

PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday 23 October 2012

Buxton Town Team Secures National Support

Initial disappointment was followed by delight, when Buxton Town Team was selected to become a Town Team Partner. This is a national scheme to support the many towns that applied unsuccessfully for Portas Pilot status, and will give the Town Team access to a wealth of information, mentoring and support, as well as a grant of £10,000.

The idea of a Buxton Town Team arose earlier in the year, when a number of organisations across Buxton joined together to submit an application for funding as a 'Portas Pilot'. The bid included a range of proposals to improve the prosperity of the town, focussing on the concept of a single 'Main Street' stretching from the Spring Gardens viaduct through to Five Ways junction.

Buxton was one of over 400 towns to apply, and disappointingly, was not chosen as one of the 24 Portas Pilot Towns. Local Government Minister Grant Shapps, however, was persuaded by the Association of Town Centre Management that many of the towns whose applications had been unsuccessful needed to be recognised and helped. So, thanks to support from High Peak MP Andrew Bingham, Buxton was invited to join the new Town Team Partner scheme.

Andrew Bingham MP, welcoming the news, said "I am very pleased to have been able to support the new Buxton Town Team in accessing the resources that Town Team Partner status has to offer, and I pay tribute to the group for seizing the initiative, and coming together to make the most of this opportunity. It's a pleasure to see such a pro-active group, bringing an impressive range of skills to the task of improving Buxton as a place to live and work in, or to visit. I am proud to have played a part in helping them get this far, and will continue to encourage the initiatives that the Town Team Partner programme will help to bring about."

Caitlin Bisknell, Leader of HPBC, also welcomed the news, saying "I am delighted that Buxton Town Team has been successful in its bid for this funding. I know that members are bursting with ideas about how to spend the money and are keen to get moving. There are important links

to be made between the work of the Town Team and the borough council's recently launched retail strategy. I look forward to working with them to revive Buxton's fortunes."

The Town Team Partner funding will go towards four elements selected from the original Portas proposal, that the Town Team believe will benefit the largest number of people in the town, and have the potential to attract additional support from elsewhere. They are:

- Producing an illustrated town map featuring the retail, cultural and architectural elements of 'Main Street'
- Supporting the establishment of at least one 'pop-up shop' to make use of empty retail premises, which will act as a pilot for a town wide scheme
- Contributing to the establishment of a new 'Shop Local' scheme in support of local independent businesses and
- Holding the first Town Fair along 'Main Street' where new and existing local businesses, community groups and artists can demonstrate their offers in a festive environment.

Meanwhile, local shops are already signing up to the first Town Team project, a 'Christmas Shopping Crawl' in support of independent businesses. Starting on 23rd November with the Christmas lights switch-on, shoppers will be invited to 'crawl' round participating shops, and collect a stamp on a map for each one. Completed maps will be entered into a post-Christmas draw, with £1000 worth of prizes on offer. There is still room for a few more shops on the Crawl map - email neil@buxtonspa.co.uk before the end of October if you would like your business to be included.

Buxton Town Team are in the process of registering as a Community Interest Company, with the stated objective of advancing the prosperity of Buxton and the well-being of its community. Emma Fairbrother encouraged anyone who cares about Buxton to get involved, saying "If you would like to be part of the Town Team, there is definitely a place for you. Email us on pilotgroup@buxtontownteam.org.uk to find out more."

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