

EGREMONT & ST BEES NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

**Notes of the meeting held on Tuesday 8th June 2010
in Egremont Methodist Church Hall**

Meeting started at 6.30pm

Forum Chair: Cllr Margaret Woodburn

**Councillors Present: Cllr David Banks, Cllr Michael McVeigh, Cllr Frank Morgan,
Cllr David Southward, Cllr Connie Watson and Cllr Peter Watson**

Apologies: None

Councillors Code of Conduct – Declaration of Interest: None

The meeting started with a minute's silence to remember all those who had been killed or injured on 2nd June 2010 in the West Cumbria Shootings.

Cllr David Banks thanked the police for all they have been doing over the past week.

Inspector Gary Hunter introduced himself saying that he was prepared to answer any questions from last week or about what is happening in future weeks; he introduced PC Jenna Birbeck a new officer who has replaced PC Ben Strain, who has moved on.

A comment was made that the community do like stability and hoped Inspector Hunter would be with them for a while. Inspector Hunter said he hoped to be around for at least a couple of years as he is a local lad. There were no further questions.

Topic 1: Flood Action Group, Egremont

Speaker: Jo Ratcliffe, Environment Agency accompanied by Dave Falcon

Jo had approached the forum to see if local residents wanted to set up a Flood Action Group as the Environment Agency were aware of a number of issues in the Egremont area, some related to the Environment Agency and some to other agencies such as Highways, United Utilities, CBC, CCC etc. The National Flood Forum is a charity which was set up a number of years ago by people who were flooded and works with the Environment Agency to set up Flood Action Groups. Heather Shepherd has been helping the Environment Agency with groups in Cockermouth, Keswick and Workington and is very keen to help set up a new group in Egremont and Cleator. Unfortunately Heather was not at the forum as she was attending another meeting.

It is best if the group is local rather than area wide, as this is more productive and better for flood action plans. If residents are interested they should hold a meeting, invite Heather to attend and she will help to set up a group which can be informal or formal with a constitution this means the group can apply for grants from the Cumbria Community Foundation and other organisations. The next step is to produce an Action list; talk to neighbours to find out what the issues and concerns are. The group would arrange a multi agency meeting with representatives from all partner agencies to go through the Action list which would include site visits; the meeting would then decide what progress needs to be done, set up the next meeting, this would carry on until actions have been done or reasons why they haven't been done are confirmed; once the programme is rolling, actions get resolved.

Other advantages in having a Flood Action Plan is that the group:

- will know what to do if it happens again;
- can take flood protection measures;
- provides one to one contact;
- receives information re river levels;
- communicates with the weather flood warden who has contact with the incident room as to what the situation is and they can tell people in the local area;

Questions and Discussion

Comment It's difficult to get anything out of the Environment Agency; you appear to be asking us to form a group to do your job. I represent people from Cleator who were flooded, you promised a report about what you intended to do about it, I've had no reply; you are doing nothing as an organisation.

Q Does anybody intend to build up the bank alongside Cleator or not? What are you going to do now? It's been seven months and nothing's been done.

Comment Thanks Jo, you've drawn the poison chalice, a large number of people are affected by the flood, you're giving us an early warning system, and we need defences this hasn't got to happen again.

Comment A meeting was supposed to be set up with Jamie Reed, yourselves and councillors, the silence is deafening in three months time it is going to rain again, we want to know we are safe.

Q I often walk down the river there are great big tree stumps in the river, we were flooded in Cleator, if it rains we are bound to flood again, has the river been looked at from Ennerdale to the sea?

Comment This problem we are experiencing has been going on for 10 years; the Environment Agency were to stake out the bottom of the beck beneath the bridge; when the last flood came 2-3 inches was dredged, the bridge on the down side carries the main water supply to the town. The Environment Agency is like an inverted pyramid the beck is not cleaned out, gravel was taken out of the beck and transported to Carlisle; if it had been moved from the bridge to the Rugby club it would have saved it. Nothing has happened.

Comment They've never cleaned any of the River Ehen out.

Councillors David Southward and Frank Morgan thanked Jo and Dave for coming to the forum and recommended the proposal Jo had made to set up a group. Both councillors and MP Jamie Reed had met with the Environment Agency to discuss what is possible; three meetings had taken place including one on site. They made the point that in forming a group they didn't want to give residents false hope as there is the question of finance, as the Area officer had already stated how little money there is in the country, resources come down to economics, they can't provide protection for a small number of houses. If a group is formed and steps taken as has been suggested there is some hope, a good example of it working is in Cockermouth.

A There are two pots of money:

1. National - which we bid against, this is what was used in Carlisle, there is a national scoring system, everyone who's been flooded has a score, to attract funding you have to have a score, Egremont doesn't have a score that will attract funding;

2. Local - that we can use, there are funds for small amounts of money to protect a small amount of houses. The way to apply for this money is to form a local group and you can then get funding; Cockermouth's Flood Action Group had to find funding of £100,000 it was the only way to get defences and to source local businesses and charities that is the best way to get defences for Cleator and Egremont.

Comment We're suffering from a lack of maintenance of the river, which would be cheap and would solve the problems.

FM Black Bridge, Egremont – following the damage caused by the floods, a meeting was held, followed by a meeting with the multi agencies as not all the problems were the Environment Agency's, we had a site meeting where there was some agreement on the work needed to go forward.

Cleator has had meetings with the Environment Agency; Engineering consultants have carried out flood modelling; they have now concluded their engineering investigations and have fed this information to the Environment Agency; they will set up a meeting to discuss the way forward. I understand the points made about the debris and other issues, work has been moving forward however there is a need to move forward quicker and that is to get the multi agencies together, we will see what we can do. My question is would we need a separate Flood Action Group for Cleator and one for Egremont?

A I suggest they start off together, they then may wish to separate later.

Comment The feeling from this meeting is that we need to get a meeting together quickly.

Comment We don't want sympathy we want action.

Q The maintenance of the river seems to have stopped, since the River Authority stopped. If we formed an Action Group the Cleator cobbles could be put behind defences. Would you allow us to put flood defences in place?

A That's what a Flood Action Group is for, to put in solutions. Yes it is possible; we can work with you to bring these things together and put solutions in place.

Comment We feel that the suggestions should come from you and not from us.

Comment We made suggestions about moving the stones and that would have cost a lot less.

A There is strength in forming a group and working with other agencies.

A show of hands was taken as to who would be interested in forming a group, 20 people showed an interest and their names were taken.

Action: A list of names, addresses and/or emails have been sent to Jo to be forwarded to Heather Shepherd, Community Manager, National Flood Forum to arrange a meeting. Flood Warning Direct booklets were available re setting up a group.

A Once you have formed a group you can always chase us up for information.

It is hoped that a meeting will take place within the next fortnight with Heather Shepherd and all interested residents and subsequently with agencies.

The Rugby League Club was suggested as a potential venue.

Topic 2: Active for Life

**Speaker: Alison Andrew, Active for Life Co-ordinator,
Age Concern North West Cumbria**

Active for Life is a new project promoting health and well being for people over 55 in the mid and north Copeland Area. Age Concern has joined with Help the Aged to help people remain independent through activities, prevention and accessing information.

The DeLucy Centre is being developed as a community resource for the people of Egremont and surrounding area by holding weekly surgeries:

Phoenix Enterprise (job search) CAB, Handy loans, Credit Union, In training (support back to employment) Moneywise plus new learning and leisure opportunities such as Scrabble club, writing for fun group, adult education courses

The role of Active for Life Co-ordinator started in December, researching and networking with the local community as groups, individuals, community workers, health and adult social care to look at current service provision and identify any gaps.

As transport is a major problem in this area it is important to get more locally based facilities and support local or existing groups through assisting with funding, recruiting new members, establishing a committee, networking with other groups and clubs, sharing resources and speakers.

A number of new activities have started:

- Active for Life weekend monthly social group – walks and outings to local attractions;
- Thornhill school intergenerational project – older and younger generations sharing memories of schooldays and childhood;
- Digital inclusion events (vital access to information in rural areas) such as computer drop in and mobile phone workshop.

The project is keen:

- to utilise local venues by supporting the use of community buildings for lunch clubs, coffee mornings, yoga class, information events etc;
- to promote awareness of health issues A Healthy Ageing Event was being held at the end of June and events were being planned for a Men's health day, cooking for one sessions, general exercise classes and regular winter warmth events and
- to encourage people to be active members of the local community by joining a social group or by volunteering. Currently the project is seeking volunteers to maintain the community garden attached to the De Lucy Centre and to lead a gentle walking group in the Egremont area.

Questions and Discussion

Comment I have taken advantage of the free swimming pass, there are some people who are eligible but not a lot of people are using it at Egremont or Hensingham pools. Alison said that she will promote this.

Comment I'm interested in the idea of a history group.

Alison's contact details: Age Concern Northwest Cumbria, The DeLucy Centre, 14-15 Market Place, Egremont Tel: 01946 828100.

Community News and Updates

• Youth Works Egremont – Scott Benbow, Project Manager

Scott took over as Project Manager at the end of 2009; there has been a revamp of volunteers and the management team; the youth centre is still in the two houses on Dryden Way on the Orgill Estate, the heating system has been changed and they've worked with the Probation Service to decorate the Centre along with a local artist to put cartoons of the youngsters on the walls.

Activities:–

- a film company from Harrogate has taught the youngsters how to make a movie and they've received an initial edit showing what Youth Works does; the children are going around Egremont filming local residents and this will be shown at the Media Centre at Florence Mine;
- a programme has been put together and Youth Works is looking to do more activities around Egremont rather than to have a general drop in;
- a computer suite – funding is being sought, it is hoped to involve the community, where these facilities can be used by Learn Direct during the day time;
- a Reward scheme – to be set up to encourage the youngsters to get involved in activities they wouldn't normally like to do, such as litter picking;
- a members group - to come up with ideas to get funding.

Questions and Discussion

Q It's good to have such a comprehensive coverage.

A We're setting up a website, anyone can access it and see what we are doing, we have a lot of younger kids hopefully when they get older, 14-15 years they will have ideas as to what they want to do.

Comment: The Rugby Union Club is happy to work with them.

Q In the past at Youth Works we didn't always know what they were doing, it was adhoc which didn't always help. Do you plan ahead?

A We try to plan ahead, we have organised some activities but these haven't always gone according to plan as the kids have not always attended. I'm hoping that with the website they can access it and see what is going on; we'll also advertise through the schools, Egremont Today and they'll be a Newsletter and a calendar so people can see what is happening.

We have 50 members between the ages of 8 and 14 years old. Once we get established we can introduce more programmes in sport, dance etc

Q Youth Works used to have Open days where councillors could come along and chat to the kids.

A We're currently teaching healthy cooking and we're organising an Open Day for the funders with the kids putting on a buffet.

Comment: We're glad to hear it's up and running and we're looking forward to a visit.

• West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Waste Safely Partnership – attached

Forum Grants Budget £6,671.61

Youth Grants Budget £ 1,374.66

Grant Applicant Presentations - The grant applicants made their presentations.

Consideration of applications - Applicants and their supporters including councillors withdrew whilst those remaining, decided the awards.

Grants Awarded

ORGANISATION	PURPOSE OF GRANT	AMOUNT AWARDED
Egremont Rugby Union Club	Towards the cost to build disabled toilets and disabled access and egress to and from the club	£1,000.00
Copeland ASC	Towards the cost to replace the timing system, blocks, touch pads and scoreboard	£250.00
Smithfield and Longcroft Tenants and Residents Association	Towards the cost to run social events for residents of Smithfield and Longcroft	£450.00
The Phoenix Youth Project (Moor Row)	Towards start up costs for new youth club at Moor Row	£424.00
Oald Cumberlan Castle Mount Residence Fund	Towards the cost of sensory equipment, games and craft materials	£350.00

Topics for future meetings: - No suggestions made

Dates of Forums with suggested venues.

Tuesdays at 6.30 pm

14th September 2010

9th November 2010

25th January 2011

St Bees

Moor Row

Egremont

(Rugby Union Club if open)

Meeting finished 8:50 pm

Managing Radioactive Waste Safely Report from Neighbourhood Forums

Members of the West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) Partnership recently attended your Neighbourhood Forum to present on the MRWS process that is currently taking place in West Cumbria. A report summarising the input received from all of the West Cumbria Forums in the last six months is now available. The report also outlines what has happened as a result of the input from the Forums, together with all of the other strands of public and stakeholder engagement (PSE) that have been taking place. The report (which includes a one page summary) is available to download on the Partnership's website <http://westcumbriamrws.org.uk/#/complete-list/4535222815> (Document 62 in the Document Library).

MRWS is the name of the Government process to find a site for geological disposal of the country's higher activity radioactive waste. Allerdale Borough Council, Copeland Borough Council and Cumbria County Council have begun the early stage of a conversation with the Government about possibly hosting a geological disposal facility.

The West Cumbria MRWS Partnership is an advisory body that has been set up by the Councils to make recommendations to them on whether they should participate or not in the Government's geological disposal facility siting process. The discussions are being held without any commitment to eventually host a facility.

The Partnership and the Councils are committed to reaching out to the people of West Cumbria to give them the opportunity to understand what is being discussed and express their views. The presentations at the Neighbourhood Forums were part of this process.

A further report detailing the full findings of all of the PSE work that has been taking place is in the process of being produced, and will reflect the vast amount of material generated from all the strands of engagement together with the Partnership's responses to the issues raised. This report will be made available on the Partnership's website following the next Partnership meeting on 13th May.

For further information on the MRWS process, the work of the Partnership and the findings of PSE1, or to receive paper copies of any of the reports, please visit the Partnership's website www.westcumbriamrws.org.uk, where you can also sign up for regular updates. You can also contact the Partnership via the free phone no. 0800 048 8912.