

Upper Eskdale Development Group
Open Community Meeting
The Hub : 20-07-16

Present: Diana Lilley, Ernie Buck, Sue Campany, her aunt, David Milburn, Andrew Gordon, Becky Peloso, Kathy Walker, James & Sandra Cooke, Steve & Karen Parkin, Sophie Dupre, Cameron Skillen, Sharon Tolson, Mandy Rae, Ken Porter, Helen Eyre, Ros King, Lisa Nash, Lyn Gibson, Ian Stuart and Sarah Lamb, Angie Ball, Nick Jennings, Jock Miller, David Moffat, Kate Roddick, Morag McGill, Victoria Long.

Jock introduced the new directors: David Moffat, Sue Campany and Ken Porter and expressed thanks to Angelo van Hoppe who has now resigned, for his work as a director. He explained that we have funding from the Lottery that will now cover some costs over a 7 year period rather than the original 5, and thanked Nick Jennings for having saved the funds to allow this to happen.

David Milburn the Interim CEO was introduced and said a few words about his role: He is here to provide support, advice and guidance and to see that the Lottery funding is properly used. All the capital provided has been spent. £55K of the revenue had not been drawn down and now this has been reallocated to be spent over a 7 yr. period (previously 5) on training, salaries and marketing. Any other expenditure will have to come from other sources and we need to address the needs of the community including the wider community. He will only be in post technically until October, which may be tapered so that he can mentor the Trustees over a period after that. Trustees now need to make significant decisions on what has to be done for the future of the Hub. It has to become sustainable, has to pay its way. David asked people to contact him if they want to make their opinions about this known. Social care is going to be very difficult, since local services will be non-existent from now on. Extra funding is hard to get from anywhere. He suggests that the lighter room upstairs be used for Arts. The other room could be used for games. His job is to disappear in a couple of months and leave the committee in charge (from Sept/Oct).

Questions: 'what is different now' and what is the problem' about making the project sustainable.

Reply: We have been losing money. The extra two years will give us the chance to sort it out. The Lottery want to see this work. The café is costing too much to run. We have to make the Café more cost effective. Things have to change.

Suggestions: Look at who is using the café and when: take numbers – who is local, who is visitor: seasonally and otherwise. Have a Café season: providing a service between March–Oct. Look at how this can be done, what we offer, cost, etc. Generally: out of season is for the locals and we need to find out what they think: what they want to eat. Find out what is our market. Who is buying, who is coming or not and why and what would attract them. We need to work out what we can offer and the quality has to be good. One person mentioned an experience of poor quality food. Staffing difficulties were discussed: some people work better under pressure, but staff ratio to customers is very difficult to estimate and customers sometimes end up having to wait a long time if number of staff is low. David mentioned he has seen a lot of these Cafes and very few of them cope. Have to look at how we can deliver a value for money service.

Shooting parties may come by in the winter. If the chef is good, people will come from far and wide.

Ambience: some comments were made about the décor, although no definite ideas on how to change/improve it were presented.

Licencee for the Hub: Nick Jennings is currently the Licence holder but wants to stand down. It is a legally mandated remit. David asked if anyone would offer to replace Nick. This involves some training.

Shop (Becky Paloso): The shop has been open for 3 months. It started with a very low budget and is run by volunteers. We talk to customers to find out what they want. Basic groceries are provided and we have been talking to Suma about stock from them. A fridge has been bought and we hope to buy a freezer. We would like to offer more services: cash back, for example.

Affordable housing (Nick Jennings): We have received funding to do a survey of the site. It looks definite that it will be for 2 houses only. However, we have not yet secured the land and have to check that we will be building what is actually going to be needed. There are no funds and we need to find the money before doing the work.

Health & Social Services (Nick Jennings): there are some big changes taking place and there is a meeting on 2nd Sept in Langholm to discuss the changes and the delivery for the Day Centre clientele.

Windfarm (Nick Jennings): The planning permission for the windfarm has gone through. A new development was the possibility of setting up a local electricity company which would reduce all our costs.

Playground (Victoria Long): The planning permission has been received. Since we are an ageing community, it is important that we do all we can to encourage families with children and young people into the area. All the funds now need to be raised. Since a neighbour expressed concern about the siting of the playground, it was suggested that a meeting be arranged by the neighbours with those at the Hub to discuss how to make the situation more manageable.

Volunteer day (Jock Miller): This was suggested to be 30th or 31st of July, preferably Sunday 31st, mainly for garden work. He asked for people to speak to him after the meeting.

Suggestion Box (Sharon Tolson): This is on the wall in the lobby and we welcome you to use it.

Comments: the Hub is a work in progress. Health and social care is also a work in progress, the situation will develop and change. It might be good to have a poster/?board to see what is going on in regard to health in the area.

There are always wrinkles in volunteer organisations. A hope was expressed that there is a person responsible for the staff and volunteers: a lot of the staff/volunteers are working really hard. David Milburn mentioned that he is dividing up the responsibility for all areas of work to the Trustees.

Signage: you get past the Hub before you realise it's a Café.

Up Coming Events (Sharon Tolson) : Some of these were mentioned.

1st Aid (David Milburn): There is a lack of 1st aid trained people. The Hub will be organising some training. If anyone is interested (full blown first aid), please let Sharon know. Is a half day event.

Victoria Long, Secretary