

# BuxtonTownTeam

*All together, better*

## IDEAS AND VISION GROUP NOTES OF THE MEETING ON TUESDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2014

- Present:** Alan Thompson, Derek Bodey, Jane McGrother, Janet Miller, Janine Morris, Joe Dugdale, John Estruch, Malcolm Bradbury, Mike Badman, Mike Monaghan, Peter Burgess-Allen, Philip Barton, Richard Lower, Roddie MacLean, Simon Fussell, Steve Taylor, Tina Heathcote
- Apologies:** Adrian Brown, Caitlin Bisknell, Carlon Stewart, Charles Jolly, Emily Markie, Jean Todd, Linda Baldry, Liz Mackenzie, Mike Bryant, Neil Scowcroft, Rachel Hoodith, Sarah Rawlinson, Steve Caddy, Suzanne Pearson
- Introductions:** The meeting started with a round of introductions.

### 1 NOTES OF THE MEETING ON 13<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY

The notes of the last meeting were passed as a true record and there were no matters arising.

### 2. PROJECT UPDATES

#### 2.1 Big Buxton Spring Clean

The project has been formally approved by the directors, and Big Buxton Spring Clean Day set for Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April. The team have started planning, done some grot-spotting trials and taken lots of photographs. The University are interested in the idea of a Guinness Book of Records attempt for cleaning railings, but not till next year, we could trial it this time. As well as the town centre, residents associations and community groups in Fairfield, Harpur Hill and Burbage are being encouraged to do something similar on their own patches. A risk assessment is in draft, looking at for instance the best way to clean higher level signs, and we will have insurance in place by then. We are in no way criticising the work of HPBC Clean Team, who are keen to work with us on this, and will be providing litter pickers, gloves, bags and so on.

#### 2.2 Buxton Spring Fair 2014

Recruitment of participants started last week, and we have 14 stalls confirmed so far and many more enquiries. All shops and businesses have been visited and given fliers encouraging them to take part, all have been supportive.

#### 2.3 Totally Locally

Unfortunately neither Rachel nor Neil were at the meeting to report on progress.

#### 2.4 Illustrated Map

Joe reported that he was in discussion with the solicitors about a legal agreement with the artists, and would have quotations for printing very soon.

#### 2.5 Artisan Market

John confirmed that the Artisan Market Company and HPBC were happy with the idea of a two trials (in Spring Gardens and the Market Place) and an evaluation of the pros and cons of each.

### 3. AUGUST FAMILY FESTIVAL

Terry Crawford has plans to hold a family orientated series of events to run between 1<sup>st</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> August, to replace the Gilbert & Sullivan Festival. They will have various activities in the Pavilion, the Gardens and the Promenade, but want to expand beyond this to include the whole of the town. Along with other organisations in the town, we have been asked for ideas about how we might contribute to this.

Simon noted that the Civic Association are hoping to have falconry displays and a collection of owls at Pooles Cavern.

Other suggestions were made as follows:

**Geo-caching:** Set up a number of multi-cache trails in and around Buxton, with different themes and levels of difficulty. This is something the Town Team would like to do anyway, but could time it so as to launch at the start of the festival. It may be possible to link in with the Buxton Museum plans for Smart Phone tours.

**Art on the Railings:** We would need to ask the Buxton Art Trail team to take this on.

**Pavement Art:** This would also need involvement by the town's artists. Ideally it would include the rather specular trompe l'oeil variety, if there is anyone in the town who can do this.

**Music:** Bands on the pump house roof, and other spots around town, dancing, possibly brass bands and pipe bands. We have contacts, but not necessarily anyone who could organise this.

**Artisan Market:** Depending on the outcome of licensing and June/ July trials, an Artisan market could take place on the first weekend in August.

**Children's Entertainment:** A gathering of all the local children's entertainments, possibly as a

competition. It may be that eg Funny Wonders could possibly organise this.

**Story-Telling and Poetry Slams:** To take place in the daytime and in the evening, for both children and adults, so as to encourage people to stay over in the town. Again we have contacts, but not necessarily anyone to take on the organisation.

**Opera House Whale:** It was here as part of the festival last year, we don't know whose it is.

**Dinosaur Park:** Gather together the existing dinosaurs (Andy Hill's metal ones, The Transition Buxton rubbish ones) and hold workshops building more of them. This is possibly something Transition Buxton might be willing to get involved with.

**Climbing Walls and Artificial Cave:** It may be possible to get the Mountain and Cave Rescue teams involved in organising this.

**Tennis Tournament:** Mike Badman will ask the tennis club if they might organise a weekend tournament. It might be worth asking other sports clubs (football, orienteering etc) if they could do something as well. Again we have contacts but not necessarily anyone to co-ordinate.

It was agreed that Janet and Tina would take these ideas to the meeting on Thursday.

## **4. BEAUTIFYING BUXTON - GREENERY**

### **4.1 Buxton in Bloom: Presentation by Jane McGrother**

Jane used to head up the Buxton in Bloom team, but stood down after 2009 when Buxton won gold in East Midlands in Bloom, then silver in Entente Florale. Buxton has not taken part since then.

The judging criteria do vary slightly each year, but East Midlands in Bloom is about a lot more than hanging baskets and bedding plants. The judges look for permanent plantings and environmental initiatives, and any other way of making the town as beautiful as possible. They also want to see involvement by as many different organisations as possible. The Big Buxton Spring Clean, Transition Buxton's orchard, Eco-schools and so on would all contribute.

The first stage is to produce a brochure that gathers together all these initiatives, the second is to devise a route to take the judges that shows all of these while avoiding anywhere we would not want them to see.

Designing and printing brochures can work out quite expensive, but producing DVDs is much easier now than it used to be. The costs to enter are modest, about £30, and the initial training day costs £6 per person.

Judging this year would be between 7<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> July - we are usually towards the end of the period.

Jane is willing to be a part of a reformed team but not to lead it, and is happy to go on the training course, which is in Immingham on 20<sup>th</sup> February. The gardening team at HPBC are also willing to help if we decide to go ahead, and several previous team members would probably join in again.

### **4.2 Transition Buxton Projects**

#### **4.2.1 The Community Orchard: Presentation by Pete Burgess-Allen**

Pete reported on progress planting a community orchard in Buxton. Because of the lack of a suitable single site this is a 'dispersed' orchard, spread across several places in the town. There are now over 50 trees in total, all in public places where anyone can go and pick the fruit and take it home to use. The largest group is at Christchurch Burbage, with 24 trees, but there are also trees at Gadley Lane, Pooles Cavern, Fairfield, Brownedge Road, Cote Heath, Buxton Infants School, the United Reformed Church and Ashwood Park. Most of the trees are apples, but there are also some pears, greengages, damsons and cherries.

The main objective is to provide free, fresh, locally grown fruit, but the orchards also serve as a meeting place and a community hub, and help wildlife. By planting a wide range of different varieties we will learn which ones do best here, and by planting in schools, children learn about where food comes from.

Most of the funding has come from individual sponsorship, at £20 per tree, HPBC have paid for some of the trees from their general tree planting budget, and this year Tony Kemp is funding some from his mayoral allowance.

There are still plenty of potential sites in the town for further planting (eg Temple Fields, Grinlow Wood fringes, Pavilion Gardens, the University, Lismore Field, roadside verges) as well as more space at some of the existing sites.

#### **4.2.2 The Serpentine Project: Presentation by Steve Taylor**

Transition Buxton are in discussions with HPBC about converting the old plant nurseries in the Serpentine Park into a Food Reskilling Centre. This would be part of making Buxton a more sustainable town; we used to grow a lot more of our own food but those skills have been lost, this would be a centre where people can learn about growing food in their own gardens and allotments. It would be a benefit to the whole community, as well as making good use of the existing buildings, without the need to remove any mature trees.

The site has a single storey building, a below ground building which has collapsed, two greenhouses (one pretty much intact the other dismantled), old nursery beds, a prefabricated garage and areas of scrubby bushes and saplings. The only mature trees are around the periphery.

The proposal is initially to bring the greenhouses and nursery beds back into use for growing a range of vegetables. Surrounding these would be a forest garden, and areas for soft fruit bushes and canes. Part of the idea is to experiment with the best crops and growing methods for Buxton's climate.

The buildings would be repaired and refurbished to provide teaching facilities. The university is interested in being involved, and are looking into how use of the site could fit in with their various courses. Schools could also take advantage of this, and it could provide adult learning and even apprenticeships. The buildings could also house food processing facilities, both for use with crops grown on the site and by people bringing their own produce, with payment either in cash or as a share of the product. If the buildings were refurbished to the requisite environmental standards, it could serve as a demonstration and a sustainability hub more generally for the High Peak.

The enterprise needs to be self-financing and Transition Buxton are drawing up a business plan; a lot of labour will be through volunteers and students, but there will be a need to pay a part-time manager. Capital costs will be dominated by the cost of renovating the buildings: HPBC are asking DCC to produce a survey and a cost estimate for this. There is concern about the time taken for all this to happen and a perceived loss of momentum.

### **4.3 Buxton Civic Association: Presentation by Mike Monaghan**

BCA started in the 1960s as a typical civic association, lobbying against some rather shocking planning proposals such as to demolish the Pavilion Gardens complex and to allow Solomon's Temple to collapse so it could be removed. They were then gifted a number of woods in Buxton by the Duke of Devonshire, and took over Pooles Cavern in 1976. As well as the cavern, they now have a total of ten woodlands surrounding the town, and are responsible for their upkeep, which is a big liability. They are very much a business.

In the early years they were very focussed on becoming economically viable. They are now in quite a healthy financial state and in a position to look at making improvements; they have installed LED lighting through the cavern (a huge energy saving) and spent several tens of thousands on improving footpaths in Grinlow and Corbar Woods. They are very aware of the need to strike the right balance between maintaining public access and encouraging wildlife. There are issues with some of the trees, particularly the beeches, reaching the end of their natural life, and they are developing a 30 year plan for future regeneration. They are also starting to increase their collaboration with other organisations in the town on wider development issues, as well as working closely with schools and the University of Derby degree students.

### **4.4 Questions, Discussion and Outcomes**

Entering East Midlands in Bloom would need a committee of 5-6 people. It was agreed in principle that this would be a good project for Buxton Town Team to take on; Janine agreed to draw up a project proposal and Tina and Jane agreed to join a project team.

It was noted that hanging baskets used to be provided by the council, but at a cost, which was high because it included ongoing maintenance and watering. It was also suggested that while early approaches to HPBC about an Incredible Edible scheme (fruit and vegetables in public flower beds) were not promising, this could be worth looking at again.

It was also agreed that the Serpentine plans should be supported by Buxton Town Team in whatever way we can. It was suggested that the proposal needed far more publicity than it has seen so far - presentations to other organisations, press articles, stalls at the Farmers' Market or even street stalls could all help generate the necessary groundswell of support.

## **5. FUTURE MEETINGS**

Ideas & Vision Group meetings were agreed for the rest of the year as follows:

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March - business followed by a workshop on developing a Neighbourhood Plan

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> June

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> July

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> August

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> September

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> October

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> November

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December

All at 7:30pm, Janet will book the room with the Buckingham Hotel.