

Buxton Town Team
Ideas and Vision Group
NOTES of the meeting on 22nd October 2012

Present: Janet Miller, Mike Bryant, Julian Cohen, Roger Floyd, Judith Milling, Roman Gawel, Linda Baldry, John Hudghton, Sarah Rawlinson, Carole Mordaunt-Todd, Alan Thompson and Adrian Brown.

Observer: Charles Jolly, as a representative of the Scrutiny Group.

Apologies: Rachael Quinn, Paul Armstrong, Neil Scowcroft, Roddie MacLean and Tom Rhodes.

Facilitator and Note Taker: Mike Bryant.

Previous meeting: The notes of the meeting over two evenings in September were approved. Later in the meeting, Julian Cohen stated that he had been misquoted in his reference to Tesco's interest in the former Nestle site off Station Road. There were no matters arising.

Town Team Partnership Janet reported that the Town Team had been notified that it had been admitted to the Government's scheme of support and mentoring for Town Teams in places where Portas bids had been unsuccessful. The official announcement was to be made next day, 23rd October. The £10,000 funding had to be spent on the four projects: (1) an illustrated town map, (2) help to establish the first pop-up shop, (3) a contribution to the Shop Local scheme and (4) the Town Fair next spring. This last item would effectively be the launch of the Town Team and would offer opportunities for traders and groups to show off their products and activities in a "Street Party" in Spring Gardens, the Market Place and possibly on The Slopes. The Town Team was grateful for the support of Andrew Bingham, MP, for his help with the application.

Progress reports Setting-Up Janet reported some delays with the registration to become a Community Interest Company, because the draft Articles of Association needed some amendment. However the application should be submitted soon.

The Communication Group was now making good progress on the update of the Town Team Website and the creation of a Town Team logo and letterhead. (To see and comment on the logos contact Janet Miller.) Negotiations were also under way with Vision Buxton in the hope of making the Visit Buxton website even better. Emma Fairbrother had taken on Chairmanship of the group and David Mulholland had volunteered to deputise and be its note taker.

Charles Jolly reported that The Scrutiny Group was now established with three members. They would be monitoring all the groups to ensure that activities did not stray from the Town Teams overall terms of reference.

Management of Task Forces It was agreed that each Task Force needed a clear remit to define the precise purpose and limits of their task. They should report back to the Ideas and Vision Group at defined points in their progress so that their work could be monitored throughout. It was suggested that, when each one was established, their first task should be to produce a brief Scoping Statement setting out the extent of the task, as they saw it, along with the resources required and any funding proposals. This would have to be approved by the Ideas and Vision Group before any action was taken on behalf of the Town Team. Town Team expenditure on all projects would require approval from the Directors. It was agreed that these arrangements would apply to tasks undertaken by the Communications Group, other than those to facilitate internal communications and to promote the image of The Town Team itself.

Terms of Reference for the Ideas and Vision Group It was agreed that the group should:

- Be alert to local developments so as to capture ideas from any source and at any time;
- Maintain the Schedule of Ideas as a live working document and the core of the Town Team's activity;
- Monitor activity in other organisations and other places as a learning exercise;
- Appoint the members of each Task Force
- Manage the Task Forces as outlined above;
- Report to and accept instructions from the Board of Directors.

Ideas to which there is already a commitment Numbers in (*italics*) relate to the Classified Schedule (see website)

1. Christmas Shopping Crawl This is part of a national shopping promotion for independent traders. The scheme aims to encourage shoppers to enter business premises which they might not otherwise visit in pursuit of a prize of £1,000 in cash and vouchers. The entries of those who have collected a stamp at all the participating businesses will be included in the draw for the prize. No purchase is necessary but traders will hope to make the most of the extra footfall and of the awareness it brings for their products/services.

In Buxton, the scheme (led by Jean Ball and Neil Scowcroft) was well under way with businesses being recruited and funding identified. The Town Team was underwriting some of the cost from the Town Team Partnership funds. The plan is to have the maps, which identify where the businesses are and act as an entry form on which to collect stamps, ready for use from November 12th. The major launch will be on 23rd November in association with the Christmas Lights Switch-On. Vision Buxton was also providing some funding and access to the Visit Buxton website for publicity.

2. Shop Local Scheme (24) Roger Floyd reported that the traders were currently in a lull but were planning to have a drive for footfall before Christmas. They were working on (a) getting more Christmas trees up this year; (b) having a seasonal window competition; (c) small pop-up shops inside other shops.

The Town Team Shop Local Project had come to a temporary halt because Neil Scowcroft had been pulled away to work on the Shopping Crawl (above). Unfortunately there had been a breakdown in communications and Roger was feeling he had been left high and dry.

3. Parish Map (4) The project to produce an illustrated "Parish Style" map had been taken on by the Communications Group. The Task Force was Joe Dugdale, Emma Fairbrother and Eric Tilley. They were going to share views on creating a brief which the I and V Group will review as set out above.

4. Pop-Up Shops (26) Adrian Brown reported that the offer of a unit in Spring Gardens Centre had been withdrawn but that Julie Collins had offered premises at Five Ways Junction (this was Dorothy Wilson's dress shop for many years). He only had limited information about the progress with arrangements at the time of the meeting.

4a. Business incubators (27) Alan Thompson requested permission, which was granted, to develop incubators on a small scale alongside the Pop-Up Shops. No national funding was available currently for such schemes but others would need small units for non-retail business, including University students requiring entrepreneurship opportunities while learning. Thus shared premises, possibly alongside retail, would be ideal. The point was also made that as the Crescent became established there would be increasing demand for health and wellbeing services at a less luxurious and expensive level.

5. Town Fair (51) Janet Miller explained that the Setting Up Group had not actually offered to take this project on; although some of the members were interested in playing a part in its development. A Task Force would therefore need to be appointed very soon. There were no volunteers, from those present, to take this on. There might be some interest from the University students but a strong lead would be needed. This would be on the Agenda for the next meeting but meanwhile Janet will discuss this with interested people from the Setting Up Group.

6. Buxton Brand (31) The Communications Group have nominated David Mulholland, Eric Tilley, Emma Fairbrother and Jen Francis to be the Task Force on this project. They have made the initial contact with the Vision Buxton Marketing Group regarding improvements to the Visit Buxton website. They are soon to have a meeting with Zoe Mellen the VB webmaster. This project will also be reviewed by the I & V Group.

6a. Marketing the town (50) This idea was seen as duplicating Buxton Brand above and will be removed from the Classified Schedule.

People's Supermarket Roman Gawel joined the meeting this evening to share his idea for a People's Supermarket; an idea which has been successful in other parts of the country. They are local cooperative ventures which provide healthy, ethical and locally sourced food (and other day to day essentials) through a shop which is financed and staffed by volunteers. The "Partners" who provide the investment and operate the business can make purchases on an "At cost" basis, while other customers pay a little more.

In Buxton, the closure of The Wild Carrot had highlighted the need for a source of such wares. A group had just been established by Richard and Nicky Kierton to purchase jointly from Suma, a specialist wholesaler of vegetarian, organic and fair-trade goods. This led to the conclusion that there was demand for these products in Buxton.

The project would only run successfully if enough partners could be found to finance and staff the shop. There was the possibility that retired people and students might join the workforce to gain the benefit of produce "At cost". The rent and other overheads relating to shop premises would also be a major challenge to a business run on a shoe string.

Julian Cohen pointed out that there were many residents in the town who needed basic foods at rock bottom prices and would not want to pay the Fair-trade premium. These included students and residents of the peripheral neighbourhoods who might need them available in Fairfield, Burbage and Harpur Hill.

It was concluded that, until there was a viable business plan, there was little that the Town Team could do to help. However it was an appealing idea and would be added to the Schedule of Ideas.

Action Projects to be taken forward

1. Outlets for Tourist Information (6) The council, through Paul Armstrong, had already provided leaflets, and a rack to hold them, for Chippy's Plaice in Spring Gardens. Further outlets were needed and it was thought that premises near the Grove Hotel, on the Market Place (the Tradesman's' Entrance or Mycocks' butchers?) and in High Street would provide a valuable chain to supplement the TIC in Pavilion Gardens. No one volunteered to lead the exercise to find these but Linda Baldry said that Paul Armstrong would provide further materials if suitable premises were identified.

2. Way marked visitor route (12) This was discussed briefly in the absence of Roddie MacLean who had offered to lead the Task Force. It was noted that this was successful in other places where brass inserts were set in the pavement. In the short term it might be possible to stick or paint marks on the paving. Linda Baldry was concerned that that might not be permitted in the Conservation Areas where natural stone paving was the norm. She was going to enquire about this issue.

3. Parking (34) There were already various initiatives going on so no clear campaign could be identified. Derbyshire County Council was in the process of bringing in changes to the on-street parking regulations. Linda Baldry suggested that we should invite someone from DCC to come to one of our meetings to discuss all the issues round parking and eventually establish a continuing link to the County Council.

It was pointed out that off-street parking accommodation, which was already under some pressure, would be further curtailed by the allocation of the lower level of the Pavilion Gardens car park for use by the Crescent Hotel. The question was raised as to how much the hotel was being charged for this. Linda Baldry said she would enquire.

Sarah Rawlinson suggested that, rather than continuing to provide for more and more cars, the more sustainable solution was to radically improve public transport, including better thought out timetables. If the Trans-Peak from Matlock arrived before 9.00 am (currently it arrives about 9.10), it would be possible for University students to come by bus rather than car. Linda Baldry said she would enquire if changes in timing could be made.

4. Contribute to the Local Plan (44) The current issue on the planning scene was the Housing Options Consultation which officially ended the next day, October 23rd. Late submissions might be accepted. The members present were encouraged to contribute observations, especially regarding the site of the former Nestlé Bottling Works. This site, it was suggested, should be excluded from the Town Centre and used for sustainable housing. Some members thought it should be given to the town for leisure purposes, parking or rail related use while others thought that it was unlikely that Nestlé would agree to relinquish the land.

This led to a heated debate, with Julian Cohen complaining about Nestlé's exploitation of the Buxton Water and the impotence of "The Council" in failing to press them for a better deal. Linda Baldry stated that now that the contract was in place it had to be honoured, however ill advised it seemed in hindsight. Janet Miller indicated that, once the Town Team was properly registered, the Directors would be making contact with Nestlé, along with other major businesses in the area, to discuss ways in which they could make a positive contribution to the town.

Any other business Alan Thompson mentioned a scheme he had in mind to create a template for learning in a business situation. This was not discussed in detail.

The next meeting This was arranged for 7.30 pm, on Monday 3rd December, at The Buckingham Hotel. *The hotel has since confirmed that the Wye Room is available.*

Since the Meeting – Some update notes:

Christmas Shopping Crawl

We have received an update on the Shopping Crawl and this is included with these notes as a separate PDF file.

Because the Christmas Shopping Crawl is doing well, I think the pragmatic decision to delay the other Shop Local activity until after Christmas is inevitable.

Clarification of project details for Task Forces

Following our discussion about the preparation of a Scoping Report for each project for which we set up a Task Force, Janet Miller has devised a Project Proposal Form to facilitate this process. The Directors are expected to require the use of this form even if the project is already well established. This, they hope, will help to avoid future failures of communication about projects, their priority and the resources (including manpower) needed to complete them.

The forms will come to our Ideas and Vision Group initially and the Directors will be deciding if they need to vet all of them or just those with funding needs.

An illustration of the use of the form (using it with details of the Shopping Crawl) is also sent herewith as a separate Word file.

Council Way-finding Proposals

Paul Armstrong has sent out his draft scheme for initial consultation. See yet another Word file. This is a long term scheme to replace Buxton's signposting and is not in any way competition for our idea of a decorative map. He is requesting feedback and Janet is proposing that there should be one corporate response from the Town Team. Please send your observations to her for inclusion – janet@jmassociates.demon.co.uk. She will pass them to whoever finally sends the response.

On-street Parking and Business Rates

Cllr Linda Baldry has been very busy on our behalf. She reports as follows:

"I have spoken to business rates about the setting up of a co-operative shop and their comments are: "On the face of it, it would appear that this case might well have some merit re Discretionary Rate Relief (which can go up to 100% in certain circumstances). However, any such decision will require a detailed evaluation of the full details. Any such decisions now fall under Rob Jones rather than me under the new structure."

"I attended a meeting at DCC yesterday to discuss parking in Buxton and suggested that it might be appropriate for an officer from DCC to attend one of your meetings to discuss problems/suggestions/concerns that you have about parking so that they are aware of the situation and they will be able to answer any questions you may have. They agreed with this and will liaise via Paul Armstrong and I have advised him, so he is aware.

"I am still trying to get some answers relating to:

Costs associated with the car parking for The Crescent
Stickers on the ground for visitor tour
DCC re bus routes and timings"