

## NOTES OF THE IDEAS MEETING ON TUESDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2017

**Present:** Carole Rogers, Derek Bodey, Jim Lowe, John Estruch, John Robertson, Laura Harrall, Paul Rogers, Paul Wells, Philip Barton, Richard Lower, Rosemary Wood, Sue Wolton, Suzanne Pearson, Tina Heathcote, Viv Marriott

**Apologies:** Beth Eaton, Charles Jolly, Claire Millard, Dick Silson, Elaine Hill, Janet Miller, Jean Todd, Kathryn Barton, Lesley Caddy, Marie Butler, Mike Monaghan, Steve Caddy

**Introductions:** John Estruch chaired the meeting which started with a round of introductions.

1. **NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING** on 15<sup>th</sup> February were agreed as a true record. Carole Rogers, who had given a presentation on Dementia at the "Making Buxton Accessible to All," wanted to know if the last directors' meeting had resulted in any way forward. Tina Heathcote replied that the issues had been passed on to the Access, Parking, Traffic & Transport Group and BTT had identified a few things common to several groups, to put forward to HPBC.

### 2. PROJECTS – CLOSING REPORTS, PROPOSALS & UPDATES

John Estruch explained to new members the strength of BTT's projects system, which leads the Ideas Meetings and results in action, while closing reports complete the process.

**2.1 Closing Report Buxton Spring Clean 2015.** Tina explained that this had happened a couple of times and the last one in 2015. The aims were to get the whole town out cleaning signs, seats, parking meters etc to tidy up identified specific areas.

**2.2 Closing Report Buxton Railings Clean 2016.** Tina described how originally this was part and parcel of Spring Clean, now in its 4<sup>th</sup> year and run as a separate event. The previous organiser Helen Davison was in the process of moving from Buxton, and passed on the co-ordination to Suzanne Pearson. Event planned by Public Services students from Buxton & Leek College, the aim is to clean railings in Pavilion Gardens and encourage a sense of ownership and civic pride. First year 85 children took part, second year 180, third year 500 and the students are aiming for more this year. Children are provided with tabards and cleaning materials, water from 2litre containers, they stay a couple of hours and never want to go! Weather can cause problems but this is a safe environment for young people, schools can access it easily, the briefing before they begin questions – "Who do the railings belong to?" Gradually they realise that this public space is owned by them. Tina concluded "It's a good day - please come along!"

**2.3 New project proposal - Buxton in Bloom 2017.** Viv Marriott spoke about this fourth year project which differs from previous ones as it will not include East Midlands in Bloom, but instead be Buxton based and link with the Open Gardens Trail 2017 in June. The aim is to develop a sense of pride and ownership throughout the town. It can involve charity shops, private homes, WI groups, the Flowerpot People Trail, local businesses, shops, youth groups and residential homes. It will also link with Buxton Wells Dressing as locals can enter competitions in both Bloom and Wells Dressing. Like with the town's Christmas decorations, people will be encouraged to create decorations to go up around the town, and a BTT craft group will run workshops to make flowers and birds from recycled materials. The suggestion is to have monthly craft-making meetings in advance, rather than having a rushed job in the summer! These meetings will also be social groups, it is anticipated that a core group of 10-12 people will assist people with gardens or crafts and this will expand. **General Discussion** Members at the meeting offered suggestions to Viv; Rosemary mentioned possible links with RHS at Chatsworth, Derek suggested talking with other craft groups in town eg U3A craft groups, Philip expressed concerns about Buxton in Bloom and BTT Craft Group actually being two separate proposals. Viv asked for assistance with admin support with entries – is there anyone with database experience who can help? Sue Wolton volunteered to promote Buxton in Bloom among local shops and businesses.

**2.4 Update on current project - Boundary of Peak District National Park Walk Launch** – Tina explained that the walk of 192 miles, with 20 stages, has Buxton as its start and finish. The launch on 17<sup>th</sup> June is a very big day with stalls and events linked to outdoors on Buxton market place. Dignitaries invited include Emma Bridgewater as the president of the Council for Preservation of Rural England who will open the event. Representatives from all the boroughs, districts and parishes along the route are invited and are being very helpful with the organisation. A group of walkers from Buxton will set off at 10.00 am to walk their stage and local BBC radio stations will "pass the microphone" along the route throughout the day. At 6 pm in the evening we hope to have Karen Bradley MP for North Staffordshire open the big final celebrations. Buxton Civic Association is on board, as the date is also a national celebration of National Civic Day. Carole asked if anything about a celebratory peel of bells around the town has been organised. This idea has still to be followed up. Derek reminded everyone that if they wish to take part in any stage of the walk to contact Friends of the Peak District via their website as they are the walk organisers.

**2.5 New project proposal – Ashwood Park (phase 2)** Richard Lower explained how Phase 1 with previous project leader, Claire Millard, has changed how the park looks by creating vistas and opening up the space. As Claire is leaving town, he is offering to protect the work already done, continue to clear bushes and remove saplings. He proposes to plant natural flowers to replace scrubland and provide colour. HPBC have agreed that the yew trees around the tennis courts can be trimmed to 3/4ft height thus reducing the damp and moss. A Community Pay Back team have cut back growth around the railings by the river and plans are to paint these later in the year. Richard hopes to keep the momentum going and advertise through the BTT newsletter; giving dates for planned work at Ashwood so more volunteers can be involved. He plans to raise money through grants to buy bluebells and wild garlic.

**General Discussion** Rosemary offered wild garlic plants from her garden. Philip Barton, as treasurer of BTT, thought the directors would be wary of signing off a project that identifies costs of £2,000. Richard replied that this was only a rough estimation and he would only spend money if needed. A second tree surgeon has offered to fell the yews free of charge, but paint for railings will need to be purchased. John suggested a smaller amount as a budget is advisable.

**2.6 Item to consider Fund Raising Issues.** Tina sees the development of BTT as entering phase 2. She believes the organisation is more mature, and increasingly in need of money to move on to next stage and we should consider how to go about getting funding in the future. A more systematic approach would mean that different projects are not bidding for the same funding or miss opportunities. Perhaps a sub-group, similar to the communications group, could be responsible for fund raising from which project leaders could request monies? We can put it to the BTT members and request any retired fundraisers or people with bid securing experience to form a team and put a group proposal to the directors.

### **3. ACCESS, PARKING, TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT**

Tina explained that this group arose as a result of the 'Buxton on the Move' Conference which took a holistic view of movement developments around the town and congestion issues. The group last met in January to consider whether to continue, with properly constituted terms of reference and with aims based on the findings from the conference to develop specific projects. The group is responsible to the directors and will report on accessibility for everyone. So far they have looked in depth at coach travel, cycling, and with DCC and Derby University at sustainable travel. They have requested meetings with DCC and HPBC and feel that members of both organisations do not live in Buxton and therefore are not personally aware of the issues; for example the proximity of traffic lights near roundabouts where in a length of under half a mile there are eleven sets of traffic lights – rather excessive!

### **4. TOWN DEVELOPMENTS**

4.1 Roddie reported that crocuses planted on the Slopes have come through.

4.2 Progress on the Crescent was very well reported by Cary Hadfield from Vinci at a recent Vision Buxton meeting. As site manager, Cary has taken photos and written fortnightly reports that unfortunately haven't been made public, leading to public frustration. He is happy for anyone to talk with staff on site who can possibly arrange a tour. The whole fabric of the building is in a much worse state than envisaged at the start, and hand tools are being used rather than machinery. The report on the working springs, back in 2012 by English Heritage, forbade any removal of floorboards and since then many additional structural problems have been revealed. James Berresford, the newly appointed chair of the Crescent Trust is now receiving regular reports. HPBC and DCC were very glad to pass the lease over and wish to have locals involved. Jim Lowe commented that the town is of utmost importance "If Buxton doesn't work, then the Crescent won't work". Tina offered to take these concerns to the next Crescent Stakeholders meeting.

4.3 Buxton Spring Fair on 1<sup>st</sup> May – Richard reported that the process of recruiting stallholders, local groups and businesses is happening with a rolling programme of music and dance planned. Information is on the BTT website and leaflets on how to apply circulated around the town. Marshals will be required at times during the day and gazebos sought. On the market place, stallholders will be able to hire sturdy market stalls.

### **5. MAINTAINING BUXTON'S GREEN PLACES**

John introduced this main item of the meeting by recognising that nationally all local councils have had cash cuts, resulting in voluntary groups picking up the non statutory work eg Friends of the Pavilion Gardens.

**5.1 He introduced Jim Lowe who is the BTT Slopes Care Team leader.** Jim described how a regular team of members have been improving and maintaining the Slopes which is an important link between upper and lower Buxton, with importance to the whole town. The work started in summer 2016 after discussion with HPBC and involved low level maintenance, weeding, moss clearance and base of trees pruning. Meeting on Thurs/Sat alternate weeks the group has established good working relationships with HPBC who clear the mess. Most of the walls are now cleaned – so what next? Benches and railings could lead to pointing – which may be beyond volunteer skills. Public support has been tremendous – about 6 months ago a volunteer put on Facebook a picture of the cleaned wall on Terrace Road, resulting in 18,000 hits. Passers-by recognise the BTT hi-vis blue jackets and say how grateful they are to Town Team. The Rotary Club have supplied crocuses while The Source Café gives coffee free of charge. There is a hard working group, with a core of 6/7

volunteers, supplemented by another 5/7, who do approximately 60 volunteer hours per week. During their coffee break, the team ponder the next stage of the Slopes development- What should the Slopes look like in the future? The immediate problem is blocked drains from years of neglect that is low cost at the moment (estimated £50) and HPBC have the kit to remove leaves and soil. Volunteers really enjoy the teamwork and sense of satisfaction but it's like the Forth Road Bridge – a never ending project and grass is already encroaching after path edging in Aug/Sept last year. The urns have damage and require cleaning. Roddie explained that the urns, protected by English Heritage, are made from Coade Stone, an early Georgian artificial stone, which will require specialist cleaning methods. He suggested that the trees are encroaching on the iconic views down Hall Bank and the progressive management of trees in Buxton is not happening.

**General Discussion** The meeting recognised the hard work of volunteers who are also advertising BTT – perhaps a plaque to acknowledge volunteers is appropriate? The purchase of BTT feather type pennants was mentioned, to erect as work in any project is in progress. Members of the meeting commented on the use of the Slopes as an amphitheatre or possible picnic tables spot. Perhaps the empty plinth could become an art space like the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square? Lights in the trees (as in Bamburgh) would be magical, perhaps fixed collecting boxes for donations to Christmas lights (as in Seahouses). Richard Tuffrey, county architect, and Roddie have looked at the area to left of the avenue of trees, apparently not in conservation area, which slopes towards Terrace Road, where there was once a bandstand at the top.

**5.2 Richard Lower reported on BTT volunteer work at Ashwood Park.** Over the past 2 years, BTT have litter picked and pulled rubbish from the River Wye. They have opened up the confluence of the river and Hogshaw Brook and generally opened up the whole aspect of the park, working alongside Waterside Care (part of Keep Britain Tidy) and HPBC. Flower beds have been revitalised, bushes removed by the Council and top soil supplied. Snowberry bushes and saplings by A6 have been cut down low so the park can be viewed from the road. There have been lots of favourable comments from passers-by, some of whom remember a paddling pool and bandstand. Benches and bridges have been painted red, resulting in eye-catching features. The tennis court and basketball court is well used in the summer and going forward the plan is to lop the surrounding yew trees to approx 4ft to open up the amenities. Two paths have been discovered – at the Wetherspoons end, a flight of steps leading up to a grassy area and at Morrisons end a muddy track through the woods. Drainage is bad on all paths, particularly by seats. There is lots more that can be done, as brambles keep returning.

Half way through the park, the bridge has been cleared of trees and HPBC have agreed to money for the demolition now going to restoration, as this is a safety issue being the only means of access apart from either end. Richard has talked with Morrisons who own the bridge at their end about a loose concrete block that could be endangering pipes.

**General Discussion** Again, thanks was expressed to all volunteers. A suggestion that stone from Tarmac would be ideal for improving pathways and as Buxton Civic Association has a donated amount each year, hopefully we can liaise with them. Tina has had discussions with Cemex who run a corporate responsibility scheme where every employee has a paid day to do community work. As they have 140 staff, there could be over 100 person days of help. We also need to ask the Council which jobs have been neglected. Mention was made of litter in trees and bushes growing from rooftops around the town. Volunteering generates other people eg Fairfield scouts are proposing to look after the small park off Fairfield Road – perhaps Cemex could help paint the seats there? Tina concluded that it is all about acting together and talking – pooling offers of staff help, equipment from local firms, publicising businesses who have helped via noticeboards. Suggestion that Fairfield Green could be a future project along with the clean up of A515 dual carriage entrance. Problem with bench restoration and painting is having somewhere to do the work – perhaps Cemex could offer a solution? Roddie mentioned an old photo of Ashwood Park, showing long panorama with bridges and bandstand, which hangs in Barbarella's.

## **6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None raised

John thanked people for attending.

**Date of next meeting Tues 11<sup>th</sup> April** General Meeting at the Palace Hotel

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