

## **IDEAS & VISION GROUP NOTES OF THE MEETING ON 4<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2013**

**Present:** Alan Thompson, Janet Miller, Joe Dugdale, John Hudghton, Julian Cohen, Linda Baldry, Mike Bryant, Pat Chapman, Rachel Quinn, Roddie MacLean, Roger Floyd, Sam Copley, Sarah Rawlinson, Tom Rhodes

**Observing:** Lilla Madacsi, Netta Christie

**Apologies:** Adrian Brown, Charles Jolly, Derek Bodey, Trevor Gilman

### **1. NOTES OF LAST MEETING**

#### **1.1 Notes of the Last Meeting**

The notes of the meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2012 were approved as an accurate record.

#### **1.2 Matters Arising**

It was noted that there had been a meeting with Carlon Stewart (Spring Gardens Centre Manager) on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2012, for which the notes had been circulated. Janet will post these up on the website.

### **2. REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The directors have met twice so far this year, notes of both meetings are available to read on the website.

The first (14<sup>th</sup> January) dealt with taking over from the Setting Up Group (whose work, with the exception of terms of reference, has been completed) plus routine matters such as projects.

The second (29<sup>th</sup> January) was specifically to address issue of developing a business plan and a strategy. It was agreed that the strategy encompassed two separate elements -

(i) Strategy for the Town Team - how the company will operate, how we will position ourselves, relations with other bodies, aspirations as regards membership numbers and so on. The directors believe it is within their remit to take direct responsibility for determining this.

(ii) Strategy for Buxton town - the directors believe that forming a strategy for the town depends on first developing a vision of what we want for Buxton, and that it would be presumptuous of them (as 6 volunteers with no democratic mandate) to define this without reference to the membership and the wider community. Accordingly they proposed to hold a general meeting in May (being one year since the first public meeting to discuss setting up a Town Team) with the aim of developing a common vision that the majority of people in Buxton would support.

This generated some debate, with suggestions that the board needed with some urgency to define a strategy, as a framework that projects could fit into, and that the public meetings last year had already covered this so another public meeting was unnecessary. It was pointed out that the lack of an over-arching strategy was not preventing any of the proposed projects from going ahead. The view was also expressed that one reason that previous organisations in Buxton with similar aims had failed, was that a small group of people had tried to impose their ideas without wider consultation.

### **3. REVIEW OF IDEAS AND PROJECTS**

#### **3.1 'Wonder of the Peak' Tram**

Netta reported that she had put in her own money to buy and convert a milk float for use as an 8-seater tourist bus between Pavilion Gardens and Pooles Cavern. Licensing restrictions meant that initially it would not be possible for passengers to get on or off at intermediate stops, but it was hoped this could be resolved by next year. The launch of the service would be on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March, with a planned 'naming ceremony' at the Turner Memorial using St Ann's Well water. There is no shortage of other ideas where the tram could feature - the University Open Day later in March, an elderly magicians' trip to the Museum, the Spring Fair etc. Netta was congratulated on the venture, and the Town Team look forward to working with her in the future.

#### **3.2 Christmas Shopping Crawl**

The project is essentially completed, the prize giving event took place at the Green Man Gallery on 24<sup>th</sup> January. While comments from participating traders indicated that it was generally regarded as a success by them, a proper analysis (based on trader evaluation forms and a formal comparison against the success criteria in the Project Proposal), had not yet been compiled. It was suggested that if the scheme were to be repeated a number of modifications might be made. Janet will ask Jean and Neil to submit a formal report as soon as possible.

#### **3.3 Green Man Gallery**

Initially, Buxton Town Team had been asked for two things - to sign the lease on behalf of the collective and to provide some initial 'start-up' financial support. Alan has spent considerable time analysing their costs and sales to date, and produced a projected cash flow that demonstrates that financial assistance is not in fact necessary. The details of who has responsibility for different elements has been agreed, and the Town Team have agreed to sign the lease on behalf of the collective, with certain provisos. The Directors expect to approve the project and sign the lease in the very near future.

#### **3.4 Spring Fair**

The project has been approved, with a minimal budget from the Town Team of £2,500 - additional funding will be sought from elsewhere either in cash or as donations in kind. Details of the costs to participants are still being worked out, negotiations with HPBC and DCC regarding trading permits, events licencing and road closures are

still ongoing, so it is too early to say how many stalls there will be or how many street front traders will open on the day. This is an ambitious project and the organising team will be needing a lot of help from other town team members. A small flier and a more detailed briefing document have been produced, Janet will post these on the website for downloading.

### **3.5 Town Team Website Hosting**

The project has been approved, and Andy is proceeding with transferring the website to a new host and setting up the new email accounts. The work should be complete by mid-February.

### **3.6 Town Team Identity**

The Buxton Town Team identity has been approved and incorporated into all recent letters, fliers and other publicity. Work is now starting to incorporate this identity into the website. A small flier about the Town Team has been produced, Janet will post this on the website for downloading.

### **3.7 Parish Map - Buxton Illustrated Map**

The proposal is becoming much clearer, a team of artists from the Green Man Gallery have developed some suggestions and are keen to carry out the work, at a cost of no more than £750. The current total indicative cost is £1,500, which will cover printing, packaging, publicity and so on.

As regards the exact content of the map, the team felt that this should be a collaborative effort, where anyone who had a view could have their say. A workshop has been arranged from 3-5pm on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> February, at the Green Man Gallery, all are welcome.

It was agreed that the details of the proposal should be finalised and presented to the directors for approval as soon as possible.

### **3.8 Pop-Up Shops**

There are four people now on the project team and a fifth one joining soon. They are looking to develop themed 'clusters' of businesses (eg sports & adventure, health & beauty) who can then be brought together as a collective to occupy vacant premises. Template tenancy agreements are now available. They are also looking into setting up a charity which would take on the initial leases and take advantage of concessions on rates. It was reported that the University have put in a bid for funding to set up incubator units for their business students, and suggested the team should discuss with Sarah if there is potential for collaboration.

### **3.9 Buxton Branding**

Vision Buxton have agreed that they will list non-member businesses on the Visit Buxton website, and have asked the Town Team to help in contacting them all for permission. Janet has offered to do this for businesses along 'Main Street', while doing the consultation about the Spring Fair.

Vision Buxton have also agreed a major upgrade of the website. Lilla reported that she was one of a group of University students working with Zoe to make the site more user friendly and interactive, and on how to develop into social media.

### **3.10 Visitor Tour**

No progress to report, but it was noted that a tie-in with Netta's tram could be appropriate.

### **3.11 Shop Local**

The University have agreed to take on a piece of research into the various local loyalty schemes in use around the country, and to recommend what might work best for Buxton. They will be reporting back towards the end of April. It was suggested this presentation should be made to a wider audience, and invite for instance members of the HPBC Regeneration Select Committee sub group. Sarah will forward a copy of the briefing document to Linda.

### **3.12 HPBC Wayfinding Scheme**

Concern was expressed about the draft proposal that HPBC officers had put together. The cost seemed very high and the document indicated that funding would be coming from the Town Team, which it will not be. It was also felt that the use of a large national 'preferred partner' was inappropriate and that we should be using local businesses to design and produce new signage for Buxton. Linda will take these points to the Wayfinding Meeting in March.

## **4. SPECIAL MEETING ABOUT THE RETAIL SITUATION**

The meeting had taken place on 21<sup>st</sup> January, in spite of severe weather, though unfortunately some key people who live out of town had been unable to be there. Joe had written up a very short note but the flip charts from the group sessions had ended up with Janet - these will be retrieved, and Joe/Janet will expand the note into a more detailed report and post it on the website.

A lively debate followed regarding: the way the meeting had been run; the distinction between anecdotal evidence and facts-based research; whether it was productive to criticise HPBC for their policies (past and present) or better to work in collaboration with them. The point was also made that if High Streets are to survive and compete with supermarkets they need to offer more than just retail - arts, entertainment, community events etc.

## **5. SPECIAL MEETING ABOUT TRANSPORT AND PARKING**

This will be held on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> February, 7:30pm, in the Buckingham Hotel. Linda, Pat and Sarah volunteered to organise and facilitate it.

## **6. NEXT MEETING**

This will be held on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March, 7:30pm, provisionally in the Buckingham Hotel (Mike will confirm).