

AONB meeting 21st Sept 15

AONB have been in the process of updating their input to the Core Strategy and will use this to update their Design guide for the future.

There is an understanding that the past few months of meetings with Parish Councils has improved their communications. A presentation to ATC could be arranged for January Full Council if required??

A survey is being carried out to place all electrical cables underground. Town and Parish Councils can help with this by identifying those which are obstructing the views of natural beauty. Survey forms are available on demand. This is a 6 year programme, but does not incorporate BT.

Parking issues are a problem in small villages and the recommendation is to use the LTP as a starting point for action.

A hand out of the problems with second homes is available but the methodology is flawed as it is based on local hearsay, Amble is not available.

It was pointed out that AONB are in the process of using the Coastal Community Fund to provide some solutions for the problems within Beadnall, Bamburgh and Seahouses, as this is ongoing it will be monitored for future publication. Other communities are encouraged to use this fund and others like it.

The next AONB forum will take place in Alnmouth on 13th November.

Some Parishes have not been consulted about the NCC strategy to close toilets, AONB are aware of the problems and will consult with NCC.

Dark Sky events will be published soon.

Town & Parish Council Conference- 24th September 2015

Councillors Lewis & Weir attended on behalf of the Council.

This was held at West Hartford Fire Station- a much better venue than last year as there was plenty of room for the Market Place- stalls of information and people to answer queries- and separate rooms for the discussions.

There was time to browse at the Market Place before the introductions, during the break and after the discussions with over 20 topics for example from Fostering & Adoption to Youth Forums to Age UK; Waste Management to Highways to Rights of Way; Broadband to Public Protection to Locality. We both felt that the layout and variety were very good and the officers informative, knowledgeable, friendly and helpful.

The group of Councillors and Clerks representing about 100 of the parishes in the area- more than last year were welcomed with short speeches from NCC on the value of working together, the achievements of the ongoing formation of the Joint Charter and about the work to date of the Town & Parish Liaison Group.

There was a choice of 2 out of 3 discussions groups so as we had recently had the opportunity of a talk about Neighbourhood Planning, we declined that one and took part in 'Providing for Everyone' and 'Raising the Game'.

'Providing for Everyone' was quite a disappointment- too much theory and not enough practical examples. We had thought this would give insight into how community and voluntary groups working with Councils could obtain funding to make improvements in their area, tips on how to access volunteers and also give some idea of where grants could possibly be sourced in this time of austerity. However it was more on the theory of how people can interact and draw on each other's skills and how to overcome barriers to working together. The overall impression given was a simplistic view that lots of people were eagerly coming forward to improve their community and we just needed advice on handling the dynamics of a diverse group! In the last few minutes there was an example of a group obtaining funding for a Play area- with very few details- and then time for some questions. This became an opportunity for some to say what they had achieved in their own area, mainly for play areas, but again with little detail. There was however a Town Council who gave the example of how the 'In Bloom' had been abandoned after the first year due to the infighting and nastiness which had prevailed! We highlighted that when we all work together a lot can be achieved but the first hurdle in most cases is getting community groups & individuals to understand that Councils are a legal entity who must work within that framework- we cannot just shrug and agree 'it worked okay before so let's just carry on in that way' if that way does not conform to regulations as we are accountable not just to Local Government Acts but also to our Ratepayers.

The second session began with an explanation of the dynamics of austerity and the fact of it continuing to have an effect on Town and Parish Councils for another 5 years as Government continues to cut money to Principal Authorities who then look at ways to cut their budget where they are can as some budget areas such as Health cannot be changed. Ultimately this will

continue to either reduce services, see more given to Town and Parish Councils or more partnership working between the two. This led into a presentation by Choppington Council as to how they operated as a Community Council. They only budget for things agreed by their parishioners- this is done by an annual survey to 100% of their households and 3 meetings per year with a Residents Panel which has grown over 4 years to 200 members. Anyone who raises a query or a complaint is invited to join and help to determine how money is spent. They did not say what the return rate was! We felt this type of procedure was much easier to start in an area which had not previously had a Council and began with quite a generous budget decided initially by NCC. (Perhaps too it is easier when you are not responsible for two cemeteries which some people may not wish to maintain.) They did make it sound remarkably easy but there was little detail of how it worked in practice, for example, how did they handle differing views on what to spend money on? In the short question time setting the budget was mentioned; Whilst this goes before the panel, it emerged that a skeleton budget is produced and then people asked if they want to spend for example, another 6p per week on seats. It would have been interesting to get more of the finer details of how it operates.

There was also a short presentation on how a cluster of parishes is working in Upper Tynedale.

This session was more interesting, however three presentations within the time scale was too much to do justice to each topic and certainly didn't leave enough time for a good question and answer session.

It is commendable that NCC are working with Town and Parish Councils and trying to give them an opportunity to meet together. However we felt that in an attempt to appeal to the wide range of Councils with diverse interests and from different communities, NCC had tried to pack too much in with too many speakers and topics, and therefore, apart from the Market Place, it felt more like being 'lectured' than an opportunity to share views and ideas. Perhaps the short introductions with an hour before for the Market Place and only 1 session where there is a choice from 2 topics would work better. The presentation session could then be 1 hour instead of 45 minutes, which would allow time to debate further and share information which is what most attendees wanted.

PLANNING TRAINING NOTES- 15/09/2015

Clirs Dargue, Lewis & Morrison attended this second training event.

The session was about the recent 3 draft policies concerning Town & Parish Council's involvement in the pre application process.

Any discussions held/ comments passed at this stage will have no impact on expressing views at the actual planning application stage- these are 'given without prejudice' at this point.

It was hoped the new policies would become operational from 5th October- after that all applicants could seek pre application advice on payment of a fee.

At that point, Town & Parish Councils would be notified electronically to ask if they wished to be included. There is a very tight window of 14 days to respond and only a subsequent 7 days to comment- a total of 21 days as these pre applications have a turn round of a maximum of 25 days unless major developers agree to extend this. ***Councils would need to establish a protocol for dealing with these as they would fall between meetings e.g. Clerk with Chair & Vice Chair of Planning could be delegated to respond.***

The purpose was to engage with the wider community at the earliest phase so any concerns were highlighted and possibly addressed before full application; this would facilitate a smoother, more efficient service. Also with the increase in fees- to bring Northumberland more in line with the rest of the country- more/ better qualified and experienced staff could be employed.

There were 3 types of development- Major, Minor and S106. Councils would need to use their own judgment as to whether to be involved and at what level; however these protocols did mean that Councils had a greater opportunity to influence what was required in their area. Councils would need to remember to concentrate on Material considerations. Involvement would range from a short telephone call to the case officer at NCC right through to a community meeting dependent upon the scale/ controversy of the application- diagrams for involvement attached.

Currently approx.40% ask for pre planning advice but discussions with developers and their agents indicate this will increase rapidly as they begin to come to understand how this process could actually assist them and possibly help to obtain permission quicker. They had been favourable to the scheme.

Under S106 agreements, the viability of a town could be a consideration; there was no predisposition to more affordable housing if other infrastructure was needed. The High Court had ruled that schemes under 10 dwellings could still be assessed for affordable housing; throughout the county the percentage was between 25 and 35. *It did emerge that Amble doesn't need any more affordable housing!* Large scale developments might be asked to consider local employment opportunities or training and apprenticeships. However a change in legislation meant that no more than 5 contributions could be pooled towards 1 project. Consideration may be given in future to aspects such as Health Facilities which are not presently included in these agreements.

NCC are committed to greater engagement with town and parish councils especially in regard to the planning process and the next training will probably be in the new year. Councils were urged to make suggestions for these training sessions.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS- 21/09/2015

Councillors Lewis & Morrison attended this talk given by David English, NCC, to Hauxley, Amble & Warkworth Council members. Acklington & Togston did not attend.

The presentation was interesting and addressed the background to the Government incentive of 'Open Source' community led initiatives such as this. NCC officers had helped with the pilot schemes started in 2011 of which 1 has been approved this July- Allendale taking over 4 years- and one is about to go through the final stages. There are 5 in the pilot scheme, a further 8 designated areas have commenced and another 4 have applied to NCC for approval of their area.

Many start with the concept of a controversial development and think they can use a Neighbourhood Plan to stop this. However it must be clearly understood that Neighbourhood Plans cannot prevent development but can for example, direct growth to certain preferred areas, limited numbers of dwellings in a certain area or protect green spaces.

All Neighbourhood Plans must suggest objectives which can become Planning Policies as this is how they sit within the legal Planning Framework. They must fit into the Local Core Strategy and Planning Policies as well as National Guidelines.

Limited funding is available to help with Plans but this will not cover the costs entailed. For example, Allendale had £7000 of funding but spent a further £2,500 on publicity and community engagement - some of the legal analysis documents must be professionally produced and can easily cost £2,500 each. NCC will assign an officer who will give technical guidance and support but not do the work needed and whilst there is a strong commitment to working with Councils there is a limited amount of time as more councils start plans and there is no financial assistance available. However Councils were urged not to use the idea of being able to get funding as a driver for carrying out the work.

The Plan can be worthwhile but involves a lot of time and effort as well as engendering lots of community objectives which will not fit the framework. It can be controversial and inevitably not everyone will be happy with its suggestions.

First step is to define the area to be covered- this can be more than 1 parish but all must agree and 1 leads with the other's consent. The lead party must be a Council and not a community body. This needs to be submitted to NCC for approval stating why it is considered an appropriate area for planning purposes. Approval can take 4-6 weeks.

Next you must set out the vision, objectives and policies which are determined by community engagement. However you must decide who to engage with and why, who not to include and why, and determine procedural governance steps for the Council or Steering Group to adhere to. This will always be subject to review and rework.

When complete, the document goes to NCC with a statement of how and why it meets the legal requirements such as how it fits in with the Core Strategy, National Guidelines and Policies, Strategic Land Assessment etc. There needs to be a Consultation Statement saying who, how,

when, where, what was consulted with the community and the actions taken from those consultations. This must include any opposition and how that was dealt with.

This is followed by an independent Examination ordered by NCC and agreed to by the Parish/ Town Council. If accepted as fitting all the correct criteria, then the Neighbourhood Plan goes to a Referendum where a majority vote in favour is needed for it to be accepted into the legal framework.

Nationally there have been 1600 accepted designated areas since 2011 of which 100 Plans have passed the referendum stage. There has been an average 34% turnout with a 88% pass rate.

We were then informed of 9 Neighbourhood Plans which had been passed throughout the country- some had limited objectives whereas others had wider ranging ideas. Some addressed the issue of farm building conversions, others second homes, some the issues around the effect of a bypass. This was followed by a question session- some points of which have been included already, others were for clarification.

The view was expressed that in many cases where small areas felt threatened by large developments that even a Neighbourhood Plan could not have prevented the development going ahead. It was felt that developers were aware of the increasing numbers of Neighbourhood Plans about to come into being and their place in the planning procedures and so were pre-empting these by getting permission now.

It was stressed that

- all Neighbourhood Plans must have objectives which lead to Planning Policies which can sit within the Local & National Guidelines
- they must embrace development and not obstruct it
- if the County's Core Strategy already covers the objectives then a Neighbourhood Plan is not needed for those issues
- it is a lengthy, time consuming process which is not cheap
- Community engagement is vital for it to succeed
- it can be a worthwhile exercise in finding out what your community wants for its future- but not all of that will be objectives to fit into the plan!

AMBLE HISTORY TRAIL- MEETING- 29/09/2015

Notes from discussions for trail route signage.

Cllrs Lewis, Morrison and Weir had all looked at the trail to identify possible sites for signage.

These **preliminary** discussions amalgamating everyone's ideas would be followed by a walk of the trails together to better pinpoint the exact areas and how this could best be achieved. (There could be changes following this)

Signage would be based on people accessing the trails without the benefit of a leaflet therefore needing indication and some information.

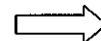
It was felt that the Trail notice board on the building wall at the T.I.C. Car Park gave very limited viewing and that *we should ask permission to move it* from there to the wall adjacent to the T.I.C. steps so a greater number of people could see it and also to benefit those without a leaflet encouraging them to follow a trail. In the plain side, *insert 'Get your leaflet from the Tourist Information Centre'*

Initial discussion with HMP Northumberland had resulted in the suggestion that a 15cms square durable wooden plaque could be made with the letters of the trail- RED or GREEN- with the appropriate number and directional arrow. These could be fixed to an existing post by means of a jubilee clip or mounted on a small wooden post as appropriate. NCC had indicated these would be more easily accepted than fingerposts. Permission from NCC to use existing sign poles for attachment or land/house holders may be needed dependent upon position; hence positions may need to be changed. Also permission might be required for the information boards.

{There was space on the leaflet for more photographs to be inserted. Logos would be changed. Contact details would be enhanced.}

Red Trail

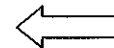
Erect plaque on the fence of old Brickworks with RED 1



(Permission has already been given for a small info. plaque relating to the Brickworks

(later- when pathway in place-at rear of Harbour Village erect Sign RED 2)

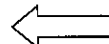
Fence at rear corner of Coquet Street Car Park erect Sign RED 2



On grass- RED 2



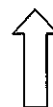
End of Marina Fence erect Sign RED 2



At Yacht Club fence erect Sign RED 2

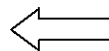


Also one to acknowledge carry on through gate past boats



On pathway where seat is erect Information Board - (perhaps look at placing refurbished seat here) Wording to be determined. This would also be useful for those walking from Warkworth and crossing to the town here.

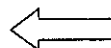
At path to broad exit; On pole RED 4



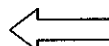
Ask if place pole in garden at corner of Victoria Villas entrance RED5



High Street - on Bus Stop RED 5



Queen Street Co-op On fingerpost RED 6



TOTAL: 1 Information Board 10 plaques

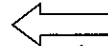
Green Trail

Following discussion it was decided this trail would be better if it went in the opposite direction to give points of interest and good views earlier in the walk. The wording would need to be redone to reflect this - hence numbers do not correspond to present wording. Also the middle and end of the trail would be routed differently. It was acknowledged that this trail would require more signage due to the more 'rural' aspects.

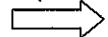
Erect plaque on the fence of old Brickworks with GREEN 1



Erect plaque to go through Harbour Village GREEN 1



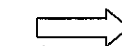
Erect plaque at rear of Harbour Village to point along
to Dock GREEN 1



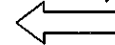
Erect plaque at Dock to direct across Harbour GREEN 1



Erect plaque - Puffin Board?- to direct along quayside GREEN 1



Erect plaque on Trail notice board to direct along Pier GREEN 2



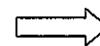
Erect plaque at end of Breakwater to direct to Paddlers Park GREEN 2



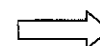
Erect plaque near Coal Truck to direct through Paddlers Park GREEN 3

Erect Information Board at Paddlers Park- wording to be determined.

Erect plaque near new bench being installed on Coast path between



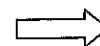
Rocket Hill & Island View to sign along the coast GREEN 3



Erect plaque at rear of East Cemetery to direct along back

- this is a change of the trail GREEN 4

Erect plaque at opposite corner to direct towards



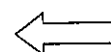
Links Road/ Signpost to Dunes & Hauxley? GREEN 4

Erect Information Board facing footpath near Funworld-

wording to be determined. This would get people onto the footpath

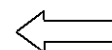
but could encourage those walking from the Caravan Park to go on the trails.

Erect plaque between East Cemetery and Marine Road to



guide along GREEN 5

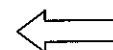
Erect plaque at end of Panhaven Road to point to Newburgh Street GREEN 5



Erect plaque at junction of Ladbroke Street to direct to Newburgh Street GREEN 5

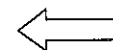


Erect plaque on 1 way signage to direct along Leazes Street- GREEN 5



from here is a change of the trail

Erect plaque to direct up footpath to the Mound GREEN 5



Erect information Board on Mound- wording to be determined. Ideal spot

Direct people to walk behind to go along the paths towards the centre.

Include a diarama? Have a distance post here too?

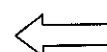
Erect a plaque at the central path crossovers to direct to Dilston Terrace GREEN 6



Erect a plaque in flowerbed / behind seat to direct to Fourways 1 GREEN 6



Erect a plaque on Fourways 1 to direct along Bridge Street GREEN 6



Erect a plaque Tesco corner to direct back to Town Square GREEN 6



TOTAL: 3 Information Boards 20 Plaques

Red Trail Walk- Friday 2nd October 10.30am Town Square

Green Trail Walk- Thursday 8th October 10am Town Square