

Ideas and Vision Group
Notes of the meeting on Monday, 15th April 2013

Present: Adrian Brown, Joe Dugdale, Janet Miller, John Estruch, Rachel Hoodith, Roddie MacLean, Alan Thompson, Neil Thompson, Tom Rhodes, Roger Floyd, Sarah Rawlinson and Mike Bryant.

Apologies: Rachael Quinn, Jean Todd, Linda Baldry, Julian Cohen, John Hudghton, Trevor Osborne

Chairman: Adrian Brown was asked and agreed to chair the meeting.

Introductions: The meeting started with a round of introductions.

1.1 Notes of the meeting on 4th March. These were approved as a true record.

1.2 Matters Arising Roddie reported that a nomination form to register Hardwick Hall, the British Legion Building in Hardwick Square South, as an Asset of Community Value had been completed and sent to High Peak Borough Council. This, if accepted, would prevent a sale of the building except for a community use for a period of six months.

2.1 Pop-up Incubator Project Alan and John explained what the team was doing using a Power Point presentation. *The full content of this is available on request.* This set the national and local context of their work and their aim to build on the example of the Green Man Gallery to:

- Encourage shift of retail to better reflect Buxton's visitor attractions
- Encourage small businesses to develop attractive offerings
- Utilise empty premises to make shopping streets more attractive
- Increase footfall for all businesses
- Encourage visitors to stay longer and do more
- Help new entrepreneurs to develop their business skills

They planned to develop "Clusters" of small traders with similar businesses (common "Themes"). These would share some costs and be incubated together, in premises with favourable rent and support with utilities and insurance, until they became self supporting long-term businesses. Some examples of possible themes were listed.

The team were going to:

- Identify and facilitate the formation of clusters
- Facilitate training
- Help set up and equip premises, including negotiating with landlords
- Monitor and support clusters during incubation
- Develop and improve the business model using a template from the Green Man Gallery.

All this was to be done through a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, to be called Jack-in-a-box, which would work closely with Buxton Town Team.

The meeting was supportive of this project and in discussion the following points were made:

(i) that not every situation would be best served by a themed cluster and that in some cases a "Department Store" approach might be more beneficial;

(ii) that there might be loans available from Government funds via the Chamber of Commerce;

(iii) that as businesses became viable, some of the costs of mentoring would be recovered, though much of the funding would be covered by grants;

(iv) that those who had booked sales stalls at the Spring Fair might be possible beneficiaries of the Jack-in-a-box scheme;

(v) that some landlords were starting to be more realistic about rents;
(vi) that the Directors had already pressed the council for help with identifying landlords of retail properties which might be used in the scheme;

Alan and his team urgently need further recruits as there is a huge amount of work to be done and the current members could only spare one day per week each to devote to the project.

The meeting was enthusiastic about and supportive of the Pop-up Incubator Project and was grateful to the Project Team for all their hard work and for their excellent presentation.

2.2 Project Approval of above Janet had re-worked Alan's original Project Proposal Form to reflect the current state of the project. Copies were provided for those present. John undertook to provide the information for the timetable section, with the proviso that the Project Team could not commit to it precisely. This proposal was to cover just the "Research Phase" with the expectation that the team would seek further approval when they moved to implementation. On this basis, the project was recommended to the Board for approval.

3 Future of Buxton Market Roddie explained that, in order to initiate some action on the long standing decline of the market, Cllr Godfrey Claff (Executive Councillor for Regeneration) had dusted of an old report suggesting that the market should move to Spring Gardens and initiated a consultation on it. The meeting of Buxton Traders had been unanimous in saying "No" to this scheme and wanted the market to remain on the Market Place.

Various representatives of the Town Team had attended the council's Retail Sub-Committee to which this report had been referred. The sub-committee rejected the report on the basis that it was too narrowly based. They wanted alternative sites and other possibilities to be explored. There was to be no wider public consultation on the issue until the sub-committee had met again to look at the various alternatives. The market will have to struggle on as it is for a bit longer.

It was felt that the council could improve the appearance of the market by controlling the layout of the stalls and imposing other basic standards. Concern was also expressed that there was little promotion to encourage new traders to take stalls. Limited additional resources used to address such problems might start to turn the market round in its present position. The transfer to Spring Gardens would not in itself provide a cure for the situation and could cost a great deal more.

Roddie then explained his suggestion that the market could be revived by marshalling the stalls into an avenue running east west in front of the town hall. This would maximise the space for car parking on market days and mean that market customers would be walking on the flagged area without trip hazards. The Town Team could contribute to its appeal by providing a performance space for musicians at the west end, in front of the Kings Head. If this was sheltered by a colourful awning, it could be both seen and heard from the bottom of Hall Bank providing additional publicity for the market.

The meeting was grateful to Roddie for all his work on this issue.

4 Spring Fair update Janet reported that, with three weeks to go, arrangements were going well. The road closures had been granted as requested and barriers would be in place to control these. 88 participants had already been registered and there were still bookings coming in. Over twenty bands, dance groups and other acts were going to take part. A guide was in preparation for printing on A4 paper and would be folded twice to form a pocket size leaflet. Students were organising a Treasure Trail, for which the University was giving a prize.

The main requirement now was to recruit marshals and especially six team leaders to be responsible for particular areas on the day (so far only two leaders had been identified) and for a team of people to organise and staff the Buxton Town Team information stall. *Volunteers please contact Janet urgently.*

5 Draft Artistic Town Map Joe brought a black and white draft of the town map which would eventually be printed in full colour. The historic buildings were illustrated round the edge and these features were possibly a little too big. It also left the central map somewhat bare. Some people thought that the Postcode and road numbering spoilt the appeal and suggested that the main roads might be labelled to Ashbourne, to Bakewell etc. The draft received general approval.

6 Progress Report on Green Man Gallery Alan reported that things were going well. There were 21 members each paying £10 per week plus commission on their sales. There was access for non-members who were charged more. The programme of workshops was successful and provided additional income.

The members were learning quickly how to make the best of their opportunities and were now managed as four working groups to avoid huge meetings. Overall they were on budget with cashflow above predictions but sales lower than forecasts, probably due to the bad weather.

7 Christmas Lights In preparation for a meeting called by the Leader of the Council and scheduled for the next afternoon, Mike asked for views about how the Town Team might contribute to the success of the Switch-on Event and the extension of the festivities towards the shopping centre. He explained that the traders complained that the lights were all used on council property and therefore favoured the Pavilion Gardens over their own businesses.

While recognising that the Switch-on Event was popular, as were the workshops leading up to it, there was no great enthusiasm for contributing to it at this stage. It was resolved to review the Town Team's position once the outcome of the deliberations the next day were known.

8 Other Business and New Ideas

8.1 Local Loyalty Scheme Sarah reported that the research which students from the university had been undertaking was complete and a date was needed for them to present their results. This was arranged for Monday, 29th April, at 6.00 p.m., at the University. Refreshments would be provided. This arrangement needed to be conveyed to the Buxton Traders and Vision Buxton.

Later, Alan mentioned that he had seen an excellent presentation about Totally Locally in Leek. It was pointed out that this scheme was included in those being evaluated in the University's research.

8.2 Local Plan Alan encouraged those present to read the Local Plan and offered to identify individual parts of particular interest.

8.3 University Community Liaison Sarah reported that John Phillips, former Editor of The Buxton Advertiser, had been appointed Community Liaison Officer for the University.

9 Future meetings The next meeting was already arranged for Monday, 13th May 2013. The Buckingham Hotel had confirmed that a room would be available.

MFB 20th April 2013