

## **BUXTON TOWN TEAM**

### **NOTES ON THE DIRECTORS' STRATEGY MEETING HELD TUESDAY 29<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2013**

**Present:** Alan Thompson, Janet Miller, Joe Dugdale, Roddie McLean, Roger Floyd, Jean Ball

**Observing:** Trevor Gilman

**Apologies:** Tina Heathcote

## **1. TOWN TEAM STRATEGY**

### **1.1 General Discussion**

The following points were made:

- We have stated aims (CIC36) and are getting on with projects, our strategy could be simply to pursue those aims by whatever (legal) means are open to us.
- A strategy for Buxton Town Team itself, and a strategy for Buxton are two separate things.
- As directors of the Town Team we can decide on a strategy for the company ourselves - how we see the company operating in say ten years.
- A number of key elements of the Town Team's role are not yet in place eg discussions with landlords, major businesses and other organisations in the town.
- We could devise a framework of what we think needs to be done to achieve 'prosperity and well-being', which could inform which projects we support.
- It would be useful to know that as a group at least, we are wanting to move in the same direction.
- Any framework must not be too limiting, however, in uncertain times we need to be flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances, and opportunistic when appropriate.
- Any plan we could devise would be relatively short term (three years?), and need reviewing regularly.
- A Town Team strategy must encourage greater membership, the members are what give us our voice and attract funding; we need the membership to be fully supportive of our aims.
- A strategy for Buxton and its community should involve much wider consultation, we should aim to develop a common vision with buy-in from as many people as possible.
- A common vision for Buxton might be impossible to achieve, and one that could be endorsed by everyone might have to be very vague.
- Other town teams may have developed ideas on this that we could learn from.
- We should consider to what extent we see Buxton becoming economically independent, or at least resilient - we want to collaborate with and take advantage of major developments, but not be dependent on their success.
- The Ideas & Vision Group was set up to assess and prioritise projects, it acts as a microcosm of the wider community, and we must be careful not to undermine their role.

It was suggested that we could form three working groups, to consider:

- how to take the Town Team forward
- how to achieve future retail and economic strength for the town
- what can we achieve for the community

however it may be difficult to separate the latter two, as community well-being and economic prosperity, and the means of achieving them, are intertwined.

### **1.2 Devising a Strategy for Buxton Town Team**

It was agreed that we can and should devise a strategy for the company.

For a start, defining our purpose, position, vision and values would be a useful exercise:

Values: We did come up with a list during the preparation of the Portas bid, Janet will check what these were and append to the notes.

Vision: This has to be developed with the members.

Purpose: Our purpose is essentially defined by the Community Interest Statement (CIC36), but it needs to be done along with the membership. As well as being a forum for the community to feed ideas into, we also want to be seen as a conduit for other bodies who might want to consult with the community, or communicate with all the other community groups in the town.

Position: We need to consider how much influence we want (and can expect) to have. We need to ensure that in gaining influence we do not get absorbed into the system - our independence is key. We want to be seen as effective, but not to the extent that people leave us to 'get on with it', with their blessing.

Membership Strategy: A membership growth plan would also be useful. We definitely need more truly active people ('doers') and a strategy for generating these. We also need to consider how many members we want overall; a large number gives a stronger claim to be representative, on the other hand we do have a policy of members being actively involved, which gets more difficult with larger numbers. Involvement could be responding to consultations, for instance, but even this has to be done carefully, and not seen to be merely seeking endorsement for policies we have already decided on. Any consultation also needs to seek the views of other organisations and businesses in the town (our 'friends') so we engage with them and do not find ourselves working at cross-purposes.

Communications: It was recognised that several of the areas where we are not yet functioning as well as we would like are elements of the Communications Group remit that no-one has yet taken individual responsibility for. A core part of our strategy must be to address this.

### **1.3 Devising a Strategy for Buxton**

A strategy for Buxton needs to be devised in consultation with the membership, but until the membership is much bigger, in consultation with the wider community.

The idea of forming a Town Team for Buxton dates from around April last year, the first public meeting to discuss it was on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2012. It was agreed we should arrange a 'One Year On' public meeting to:

- report on progress - setting up the company and completed/ongoing projects to date
- explain how we see our role (expanding on the Community Interest Statement)
- allow us to say where we have gaps and appeal for help in those areas
- enable anyone with an interest to tell us what they want us to be doing, and their priorities

This meeting would be for all stakeholders, as distinct from a general meeting for Town Team members (planned for later in the year) - though we would hope to recruit new members from the attendees.

### **1.4 Funding Strategy**

It was recognised that our general funding requirements (as opposed to funding for specific projects) are likely to be quite low, however we do need a plan for where this money will come from in the longer term. It was also recognised that while the £10,000 is available to fund projects now, once it is spent we will need to look at generating funding from elsewhere for future projects. We may need a strategy regarding which funding sources are appropriate for which type of project.

The first draft of a Policy on Funding and Loans had been circulated, and some comments added, all further comments to be sent to Alan who will redraft the document.

## **2. PROJECTS**

### **2.1 Website**

The proposal form was submitted, the proposal being to transfer the website to new host Crazy Pages as soon as possible. This was approved, at a cost of £300 to cover the first two years. Janet will advise Andy that he has agreement to proceed.

### **2.2 Green Man Gallery**

A spreadsheet had been circulated showing projected cash flow until the end of this year. This indicates that income should more than cover costs, and by the end of the year the business should be able to start paying some rent. Alan will discuss further with the GMG team and extend the spreadsheet into the following year, but the implication is that they do not need any financial support from Buxton Town Team. They are however keen that we should sign the lease on their behalf, especially as Vision Buxton have now decided against doing this. The question was raised as to whether even this was needed, as presumably the members could form themselves into a legal entity and sign it themselves. The consensus however was that this being hopefully the first project of several, a structure that involved the Town Team would be useful to demonstrate the viability of the pop-up concept to less enthusiastic landlords. It was therefore agreed that we would sign the lease subject to written agreement that:

- the business financial situation will be continuously monitored by Alan or his nominated substitute
  - if at any point we consider the financial risk to BTT to be unacceptable we will terminate the lease
  - Gallery members work towards being able to take on the lease direct at the end of the first year
- Alan and Roddie agreed to obtain written agreement to the above from the Green Man Gallery members, in a form that could be used for other pop-ups in the future. Alan and Janet will revise the project proposal form ready for signing as soon as all the agreements are in place.

### **3. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February 7:30pm - General Directors' Meeting

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March 7:30pm - General Directors' Meeting

Both will take place in the Old Hall Hotel.

JCMM

30January13

### **APPENDIX**

List of values generated at the Portas Group meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2012

*Visionary*

*Professional approach/businesslike*

*Inclusive / cooperative /selfless*

*Accountability*

*Representative*

*Just – socially responsible*

*Environmentally responsible*

*Plain speaking – communicative – transparent*

*FUN*

*DARING*

*PASSIONATE*

*Democratic*