

The Minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Area Advisory Group Meeting on 4th May 2010.

In attendance:

Annette Reeves	NCC Conservation Officer (North)
Peter Watts	The Greenses Residents' Association
Chris Burgess	NCC Conservation Team Manager (North) Chair
Peter Rutherford	NCC Dev Management Manager (North)
Tim Kirton	Regeneration Team (North)
Cllr Bowlas	Town Council
Philip Miller	Building Study Group
Margaret Thomas	St Boisil's Resident's Association
Alison Cowe	Berwick Civic Society

1. **Apologies:**

John Robertson (WE)

2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 13th April and matters arising.**

The minutes were agreed. Matters arising;

9. Brucegate – demolition of existing dental surgery and erection of 4 flats. The application has been approved with conditions. CAAG comments had been taken into consideration. Window/door details and sample panel of stonework dealt with via conditions.

3. **Regeneration Strategy – Protecting and enhancing the heritage asset (Update on THI and Area Partnership Schemes).**

AR confirmed that contracts had been signed by EH and NCC for the English Heritage Bridge Street and Castlegate Area Partnership Schemes. A press release; launch and photo had been prepared but EH were unable to publicise the grant schemes until after the election. AR and Iain Ogilvie (Programmes and Funding Manager) were working on a grant application form and process for managing applications from initial enquiry to payment of grant for all three heritage schemes that amalgamated EH/HLF/One NE and NCC guidance documents to ensure there was a single auditable process.

The THI development grant was continuing to be spent on additional surveys and research to support the Stage 2 submission. The reports were being collated as part of the final bid to be submitted at the end of May.

CB advised that AR's post had only been advertised regionally and not nationally but 10 applications had been received. First sift showed about 5/6 strong candidates for shortlisting but NCC not likely to interview until mid May. In the meantime Stephen Palmer from NECT was covering (2 days a week).

4. Berwick Listed Building Surveys (update).

AR advised that EH were continuing with the surveys. No additional buildings had come forward since the last batch of formal notifications but Hannah Saxton at EH was providing AR with the inspector's "initial assessment reports" (without recommendation) for information and use as part of potential local recording projects.

PM reported that the Building Study Group was continuing to work on the "Berwick in 1850" exhibition. They were plotting all the buildings that survive from 1852; starting with Bridge Street. AR advised that a recent meeting/discussion with Adam Menuge had resulted in a further offer of training/assistance; as Bridge Street is very much the focus of EH recording work and AR's delivery of the heritage projects.

5. Design Guides (continuation of discussion; proposals list [AC] funding options [CB]).

Deferred until the next meeting.

6. Berwick's Future (update on progress of project groups).

- Barracks Group – brief prepared for an options appraisal seeking viable alternative uses. Tenders due back mid May; interim report due by end of July; final report by September.
- Public Realm Group – AR showed prospective consultants around the three conservation areas on 13th April. Tenders received and shortlisting imminent with a view to appointing a consultant in the next couple of weeks to prepare the strategy.
- Movement Strategy – Castlegate car park has SAM consent but some revisions needed because of differing plans/drawings which needs to be resolved. PR advised that planning permission also required and this needs to be submitted as soon as possible.

7. PPS5 – brief overview (CB/AR)

CB requested that this be deferred to the next meeting for a fuller assessment. AR briefly outlined that PPS5 was holistic and amalgamated previous advice contained in PPG15 and PPG16 as well as landscape and cultural values that brought heritage planning guidance into line with

wider changes to the planning legislation and English Heritage's own 'best practice' guidance. The aim was to enable simpler, more transparent decisions to reflect the 'significance' of the asset and its setting. It was more concise but the accompanying guidance document from EH reiterated and stressed the current legislative framework and designation process of listing; scheduling; conservation areas; world heritage sites; historic battlefields etc. The nub of PPS5 is assessing the "significance" of a heritage asset. It still reflected the statutory designations but also locally important heritage assets that have been defined through a formal process (like a planning policy or local list for example).

There had been a series of HELM/EH training events throughout April but none in our region. An additional event had been put on in York and AR thought it would be useful to acquire the papers or see if there were other events planned for Newcastle/Northumberland.

CB advised that there were briefing notes being prepared in the office and he would bring these to the next meeting. PR requested that there be a shared approach with Development Management; not only through Central team but for the north team and CAAG to benefit from the discussion.

8. **CAAG website – example page (CB).**

CB had prepared a mock up of a website and had circulated a link previously via email. The website was also viewed in the meeting and everyone considered it a good idea. CB still needs everyone's logos. CB looking at purchasing a URL for CAAG (from NCC budget; about £50). The website could be launched to coincide with the launch/press release of the AP schemes. Ideas for inclusion on the website; CAAG's remit report; minutes; architect's protocol and checklist for assessing applications; history in the view presentation and links to other projects as part of the Berwick's Future partnership; including grant application requests for the schemes.

Ideas for content; plus logos to CB.

9. **Tweedmouth Riverside Project (MT).**

Discussion of the document is recorded as fully as possible in the order comments were raised;

CB introduced the document and considered it a useful stepping off point for the community concerning issues in Tweedmouth. It demonstrated what the community felt was important and had been articulated in a professional way.

MT outlined the history. Tweedmouth people keen to be involved; they want to be listened to; they want to promote Tweedmouth. St Boisil's residents had previously met with the Harbour commission, Councillors, fishermen, the Berwick Development Trust and One North East to convey their ideas. This produced a 'bombardment of ideas' and expectation perhaps that Regeneration or One NE would take their ideas forward.

The response was an invitation to continue the dialogue - but for the community to structure their thoughts – to have a more holistic approach and overview. Residents contacted all sorts of people/organisations and landowners as part of the preparation of a report. They were assisted by a professional planner – the document is not the final solution but does link their aims and objectives; concerns; guidelines and suggestions they hope will come to fruition.

AR conveyed what was briefly mentioned at the last meeting – how does the community document fit in with other strategies being prepared - the Berwick's Future Master Plan and Regeneration Strategy; Eastern Arc Area Action Plan and emerging Spittal Masterplan. MT conveyed they had met with Rob Horne to discuss the report. There was also a public meeting (4th May) at 7.00 p.m. Jenny Lampert (planning consultant) was fronting the meeting on behalf of residents.

AC asked how *did* it link in with the Berwick's Future?

MT confirmed that Rob Horne as the lead on this partnership *had* listened to the group; it was a worthwhile meeting and RH suggested sending the information in to NCC Planning Strategy as part of the Eastern Arc Area Action Plan work.

PR referred to the last page of the document and series of questions relating to decisions regarding image of the town; heritage value; issues affecting each site; how to interrelate the issues and interpretation of community vision and considered that this **was** captured in the Berwick's Future work – and formed part of the strategic overview and vision.

PW confirmed that Berwick's Future is moving to the delivery phase with a series of projects and project groups – this site; the relationship and input from the community was an identified project to be taken forward.

AR confirmed that at the last Berwick's Future Steering Group Rob Horne outlined that membership of a project group was still to be determined once residents had presented the improvements they were looking for. There was a discussion about how this information is being (or not being) communicated as there was a perception that "nothing is happening".

PW confirmed that a newsletter was published and circulated from the “communications group” but there were recognised issues in the dissemination of information to everyone.

PR outlined the process of decision making that needed to be understood by the community. The motivation of the partners in driving and taking the regeneration strategy forward needed to be trusted. PR undertaking work with Parish Councils in understanding each others position in how partnership works – the community needed to understand how the partnership took issues forward and the partnership needed to understand how community works – there was ‘a fracture’ that needed to be repaired.

The document was re-articulating issues already addressed by the partners – there were difficulties with some sites and this was for specific reasons. The value of the document was to feed into the Eastern Arc Area Action Plan – issues and options – to inform the preferred options report and direction of policy (that would emerge in 6-9 months time).

PM congratulated Tweedmouth residents on the production of professional document and vision for Tweedmouth – that focused on the importance of the river. It was an inspiring community led document.

PW considered the document contained a wealth of ideas; but what was the next stage; the options; that needed to be driven through Berwick’s Future.

AC considered there were micro/macro tensions between the strategic overview of the Berwick’s Future work and smaller scale projects.

PR reiterated the need for continuous engagement – more work was being done on the vision/regeneration strategy and the 10 sites; the next phase of work is currently being progressed and would be shared. The recommendations/options and decisions would be made through the Eastern Arc Area Action Plan.

CB wrapped up the discussion and considered the report was positive; the community had articulated their voice in a professional way that would inform future work.

10. **Current Planning Applications.**

None for CAAG consideration.

MT raised an issue of closing date for applications that differed in the press to neighbour letters (would need to raise with tech admin re; registration/neighbour letters and consultation dates).

MT raised Dock Road application – change of use to garden – concern that this site adjacent to the Goody Patchy and could affect the appearance of the conservation area. The land had been previously owned by BBC and was now NCC. CB asked TK to investigate purchase of council owned land for garden purposes. Is this an application for CAAG concerning the conservation area? If the application is not determined by the next CAAG we could possibly bring this application to the next meeting for discussion.

11. Any Other Business.

TK – Bridge illumination project; CAAG concern has been passed on to procurement regarding the delay. It was hoped that the matter would be resolved for the “opening” in October.

PM – Interpretation panels at the station had been put up for the Stephenson 150 festival and book publication (“Crossing the Tweed”). It had been done in time for the welcome parade of returning soldiers from Afghanistan who partook in the celebration.

AR – Advised that the letter to NCC’s reply to CAAG (from Peter Biggars) had not been sent as AR/MS had not been able to discuss the response since the last CAAG meeting; particularly as MS was not there for that part of the meeting. AR will pick this up with MS.

12. Date of Next Meeting(s).

Tuesday 1st June

Tuesday 6th July

Tuesday 10th August.