

ATCM Awards 2014

Welcome to the ATCM Awards entry system. Please provide as much information as possible so the judges are able to assess your application.

- * What Awards Category Are you Entering?**
- Business Improvement District of the Year
 - Developing the Evening & Night-Time Economy
 - Diversifying the Business Mix
 - Town Team of the Year
 - The Chairman's Award for Outstanding Achievement

Project Name: Buxton Town Team CIC

Description of your project/work/Award entry: Buxton Town Team is a Community Interest Company set up in November 2012. Its aim is "to advance the prosperity of Buxton and the well-being of its community". To this end we have carried out a number of projects, as described below, and Buxton Town Team has quickly established itself as an important contributor to the life of the town.

Area/Region: East Midlands

BID/TCM Role in the project: None

Summary

Buxton Town Team CIC was set up as a direct result of discussions emanating from the bid for Portas Pilot funding. A number of organisations came together to prepare the bid, but very quickly decided that whatever the outcome, the advantages of working together were so clear that we were going to set up a Town Team anyway.

Buxton Town Team currently has a team of eight directors, who must be active members; they are selected for their individual skills and experience, but also with a mind to their involvement in or links with our partner organisations.

Our membership has grown steadily and is now at 142; we have a policy of not pursuing membership numbers for its own sake, we ask people to commit to being actively involved, by working on and delivering projects.

Our strapline "All Together Better" reflects our philosophy of demonstrating that a small group of people, willing to work together, can mobilise many more and deliver major improvements for their community. People see this in action in all our projects and recognise that they can make a difference; they choose to commit to the Town Team on that basis. Tellingly, after each Town Team event, we see a marked increase in membership applications.

In summary, what we have achieved to date:

- created whole-town events in support of the local economy, which have attracted many thousands of visitors
- mobilised hundreds of volunteers to assist in our activities
- developed excellent working relationships with High Peak Borough Council, local retailers and businesses, the University of Derby, Buxton & Leek College of FE, local schools and churches, the emergency services and a wide range of voluntary organisations
- become the "go-to" organisation when there is a call for something to be done in the town
- grown our membership from nothing to 142 active members

been approached by other prospective town teams asking for advice on how to run a successful town organisation.

Budget: As a Town Team Partner, Buxton Town Team received a £10,000 grant from the Department of Communities & Local Government in October 2012. We treat this as 'reserves', and use it to underwrite projects, so as to re-circulate

it for as long as possible. We keep the core costs of running Buxton Town Team to an absolute minimum, by using volunteer effort and securing in-kind assistance from local businesses and others. We aim for projects to be self-financing where possible, but if external funding or in-kind donations are needed these are sought on a case by case basis. Each project is fully costed, and the source of funding identified, before being approved.

The total expenditure on all projects to date is £7,170. Roughly the same amount has been recouped as income so as to maintain the £10,000 reserve.

Objectives:

Buxton Town Team's aims and objectives are formally recorded in our Community Interest Statement (CIC36), agreed when we registered as a Community Interest Company:

Buxton Town Team's activities will provide benefit to the people who live, work, run a business in, or visit Buxton. In particular Buxton Town Team's objective is to advance the prosperity of Buxton and the well-being of its community.

More specifically, we:

- Develop and implement projects to support existing local traders and businesses
- Develop and implement projects that will enable and encourage new businesses to set up and thrive
- Develop and implement projects that will deliver an improved environment, and a good choice of retail outlets and leisure activities for residents
- Develop and implement projects that will enhance the attraction of the town to visitors
- Operate in collaboration with other organisations in the town which share similar objectives

Project Partners:

We operate in collaboration with a wide range of other organisations and are fast becoming the natural home for discussion and action on future developments.

Our partners include the county and borough councils; schools, college of FE and University; local business and trade organisations; local industry; emergency services; church groups; residents associations; other voluntary organisations.

By working together we:

- eliminate unnecessary duplication of effort
- avoid contradictory or confusing activities
- maximise positive impact and
- allow the community to be heard with a loud and clear voice.

Local circumstance:

Buxton, at 1,000ft above sea level, is England's highest market town. It is remarkably self-contained as it is surrounded by the open country of the Peak District National Park - the nearest major population centre is 12 miles away. It is a small town (population 21,000) but has a world class and internationally recognised cultural and architectural heritage.

Since the formation of High Peak Borough Council in 1974 (by absorbing the municipal boroughs of Buxton and Glossop as well as a number of other urban and rural districts) there has been no statutory body responsible for overseeing Buxton's specific needs. The Borough Council recognise that they cover a wide area, with diminishing resources, and that there is a clear benefit from local involvement in decision making and collaborative implementation of ideas.

Buxton town centre is split geographically into three distinct areas - the higher and lower shopping areas and the heritage area. We refer to these three areas linked together as 'Main Street'. In addition there has been a perception that the cultural activities, and specialist businesses such as outdoor pursuits, spa therapies, health & well-being, and general tourism, have operated in isolation from the needs of the town and its residents. Buxton Town Team's vision is to draw these disparate elements together and create one cohesive, sustainable and self-supporting community.

Other info:

Implementation:

While Buxton Town Team is project focused, the Directors are charged with maintaining the strategic direction and ensuring that all the projects contribute to our vision - which is of one 'Main Street', one town, one community.

We have an Ideas & Vision group where anyone's ideas can be presented, discussed and developed. If they are considered worth pursuing they are then formalised as a project proposal, which goes to the directors for approval. This document specifies the scope of the project, the timescale, the financial implications, the members of the project team (including the leader), the aims of the project and the measurable success criteria against which it will be judged.

Working alongside this we have a Communications Group who are responsible for information flows both internally and externally; they maintain the website, Facebook page and Twitter and Instagram accounts, keep in contact with members, and prepare and send out press releases.

In addition, individual directors are nominated to represent us on a number of collaborative bodies aimed at marketing the town, developing retail strategies and steering the future development of the town.

Results/Outcomes:

Successful projects completed so far are:

- **Two Christmas Shopping Crawls (December 2012 and 2013)** - aimed at increasing footfall to 30 participating independent shops in the 6 weeks leading up to Christmas.
- **Two Buxton Spring Fairs (May 2013 and 2014)** - aimed primarily at Buxton residents re-discovering their own town, we fill the 'Main Street' with stalls, music, activities and entertainment for a day, involving a huge range of local groups and businesses, show casing everything that Buxton has to offer - 140 participating groups in 2013, almost 200 this year. The project team in both years included students from the University's Events Management course.
- **Green Man Gallery Pop-up Shop** - assisting a group of local artists to set up and manage a pop-up art gallery and community hub, Buxton Town Team took on the 'meanwhile' lease for the first year, and helped negotiate an ongoing arrangement with the landlord.
- **Big Buxton Spring Clean (April 2014)** - over 200 people (including students from the schools and FE College) were mobilised to clean the park railings, signs, bins, bollards and other street furniture, and pick up litter. The aim was to get the town ready for the Spring Fair and the summer festival season, but also to increase the sense of ownership and community responsibility.
- **'Great Town 2014'** - Buxton having been nominated as finalists, the Town Team took the lead in arranging the visit of the judges from the Academy of Urbanism, working with High Peak Borough Council, Vision Buxton, Buxton Festival, Buxton Crescent Hotel & Thermal Spa and the University of Derby. The judges were impressed that the visit was led by a body other than the local council, this was a first for them.
- **Illustrated Buxton Map** - Buxton Town Team commissioned seven local artists to produce a creative illustrated map of the town incorporating historical and geographical points of interest. Its aim was to foster civic pride, and fill a gap in the market for Buxton branded gifts for visitors.
- **Talking Signposts** - piloted in 2013, in collaboration with the TIC, volunteers provided information to visitors passing through the town centre during the Buxton Festival. The project will be repeated and extended this summer.

Other projects that we are actively working on:

- **Street Art Phase 1** - we have produced flowers from recycled plastic bottles to decorate lamp posts, hung bunting (thank you Buxton Fire crews) and are working on having unsightly hoardings around the Crescent redevelopment site painted by local art students from the schools and college, ready for the summer season.
- **Buxton in Bloom** - Buxton Town Team have revived the Buxton entry

into the East Midlands in Bloom competition, last entered in 2009.

- **Artisan Market Trials** - as part of a more general review of the street market, which is very much in decline, we are overseeing and evaluating two trial markets. These will be run by a commercial company in June and July, the first in lower Buxton, the second in higher Buxton; further trials are envisaged for later in the year.
- **Serpentine Nursery** - we are chairing and facilitating discussions between the project partners (Transition Buxton, High Peak Borough Council and Buxton & Leek College of FE) for the restoration of a derelict Victorian plant nursery, to become a productive resource for the community.

and we have lots more ideas in the pipeline ò

Innovation

There are two key areas where we believe our approach is innovative:

1. Our structure -

- the Ideas & Vision group enables anyone with an idea to have it heard and properly considered
- people can choose their level of involvement, from simply turning up on the day to help out, up to leading a project team or chairing one of the groups - allowing people to choose what they do, with no pressure to do the things that don't interest them, means they are willing to do more
- the project teams allow a huge number of people to be involved in achieving real change, without the need to hold large, unwieldy meetings - some people hate meetings, but will always respond to a call to action!
- we have a separate Scrutiny Group who monitor everything we do, hold the directors to account as regards good governance and will deal with any complaints both internally and externally

2. Our attitude to funding and finance - we believe that:

- the real value in a town team is people's enthusiasm, energy, resourcefulness and determination to make things happen - funding if needed will follow
- because members pay a one-off £1 joining fee, with no annual subscription, we avoid unnecessary bureaucracy and anyone can afford to join - though people who can afford to are generous with their in-kind donations
- funding for funding's sake can be a distraction, and is potentially divisive
- persuading local businesses to contribute goods and services at no cost is a valuable way to foster a sense of community cohesion and involvement
- being seen to deliver high quality results without recourse to high levels of expenditure gains greater credibility and 'buy in'
- with the decline in public finances, it is increasingly important to demonstrate how much can be achieved at minimal cost if people are willing to co-operate
- avoiding spending money avoids accusations of spending it on the wrong things!

Endorsement

The following endorsements have been received from leading members of the community:

- Andrew Bingham MP - "I was happy to support the Buxton Town Team at its inception and I am truly glad I did. As a team their level of commitment and enthusiasm is without parallel. They have not only set about transforming parts of the Town but they have invigorated other people. Their sheer energy has rubbed off on to the wider population of Buxton so much so that many of their events and activities are supported by dozens of local residents of all ages. They have succeeded in crossing all gaps, age, gender and backgrounds to become a genuine force for good whose efforts are yielding positive and obvious benefits for all to see. I often regale fellow MPs with the exploits of the Buxton Town Team and I have yet to find another team across the country that can rival the Buxton Town Team. I am delighted to give them my support for this award and feel not only is it well deserved but will also give yet more impetus to an

already highly motivated and successful Team"

- Caitlin Bisknell, Leader of High Peak Borough Council - "Working with Buxton Town Team is always a pleasure because of the enthusiasm, goodwill and pure joie de vivre they bring to every project. I believe we have developed a very open and sound understanding of what we can jointly achieve for the town, and it is inspiring to see how BTT has taken it forward so positively in such a short length of time."
- Dai Lerner, Executive Director of High Peak Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council - "Buxton Town Team has become in a short time one of High Peak Borough Council's most proactive and successful regeneration partners. A number of years ago the Council developed a vision for the town by involving residents through a participative approach to design and place-making. Buxton Town Team has helped the Council deliver the community's vision. The Team is independently-minded, enthusiastic, innovative and their passion for the town has put local people at the heart of improving Buxton."
- Adrian Brown, Vision Buxton - "Vision Buxton is proud to have been the lead organisation in the setting up of the Buxton Town Team. Distinctly different in its aims and objectives to Vision Buxton, the Town Team has been responsible in a very short period of time for a wide range of initiatives and projects that have attracted more visitors and customers to the town's attractions and retail outlets. Working together the two organisations have enhanced Buxton's image, and are united in making a great town even better."
- Liz MacKenzie, Buxton Festival - "The Town Team have achieved a huge amount for the town and engaged with all key groups and organisations in a helpful and effective way. Their work has raised the profile of the town locally, regionally and nationally and demonstrated how much can be achieved by working together with a very limited budget. The Spring Fair which they created is now established as a major event with the highest footfall into the town of the year. Buxton Festival have undoubtedly benefitted from their work including the Spring Clean which has greatly improved the appearance of the town for our Festival audience. We fully support and endorse all their efforts."

Further endorsements from members of the public about specific projects can be found on our Facebook Page.

Additional Information

Further information, including photos and videos, can be found at:

www.buxtontownteam.org

www.facebook.com/pages/Buxton-Town-Team/532474296804605?ref=hl

Twitter @BuxSpringFair

Instagram #BuxtonSpringFair