

BUXTON TOWN TEAM

NOTES ON THE MEETING WITH HPBC ON TUESDAY 15th JANUARY 2013

Present: Janet Miller, Joe Dugdale, Jean Ball, Caitlin Bisknell

1. SPRING FAIR

Date: All were agreed that Monday 6th May would be the best date; the issue of local elections was noted, but not considered to be a significant enough problem to counter the advantages.

Aims: Celebration of local talent; voyage of discovery; be a tourist in your own town; open day for Buxton.

Extent: The area of the fair would include Spring Gardens, the Crescent, the Slopes, the Market Place and High Street. Road closures will be needed on the Crescent, Eagle Parade and Scarsdale Place. Parking in all these areas would have to be suspended, with some consequent loss of revenue to HPBC. BTT are investigating alternative car parking arrangements elsewhere to compensate.

Support from HPBC: BTT were not intending to ask HPBC for direct funding for the event, but are hoping for sponsorship in kind, through a range of methods, such as waiving of or reduction in various fees, and the free loan of barriers, stalls and other equipment. Caitlin mentioned that there may be small amounts of money available from the Councillors Initiative Fund, and advised us to approach councillors direct for this. She also advised that BTT are welcome to use the HPBC website and other media to promote the event.

Trading Licenses: BTT requested that consideration be given to a reduction in the normal fee of £25 per trader, on the grounds that we would collate the applications and send them in in batches, so the administrative costs to HPBC would be significantly reduced. Caitlin agreed to investigate the possibilities, and what precedents might have been set, and get back to us.

Map and Leaflet: BTT will produce a map for allocating pitches, based on OS maps to be supplied by Paul Armstrong. This will be made into a leaflet for use on the day, with due prominence given to sponsors and supporters, which would naturally include HPBC.

2. BUSINESS RATES

While all start-up and pop-up businesses are likely to qualify for the 50% 'small business' rates reduction, the additional 30% reduction awarded to charities is discretionary; BTT would like to see a policy where this is extended to all start-up and pop-up businesses for an initial period, say a year, while they establish themselves. They suggested that it would probably not constitute a reduction in revenue to HPBC because these were businesses that were unlikely to start up at all without such support; on the other hand if premises have been empty for longer than 6 months HPBC charge full business rates, and in these circumstances there would be a genuine loss. Caitlin advised that a change in policy would need to be discussed and agreed at senior level, and the cost implications incorporated into the budget. She also advised that finalising the budget for the coming year was proving problematic, due to late changes in government structures, which were also resulting in a larger than anticipated reduction in spending power. She agreed to discuss the matter internally, but thought it was unlikely that any change in policy could be agreed before 28th February, when next year's budget needs to be finalised.

Regarding applications by individual businesses, however, Caitlin advised that if there was some element of charity or benefit to the community, they could apply for special consideration to be given to a reduction, there is a form they can complete for this purpose. Such applications would always be decided by councillors, this power is not delegated to council officers. She also advised that businesses could apply for Councillors' Initiative Funding as an alternative means of assistance.

3. TOWN TEAM LETTERBOX

BTT are in need of a town centre drop off point for membership applications (which will include a £1 fee) and other communications, and asked whether a post-box could be placed at reception in the Town Hall. We would have to provide the box, which would have to be locked because deposits would include cash. Caitlin agreed to find out if this is possible and let us know.

4. RELATIONSHIP WITH HPBC

Caitlin expressed concern at the rather negative comments that have been made by some people involved in BTT; these are unfair, counter-productive and very detrimental to a good working relationship. Joe, Janet and Jean assured her that such views were not held by the majority of BTT members, and were certainly not held by the board of directors, who looked forward to a positive and collaborative relationship with HPBC.

A specific concern was the meeting arranged for 21st January to discuss the retail situation in Buxton. Joe explained that the 'discussion document' circulated was very much an individual perspective, which did not represent an official BTT viewpoint; the purpose of the meeting was to explore positive ideas for action, and to prioritise these. The participation of HPBC officers and councillors in this process is very welcome.

JCMM
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