

## **Ideas and Vision Group Notes of the meeting on Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> July 2013**

**Present:** Janet Miller, Tina Heathcote, Suzanne Pearson, Janine Morris, Jean Todd, Roddie MacLean, Adrian Brown, Alan Thompson, Joe Dugdale, Mike Mirams, and Mike Bryant

**Observing:** Charles Jolly (Scrutiny Group)

**Visitors:** Maria Doglioli and Margaret Charlton

**Apologies:** Sarah Rawlinson, Jean Ball, Rachel Hoodith, Linda Baldry, Rachael Quinn (Cllr), John Hudghton, Carlon Stewart and Tom Rhodes.

**Chairman:** Tina Heathcote was asked and agreed to chair the meeting.

**Introductions:** The meeting started with a round of introductions.

### **1 Notes of the meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> July**

**1.1 Approval** The notes were approved as a true record.

**1.2 Matters Arising** (a) Website (5.8 in notes) Vision Buxton is making Zoe available for one hour per week to help out the Town Team. The Town Team is grateful for this help.

(b) Illustrated Map (5.4 in notes) Adjustments are being made in response to feedback and the next stage will be a draft for public display.

### **2 Public Transport**

**2.1 Bus services** Past improvements had been whittled away by recent cut backs. These seemed to be more severe since the formation of the new company, High Peak Buses, which was now responsible for most local services. There were many examples of services which clearly failed to meet users' needs.

The change in timing of Service 58 to Macclesfield seemed particularly inept as it now arrived there just after the London train had left. It had consequently been seen travelling empty on some recent journeys. "Joined up thinking" to integrate services was necessary if public transport was to gain in popularity.

Clarification was to be sought from the company regarding the extent of any subsidy and whether any assessment of the impact of the changes on the users had been undertaken.

It was important to get people to use buses to reduce their consumption of fossil fuels. The question of the cost effectiveness of subsidies should be investigated in the light of the cost of providing and maintaining car parks. Further investigation of this economic question was to be undertaken by Mike (M), Janet and Joe, possibly with Sarah Rawlinson.

If an explicit brief was developed, university students or school pupils might undertake a research project to assess the impact of public transport on the town and any mitigation which could be found for its limitations.

**2.2 Rail Service to Manchester.** The agenda item had been couched in these terms as the re-opening of the Matlock line was too big an issue for this meeting to deal with.

The existing rail service is increasingly well used. It was thought that it might take more traffic off the roads if it was more frequent. This would provide better for return journeys both for visitors travelling out into the Peak District and those travelling to business and hospital appointments in Stockport and Manchester. It was noted that the Community Rail Partnership was pressing for two trains per hour and for reduced running times. The line had recently been designated as a "Community rail service" which meant that local groups should have more influence over its management.

The proposed relief road to Manchester Airport would join the A6 between Hazel Grove and High Lane. This would bring extra traffic onto the A6. There might be funding for better rail services as mitigation for this increase in road traffic.

It was proposed that Janet should consult Mike Rose and that then the Directors should seek a meeting with the train operating company, with representatives of the Borough Council present.

**2.3 Car Parking Provision** There is a general perception that provision is inadequate but this is not born out by observation of the off street car parks which are hardly ever completely full. There is a need for better signage to car parks especially those available to visitors who want to stay all day and those, like Market Street, which are hidden away. If additional signs are installed, it was important that some of the clutter of signs already in place should be removed.

On the streets, movement was often restricted by parking on both sides. This problem is spreading wider and wider with controls also being regularly extended. Some provision for those who work in the town centre would be of value. Park and ride was mentioned but might not be sustainable with the numbers coming into Buxton by so many radial routes. The busiest route is Fairfield Road and it was suggested that a park near Dove Holes Station and a shuttle train might fill the bill.

**2.4 Car Parking Charges** This was the most contentious issue. Parking in Buxton is regarded as expensive when compared with other local towns, like Leek. Doubts were expressed about the sustainability of the situation where parking income was such a major part of the borough council's income. It was suggested that concessions for local residents should be extended though some did not seem to make use of the early and late shopping one.

It was suggested that more clarity was needed to provide for three distinct needs: (i) brief stops to buy single items or withdraw cash; (ii) medium term parking for general shopping; (iii) long stay parking for visitors or town centre employees. These should be signposted and charged appropriately.

Two items, regarding the management of parking, caused concern that visitors might be deterred from returning to Buxton. The requirement to enter part of the vehicles' registration details when paying in car parks was irritating and could not make much difference to income. The attitude of the Wardens in imposing penalties for such offences as obstructing dropped kerbs was too "Gung ho". It all suggested that the only objective was to maximise income.

It was also pointed out that prepayment for parking, with the possibility of a severe penalty for overstaying, was a deterrent to staying and spending in the town. Payment on exit would be ideal or could top-up by mobile phone be provided?

The point was made that any changes which the Town Team requested must be evaluated in terms of the cost to be set against any benefit.

**2.5 Cycle and pedestrian facilities** The meeting was concerned that there were absolutely no facilities for cyclists within the town. Secure cycle storage was needed for both the shopping centres and the railway station. Safe cycle routes needed to be identified and marked out.

Improvements of the pedestrian routes, especially around the railway station, were urgently required.

**3 Talking Signpost Project Review** Mike B had circulated his report with three appendices giving details. *\*This is available on request.* He stated that it had all gone well and that he was grateful to all the volunteers. The meeting noted its gratitude to him for arranging the trial run.

*\*This and other items in italics are added notes and do not form part of the record of the meeting.*

# BuxtonTownTeam

*All together, better*

Talking Signposts (Continued) One of the repeated comments from both visitors and volunteers was the unsatisfactory nature of the "Tourist maps" displayed by the council on the boards around the town. Maps orientated to show what was ahead of the visitor and covering more than just the defined town centre were required. Roddie MacLean undertook to follow this up with the council officers in the context of wayfinding more generally.

There was some interest in extending the project immediately and Mike was asked to contact all the volunteers to see if enough of them were available. *Only four people responded positively to this message so this extension is not practicable.*

Tina undertook to prepare a Press release for the Buxton Advertiser.

For next year, Mike suggested that all the volunteers should be invited to talk over the plans, possibly over a drink. This gathering would have to formulate the precise details of how to take the project forward and identify a Project Team to oversee it. Mike explained that he was too committed to have time to manage it next year.

**4 Great Town 2014 nomination** The Borough Council had convened a small group to organise the visit of the "Jury" from the Academy of Urbanism, on 21<sup>st</sup> August. Vision Buxton, the University, Trevor Osborne and the Town Team are all contributing to the planning.

The visit is to start with a minibus tour including the various industrial and trading sites on the edge of the town and Poole's Cavern. After lunch at the University, there was to be a short tram ride and a walking tour of the historic centre, including The Crescent. *By now, Tina and Roddie are leading on the arrangements for the minibus tour, Margaret Charlton is going to be a temporary Talking Signpost and several Town Team members will be guests at an early evening reception.*

**5 Jack in a Box update** Alan reported that the Project Team were to meet potential members of the first cluster on July 31<sup>st</sup>. They would be showing the Unit 8 in The Springs Centre. This cluster was to sell jewellery and fashion accessories. There were some concerns about the membership of the cluster but every confidence that they would soon have their charitable status.

**6 Other business** (a) A-board Policy in connection with the Great Town assessment visit, concern had been raised about the mass of A-boards in Buxton's public realm. Many of these are illegally chained to street furniture and the ones near Turner's Memorial are set out in rows which obstruct pedestrian movement. Dai Larner, from High Peak Borough Council, had sent the code of practice which is recommended in Bakewell, with the suggestion that it might be applied here through the Town Team.

Although the principles set out in it are desirable, there was some concern that the Town Team was being asked to do the council's dirty work for them. Mike B suggested that, as part of the wayfinding scheme, businesses might be sold a standard size space on a single structure. This would list the businesses on a geographical basis (Spring Gardens, Higher Buxton etc). This could be done quite flexibly using screw on plates which could be removed if the business collapsed or withdrew its subscription. *A PDF of the Bakewell Leaflet is circulated with these notes.*

(b) Exhortation from Jean Ball Everyone was encouraged to (i) visit the website to read and comment on the Business plan; (ii) consider who could be recruited to the membership of BTT and who should be put forward as Directors. It was pointed out that the selection of Directors was in the hands of a small Search Committee in accordance with the constitution. She also raised the issue of Christmas events (Crawl?) and it was agreed that this should be an agenda item for the meeting on August 28<sup>th</sup>.

(c) Retail section Alan Proposed that the Town Team should establish a Retail Section to deal with all retail issues starting with the Local Loyalty Scheme. *This needs a decision by the Directors.*

# BuxtonTownTeam

*All together, better*

(d) Branding Buxton Adrian reported that this issue, which was being tackled by the newish Stakeholder (Marketing) Group was now clearly linked back to the Vision Buxton Board. *In the last few days, the co-chairs of the Stakeholder Group have been in touch in order to work more closely with BTT. Currently they are working on Voucher Cloud and a Digital Buxton High Street. This may be on the agenda for the next meeting.*

**7 Future meetings** The Ideas and Vision Group will meet at 7.30 pm, at The Buckingham Hotel on the following dates: Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> August, and the following Mondays, September 16<sup>th</sup>, October 14<sup>th</sup>, November 18<sup>th</sup> and December 16<sup>th</sup>. *The August meeting was to have been a less formal one but so much new business has come forward that I am planning a full agenda.*

M F Bryant  
01298 213341  
[mfbryant@btinternet.com](mailto:mfbryant@btinternet.com)

12<sup>th</sup> August 2013