

BUXTON TOWN TEAM - SETTING UP GROUP

NOTES ON THE INAUGURAL MEETING HELD TUESDAY 24TH JULY 2012

Present: Alan Thompson, Janet Miller, Joe Dugdale, Judith Milling, Julian Cohen, Neil Scowcroft, Nina Lubman, Roger Floyd, Suzanne Pearson, Tina Heathcote

Apologies: Roddie McLean, Trevor Gilman

1. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

To agree the role of the Setting Up Group, and how we should structure it, and then to look in more detail at the more urgent tasks that need to be carried out.

2. ROLE AND STRUCTURE OF THE SETTING UP GROUP

2.1 Role of the Setting Up Group

Its remit, extracted from the report of the meeting on 19th June, is to:-

- co-ordinate the work of the other groups
- set up the CIC (ie a legal structure so we can operate) and produce memoranda, articles of association, constitution etc
- possibly act as directors temporarily, until a 'permanent' board has been selected
- research other ventures (this is with regard to town team structure, not successful projects elsewhere)
- agree a membership structure, if we decide one is needed
- devise a method for selecting the Town Team board
- liaise with HPBC/DCC, 'friends' and other groups active on similar issues
- set up any other formal procedures that prove necessary

2.2 Individual Roles Within the Setting Up Group

Chair - suggested we may not need a permanent chair, Joe agreed to facilitate the meetings for now.

Secretary - agreed continuity is essential, Janet agreed to take on this role for the time being.

Treasurer - agreed we will need one, Alan Thompson agreed to take it on.

Press Officer - suggested we could delegate this to the Communications Group

Liaison Roles:

HPBC - agreed we need a single point of contact, and for now that should be the secretary.

'Friends' - agreed a single point of contact would be useful, Tina will take this on and make a list of who the 'friends' might be.

Landlords - Nina already has a lot of contacts and will take this on, keeping them informed of what we are doing and informing us as best she can, given the constraints of commercial confidentiality.

Other activist groups - liaison with some groups is in place through common membership, but there are others where this is not the case; Neil will compile a list of all activist groups in the town, with contact details; any existing lists to be sent to him.

2.3 Membership of the Setting Up Group

It has been agreed as a matter of principle that anyone in Buxton should have the right to join any of the groups, but concern was expressed that this might not be appropriate for the setting up group. On the other hand, the group will only exist for a short time until the 'permanent' board is in place, and is not so likely to attract either huge numbers or disruptive elements. It was agreed therefore that we would need to address the issue only if it became a problem.

2.4 Communications within the Setting Up Group

Everyone agreed they were happy to use open email addresses on future communications within this group.

3. CO-ORDINATING OTHER GROUPS

3.1 Communications Group

There was some discussion as to whether this group was actually needed, we agreed it was, so that the setting up group can concentrate on the business set up without their energies being diverted elsewhere. It was also agreed we should devise some sort of remit for this group, and be clear what we wanted it to take on and what we would do ourselves within the Setting Up group. It was suggested that initially we should delegate:-

- internal communications with our members/supporters, including sorting out town team emailing
- setting up and maintaining the website and social networking
- preparing and issuing press releases
- marketing our ideas to the outside world
- market research and liaison with other groups doing this

3.2 Ideas & Vision Group

It was agreed this group should be allowed its flexibility, but we will need to work out a method for dealing with proposals as they come through and adjudicating between competing ideas.

3.3 Other Groups

To be discussed as they become needed.

4. COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY SET UP

Joe will circulate a guide to setting up a CIC. Roger had previously produced a potential mission statement, Tina will locate this.

Set up costs are likely to be in the order of £200, which we felt could be raised by small donations from our existing supporter base. A bank account will be needed, almost certainly with the Co-operative Bank; to set this up we will need a constitution (even if a temporary one) and an agreed list of signatories.

The timing was discussed, ie whether we need to set up a CIC as soon as possible, or whether we should delay it until we have a permanent board ready to run it. The main disadvantage of delay would be that as a community group, without the protection of being a limited company, liability on the appointed officers would be unlimited; in addition, as a CIC, our credibility would be higher. On the other hand we would need to appoint temporary directors and then transfer directorships once we had a board selected. Also with a CIC set up under temporary directors the pressure to appoint a 'permanent' board would be reduced, so might take longer (this could be a good or a bad thing). Joe will investigate the minimum number of directors needed for a CIC, and also the ease of transferring directorships in due course.

Alan will research how other town teams have structured themselves, as there are bound to be things we can learn, it was agreed however we would keep an open mind and devise our own structure that suits us.

It was agreed that a small sub-group (Joe, Janet, Tina and Suzanne) would put together a clear proposal and a draft constitution for discussion at the next meeting.

5. MEMBERSHIP

The question of whether we need a 'membership' at all was discussed. It has been suggested that everyone in Buxton should be a member of the Town Team by default, unless they opt out; apparently this is the system used by Harpur Hill Residents' Association. This has the benefit of simplicity - there is no need to

maintain a lists of members, or worry about who is entitled to vote, or how to expel anyone who works against the community interest. Roger will circulate a note outlining how the HHRA system works. There are also benefits, however, of asking people to in some way opt in to membership, not least in terms of our credibility in claiming to be representative.

Possible ways by which people might opt in to membership:

- by invitation, when people are deemed to be 'active' - but who would do the inviting?
- by annual subscription - this helps with fundraising but involves unwelcome administration
- by one off nominal joining fee of say £1
- by attendance at group meetings, either once only or a minimum number of times
- by registering on the website, or on Facebook, or Twitter

It was generally felt that if we had an opt in it should be meaningful, and that we should differentiate between 'members' (who would have opted in by say attending meetings) and supporters (who might say follow us on social media, but not be actively involved). It was also felt that there could be benefits from formal affiliation by other groups or by the 'friends'.

Also, that while in principle the working groups are open to anyone in Buxton, we do need a mechanism to protect against people turning up just to cause trouble. We need to consider whether a group has to accept everyone who wants to join it, and whether we need the ability to expel people if they are working against the interests of the group.

It was agreed that the CIC sub-group would consider all the above and put together a formal proposal for discussion at the next meeting.

6. SELECTION OF THE BOARD

This was not discussed due to lack of time, but needs to be considered at the next meeting.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This will be at 7:30pm on Monday 20th August, in the Old Hall Hotel.

The CIC sub-group will meet on Monday 30th July at around 7:30pm (after the Crescent Development presentation).

JCMM
25July12