

North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership

LIME GROVE PUBLIC MEETING REPORT



January 2017

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North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership

The Area Partnership brings people from across the community together to get our voices heard and influence decisions about the things that matter to us. We will continue to work with communities across the North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership to develop an Area plan in a fair, transparent, accountable and inclusive way.

Our Vision

Our vision is to work with our community to make life better for everyone who lives, gets around, works, and visits the North Berwick Coastal Area.

Our Values

The overarching value of the North Berwick Coastal Area Partnerships is to reduce inequalities both within and between our communities.

Background

The North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership agreed to continue a 'Community Conversation' in response to the request from the community to protect the Lime Grove Site from housing development.

The Lime Grove Site, which is a former Council Depot, may be the last significant piece of brown field land in North Berwick held by East Lothian Council that could be used to benefit the community. East Lothian Council is preparing the land for sale, but there is growing interest from community members to ensure it is used for the benefit of the coastal communities and not just sold off to a private housing developer.

Both the North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership and the North Berwick Community Council have written to East Lothian Council to ask them to consider an asset transfer of the site and are receiving guidance through the Community Ownership Support Service. There is no guarantee that an asset transfer will be successful, but the new Community Empowerment Act, which came into force on 23 January 2017, is aimed at encouraging the community to take over assets.

During the Community Conversation organised by the North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership, the community identified a range of facilities to meet local need and their aspirations to support a sense of being a community, such as a community hub, employment sites, growing spaces, affordable housing and services to promote health and wellbeing. These are objectives already contained in the North Berwick Coastal Area Plan and to develop these proposals further, we organised a series of community engagement events. Over 100 people attended the meeting during the Fringe by the Sea Festival at the Spiegel Tent in August and several hundred visited the former Thistles shop in the High Street at the end of last year to give their views on what would make North Berwick Coastal a great place to live, get around, work and visit. www.eastlothian.gov.uk/areapartnerships. The Lime Grove Site featured regularly as a space in the community where some of our dreams and aspirations for our community could be realised. A group of interested community members then met with the Development Trusts Association Scotland and Community Ownership Support Service in December 2016 and agreed to hold a public meeting.

Objectives for the Meeting:

- To explore the strength of feeling from local people that the Lime Grove site should be protected for their community. After the presentation from the Community Ownership Support Service there was an opportunity for questions and people were asked to give a show of hands to measure the strength of support from the community. Over **160 people** put up their hands, there were no objections.
- To begin to consider how best to use the site and what new facilities on this site would benefit the wider community across the eastern part of the county. The Community Conversation had already identified possible uses and there was an opportunity to discuss these and put forward any other suggestions.
- To have a clear steer from the community and their support to take this forward.

It was acknowledged that this was a really exciting opportunity for the community to get some of the facilities it really needs and a first step in reaching as many people as possible.

It is important that we continue to include those voices that are not normally heard as we go forward.

As the meeting did support putting in a community asset transfer request, the next stage to consider for the community is to set up a limited company. Once the request is in East Lothian Council will have to hold off selling the land allowing a 6-8 month period for the community to come up with a detailed plan for the site.

**Lime Grove Public Meeting
7.00pm on 26 January 2017 at North Berwick Community Centre**

Agenda

Time	Activity
7.00-7.05pm	Welcome – Chair of the meeting, Deborah Ritchie
7.05-7.15pm	Background to the meeting, including position re Lime Grove and Community Conversation – Lesley Kay, Co Chair of the North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership
7.15-7.25pm	Nicky Donald, Community Ownership Support Services
7.25-7.35pm	Questions
7.35-7.40pm	A show of hands
7.40-45pm	Introduction to World Café – Katie Nevans, Community Development Officer, North Berwick Coastal
7.45 -8.45pm	World Cafe Discussion
8.45-8.55pm	Report back from tables
8.55-9pm	Thank you and way forward – Lesley Kay, Co Chair of the North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership

Attendance

160 people attended (70 males, 90 female).

LIME GROVE SITE



Community Ownership Support Service (COSS)

Nicky Donald from COSS gave a presentation, key points from this:

- COSS is part of the Development Trusts Association for Scotland (DTAS)
- COSS is a Scottish government funded programme, adviser led across 32 LA areas, set up to : help community-based groups take ownership of assets for community benefit – asset transfer
- support local authorities and other public
- agencies to transfer assets into community ownership

What is (Community) Asset Transfer?

A process to allow a community organisation to take over publicly-owned land or buildings, in a way that recognises the public benefits that the community use will bring. That may be a discounted price, a grant or other support.

Assets are land and any buildings or other structures on the land.

The community body requesting the asset transfer must be:

- A limited company with a Dissolution Clause
 - (i) to another community transfer body
 - (ii) to a charity.
- A Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)
- A Community Benefit Society
- (BenComm)

All with no fewer than 20 members.

Nicky suggested the following questions to ask before considering an asset transfer:

- What is the need/demand? How do we know?
- Do we require an asset to deliver on the need?
- Have we looked at every asset option?
- Will the project promote or improve: economic development, regeneration, public health, social wellbeing, environmental wellbeing.
- Will it reduce inequalities?
- Is it all financially viable?
- Will it be sustainable in to the future?

Summary points made from the floor

- Officially survey site and classify as brown field or public open space.
- Important to establish valuation of the land
- Is the site contaminated? e.g. asbestos
- What environmental restrictions are on the site? e.g. natural habitat for newts
- Maximise the view
- Expanding town and the need for more infrastructure
- Public land must be protected from private housing development
- Proximity of residential area and width of access road into the site
- Great views but access limited - avoid facility that clogs roads only at 'peak times'

- Site is on the edge of town – accessibility?
- Creative use of existing buildings and incorporate history of site using recycling materials
- Parking issues for local residents
- Narrow road – one road in – one road out space when cars parked
- Further consultation needed as who isn't here tonight?
- Need to take the discussion to the schools.
- Gather ideas from children and young people.

Feedback from World Cafe Consultation

How could the Lime Grove site meet the needs from the community in relation to:

Outcome from Area Plan	Local residents are well informed about opportunities and developments in their area and how they can get involved
Related Outcome in the East Lothian Plan	We have stronger, more resilient, supportive, influential and inclusive communities

Community Hub

- Performing arts space – multi functional combining skatepark, cinema, theatre, recording studio, exhibition space, soft plan and cafe.
- Performance and rehearsal space, stage
- Fringe by the Sea space
- THE SPACE 2 – the next frontier - run by young people for young people
- X Generation Skatepark
- Create a building young people want to go into whatever the interests
- Social spaces for people to meet who are isolated
- Maximise aspect of the view
- Craft spaces too
- Community Centre - Combining need for improved larger centre with performance space
- Commercial space – offices, pop-up shops, training in catering
- North Berwick Arts Collective – artists, designers, Craftspeople
- Natural environment – use the wildlife in the area to educate and work with young people
- Space for a variety of community groups to meet
- Accessible space
- Purpose built
- Office space for independent consultants like the Melting Pot on Rose Street, Edinburgh – social enterprise hub
- Hosting international artists and photographers e.g. Dunoon Burgh hall example of community space with exploring

- No Big Car Park – a big Bike park instead
- Theatre offering all facilities must be top quality
- Learning spaces including outdoor play environment for children
- Cafe – good and well run to generate income to help run the centre providing visitors to the theatre/arts centre/drama group with a quality experience
- Outdoor amphitheatre
- Iconic building into the landscape – panoramic views, indoor theatre in the round, second floor pods – (art studios, small business spaces etc)
- Multi purpose – huge market from visitors to the town as well as resident

Comments:

- I feel the original idea of an Arts Centre is being overtaken by so many worthy interest groups that nothing is being achieved – just going round in circles.

How could the Lime Grove site meet the needs from the community in relation to:

Outcome	2. Our communities are able to make healthy choices and access the services they need in order to maintain a positive level of well being
Related Outcome in the East Lothian Plan	(3) In East Lothian we live healthier, more active and independent lives

Health & Wellbeing

- A Health Campus
- New Health Centre combined with community hospital space
- Wanderbus for access
- Healthy Living Centre – harm reduction, therapy, mental health services
- Family Centre – proving for equality for all, We are not all affluent.
- Mixed team of complementary services
- One Stop Shop
- Cafe – multi use – no stigma in visiting, no one knows why you are there.
- Dental Surgery
- A second Day Centre for older people
- Residential care
- Social spaces for people to meet especially those who are isolated
- Wellbeing Centre including – physiotherapist, podiatrist etc.

Comments:

- The Eddington is a huge asset not just medical, social too, friends of patients pop in and out, the terminally ill may wish to die in North Berwick. This hospital is much loved in the town.
- Want the Eddington to stay
- The Abbey is a great asset and it needs investment

How could the Lime Grove site meet the needs from the community in relation to:

Outcome	9 Increase the availability of affordable housing
Related Outcome in the East Lothian Plan	Everyone in East Lothian has access to quality sustainable housing

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 1-2 bedroom housing helping locals to live in the area – young people to establish themselves and older people to downsize
- Innovative housing solutions – starter homes – offer a few plots for people to design their own homes
- Flats and houses for rent
- Mix of social housing and mid market rent
- Preserve the character of the existing buildings on the site
- Need for community facilities
- Possible mix of housing – builders funding social housing or houses funding community facilities
- ECO builds
- Needs to have enough parking
- Need a decent design
- Temporary accommodation to move on e.g. pods, shipping container style (see Archerfield) interesting mix of housing
- Housing just on part of the site with workshops/youth space
- More shared social spaces
- Co-housing

Comments:

Is Limegrove the right site? The Home farm site (on Trust Land) maybe better as this is closer to the town centre facilities.

How could the Lime Grove site meet the needs from the community in relation to:

Outcome	15 Increased opportunities for local employment and business growth
Related Outcome in the East Lothian Plan	We have a growing sustainable economy

EMPLOYMENT

- Community workshops
- Spaces for small business and hot desking
- Artists Studios

- Small office accommodation
- Crèche 6am-6pm
- Studio Units
- Rowing Club Workshop
- Cafe/restaurant
- Farmers market
- Award winning Cafe
- An enterprise hub

How could the Lime Grove site meet the needs from the community in relation to:

Outcome	5. To protect our high quality natural environment
Related Outcome in the East Lothian Plan	East Lothian has high quality natural environments

GROWING SPACES/ENVIRONMENTAL

- Community gardens
- Wild garden
- Farmers market
- Quick delivery community bin hands
- Environmental sculpture
- Allotment
- Ecological design
- Cafe e.g. social bite – ‘Serenity Cafe’ Gorgie City farm cafe
- Food hub produce swap
- Officially survey the site and classify as brown field or public open space
- Link to Cycle /paths routes to site
- Buildings green and grow
- Environmental wildlife
- Wildlife – Newts
- Men’s Shed
- Education Centre for wildlife with children involved
- Skills for gardens and cultivation
- Links to In Bloom
- Running water and suds pond
- Mental health garden
- Access – bus, parking limited
- Limegrove farm (like Gorgie Farm)
- Sensory garden
- Maintain green area as an openspace for roaming children etc.
- Promoting local produce e.g. bakers, food stalls

OTHER IDEAS

- Access for everyone
- Create multigenerational spaces that everyone wants to visit
- Retain existing stone buildings – historical context of site preserved as far as possible - very 'North Berwick' style!
- Weddings and parties venue
- Artists Studios – using the steading building
- Recording Studio
- Understory car park incorporated in building
- Tourist Pods (like those on the caravan parks)
- Zero energy building
- Community book shop offering reading/poetry sessions
- Move Fire Station out of town
- Community Radio Station – young people interested in media e.g. east Coast FM, Crystal FM
- School uniform bank for parents
- Room for Scout group
- Importance of walking to the facilities – Wanderbus, park and ride, little trains?
- Site linked to path/cycle network
- Funicular Railway up the hill to the site – tourist attraction
- Scope for 2-3 different buildings
- Skatepark – SPACE 2
- Outdoor Pool with cafe overlooking the sea
- Community Restaurants/cafe –entertainments for holiday makers
- Maximise close proximity to the caravan park and Tantallon castle – partnership entertainment and glam ping
- Children's Nursery

Comments:

- Encourage pedestrians and cyclists to use whatever the facility might be – discourage cars, limit parking please, disabled parking and a Wanderbus.
- Acknowledge and maximise the view

Summary

There is overwhelming support from the community to help secure the Lime Grove site for the community.

The majority of people wanted to see a mixed use of the site with strong support for combining services to maximise the spaces available and make the most of the view.

It is important to take into account where facilities are best placed in light of current developments on the North Berwick Trust Land. There is a need to look at existing community assets and whether the community is making best use of these.

Many people raised the loss of the SPACE (indoor skatepark) and the impact this has had on young people.

Way Forward

The Lime Grove Sub Group from the North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership will meet to pull together an action plan that will include:

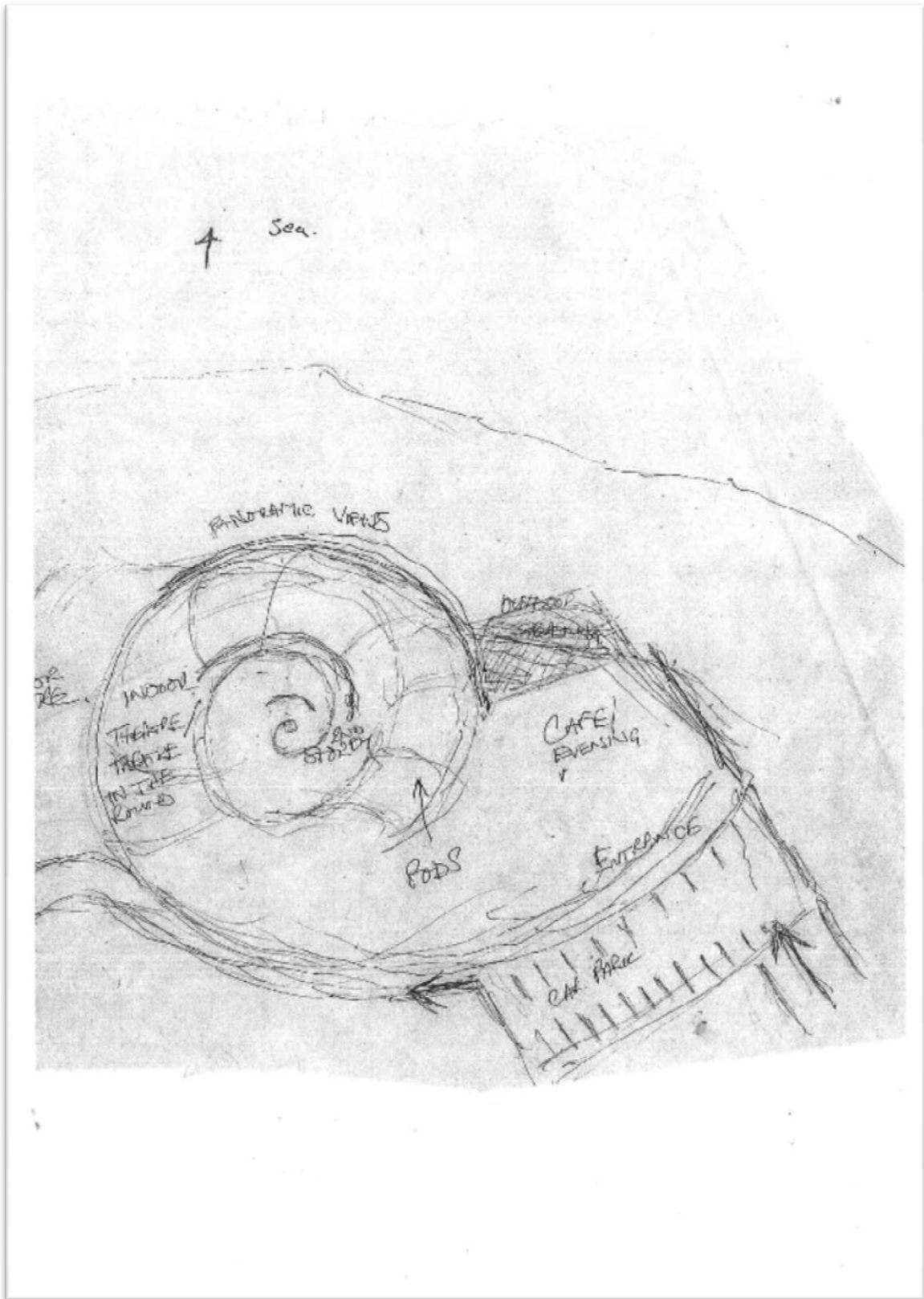
- Further consultation with the community to ensure as many voices are heard
- Liaise with East Lothian Council on developing proposals for the site
- Continue to liaise with the Community Ownership Support Service for advice and support
- Circulate report from the Meeting to feedback to the community on initial ideas
- Prepare a skills audit and match local skills to what's needed
- Prepare an action plan
- Prepare a communications strategy
- Consider best governance to take this forward e.g. Community Company
- Attract funding and or expertise for survey reports and evaluation of land
- Prepare a Business Plan in response to community aspirations and needs.

Thanks from North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership

The efforts from the community were instrumental to the success of this public meeting. These included the design of the publicity, spreading the word through flyers and posters, word of mouth, social media and local press coverage. Local people gave up their time to chair the meeting and facilitate the World Cafe format. Thanks to all the 160 people who attended the meeting and for demonstrating their support.

Thanks to Ian Goodall for the 'Hands Up' photo.

Our apologies to the people who had to stand and were unable to see the full presentation. This was due to the high number of people attending.



A doodle drawn at the World Cafe consultation table