

Ballyhornan Realm Inter-Agency Community Task Force Newsletter

July 2012 Issue 1

The Ballyhornan Realm Interagency Group (BRIG) is a unique cross-community, cross-party working group dedicated to re-develop Ballyhornan. Sponsored by Down Council and involving all local politicians it has been working hard to deliver change. Here are a few of the things we have delivered over the last year;

- Down Council have matched £5000 towards the cost of developing our village plan with £5000 from Down Rural Partnership, and taken the lead role in its delivery.
 - On Monday 25 June in the Ballyhornan Family Centre, URS, a company employed by Down District Council to develop the Village Plan, outlined their draft proposals. The meeting was well attended and many questions were raised regarding how the plans may impact on the area.
 - The draft proposals for the Ballyhornan Village Development Strategy will be on display from Monday 9th July 2012 until Friday 20th July 2012 in the Ballyhornan Family Centre
- Planning permission was achieved for 12 Social Housing units adjacent to community centre, and discussions are ongoing with the ARC Housing Association regarding their building
- Planning permission was also achieved for a 3G pitch at the centre, a landfill grant of £100K has been agreed towards its cost, and Council is currently seeking the balance of funds.
- We made a submission to the Committee for Regional Development Inquiry into unadopted Roads in N.I.
- DRD Minister Danny Kennedy confirmed at our meeting in the centre short term plans for sewage treatment, and that a longer term solution for full treatment at Ardtole was 'in the pipeline'
- Minister Kennedy said his department would also look at the roads situation but a village plan would need to be in place first. (see point in yellow above!)
- Local Councillors lobbied the planning service to ensure that permission was given for a local petrol station and better retail facilities centrally located.
- The Task Force is currently pursuing Social Investment Fund as a possible route to obtain the funding necessary to tackle the problems in the area.
- Last year also saw the completion of our new IT suite at the centre with us finishing our first round of computer courses. This was the result of a lot of fund raising and hard work on everyone's part. (See article on broadband on next page)
- Environment Minister Alex Attwood was given a detailed tour of our planning issues – and is proving to be a useful source of ongoing support.
- Other MEP's, MLA's and organisations have been briefed or given tours of the area to try and create consensus on the unique need for Ballyhornan to have a special cross-agency support our redevelopment



Our Committee meets with Minister Kennedy, Margaret Richie MP, John McCallister MLA with John Dumigan Chief Executive of Down Council

DRD MINISTER MEETS BRIG On the 17th of November 2011 the DRD minister Danny Kennedy came to visit - he did a complete tour of the area to see the problems first hand. It was confirmed after the tour at a meeting in the centre that sewage treatment would be addressed in the near future. And, once a 'Village Plan' was in place, he would look at what his department could do on roads. (See work ongoing on this highlighted in yellow left).



Chris Hazzard MLA getting "the tour" from Ballyhornan Committee and Cllr Liam Johnston

MLA Chris Hazzard convened an adjournment debate at Stormont regarding the neglect of Ballyhornan and the surrounding area. Issues raised included raw sewage pollution, the prevalence of asbestos, lack of housing & roads infrastructure and various specific environmental concerns.

Written by Cllr Cadogan Enright with thanks to Down Recorder for photos
Contact Chairperson BRIG at 028 4461 0807 Liam McLernon



Councillors Cadogan Enright (left), Liam Johnston (from the right) and Willie Clarke assisted BRIG committee members in meeting the planning service about Planning Permission for the new Petrol Station with Retail on 'Green Belt' land at the centre of Ballyhornan. This along with the planning permission for social housing has created an important precedent in the area

The favourable planning decisions we have obtained with the assistance of local councillors were unusual as they were for developments in what would have been considered before as 'Green Belt'.

This makes Ballyhornan unique in planning terms in the District as the only area where the development boundaries are now regarded by consensus as incorrectly drawn. This is because we have managed to convince the authorities including Minister Alex Attwood that the centre of the village and even ugly old RAF derelict buildings should NOT be treated as 'Green Belt'. Hopefully our new village plan will re-enforce this view



CHRIS HAZARD TACKLES BROADBAND

At a well attended public meeting at the Family Centre organised by South Down Assemblyman Chris Hazzard (back row third from left) IBUB Communications with a satellite solution and North West Electronics which was prepared to erect a local mast if it received a minimum number of 'expressions of interest'. Many residents filled in forms available – contact centre for more details.

Broadband access has been a big problem for the area, with the BT facility ending at the new 'cabinet' at Chapeltown, leaving our area without a decent service, and this affects business development in the area.

Also in attendance with Chris Hazzard MLA was Down Council Chairman Micky Coogan.



MARGARET RITCHIE & FIRST MINISTER

In early October 2011 Margaret Ritchie took Patricia Curran BRIG chairperson and John Dumigan DDC chief executive to Stormont to meet the first minister with roads and sewage being top of the agenda but also discussing regeneration in full.

This meeting led to the visit shown on the front page of this newsletter by DRD Minister Danny Kennedy to see what could be done.