial and fundamental part of the master plan. Major investments in the Whitehaven area had proved to be very successful. There is a lot of work going on to promote tourism in the area and we all need to be better involved.

“What about the condition of the local cycle way since the demise of Ground Work Trust?”

There is to be a consultation regarding leisure, which will include the cycle ways, in the near future. They are in need of improvement though there is not enough money available at the present.

“Regarding hot spots of depravation, can we invest in people’s jobs instead of training courses, i.e. extra workers in the youth club.”

These needs and initiatives can be identified and progressed locally focusing on local needs and demands.

A.O.B.

Patricia Sharkey informed the group that the Blue Skies Group who have been established to assist in matters affecting mental health would be starting in the town council buildings on Tuesday 10th March and welcomed everybody to the opening.

Richard thanked Tim for his very informative presentation. He thanked the group for attending and wished them well in these difficult times.

Meeting closed at 1420hrs.