

IDEAS & VISION GROUP
NOTES OF THE MEETING OF MONDAY 10TH NOVEMBER 2014

Present: Alan Thompson, Andy Parker, Derek Bodey, Janet Miller, Janine Morris, Jean Todd, John Atkin, John Faulkner, John Phillips, Pat Hobby, Phillip Barton, Roddie MacLean, Richard Lower, Steve Caddy, Tina Heathcote, Zena Bishop

Apologies: Dave Carlisle, Helen Heywood, Jean Ball, Joe Dugdale, John Estruch, Linda Baldry, Marc Heywood, Mike Monaghan, Rachel Hoodith, Richard Silson, Sarah Rawlinson, Sue Mellor

Introductions: Roddie MacLean chaired the meeting, which started with a round of introductions.

1. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The notes of the meeting on 8th October were passed as true record.

2. PROJECT UPDATES

2.1 Buxton in Bloom

A closing report had been circulated, the final costs are still being confirmed, but a deficit of less than £100 is anticipated. The report was accepted, and Janine and her team were thanked for the hard work in making the project such a success; the results were especially impressive given that it was only discussed for the first time in February. The team are already looking at what changes they might make next year (such as extra categories in the local competition) and additional sources of funding. They would be delighted to welcome new people to the team.

2.2 Welcome to Buxton Station

A draft project proposal had been circulated. The proposal includes improved signage, inside and out, and improvements to the general environment through art work, planters and hanging baskets. There is some crossover therefore with the Buxton in Bloom project. In addition it is hoped that the dormant 'Friends of Buxton Station' can be resurrected to take on ongoing improvements and long term upkeep. Funding for the (relatively minor) costs associated with art work and flora has been identified - Northern Rail have indicated some funding and Linda Baldry has also offered a contribution from her Councillors' Initiative Fund. The costs for signage are still being researched, once these are known approaches can be made to potential sponsors.

It was suggested that a board and renting advertising space might be a source of funds, this will be looked into.

It was agreed that the project should be fully worked up and sent to the Directors for approval.

2.3 Buxton Spring Fair 2015

A draft project proposal had been circulated. Janet is in the process of recruiting people to join the project team, anyone interested should contact her. It was agreed the proposal should be taken to the Directors for approval.

2.4 Buxton Conference

It has been agreed that the event will be organised jointly with Vision Buxton, and the date is set for 25th February 2015. HPBC are enthusiastic about the proposal and have agreed to allow use of the Pavilion Arts Centre, including refreshments, at no charge. Preliminary 'hold the date' invitations will be going out this week.

2.5 Merchandise

The first batch of 200 tea towels and 48 jigsaws have pretty much sold out, so a further 400 tea towels and 48 jigsaws have been ordered. They will be on sale at the December Artisan Market, or are available from Philip direct. The TIC have also now agreed to stock them, and we have also been offered a small display space in the Pavilion café area where our certificates and the Academy of Urbanism poem can be displayed, alongside samples of the merchandise. Merchandise sales are now making a significant contribution to Town Team funds.

2.6 Market Regeneration

HPBC have issued a pre-qualification tender document for the operation of all the markets in the High Peak. They have confirmed that they would welcome a bid for just the Buxton market, and a team is busy drawing this up for submission by 28th November. The plan would involve setting up a separate CIC. If the initial bid is successful more detailed plans will be drawn up and a project proposal put forward.

2.7 Buxton College Student Projects

Tina, Janet and Helen D have been working with Public Service students, who take on volunteer projects as part of their course work. The projects suggested to them are: Ashwood Park, Big Spring Clean, Railings Clean, Street Decorations, Street Signs and a Stall at the Spring Fair. Depending on how well these progress they may also work on various street art and planting projects, dog mess and overgrown hedges. We are looking for 'mentors' from the Town Team to work with them on each of these projects, people who are CRB checked are particularly welcome. It is hoped that a 'Friends of Ashwood Park' group can be set up for the ongoing upkeep of the park.

2.8 Winter Decorations

The bottle cutting team have produced strings of snowbirds to be hung on the Market Place and the Slopes. Helpers are needed during the day on Friday 21st November, offers to Tina.

2.9 Crescent Development

The Heritage Lottery Fund will decide shortly whether to fund the gap, and in support of that we have been running a Facebook campaign and put up posters on the site. This has resulted in a big increase in letters of support for the project; Richard Tuffrey is delighted, and confident the message has got through to HLF.

3. COMMUNICATIONS

3.1 Background

There has been a Communications Group since the Town Team was formed, but this is the first time they have talked to the rest of the Town Team about what they do. Their remit is twofold:

- Internal Communications (emails, the monthly newsletter, meetings, the website)
- External Communications (local press, local radio, Facebook, Twitter, the website)

3.2 Member Survey

In preparation for this meeting, members were asked to complete an on-line Survey; 60 (out of 173) had done so. Key findings were:

- For what is happening in Buxton: Pure Buxton and the Buxton Advertiser are most popular, then email
 - For news about Buxton Town Team: email is by far the most popular
 - Monthly newsletter: most people do read it
 - Website: not well used by members, those who do are looking either generally, or specifically for project updates and events, the members area is hardly used at all
 - Ideas & Vision Group; most respondents are aware of the meetings
 - Engagement: only 2 respondents feel not at all engaged, just under half feel moderately engaged or more
- It was noted that members had been asked to participate via email, so the respondents would be likely to favour that as a means of communication. Also noted that we have four members who are not on email.

3.3 How can we improve?

Email: We aim to email members only once per month, as the newsletter, but on occasions an 'exceptional' email has to be sent if something is important and can't wait. It was agreed that this frequency was about right. It was suggested that we could set up say Yahoo groups and allow people to opt in to receive additional information on specific topics if they wished; this may be something the project teams could consider, as an alternative to just emailing members of the project team.

Facebook: Noted that you do not have to have a Facebook account to see the Facebook page. This tends to be used as a more immediate means of contacting people than the website, and we are able to reach large numbers of people this way - over 5,000 for instance, for the Crescent Development campaign. Noted that it can fall down if the administrators are unaware of something, as when the October Artisan Market was cancelled at the last minute.

Twitter: The Town Team Twitter account has been operating for about 5 weeks (though we have had Spring Fair accounts for longer) and the team are still learning how best to use it. The 140 character limit for instance can be got round by using a photo with text on it. Twitter is very 'immediate', messages disappear within a few hours.

Website: The website is much more cumbersome to use and so is not updated very often. The public area is aimed primarily at external people, or new members wanting a feel for what we do. Noted that it can appear different depending on what browser people use. It was suggested that we could engage students to help improve it, but the University does not actually have any relevant courses in Buxton; continuity can also be an issue, we do need to keep to standard templates that anyone can pick up and use.

Meetings: Noted that the Ideas & Vision meeting is the general open meeting to which members can bring their ideas and views; the name does not make that obvious. Alternative names were suggested, the favoured option was simply to drop the word 'Vision' and refer to it as the Ideas Meeting. It was also noted that we refer to the Ideas & Vision Group, but there is no formal membership, simply a list of those people who have attended meetings or asked to be sent the notes, agenda and other papers. All Town Team members are informed of the date of the meeting and the topic (via the monthly newsletter) and encouraged to come along. It was agreed that we could make more use of the members area, for instance to discuss projects or other ideas in advance of the meeting. The agenda and other papers could perhaps be routinely posted on the website. The Communications Team will consider the options.

3.4 Vox Pops Project

Tina and Andy have recorded 31 interviews with members of the public so far and aim to complete 50 by the end of the year. A selection of these was shown to the meeting. Clips have also been posted on Facebook and Twitter to illustrate particular topics, and we will be doing more of this. The recordings are being analysed and indexed.

3.5 Summing up

More detail is included in the appended slides from the presentation.

The Communications Group would very much welcome additional help from anyone who would like to join them.

4. FUTURE I&V MEETINGS

The next meeting will be on:

Tuesday 9th December at 7:30pm in the Buckingham Hotel.

Meeting dates for the first half of 2015 were agreed as follows:

Monday 12th January

Thursday 12th February

Wednesday 11th March

Tuesday 14th April

Thursday 14th May

Monday 15th June

All will be at 7:30pm. We understand the Buckingham will be open until May, Janet will book a room for as many dates as possible.