

Buxton Town Team
A Community Interest Company – Registered no. 8304388
Ideas and Vision Group

Report of a meeting with Carlon Stewart, Manager of Spring Gardens Centre

On Tuesday, 11th December 2012, Roger Floyd, Bill Barrett and Julian Cohen attended the meeting on behalf of the Town Team. They were given a warm welcome by Carlon Stewart. The main points that emerged are set out below:

The complicated arrangements at the Centre were explained. Carlon is employed by Workman to manage the Centre. Threadneedle are asset managers on behalf of the owners Zurich. The Centre has changed ownership 6 times over its life and is up for sale on an ongoing basis. Regarding rent and conditions shops liaise with two agents who are employed by Threadneedle.

Carlon himself does not have much to do with the retention of existing shops or attracting new ones or anything to do with the Centre's ownership or future.

The car park is leased by High Peak Borough Council.

Service charges for shops in the Centre have been reduced but business rate levels are high.

Companies, Game, Glitz and Julian Graves have gone into liquidation. If agents of the Centre's owner, Zurich Insurance, even enter the former units of these companies without the receiver's permission then the owner immediately becomes liable to the full business rates on those units. They are therefore out of commission for the time being.

Carlon stressed that he felt the relocation of coach parking to the Pavilion Gardens and away from the town had resulted in a definite decrease in footfall at the Centre.

Carlon maintains that he is keen to have 'pop-up' shops in the Centre. It may be acceptable to Zurich for charities to occupy units on a licence, rather than a lease. Licences are much simpler and not as legally demanding as leases. Seemingly it was the daunting nature of the proposed lease that killed the possibility of an Art Gallery in the former Ponden Mill premises in the centre. Carlon said he will explore the licensing possibility at his meeting with Zurich and Threadneedle in January and report back to us.

The Town Team representatives expressed their concern about Threadneedle investing heavily in Tesco shares and the possibility that they might want to close the Centre to build a new mega supermarket. Carlon did not think this was intended but said he would put our concerns to Threadneedle at his January meeting with them and get back to us about what they say.