



16 July 2024

An Open Letter to:

The Right Honourable David Smith, Member of Parliament, North Northumberland Constituency  
Ms Kim McGuinness, Mayor of the North East Combined Authority  
Cllr Glen Sanderson, Leader, Northumberland County Council

Dear all,

Our question is simple- what specifically do you intend to do for our community? The answer probably not so easy.

We have a strong vibrant community with many volunteers who have set up interest groups to enhance the offering for our people and their well- being, but volunteer time and effort should not be there without some external support and effort to improve the actual infrastructure offer within the town.

It is disheartening to see other towns in our region receiving government and County support for increased leisure, recreation, travel, social rented housing and employment infrastructure without similar input here. We note these expanded provisions with prospects of even more future spending promised in the same areas. We, like others, are concerned to see our own County Chairman advocating spending lots of NCC money to create a park in an area which has green spaces as well as public access to a very large extensive privately owned area of parkland whilst other communities struggle to get funding to improve their current facilities or to bring in new facilities and employment opportunities.

We appreciate their community needs but expansion of the areas to the South and North of this area brings little direct benefit for our community and those smaller areas near to us. We are fully aware of the facilities available in these towns but why should our families and individuals have to spend on transport to these areas for leisure, recreation and employment when the size of our town merits more than we have.

We are crying out for much needed investment in social rented housing as lots of our families and young people cannot hope to raise a deposit to buy or take advantage of present government incentives to purchase a home of their own. Many of our families are living in what is classified as a deprived area so can barely afford day to day living expenses and rely on food banks to supplement their provisions.

In the past and even today the mantra is 'first houses as these bring a larger population base to encourage employers and facilities to come.' Well, we have seen that with large scale housing developments and even almost 1000 more houses approved- so many in fact that Amble has very little land left for future development. Yet where is the promised push for employment and facilities?

We don't want empty promises- we want some action!

Despite several promises our town toilet facilities are deteriorating to an almost unhealthy standard whilst we see other smaller and less frequented tourist areas have theirs refurbished. Promises again this year that they will be surveyed but another tourist season is upon us, and no work has been carried out. Operatives try their best, but we are already getting complaints about their condition. We fear the longer this drags on, the greater effect on our vital tourist industry.

We have an enterprise park with several vacant plots and a Retail Park planned but not yet fully developed. Our community is desperate for some employment opportunities as without those, our families will be fractured as individuals must leave here to get employment opportunities or for career advancement. We do not want to become just a commuter town where people spend little time in the community itself.

We know there was a decline in retail and commercial enterprises, but this has now begun to re-emerge, and firms are expanding. We have a strong tourist trade but most of this is supported by fledgling start-ups or small family orientated concerns- we need larger employment concerns whether retail or industrial to be offered incentives to come here.

Whilst employment is vital, so is the well-being of our community.

We have volunteer interest groups who would love to start up, but lack of community space prevents them- we have no Community building as yet, although this is being actively looked into, but will require vast finance. Sports facilities are poor- yes there are plans to rejuvenate our Welfare Park and new School playing fields but even if these come to fruition, they will be limited for public use as education and the need to have paid for bookings to help with revenue will be paramount.

We also really need a facility offering a mix of recreation pursuits (or ones able to be changed for short periods) in inclement weather e.g. roller skating, trampolines, climbing wall, bowling etc. This would be well supported not only by our community but also by the year-round visiting tourists and holiday stay community.

We are one of the larger medium size market towns who have put great efforts into maintaining our community, redeveloping it and expanding it to the wonderful, pleasant place it is today.

We invite you to come and meet with us to share your thoughts, views, ideas and hopefully actual intentions as to what you will do to help our wonderful community.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of Amble Town Council and Residents of Amble  
Craig Weir (Chairman & Mayor)

Cc Jeff Watson, Northumberland County Councillor  
Cc Terry Clark, Northumberland County Councillor