

Minutes

Date: 05 September 2026

Time: 10.00 – 13.00

Venue: Blacon High School

Chair: Tina Upton

Minutes taken by: Sharon Marshall

Board Attendees: Tina Upton (TU), Helen Bromley (HB), Councillor Carol Gahan (CG), David Stockdale (DS), Paul Wallbanks (PW), Jack Davies (JD), Karen Smith (KS), Russ Dean (RD)

Guest Attendees: Sharon Marshall (SM) – Proud of Blacon Neighbourhood Manager - minutes, Dylan Topham (DT) - MP Support, Eleanor Carter – Delivery lead for the North West, Pride in Place Programme, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

Apologies: Karen Crawford (KC), Samantha Dixon MP (SD)

Item	Minutes	Action/ Owner
1. Welcome - Chair	All welcomed. 1.1 Chair introduced Eleanor Carter to board as an observer for the meeting. Eleanor's spoke about her position replacing Jack who was the previous Northwest delivery lead for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Eleanor explained her role and support for the Proud in Blacon, Pride in Place programme as well as support for the accountable body and link between the programme and MHCLG. Eleanor was welcomed as an observer to the board and the board welcomed working with Eleanor moving forward. 1.2 Chair discussed how the board has a variety and diversity of experiences, skills and personalities and the strength this will bring to the programme. Chair spoke about the importance of building a strong team, working together, and ensuring strong leadership from the board will guide the programme moving forward. Chair spoke about creating a board and meeting environment where everyone has an opportunity to share, be heard and to listen to each other. To enable this, all were asked to raise a hand before speaking. 1.3 Dylan Topham (DT) was introduced and chair discussed his role moving forward. Dylan is not a board member and has no decision making powers.	

	Samantha confirmed her commitment to the programme and requested the board's approval for Dylan to attend as her eyes and ears for board meetings going forward. All board approved the proposal of Dylan attending future meetings within this observer role for Samantha Dixon MP.	
2. Apologies and Declarations of Interest	2.1 Apologies recorded for: Samantha Dixon MP – Personal engagement Karen Crawford (KC) – Holiday 2.1 Noted that it is the responsibility of Board Members to update their Declarations and submit updated forms should they change – none received. Declaration of interest register at Appendix A has been checked and published on the Proud of Blacon web page. 2.2 Board requested to declare any conflicts based on Agenda - none received.	Maintain updated Dol forms – all Board Members, ongoing
3. Building a Vision for Blacon	3.1 Chair gave an overview of the role of the board as set out in the Terms of Reference. Chair asked the board to zoom out and look at the wider picture of what the role of being a board member is, what the board wishes to achieve through the 10-year vision and focus on where they are heading. The Chair reminded the board of the three strategic themes of the programme: 1. To create thriving places 2. To build stronger communities 3. To empower people to take back control The Chair mentioned how sometimes it can be hard to sometimes see the wood for the trees and how important vision setting with the community will be to support a clear direction for the programme and board. 3.2 The board broke off into a session to carry out a group exercise and discussion around some of the emerging priorities and themes. These came from data and intelligence presented at board, as well as themes and priorities within the returned MP survey previously presented to board. The board were asked through the discussion to reduce the emerging themes and priorities presented to 9 and then place them into an order of preference see Appendix B. A discussion took place with the board members around the priorities and preferences. Reflecting on the conversations within the session it highlighted differing feelings and priorities based on	Board requested Demographic Data to be sent to Board- SM to send to board members

	personal experiences. It also highlighted how important the community input will be around this area in designing the vision and priorities. The session will be used within other settings with residents to have similar conversations.	
4. Timeline: Where are we heading	4.1 Chair discussed and presented a timeline showing some of the key steps and milestones within the 10-year programme. Slides presented Appendix C showed the proposed dates provided by the government for key milestones (all dates below are dates proposed at time of board meeting): - Board confirms membership and submitted boundary change – July 2026 - Neighbourhood Board to submit a 10-yr vision and 4 year investment plan – Nov 2026 - Government to approve 10-year plan and 4-year investment plan – Spring 2027 - Mid-term review and continued investment to be carried out – 2030 - Final delivery phase and legacy realisation will be carried out – 2033 - The Future – Chair highlighted the programme is a 10-year investment however investment, change and impacts would be beyond 2036. 4.2 Discussion with board around timeline and decisions the board will need to consider during future meetings: 4.2.1 Secondment Proud of Blacon Neighbourhood Management role ends in February. Board will need to consider options for future appointments role descriptions and duration to support the board and programme moving forward. Backdating, someone would need to be appointed before Christmas to be in place by the end of the secondment period. It was agreed options should be looked at before the next board meeting. 4.2.3. Discussion took place around the neighbourhood board and potential future independence from CWaC. Currently Cheshire West and Chester are the accountable body. Chair spoke about the ambitions of the programme to move towards community-led delivery models by the end of year three of the programme. Eleanor spoke about different models and ways this can be delivered and about the need to do what works for the board and Blacon. The board discussed using the time available to work through what any options would look like with the community and board, and what would will work best for Blacon.	Options to be brought to board to be discussed in next board meeting – Chair wb 03.10.26

	4.2.4. Chair asked Eleanor if capacity funding remaining would be carried over. Eleanor confirmed this would be able to be carried over and emphasised what the capacity funding is there to support, administration, board setup and community engagement. Chair explained the submission in October will be the first monitoring return for Phase 2 Pride in Place neighbourhoods. This will be returned by the local authority through their role as the accountable body.	
5. Community Engagement Update	5.1 Community Engagement Subgroup provided an update to the board. Subgroup referenced resources including the Pride in Place Programme Community Engagement Toolkit and Community Engagement Plan approved by board in the 11th July Meeting. Slides relating to the update are within Appendix D. 5.2 Launch and Awareness - Subgroup spoke about the launch and awareness of Proud of Blacon, Pride in Place. Using Website, Facebook, promotional materials and community notice boards to explain the programme, opportunities for participation and starting conversations around vision setting and priorities for Blacon. 5.2 Visual flow diagram discussed with board and the two approaches within Appendix D starting with the engagement and coproduction of the vision and priorities. This would include a community toolkit to be used through facilitated activities and community conversations by board members and organisations/partners within the community who have trusted relationships with residents. The board discussed the online and paper copy survey which will have core question sets and prompts proposed to capture opinions and ask specific questions around the vision and priorities. Community notice boards discussed: - Temporary in two locations coffee shops (South side) and Library (North side). - Permanent via a review of replacement and enhancement 5.3 Considerations discussed and given to: - Inclusion and representation – working with trusted community partners for reach - Trust and accountability – Providing feedback and reports as well as community updates. - Resources and capacity – Facilitation support, resources and materials, supplies and equipment. Also thinking about analysis, evaluation and impact measurement.	Paul agreed to take forward temporary and permanent board proposals

	5.4 Board agreed to the overall proposed approach and flow diagram of engagement. Temporary and permanent notice boards – Suggestion to speak to schools for locations and options. Agreed current boards are in poor locations and possibly not used as much. Board voted to agree to the temporary and permanent board proposal. Board agreed to the engagement toolkit, resources and questions set. Board discussed the capacity and resourcing of engagement activities. Board agreed to facilitation support for future engagement activities over a short term to increase capacity. Board members expressed worries around consistency and building trust within the community. Chair emphasised engagement can be wider than board members with different models and ways of engaging in different areas. Chair expressed capacity funding can be used to support this resourcing. Chair aware of an individual with experience of facilitation, local to Blaen who would be able to support with facilitation. Approved by board.	(permanent) proposal to follow – PW to agree board purchase with SM Development of questions set and toolkit - Sub-group 09.09.26 Proceed with facilitation support and scope of role – SM wb 14.09.26
6. Minutes of Aug Meeting and Matters arising	6.1 Chair noted minutes are not a transcript but a summary of meeting. Expected that all Board Members have read all minutes and agenda papers prior to the meeting. All board agreed the minutes were an accurate record of the Aug meeting. 6.2 Website design – During last meeting questions were raised with an action to review and go back to the IT company who came back with the following answers: 1. Content Management System (CMS) – It will have full capabilities that can be managed easily with no coding knowledge required. 2. Analytics – It will have detailed analytics for the board. If any particular measures required they can ensure are aligned. They have their own and also support 3rd party. 3. Marketing and Email Comms – They can build into the website system. 4. Accessibility – Build to accommodate different languages and employ AI to help with translation. All the above was confirmed it would all be within the original quote of £850.00. Board agreed that Victrix be given go-ahead with website design.	Agreed July Minutes to be published SM wb 10.08.26 Imagery to be sent for Facebook – SM to send to RD wb 07.09.26

	6.3 Facebook has been set up. Once imagery is sent it will be launched. Support was requested from board to increase followers and place onto other pages across Blacon. Need to link in with the engagement group for plans of when to launch things and messages to post. 6.4 Chair has met with different funders who fund projects within the local area. Cheshire Community Foundation and Westminster Foundation. Conversations were positive with both organisations keen to continue ongoing engagement in the future of the programme with the board and Chair. 6.5 Blacon Neighbourhood Alliance - following the result of the referendum, the Chair to pursue conversations with their executive, and is still waiting for reply from their Chair.	Facebook site to be launched – RD wb 07.09.26 Support to increase followers on Facebook site – All wb 07.09.26
7. Next Steps	7.1 Cheshire West Voluntary Action invited to the board to introduce their proposal for board members to participate in 4 learning sessions to build capacity for board members. The training would be 4 sessions around: - Confidence and communication – Building trust, better decisions through better discussions. - Being Assertive – to contribute effectively and uphold good governance. - Equality, inclusion and unconscious bias – inclusive boards make fairer decisions and better reflect the community they represent - Managing difficult conversations – Support with handling difficult conversations will keep the board focused, respectful and productive. Jack declared an interest as he is a Trustee of Cheshire West Voluntary Action. Jack did not vote for the decision to continue with the proposal. The board approved the decision to continue with the training proposed. 7.2 Folder to be created and dropped off to Blacon Library with information relevant to Pride in Place Programme for residents to read and view if not able to access information online.	CWVA to propose dates for the sessions to start with SM. SM to arrange and send to board To print materials and take folder to Blacon Library – SM to Action
7. AOB	11.1 Chair had not received any AOB items ahead of the meeting.	
12. Future Meeting Dates	<u>Confirmed Dates</u> : 3 October – Proposed venue – Holy Trinity Church - approved	

	SM highlighted the 31 October meeting will be half term. To coordinate an alternative board date for this meeting. 21 November	Alternative date to be sent out to all board members for availability and will confirm at next meeting – SM wb 14.09.26
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Appendices below

Appendix A - Declaration of Interest Register

This is the Declaration of Interest Register referred to in the Terms of Reference adopted by the Blacon Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board. It will be available for inspection at each Board meeting, or on request by any Board Member. Register last updated on: 14.07.26

Register of Conflicts of Interest: Known Ongoing Conflicts

Date Identified	Name of Board Member	Role	Details of Declaration/ Conflict	How Notified*	Action Taken**	Follow Up Required	Date Resolved
13.07.26	Christina Upton	Chair	Employed as Minister of Religion, Rector of Holy Trinity Church, Blacon	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Chair of Trustees of Holy Trinity Church (registered charity).	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Chair of Trustees for Pantry for Blacon CIO (registered charity)	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Trustee (Director) of Chester Diocesan Board of Finance (registered charity)	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a

			Trustee of Chester Clergy Families Charitable Trust (registered charity)	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
13.07.26	Jack Davies	Deputy Chair	Employed at Active Cheshire	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Trustee of Cheshire West Voluntary Action	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Partner is Director of Healthbox CIC	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
11.07.26	David Stockdale	Board member	Employed as Senior Leader at Blacon High School	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
11.07.26	Russ Dean	Board member	Blacon Neighbourhood Alliance Member	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Blacon Youth FC Committee Member and coach	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Blacon Boxing	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Chester FC	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
11.07.26	Paul David Wallbanks	Board member	Blacon Neighbourhood Alliance Member	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
11.07.26	Karen Crawford	Board member	No declarations	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
11.07.26	Samantha Dixon MP	Board Member	Member of Parliament	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a

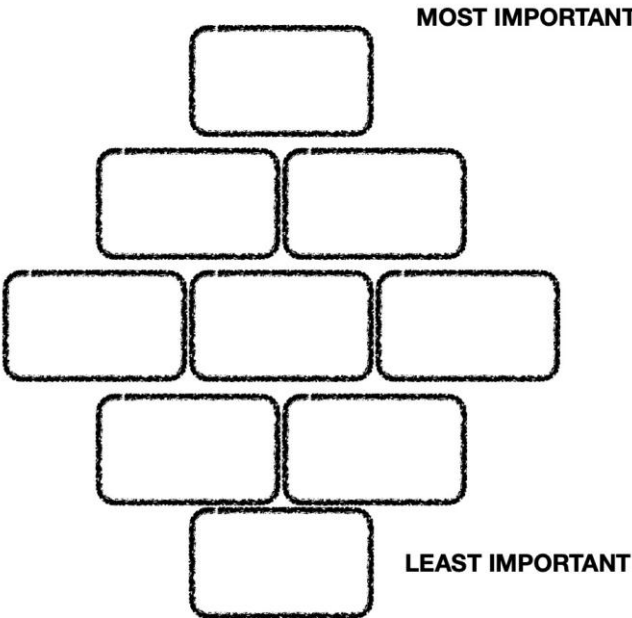
			Property in Area – address redacted	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			RSPB Membership	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Chester Zoo Membership	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Member of Labour Party	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Member of Community Union	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
14.07.26	Carol Margaret Gahan	Board Member	Blacon Ward Councillor	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Member of the Labour Party	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Member of The National Trust	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Member of the GMB Trade Union	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Trustee of Blacon Beacon	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Trustee of Ernest Jones Trust (Local Labour Party)	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
14.07.26	Karen Smith	Board Member	Director at Here and Now Chester Ltd Social Enterprise	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Employed as Team Leader/ Volunteer Co-Ordinator by Here and	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a

			Now Chester Social Enterprise				
			Member of Cheshire West Voluntary Action	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Member of West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Married to Alan Smith who is a Councillor for Blacon ward, Chester, Cheshire	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
13.07.26	Helen Bromley	Board Member	Employed at Cheshire West and Chester Council as Director of Public Health	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Professional role - commissions various Public Health Services such as Starting Well; Sexual Health; Substance Misuse. Some of these services are delivered in Blacon.	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a
			Through professional role work in partnership with many organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors.	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a

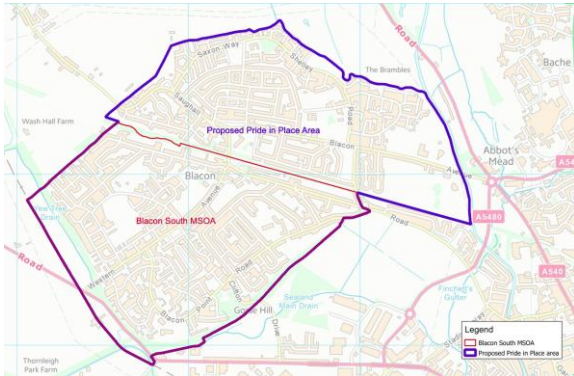
			This is the nature of Public Health.				
			Member of Unite Union.	Dol Form	Noted on register	n/a	n/a

* Eg verbal declaration at Board meeting, written Declaration etc

** Eg member withdrawing from a decision-making process; disclosure to members.



Board Confirms Membership and Submitted Boundary Change. July 2026



Neighbourhood Board to submit 10 year Vision and 4 Year investment plan. Nov 2026



Government to approve 10 Year Plan and 4 Year Investment plan. Spring 2027



**Period 1 (Years 1-4)
2026-2030**

PRIDE IN PLACE
LED BY YOU – BACKED BY UK GOVERNMENT

Proud of **Blaenau**
Neighbourhood Board

**Mid-Term review and
continued investment**
2030



Period 2 (Years 5-7)
2030-2033

PRIDE IN PLACE
LED BY YOU – BACKED BY UK GOVERNMENT

Proud of **Blacon**
Neighbourhood Board

**Final Delivery phase and
legacy realisation**
2033



Period 3 (Years 8-10)
2033-2036

PRIDE IN PLACE
LED BY YOU – BACKED BY UK GOVERNMENT

Proud of **Blacon**
Neighbourhood Board

The Future

2036-2046



Appendix D – Community Engagement Slides

Launch and Awareness

- Brand Identity Development – Develop Proud of Blacon identity logo competition.
- Website launch
- Promotional materials leaflets – designed
- Social Media – Facebook etc
- Community Notice Boards – Temporary and permanent (details later on slides)

Aim

Explain Proud of Blacon PIP Programme

Opportunities for participation

Starting conversations around vision and priorities for Blacon

Launch and Awareness

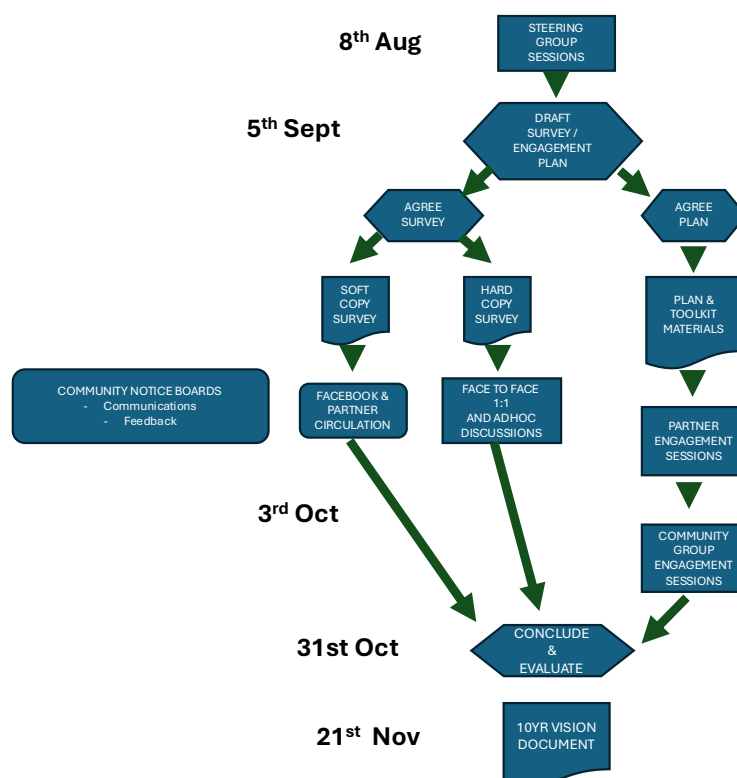
- Brand Identity Development – Develop Proud of Blacon identity logo competition.
- Website launch
- Promotional materials leaflets – designed
- Social Media – Facebook etc
- Community Notice Boards – Temporary and permanent (details later on slides)

Aim

Explain Proud of Blacon PIP Programme

Opportunities for participation

Starting conversations around vision and priorities for Blacon



Engagement and Co-Creation of Vision and Priorities for Blacon

Community Toolkit – Facilitation guides, prompts and core question sets, community mapping, visioning activities, feedback and engagement recording templates.

Activities proposed –

- Proud of Blacon Photo Competition
- Participatory budgeting Projects – Schools, etc
- Community based conversations and sessions
- Storytelling and celebrations activities
- Vision community Voice feedback – Online and paper copies
- Partnership Stakeholder Sessions
- Resident and community Forum sessions
- Youth Engagement sessions
- Targeted Community engagement Sessions – Litter picks etc

Considerations

- **Inclusion and representation** – Harder to reach groups.
- **Trust and accountability** – How do we provide feedback, you said we did, feedback reports, community updates, reporting outcomes and progress.
- **Resourcing and capacity** – Facilitation support, resources and materials, supplies and equipment for engagement, analysis of findings, support for evaluation and impact measurement.

Online Tool and Option

- Online version - draft to feed in and to be circulated, based on the 10yr vision checklist
- Core Question sets and prompts
- Paper copies – Completed by residents, used by groups, facilitated with board members and stakeholders.
- To be confirmed for dropped off Library and coffee shop.

Community Notice Boards

- Temporary – 2 locations
 - Coffee Shop – South Side
 - Library – North side
- Sustainability – For community managed by Paul to include PIP and community information and feedback.
- Permanent – Replacement and enhancement
 - Update on planning, conversation to happen with landowners. £400, per board and application £500. Owned and managed by PIP.



For Discussion

- Invited to consider –
 - Feedback and agree on proposed approach and refine if required
 - Decision on Community Notice Boards
 - Development of a constant toolkit, resources and question set
 - Identify resource and capacity requirements
 - Identify any additional priorities and pressures