

**MINUTES OF THE FARINGDON JOINT ECONOMIC FORUM (JEF)  
MEETING HELD ON 14<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2011 AT 7:00PM IN THE OLD TOWN HALL,  
FARINGDON**

**1. Present:**

**Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC):** Cllr Roger Cox (Chairman), Cllr Robert Sharp, Cllr Alison Thomson, Cllr Jim Halliday

**Faringdon Town Council (FTC):** Cllr Margaret Barker (Mayor), Cllr Mike Wise, Cllr Jane Boulton

**Other organizations:** Eddie Williams (Folly Trust) and Daphne Saunders FAP

**Non-voting members:** Cllr Judith Heathcoat

**In attendance:** Trudy Godfrey

**2. Apologies for absence**

Jane Haynes, Colin Desborough and Sally Thurston.

**3. Declarations of interest**

None

**4. Minutes of meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2011**

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

**5. Matters Arising – not elsewhere on the Agenda. To consider amending the Constitution at the AGM in October by allowing co-opted non-voting members to vote**

Cllr Boulton stated there were a number of adopted 'co-opted members' who would not attend meetings if they could not vote and Faringdon Town Council wished to extend voting rights to co-opted members who were currently non-voting. Cllr Thomson stated that she had reservations about allowing 'co-opted members' to vote. Trudy Godfrey (Vale officer) advised against a change in the constitution to allow 'co-opted members' to vote. The constitution was written to give equivalent voting rights to the 3 main 'economic development' partners in the town: the Town Council, the District Council and Other organizations. It should be noted that other organizations already have a proportionate voice in the town, as the Constitution allowed for five votes from 'other organizations'. If this were extended to include co-opted non-voting members then other organizations would have a disproportionate vote. Any changes from the existing voting structure would mark a departure from the arrangements in the other towns and would not be looked upon favourably by the Vale Council and this may risk the annual grant funding given to the JEF. Cllr Cox advised that any changes to voting rights would require a change in the Constitution and that it should be brought to the AGM on 6<sup>th</sup> October.

## **6. To discuss the Strategy and Action Plan for Faringdon and Wantage**

Cllr Judith Heathcoat asked that the Strategy should reflect the support that the County Council were giving to Faringdon Youth Centre and that they were on the Management Committee that had been set up to try and secure the future of the Youth Centre in Faringdon. Cllr Heathcoat also advised that Oxford Inspires could help to secure funding for big community events such as the Faringdon Arts Festival and Betjeman Festival. Cllr Alison Thomson requested that the Action Plan should reflect that on-street and off-street car parking survey would be postponed until such time as the supermarket development had taken place. This is because a large supermarket development would have a significant impact on car parking. Cllr Cox advised that Toby Warren had suggested that the remaining funding from the Joint Environmental Trust (JET) funding could be put towards the Arts and Pink Pigeons to support the work being undertaken by the Vale's Arts Development officer Abigail Brown.

## **7. Progress Reports from:**

### **a. Focus on Faringdon SEEDA Funding and JEF projects**

- i. **Folly Tower.** Eddie Williams advised that the Folly Tower project had secured over £100,000 investment for the new roof, electrics, lightning conductor and re-decoration which was now complete. The Lantern Room was now devoted to Berners, the Willow / Hazel '24 blackbirds baked in a pie' sculpture was now complete and benches had been delivered. There would be a launch event on 12<sup>th</sup> June to celebrate this ambitious project. All clubs and associations will be invited to hold an event in the Folly Tower. However, the Folly Tower Trustees were actively fund-raising for another £10,000 to pay for the walls to be re-pointed as they were letting water into the building. Eddie Williams advised that Faringdon Area Project had submitted the Folly Tower regeneration project as an entry for the Action for Market Towns awards in 2011/12. Cllr Thomson congratulated Eddie on this success.
- ii. **Skateboard Park.** Trudy Godfrey advised that SK8 had held a youth consultation event at the Youth Centre in March. This was well attended by 24 skateboarders contributing towards the initial designs. The skate park design company took lots of good ideas away with them. Cllr Thomson advised that in terms of the planning application (for a 380 square metre skate park), that a planning decision was imminent. Although the outcome hadn't been public knowledge prior to the JEF meeting, Cllr Thomson subsequently advised that Faringdon SK8 had secured planning approval for a larger facility.
- iii. **Things to do around Faringdon maps.** Jane Haynes provided a retrospective email update: that the maps had been produced and that Focus on Faringdon was in the process of producing the content to go with them. The maps will shortly be available to download/purchase both online and in hard copy. Focus also intends to include a route in the Faringdon Advertiser on a regular basis.

**b. Faringdon Area Project (FAP)**

Mrs Daphne Saunders advised that FAP held its AGM on 2<sup>nd</sup> February. This was well attended and resulted in the re-election of Daphne Saunders as Chairman. Helen Browning OBE was invited as guest speaker (former chairwoman of the Soil Association, Current Director of External Affairs of the National Trust, Chairwoman of the Food Ethics Council). She gave an informal talk on how she would like to see a Sustainable Faringdon and Area to develop in the years to come. There was a suggestion that the Thresher's building could be used as a co-op selling produce from 21 organic farmers in Faringdon. Andy Hayter was going on a fact-finding mission. Mrs Saunders advised that she had some trouble in contacting the relevant 'school food' officer in Oxfordshire County Council. Cllr Judith Heathcoat suggested that she write to Cllr Michael Waine who would be able to direct Daphne to the appropriate officer. Daphne advised that FAP had regrettably not been offered funding from the Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Fund (OSCA) for Faringdon's ante-natal classes. Cllr Judith Heathcoat advised that OSCA had been over subscribed by £1.9million so some very difficult decisions had to be made by the funding panel. It was noted that Faringdon skatepark was allocated just over £13,000 from the OSCA fund. Mrs Saunders was invited to apply to Faringdon Town Council for funding and Cllr Mike Wise offered to help.

**c. Chamber of Commerce**

Trudy Godfrey advised that the Chamber had held its AGM and had elected a new Chair - Paul Braim, Vice Chair - Rachel Goddard and Treasurer - Sara Allen Stevens. The Chamber were considering different initiatives that would increase vitality in the town centre and increase local trade, suggestions included: a free parking scheme, a town centre event, a town-wide loyalty card scheme. They would shortly be approaching retailers in the town centre to canvass their views.

**d. Other Local Organizations**

The Twinning Association had received a grant from the Vale West Area Committee to support the Youth Exchange trip. It was suggested that Festive Faringdon should apply to the Vale's West Area Committee for a grant to help with this year's Christmas celebrations. The Pink Pigeons Trust was pressing ahead with its programme of art works to celebrate Faringdon's unique identity – they were installing quirky notices around the town and Peter Wentworth was organizing walking tours. They were trying to identify areas around Faringdon where works of art could be located and used as venues for art. The telephone box on Canada Lane will shortly be put out to tender to local artists.

**8. Economic Development News from Abingdon and Wantage**

Ms Trudy Godfrey advised that in Wantage, the shop front grant scheme had received over a dozen applications and almost £20,000 funding had been committed. Cycle route cards would be produced by the summer 2011. The Market Place Gateway improvements project was progressing and locations for new floral display posts and fingerposts had been agreed. The Betjeman Festival had produced a detailed

programme for ten days festival during September and the JEF had received an application for support with the cost of producing brochures for the Festival. The Chamber web-site [www.wantage.com](http://www.wantage.com) was undergoing a major re-write in order to make it a more up to date.

Ms Godfrey advised that in Abingdon, the Good Living Displays at the Miele Experience Centre received many positive comments. The event showcased the 'destination retailers' in the town centre and visitors packed the food sampling stands organized by Added Ingredients and crowded into the floral talk and display given by Fabulous Flowers. Other retailers featured included the Shoe Shop of Abingdon, Friends the Jewellers and Surroundings Framers. The event is set to be held again next year with new partners already signing up to joint the event.

#### **9. Financial Report of JEF**

Cllr Sharp advised that the current account had a credit balance of £1,413.52. The Vale's grant was now due. **Action: Trudy Godfrey to raise a Purchase Order for this year's JEF grant of £1,200.**

#### **10. Future Projects**

Cllr Cox advised that the Faringdon Arts Festival would be held on 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> July.

#### **11. Next Meetings**

- The next meetings will take place on: 14<sup>th</sup> July 2011
- 6<sup>th</sup> October 2011 (AGM)

*Trudy Godfrey*  
Secretary

**APPENDIX A**  
**JEF MEMBERSHIP 2009/10**

Voting members:

Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC):

- Cllr Matthew Barber
- Cllr Roger Cox
- Cllr Jim Halliday
- Cllr Robert Sharp
- Cllr Alison Thomson

Faringdon Town Council (FTC):

- Cllr Jane Boulton
- Cllr Julie Farmer
- Cllr Kevin Herbert
- Cllr Andrew Marsden
- Cllr Mike Wise

‘Other Organizations’:

- Nick Elwell (Faringdon Chamber of Commerce)
- Christopher Marriott (Faringdon Chamber of Commerce)
- Colin Desborough (Faringdon Association of Residents)
- Daphne Saunders (Faringdon Area Project)
- Eddie Williams (Faringdon Folly Tower Trust)

Non-Voting members:

- Mayor of Faringdon (Cllr Margaret Barker)
- Chairman of the Vale of White Horse District Council (Cllr Alison Rooke)
- County Councillor for the Faringdon Division (Cllr Judith Heathcoat)

Co-opted members (non-voting, not more than four persons):

- Alison Moore (Women’s Institute)
- Tim Evans (Chair of Faringdon Twinning)
- Sjeourd Vogt (Pink Pigeons)

Observer (non-voting):

- Cllr Richard Webber (VWHDC)

In attendance (non-voting):

- Toby Warren (VWHDC officer)
- Sally Thurston (FTC officer)
- Trudy Godfrey (VWHDC officer and minutes secretary)