

Home Zone Update

Earlier this year you will have heard of Home Zones, perhaps for the first time. This would have been when a leaflet entitled 'Cowpen Quay Home Zone' was dropped through your letterbox. Since then, a lot has happened and the purpose of this newsletter is to update you of the progress that has been made.

What is a Home Zone?

Home zones have been widely adopted in continental Europe since the early 1970's. A home zone is a residential area where people come before vehicles. The streets are designed primarily for pedestrians and cyclists rather than the motorist and people share what would have formerly been carriageway and pavements. This is achieved by redesigning streets using traffic calming, parking, landscaping, seating and play areas, to control how vehicles move. If it is well designed the speed of traffic is only a little faster than walking pace.

The benefits of a Home Zone

- increases social activity and strengthens communities;
- wider ranging activity and children's play;
- more efficient use of carriageway space;
- visually more attractive streets;
- increasing levels of communication between drivers and pedestrians;
- reduced driving speeds;
- greater levels of safety; encourages walking and cycling.



Home Zone Initiatives

There have been fourteen home zone pilot projects introduced in the United Kingdom, which are currently being monitored. However, to accelerate the growth of the programme, the government committed £30 million to a Home Zone Challenge Fund in England. This allowed Highway Authorities to bid for up to £1.5 million to introduce home zones within their area. Northumberland County Council in partnership with Blyth Valley Borough Council was successful in securing £ 3/4 million for Cowpen Quay, with additional funding being made available from the Local Transport Plan and other sources. The home zone is part of a larger initiative, which will include various organisations working in partnership.

Cowpen Quay Home Zone

Consultation with the people of Cowpen Quay started in June 2002 and a lot of useful information has been received. The information provided allowed us to develop 3 'quick win projects' whilst further research was being carried out. They were:

1. Tackling the number one 'eyesore' in the area – The Boys' Club Site on Wright Street.
2. Improving street lighting in the area.
3. Improving communications between individual and community groups in the area.

What follows is an update on these 'quick-win' projects.

1. A considerable number of people expressed concern about the condition of the Boys' Club site and the threat to the personal safety of young children after the building was demolished. Following a lot of campaigning locally, we can now confirm that Blyth Valley Borough Council has now served a legal notice on the Boys' Club Trustees to improve the site. It is our current understanding that the time runs out in the New Year. We would like to assure you that the Home Zone Steering Group is keeping a watchful eye on this site and is anxious to see the site safely restored.

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2. The street lighting plans for the area were discussed in October and residents approved the proposals and almost 300 new lighting columns will be erected. These will result in vastly improved standards of lighting. Current lighting columns will be taken down and replaced by a modern, state of the art lamp and post. Details of the intended location of the lighting columns can be studied on plans provided by the Design Engineer. Residents wishing to study the precise location and wishing to have their views taken account of can view the plans at the following venues:

Northumberland C C
County Hall, Morpeth
c/o Neil Johnson,
Design /Engineer

13 Boyne Court, Cowpen Quay.
c/o Chris Byrne
Tel 01670 368657

105 Beaumont Street,
Cowpen Quay
c/o Ronnie Mordue
(Chair of Home-Zone residents
steering group.) Tel.369745



John Brown, Home Zone Steering Group, Local Residents and Mark Hedley, Engineer: Traffic Management, Northumberland County Council

On-site work installing the street lighting is expected to last 6 weeks and to be completed in February 2003.

3. Communications – help us communicate better and win some money!

With over 1000 properties in the block of Cowpen Quay bounded by Regent Street, Hodgson's Road, Cowpen Road and the town centre, it is some task ensuring residents are kept up-to-date with what is happening in the home zone and with the regeneration of the area. So, it was agreed that the 3rd 'quick-win project' should aid communications. It has been agreed to hold a design project for the development of proposals to

provide 5/6 community notice boards in the area. Detailed below is information relating to a design competition. We're asking local residents, schools, youth organisations, tenant groups etc to help us with the design of the notice boards. The winning entry can earn you £100 and will be the basis for the manufacture of a notice board. We'll be asking a local manufacturer to realise your design.

Check out the details and produce your design by 28 February 2002 submitting you entry to Chris Byrne at The Guinness Trust Office, 13 Boyne Court, Blyth NE24 IEP

Details of Entry Categories:

1. Under 11's at September 2002
2. 12 – 16 years at September 2002
3. 17+

Anyone may enter, schools, youth organisations, tenant groups especially welcome.

Submit your ideas/designs on not more than 2 sides of A4 paper
No individual may submit more than 3 entries.

It is envisaged that a draft master plan for the area will be developed. This will be the focus of the next phase of consultation, giving the residents the opportunity to comment, so that amendments can be made accordingly.

Further consultation exercises will be carried out to allow the plan to be finalised and work to start.

In developing a successful home zone, it is essential to involve everyone who will be affected by the project and residents are encouraged to get involved at all stages. Although the information received has been very useful, there are still certain groups such as the disabled and the younger generation where information has not been forthcoming, but would be welcomed.

For any further information or assistance contact -

Mark Hedley, Home Zone Co-ordinator, Environment Directorate, Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth Northumbeland, NE61 2EF

Tel: 01670 533961

e-mail: mjhedley@northumberland.gov.uk

Steve Bucknall, Home Zone Co-ordinator, Streetcare, Blyth Valley Borough Council, Cowley Road, Blyth Industrial Estate, Blyth, Northumbeland, NE24 STF

Tel: 01670 542454

e-mail: stbucknall@blythvalley.gov.uk

Do You Have A New Vision For Your Street?

Improvements to Wright Street and Renwick Road Cut

Footpath Works Should Improve Safety

A notorious footpath linking Wright Street to Renwick Road in Blyth is currently undergoing a radical transformation to improve pedestrian safety. The layout of the path meant that pedestrians using it could not see along its length and, despite being fairly well lit, it presented a real danger to personal safety.

Local residents have long campaigned for improvements to be carried out and finally problems of land acquisition and ownership have been overcome to allow the necessary construction works to begin. The path will be widened and realigned which, together with a new modern street lighting system, will make the route much safer for users. Works should be complete by the end of January 2003.



Pictured are, local resident Kath Nesbitt and Steve Bucknall who is Highways and Transport Manager with Blyth Valley Borough Council.



Residents and workmen of Athlone Court, which is currently undergoing refurbishment

Guinness Trust Estate Changes

Tenants of the Guinness Trust and those in the know, who have taken the trouble to attend local public meetings, are aware of proposed changes to the estate.

Some £3 million will be spent on changes to the estate. Plans include:

1. improvements to Athlone Court (The sheltered housing scheme)
2. planned demolition of 52 properties (mainly single-bed flats in the 3 storey properties of Kerry Close and Boyne Court)
3. extensive improvements to all remaining properties including double glazing and energy conservation work, new kitchens and bathrooms and re-wiring.
4. Improvements to the layout of the estate, including car parking and play facilities.

Work has already commenced on phase one of the work with the improvements to Athlone Court. Proposals for the environmental improvements to those areas of the estate demolished will be the subject of public consultation in the New Year.

Individuals directly affected by the changes have been involved in detailed discussions with Guinness Trust Officers. There is recognition that the changes to the estate, however welcome, will cause some anxiety for residents. It is not envisaged by the Guinness Trust, however, that there will be the need for individuals/families to relocate outside the area.

All enquiries relating to allocations and property maintenance should be directed to David Jones, Housing Officer on Free phone 08000 853585

Do you live in Cowpen Quay?

Are you involved in community work?
Interested in getting involved as a youth and community worker?
IF SO, YOU ARE JUST THE PERSON WE ARE LOOKING FOR!

THE COWPEN QUAY PARTNERSHIP IS LOOKING FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS (16 years +) TO TAKE PART IN THE RENOWNED INVESTORS IN EXCELLENCE/ PACIFIC INSTITUTE'S "STEPS COURSE".
When? - 27, 28 and 29th. January from 9.30am to 3.00pm (Lunch included)

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Do You Have A New Vision For Your Street?

(Further courses will be available throughout the year)

Where? - Probably at Sure Start Centre on Cowpen Road (to be confirmed).

With whom? - There are twelve places available in total.

Why? - In order to develop the potential of local people and the resources within the community. You'll be sure to enjoy the sessions and learn a great deal about yourself and what motivates you.

Cost? - No charge will be made to individuals completing the Course.

What do I have to do? If you want further details or to enrol, contact Chris Byrne (Regeneration Assistant) at 13 Boyne Court, The Guinness Trust Estate, Cowpen Quay, Blyth NE24 1EP. (Tel 01670 368657)

Community Organisations in Cowpen Quay

Here is a brief overview of organisations operating in Cowpen Quay with contact details provided:

Sure Start Blyth

A Government initiative which aims to provide activities and support to improve the opportunities for pre school children and their parents/carers.
103 Wright St
Tel: 01670 798800 Fax: 01670 797059

It is possible to write to them via:
Sure Start
FREEPOST, NEA12431
Blyth. NE24 1BR

Wilson School of Black Belts

A successful academy offering professional courses in a variety of Martial Arts to adults and children, with character development and self-discipline being core to the teaching.

1A Wright St

Contact: Peter Wilson, Master Instructor on 354254

Ashbourne Healthcare, Durban House Care Centre

A Nursing Home specialising in caring for the elderly mentally infirm offering care and treatment for up to 40 residents at a time.

Durban St

Contact: Wayne Riddell on 354181

The Buffalo Community Centre

Providing a range of activities for adults and children in the area, it also houses several groups and is available for private room hire.

Regent St

Contact: Denise Mitchell on 365214

Morpeth Road First School

The school teaches the majority of children in Cowpen Quay but is aiming to start providing services for the wider community within the near future.

Disraeli St

Contact: Acting Headteacher Charles Ellis on 353257

Blyth Comrades Club

91 Wright St

Contact: Jimmy Butterworth, Secretary on 353260

Blyth and District Social Club "The Big Club"

Keelmans Terrace

Contact: Les Ord, Steward on 352541
Both clubs offer affordable drinks and regular nights of light entertainment in a friendly atmosphere. They also offer rooms for private bookings upon request, see contacts for details.

Resident Chair of Home Zone Steering Group



Ronnie Mordue of Beaumont Street has lived in Cowpen Quay for 30 years.

In that time Ronnie has been actively involved in his community and was recently elected as Chair of the main decision making forum for the home zone.

"In 1999 a move was made by residents of Cowpen Quay to block a proposed venture in French St. The movement against this proposal helped rebuild a once strong community spirit. That spirit holds together still and should be used to improve the quality of life of the residents and create a great change in the area.

A start has already been made on home zone projects. You may have noticed that the first phase of street lighting improvements has already started. The whole scheme should be complete in the early part of this year.

We would like to hear from residents who have any ideas or suggestions as to how the funding can be spent to improve the area. Please use the voice that spoke so strongly in 1999. It's YOUR home zone. Come along and have your say for 2003 and beyond".

Ronnie Mordue

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