

Caithness Community Partnership

Wednesday 13th April 2019

11am – 1pm

Pentland Hotel, Thurso

Present:

Eann Sinclair, HIE (Chair); Lesley Kinloch, NHS; Sarah Bowyer, SHC; Cllr Karl Rosie, HC; Gail Ross, MSP; Trudy Morris, CoC; Michelle Johnstone, NHS; Alexander Glasgow, TCC; Amanda Bentham, HLH; Keith Moncur, HLH; Helen Allan, TCDT/TYC; Cllr Willie Mackay, HC; Roger Saxon, DSG; Ian Donald, HTSI; Rosemary Smith, HSC; Allan Tait, CVG; Julie Marker, CVG; Anne McDonald, HSCN; Nina Mackay, HLHAL; Cllr Maria Aitken, HC; Joan Lawrie, CVG; Cllr Alex McManus, HC; Jennifer Harvey, PPP; Neil Buchanan, B&DCC; Ian Mitchell, SNH; Iain Gregory, CCAB; Deirdre Aitken, HSC; Martin Thomsen, HIE; Angela Simpson, HIE;

Apologies:

Matthew Reiss, Keith Muir, Wilma Kelp, John West, Deirdre Aitken, Kirsteen Campbell, Lynn Stewart, Heather Urquhart, Jim Donaldson.

Welcome and previous minutes:

Mr Sinclair welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed delight at the fantastic turnout. He apologised for the late distribution of the minutes, this was down to problems with the CCP Website. Allan Tait asked where was SFRS and the Children's plan representative? *[update – Highland Council representative attended the Wick Locality Plan meeting that afternoon, having mistaken the dates/ venues]* He also took time to express disappointment at there being no representatives from Police Scotland, feeling let down that they have failed to attend or offer alternative representation.

Neil stated that he had not seen the new Fire Service representative at the last Community Plan meeting. He believes that non-attendance should be taken to task. Indicating that it was holding each locality session back. The Chair confirmed that Police Scotland were leading the Thurso Locality Plan, and had set up the next meeting. He also highlighted that SFRS and PS commitment can also be dependent on their work patterns/ on-call commitments. Sarah Bowyer reminded everyone that the roles were still in their early stages. People are still getting used to their responsibilities. And that there could be a lack of clarity about their CCP role. She believes that each agency is still working through things.

ACTION 1 – The Chair agreed to discuss partner commitment at the next Highland CPP Board.

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as read.

Actions from the previous meeting were discharged:

- The presentation at the last meeting by CDAP was shared by Siobhan.
ACTION 2 - upload onto CCP Website.
- Future Meeting dates - Will come back at the end of the meeting with dates for the forthcoming relevant meetings and upload them onto the Website.
- SSS sharing details on registration is still outstanding. Details will be distributed when complete.
- HES - Lauren Simpson had shared contact details.

Presentation - Ian Donald, Deputy Chief Officer, Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI)

Ian Donald introduced himself for HTSI, acknowledging that HTSI were not as visible as they could be. He would endeavour to be more visible and make every effort to connect with the Caithness CPP. He hopes to be able to produce an annual work plan, with the objective to be a useful partner and give feedback. HTSI would like to work with Caithness CPP on local action plans – the 3rd sector have some influence, but it's how best to demonstrate this. Suggestions that working from a couple of case studies or feedback from a survey would be ideal, if the partnership is happy to collaborate and share information with them?

HTSI recognises that each Community Partnership will be at different stages and is happy to adapt accordingly. Allan Tait said he would be happy to distribute any findings that would be relevant, adding that it would be interesting to see what impact this engagement will have. Ian Donald suggested the findings may be used to help aid funding, confirming that Adult Health and Wellbeing features heavily at many meetings. Other topics for HTSI are: Community Justice; Childcare & Funding; Community Identity; Social Contact; Transport.

Ranald MacAuslan (CDAF) expressed concerns over the possibility of centralisation of resources in the north. Funding cuts have already seen the disappearance of CVS North. These are now genuine concerns over the future plans for the area.

Ian Donald said that the HTSI service is currently looking to change the way it works. Investment is now going into new technology, online training, how to access funding etc. Ranald reminded the group that fundamentally nothing beats human contact. Ian confirmed that both online and human contact would still be available. The online facility is just another tool added to the toolbox.

Ian extended an invite to everyone to attend the Highland-wide forum meetings they hold. They work with all community partnerships and are currently working with Lochaber. Allan Tait argued that the meetings in Inverness are difficult to access and they have to ensure that Caithness is represented in order to have feedback.

Trudy Morris confirmed that Caithness Transport Forum feed into various local/ regional forums and would be happy for contact with HTSI.

Ranald MacAuslan would like to see a more visible Voluntary Sector. He would be happy to exchange information, as sometimes organisations exist in their own bubble. Ian Donald explained that HTSI provide training and that there are seminars available to attend. For members, training is free apart from the odd one-off charge that may crop up. This would also be discounted to members.

Helen Allan indicated that HTSI had run four seminars that interact with groups. However, she only heard about them second hand, and they seemed poorly attended, suggesting that communication was the issue. She confirmed that Thurso CDT was a member of HTSI. Ian explained that the last invitation had been sent out in letter form and he believed that it had been distributed to all members, but would be happy to consider any changes necessary. Jennifer Harvey agreed that it would be a shame if organisations such as PPP had missed out on a good opportunity to be involved, given that contracts were currently under consideration.

The Chair suggested using the CCP website for updates on events etc. This would help to sign post to other areas and would make for better collaborative distribution. Sites such as Caithness.org and the Chamber of Commerce provide alternative routes for sharing. Lesley Kinloch suggested that there

are lots of opportunities for representation. Being able to sign post to them from the website would be beneficial. However, websites vary, and it can be hard to navigate through them. It would be good if there could be a central coordination.

Alex MacManus expressed concern that responsibility would then fall onto the Council. Or perhaps move South. Stating that fundamentally leads for areas are their own responsibility. The Chair agreed that local responsibility would be preferred. It would be better to share information on the CCP Website with appropriate links.

Ian Donald thanked everyone for their time given and agreed to take away the discussion points.

Locality Plans

Castletown and Lybster/ Dunbeath/ Berriedale Locality Plans:

Julie Marker and Jennifer Harvey confirmed that summaries of engagements with people in the localities will be available on the CPP website, and it is intended to update this document as engagement continues on the ground. Themes discussed: Health and Wellbeing; Getting Around, Work and Local Economy; Facilities, Services and Amenities; Community Identity and Spirit. People reached were asked about what's working, and what needs to improve.

Similar themes ran across both areas. Looking at top issues and solutions, Transport featured quite highly, with lack of good connections leading to problems accessing employment, education, healthcare and childcare. Feedback from young people highlights that there currently are few suitable bus connections between Wick and Lybster/ Dunbeath/ Berriedale. Primary pupils think the service is brilliant, however high school pupils thought it required change, as they couldn't get transport to attend activities or for socialising. They found they had to rely on their parents. Children in outlying areas have problems going to and from school and they find it hard to rely on public transport. Caithness Community Transport was highlighted as an existing resource. Ranald highlighted that more drivers were required, especially for helping older people. Younger people might think about using it more if it were available.

Residents of Castletown remain largely positive. There are many activities for people in the area. Problems over Public Toilets has caused major issues for tourists. Concerns are of other agencies not engaging, with much room for working with people not engaged yet. CAB has also held a consultation day in the village.

Neil Buchanan expressed concern over toilets not being signposted. Tourists and locals alike need access to this facility. People like community nurses who are unable to use patients' bathrooms rely on public toilets. Alex Macmanus confirmed that he was looking into the issue. Neil Buchanan also said that areas of Lybster/Dunbeath/ Berriedale have a slow broadband service and at times have nothing at all. Quoting comments from a teenager – "trying to revise takes ages". Businesses also suffer with a slow service. It was agreed that communication of future development work by BT Openreach was an issue. It was agreed to ask for a more specific update from BT Openreach for particular areas where connectivity was an issue.

ACTION 3 – Chair to ask for updates from BT Openreach or appropriate body.

The issue of attending Orthodontic appointments was raised, with many parents having to travel to Inverness with children for a five-minute tightening of braces procedure. Couldn't this be dealt with

locally? Michelle Johnston said that this was an ongoing piece of work and NHS Highland is currently exploring all avenues, including the possibility of having a consultant up in the area one day a week. She was unable to give a timescale for implementation, but agreed it was a priority.

ACTION 4 – Michelle Johnston to update at next meeting.

Childcare

Expansion in childcare means fully funded positions for 3 and 4-year olds and eligible two year olds will be rolled out in the rural early years settings in August 2019 with towns coming on board in 2020.

This will have a big impact on rural communities. In nurseries this is the same time as primaries and high schools.

Funded places for 2-year olds is also being looked into. Child care is a big issue for parents, especially for parents who work in cafes/hotels and where childcare doesn't cover staff out-with school times. The aim is to work with childminders and commission for out of hours childcare from the ages of 2-4yrs that will be fully funded. With free meal and healthy snacks, this would have a good impact and meet the needs of the community.

ACTION 5 – Alex MacManus – to distribute details of the workshop by e-mail about the Rollout this year.

Wick Locality Plan

The focus has been on Drugs, Alcohol and Mental Health. There were structured invites in papers, on posters and in the community to workshops on the issues, and it has been good to get the perspective of first hand experiences. Lots of groups and agencies made themselves available. They looked at gaps and how to make things better. Feeling that comes across immediately is that there has not been enough support from NHS. This has had a bad impact on other agencies.

Publicans expressed concern that their premises have been used to share drugs. They have taken to spraying WD40 to prevent use of drugs. Other agencies are working with similar problems. People are begging for help and support and are being sign posted to other agencies, such as Young People at Birchwood. This is the first line of support available for recovery.

The feedback is that there is nothing available from NHS in the event of a mental health crisis and it results in other agencies plugging the gap. There is the need for something in Caithness for 1st contact. A hub is required with a 24-hr service. Currently the PPP in Wick are looking at delivering support, but the ask from the workshops is to get everyone on board to help things move forward. These problems hit all age groups. We must look at what agencies have to offer the community.

Question should to be asked who should bridge the gap?

Defining where to go to and who to speak to is important. Also knowing where best to sign post this? Michelle Johnston indicated that there's the need to be more proactive beforehand. Look at what's going on in an individual's life. It has been accepted that not one agency has the solution. Roger Saxon is delighted that the CCP is highlighting the issues and that PPP are actively helping with the complexities of the problem. Many agencies don't want to engage. The old Café Tempest building in Thurso has been turned into a Community Café. A place where there is no stigma. A place to provide help to those that need it. There is no price list, all they ask for is a donation. It is hoped that with community support the premises can be self-sufficient. Hopefully this is a place where people can feel safe to come, have a chat and make the first steps to ask for help. There are no signs to say what the building is, it looks like an ordinary place. There is no label, no pressure. This is a

good development, where information can be shared. People come in and donate food. It is volunteer run, with many having had first-hand experience of addiction. This café provides help to all who suffer from addictions, no matter what form that may take.

In Wick PPP are offering services in the meantime, to provide a place where there is no judgement. There are no sign posts to the rooms in use. Sometimes the stigma is too much for many people to deal with and this is what turns people away.

Roger Saxon agreed that there should be a direct link to the community. It is felt that statutory agencies have failed, they are not meeting the needs of the people. Allan Tait agreed that this is a big issue and suggested forming a sub group of the CPP, collaborating with the Sutherland CPP

ACTION 6 – Allan Tait – to coordinate with Sutherland CPP with a view to forming a sub group.

ACTION 7 – Jennifer Harvey to share Locality Plan report.

Thurso Locality Plan

Alex MacManus expressed gratitude to Joan Lawrie for the work done on the Locality Plan, confirming that the first draft is almost ready. After which they can set out appropriate actions. It not expected to have quick fixes. Joan Lawrie was pleased that generally the Aspiring Communities engagement process in Thurso was going well, and reaching people not usually touched by such work. The Locality meetings themselves were patchy – at some meetings nobody from the community turned up. But this could be down to an initial lack of awareness.

Joan confirmed that they have similar issues to those identified in the Wick Locality Plan. Social contact being a big problem. With Drugs and Alcohol problems, it is difficult to find groups that support these issues. There is nowhere to hold meetings. There is the growing need for a community hub. Somewhere that can help tackle problems before they arise. Lack of social contact and isolation doesn't help. This requires addressed first. Transport South to Medical appointments is also increasingly difficult.

After speaking with mums and single parents, it's become apparent that child care is a big issue. One of the major childcare providers closed last year, posing many challenges for parents. The lack of childcare providers/facilities has a knock-on effect on jobs in towns. Many parents in the care profession find it particularly difficult to gain assistance due to their anti-social hours.

Young People face similar problems with social isolation. Although there are sport groups, this doesn't suit everyone. YP say there is nowhere to go. There are no Senior Citizen lunches to go to. It is good that these issues have been talked about. Roger Saxon added that there are befrienders trying to link up with people. Although this is not available for Young People under the age of 18. It must be recognised that young people are not supported. Many have to wait 6-8 weeks before they can access support. Joan Lawrie agreed that she would keep the group updated on childcare provisions.

ACTION 8 - Joan Lawrie to keep CCP updated.

Keith Moncur confirmed that High Life Highland have a funded project Outreach. It is run by sessional staff and aims to work with NHS and Police Scotland across Caithness and Sutherland. It is currently a campervan that can be situated in car parks. It aims to target many diverse subjects. It's a place where young vulnerable people can stop and have a coffee and a chat. Outreach recognises the need to get out and engage face to face, but can also be contactable through mobile

phone. It's a good opportunity to speak to kids and find out what's going on, in a manner that's not authoritarian. Being able to guide them away from congregating in areas that cause concern to members of the public, as concerns have been raised about broken glass around playground areas after older children have been spotted there.

Keith Moncur suggested approaching guidance teachers and making them aware of the offered services. It would be good to get teachers onboard.

ACTION 9 – Keith Moncur – to promote outreach service to teaching staff.

Community Learning & Development

Angela Simpson briefly outlined CLD – she is temporarily acting as the Community Learning and Development lead for Caithness on behalf of the partnership. The role of the lead is to ensure that the partnership considers the CLD needs of the community as it develops its plans. CLD is bound by regulations will play a significant role in the effectiveness of CPPs. Angela also sits on the Highland Strategic CLD thematic group which reports to the HCPP. The strategic group monitor the progress of the Highland CLD Plan. CLD is a way of supporting groups and individuals of all ages to bring about change in their lives and communities. Through CLD more empowered communities and individuals also become better equipped to work with and influence decision makes. The Partnerships current engagement process is in itself a form CLD. An action of the Highland CLD plan is to create CLD Networks – providing an opportunity for practitioners and partners to work together on a regular basis. Angela will be arranging the first of these network meetings in the summer.

AOB

Ian Mitchell said that Peatland Partnership are having a community consultation on the Flow Country World Heritage status bid. They will be going to Thurso, Wick, Halkirk, Lybster and other Locations. There will be a notice in the paper for it. There is plans to hold drop in sessions. Dates are available on the website.

Future dates

Future dates for meetings will be circulated through Calendar invites. All information from the meeting will be distributed through the CCP website.