



GREENER BERWICK COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 19.01.24

Present: E Paterson, L Pepper, T Clift, C Elliot, L Wilcox, Nigel, M Laidler, L Hawken, Joel, J Ward,
J Lawson

Apologies: S Richardson and T Willis

Matters Arising

BCAN: Pepper confirmed Mike Wilson of BCAN is no longer interested in joining G Berwick. Thanks to Pepper for liaising with Mike Wilson.

Google Drive: Colin has sent link to access docs stored on GB google drive. Available to committee members by email from Elaine.

As we go forward and grow there is likely to be a need to store more policy docs so this should be useful.

AGM – suggest to be held in April after we have had strategy discussions with NCVA (National Council for Voluntary Action) who carried out a health check for G Berwick recently

NCC – Climate action plan 2024– Pepper reported there is zoom with NCC climate team on 29 Jan at 7.30 re their new climate action plan. Contact Pepper if anyone is interested.

Reports from Action Groups

ESTUARY Group: Elaine reported that the group had a productive meeting with N Water (NW) on 5 Feb. NW indicated their new business plan includes significant investment for infrastructure improvement in Berwick (more than elsewhere in Northumberland) – to include more storage tanks, screens and sustainable urban drainage approaches to help reduce spills from the storm water overflows. This is good, and also a tacit admission for the first time that there is a problem to be solved! Another new piece of information re the spills is they can be triggered by rainfall anywhere in the vast Tweed river system up to 100 miles away, not just rainfall at the estuary, so legitimising (under current licenses) the large number of spills. Reporting of spills and assessment of how clean beaches are leaves a lot of room for interpretation apparently – another new piece of info.

Algae monitoring continues but we may also/ or instead carry out a water ranger role which looks at problems with visible N Water infrastructure and report accordingly. A training programme for volunteers is being worked on with the Env Agency and some of us will engage with this, once N Water come back to us with a date.

Another opportunity offered by N Water – a visit to the water treatment works at Merton (near Lindisfarne). ACTION: Elaine to pursue

TRANSPORT group: Judith reported that NCC have recently appointed a “Bus Champion” so this sounds promising. Part of the role will be to monitor ALL bus stops in Northumberland, a huge task, and one that G Berwick transport group has been carrying out in Berwick recently. Another good step is the extension of running time of the BI bus to 9.30 pm.

There was a meeting re cycling and the new cargo bike with Ed Clark cycling officer from NCC and Jan Chisholm, who does cycle training and trains in use of cargo bike. Cargo bike initially intended for local businesses but available to individual also for any purpose. Advertising not yet clear but Town Council might assist.

Joan reported that no 67 to Norham has no evening service and would like to campaign for extension of service. Joan to work with norham parish council and GB transport group to gather support to present case to NCC. ACTION: Joan to pursue

Judith reported there is a new community transport officer and GB transport group will meet with them on 30th Jan at 10am.

It was noted that Jamie Driscoll (campaigning to be elected mayor for NE) expressed a particular interest in active transport at his recent talk in Berwick, so that might be useful in future.

ZERO WASTE group: Next repair café Sat 27th Jan 10–1pm at Salvation Army hall, Church St. Berwick.

Pepper reported discussion with Shona Armstrong, ASDA community champion, about possibility of pop up repair café at ASDA – will be considered further

Funding for repair café has been secured from TC and NCC, (including for a tool lending scheme) but more volunteers are needed to help run the scheme, and more repairers are always welcome.

WARM HOMES group: Martin reported a meeting decided there would be more leafletting to promote energy company grant schemes. An Energy Advice Service is also a possibility, possibly in conjunction with the repair café. Elaine advised that the £400 available from FoE up to end of March might be best suited to Warm Homes group as Warm Homes is a specific FoE campaign nationally. ACTION: Martin to pursue

COMMUNITY GARDEN group: Joel reported that the beds at Foul Ford have been planted, 12 folk participating; most keener on planting than digging! A start has been made on the Chapel St beds and the group has also helped at the war memorial garden area.

PAST EVENTS:

North Northumberland Green Hub – Colin reported about 50 people attended. 41 are members. Colin has a link for the newsletter on this. It was noted that Matt Baker and Hazel Scurr of the NCC climate team are departing.

Creative Funding workshop – Liz attended this which usefully provided info about funding creatively

Power Up – national campaign in Nov – G Berwick contribution was through Warm Homes group leafletting

G Berwick Social on 17th Dec was enjoyed by all who attended, with a pot luck supper. No AGM attached as originally proposed as AGM now suggested to be held in April after strategy meeting (s)

FoE liaison – Pepper reported on a useful FoE webinar (they occur quite frequently and are generally useful) as well as discussion with Calvin Lawson at FoE to update him on G Berwick activities.

Film "Finite" was shown by G Berwick at the Granary on 8th Dec. Interesting film on the value of campaigning but slightly disappointing turnout of about 12 people

Coat of Hope event organised by Liz, including food, was well received and attended by about 15 people.

FUNDING/ HEALTH CHECK

Liz reported on recent grant funding for repair café and community garden, as well as film showing in Dec, and will produce full accounts for the next business meeting.

General running funds are low and this type of funding is hard to obtain. Discussion re website updating that we are currently paying for, and receive a very good service from MM Sykes. Laura suggested asking MM to train her as a volunteer to carry out this task in future. ACTION: Elaine to ask MM

Martin reported how the health check came about, via a funding fair event with National council for voluntary action (NCVA). The health check is now complete, with a view to improving our chances of success when applying for funding, and next step is to have a strategy meeting, facilitated by NCVA, to consider what, if any recommendations by NCVA we adopt as G Berwick, including amends to constitution and annual events and budget going forward. One suggestion that needs consideration is whether we need to register with the charity commission, even though we are not a charity, as this might be necessary for funding apps worth over £5000. It was agreed to hold a strategy meeting on Thurs 8th Feb 2-4pm. ACTION: Martin to liaise with Marc Johnson at NCVA re venue. All action group members to be invited.

AOB: Laura reported there is a database of community organisations held by Town Council. Access on TC website under community database. Although G Berwick is included Laura suggested each action group leader could enter their group separately too, to increase awareness.

DATE of NEXT business meeting: 4th March 2-4pm. Possible change of venue to William Elder building (Community Dev Trust) or youth project building (John Bell contact)

ACTION: Colin to contact both and report back to coordinators.

Elaine Paterson/Linda Pepper 22/1/24