

**MINUTES OF THE FARINGDON JOINT ECONOMIC FORUM (JEF)**  
**MEETING HELD ON 16 April 2015 AT 7:00PM IN THE CORN EXCHANGE,**  
**FARINGDON**

**1. Present:**

**Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC):** Cllr Roger Cox, Cllr Alison Thomson, Cllr Mohinder Kainth, Cllr Robert Sharp.

**Faringdon Town Council (FTC):** Cllr Jane Boulton, Cllr Andrew Marsden

**Other organizations:**, Sarah Allen Stevens (Faringdon Chamber of Commerce), Eddie Williams (Folly Trust), Mark Harrison (Farcycles).

**In attendance:** Trudy Godfrey (economic development team leader and minutes Secretary), Bethia Thomas (Faringdon Market Town Co-ordinator)

**Apologies:** Cllr Elaine Ware, Cllr James Gregory, Paul Brame (Chamber of Commerce), Sally Thurston (Faringdon town clerk), Cllr Jim Halliday, Cllr Alex Meredith, Cllr Ian Bell, Mrs Daphne Saunders (FAP), David Williamson (Faringdon Twinning Society and Farcycles), Cllr Judith Heathcoat (OCC), Bethan Davies (Faringdon town council – visitor information)

**2. Declarations of interest and Matters Arising**

No declarations of interest.

Actions from meeting / matters arising:

- SV to progress Faringdon Coat of Arms with Town Council
- AT to email JH to ask her help in progressing the cycling project on Faringdon. MH needed costs for dropped kerbs, signage etc following their visit to Faringdon. Farcycles have funding to help pay for this project
- ST to follow up s106 funding to improve cycle routes with OCC officers as advised by JH
- BT to get marketing details for this property to allow the Town Team to proactively find a retail business for this property.
- TG to ask AB if there were any funds available in the arts development budget to develop the Faringdon coat of arms or subsequently to create wrought iron town signs. [AB advised that Bloor Homes funds were still being spent, so she did not yet know if there would be any remaining arts budget until later in 2015.]
- RS to write cheque to VWHDC for £1,400 for Faringdon markets co-ordinator.
- RS to write a cheque to Chamber of Commerce for £600 for Faringdon loyalty card prize draws.

- TG to issue press release explaining how to access the WiFi and outlining the main steps involved for publication in the Advertiser, Faringdon Folly, Faringdon.org and VisitFaringdon.

### 3. Minutes of meeting on 19 January 2015

Approved as accurate record of the meeting.

### 4. Financial Report of JEF and funding requests

TG requested £1,400 funding towards the costs of recruiting Jeanette Howse as Faringdon markets co-ordinator. This was proposed by Cllr Alison Thomson, seconded by Cllr Roger Cox and all voted in favour. £1,400 was allocated towards the recruitment of Jeanette Howse as Faringdon markets co-ordinator. **Action: RS to write cheque to VWHDC for £1,400 for Faringdon markets co-ordinator.**

On behalf of the Chamber, TG requested £600 for Faringdon loyalty card prize draws for the year 2015/16. There were more than 850 Faringdon loyalty cards in circulation; the scheme was being actively promoted by the Chamber and by the market town co-ordinator and was well supported by the retail community. This was proposed by Cllr Roger Cox and seconded by Cllr Mohinder Kainth and all voted in favour. £600 was allocated to the Chamber for the monthly prize draws to support the loyalty card scheme. **Action: RS to write a cheque to Chamber of Commerce for £600 for Faringdon loyalty card prize draws.**

### 7. 2015/16 projects

- **Empty shops:** BT advised that the Old Folly Coffee Shop had been purchased by Rachel Gibbs (owner of the Gifted Magpie) who wanted to open a second shop in the town selling childrens toys and clothes. Hare in the Wood deli were moving into the old florist shop in the Market Place and as well as a deli would be offering cooking workshops. BT was speaking to two potential businesses about using the Hare in the Woods including a dress-maker who wanted to offer dress-making workshops and a furniture Upcycling business offering upcycling workshops. Trevor Wynn Gifts would be on the market soon as the owners were retiring. **Action:** BT to get marketing details for this property to allow the Town Team to proactively find a retail business for this property. A new specialist pet foods supplier had opened in the old butcher shop.
- **Loyalty card scheme:** There were over 850 loyalty card holders. The Chamber currently spend around £300 per year maintaining the [www.faringdonloyalty.co.uk/](http://www.faringdonloyalty.co.uk/) web-site and producing monthly newsletters. BT helped to promote the loyalty card scheme via Facebook – follow us on Faringdon loyalty cards. A Town Team administrator had been recruited to help strengthen the Town Team – Adele Vincent would start work on Tuesday 21 April.

- **Markets and events:** BT advised Saturday 28 April would be a general market – see [www.southernoxfordshire.com/calendar/2442/Faringdon-Saturday-Market](http://www.southernoxfordshire.com/calendar/2442/Faringdon-Saturday-Market). Saturday 16 May would be a special market to celebrate Blackbird Day. This coincides with the Faringdon/Le Mele twinning weekend so the town would be very busy. Sudbury House Hotel would put on a special food event and were promoting a ‘Blackbird Day’ weekend. Anyone interested in taking a market stall at either market should email [bethiathomas@gmail.com](mailto:bethiathomas@gmail.com). **Action:** All to promote Faringdon markets via Twitter and Facebook. Other events being planned included Heritage Day (led by the Town Council in September) and Lord Berner’s Birthday.
- **Town look:** TB/ BT will arrange for representatives from all 3 tiers of local government, and the business community to walk around Faringdon’s town centre and out of town (TESCO) to decide on areas for environmental and physical improvement. This will feed into a list of ‘actions’ for relevant land-owners and authorities. This is likely to take place after the Elections on 7 May.
- **TESCO and town centre linkages:** there were opportunities to improve the walk between TESCO and the town centre. This project would be picked up by the ‘Town Look’ project (above) and would need high level support from councilors to help negotiate with TESCO and also the support of the Town Council as land-owner.
- **Marketing Faringdon:** BT / TG would be working with a marketing professional over the next 12 months to promote town centre businesses and events to increase footfall. This marketing would target residents and residents of nearby towns and villages. A marketing campaign would be developed and this opportunity would be tendered and procured.
- **Pop up museum:** BT would be working with a volunteer and the Oxfordshire Museums Council to launch a pop-up museum project in Faringdon on a stall for Heritage Day. Afterwards, it was envisaged that this pop-up museum would reside in a Faringdon business. This project had the support of the Oxfordshire Museums Council who had identified exhibits for the town.
- **Calendar of events and social media:** BT advised that she had drafted an events calendar, highlighting the significant events for 2015/16
  - February 28th – Charity Market
  - March 28th – “Meet the Traders” Saturday Market
  - May 16th – Blackbird Day/French Market
  - June 13th/20th – Young Traders’ Market
  - July 4th – Independents’ Day Market/Organic Food Festival
  - August 7th-9th – FollyFest 2015
  - September 5-6th – Heritage Day
  - Sept 12-13th/19th-20th– Oktoberfest Beer Festival/Pink Pigeons day (Lord Berners’ Birthday)
  - November 28th – Festive Faringdon/Christmas Market
- **Folly Tower and Woodlands:** EW reported strong growth in visitor numbers last year and record takings on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in April 2015. The Woodlands were the

big attraction, and it was estimated they attract 30,000 – 40,000 visitors p.a. The Trustees were undertaking risk assessments and now had to allocate thousands of pounds each year to maintain and manage the woodlands. They were applying to the Town Council for funds to help them manage the woodlands.

- **Town Centre WiFi:** TG advised that the town centre free public WiFi scheme that covered the Market Place was being widely used, with around 1,000 users since the scheme was launched in middle of 2014. Anyone experiencing problems accessing the WiFi scheme should email [economic.development@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:economic.development@southandvale.gov.uk). A debate followed around whether users experienced problems accessing the WiFi. TG explained most problems involved user error as people had to first register to use the WiFi system using either Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or by completing a registration form. **Action:** TG to issue press release explaining how to access the WiFi and outlining the main steps. SAS suggested this would be helpful for home-workers because there had been a recent problem in Faringdon with BT/Broadband outage for the day. This could be an opportunity to promote the WiFi and get people into the town centre. The press release should be circulated to Lou Guthrie at the Faringdon Advertiser, Beth Thomas at the Faringdon Folly and Gene Webb for publication on [www.faringdon.org](http://www.faringdon.org) and also Beth Davies for promotion on VisitFaringdon.
- **Economic development strategy:** SAS circulated the Faringdon EDS and advised that the Chamber were working on a Communications Plan.

8. EU and Leader funding: TG circulated the Oxfordshire LEP ‘Oxfordshire European Structural Investment fund strategy’ outlining the ESIF funds (£19.3 million) that was available to Oxfordshire from 2015 until 2021. TG also circulated a press release promoting EU LEADER funds (£.155 million available to Oxfordshire) and the four broad themes for project priorities. Faringdon was eligible to apply. The four themes were: ‘reviving the waterways specifically the River Thames’; ‘get growing, get selling and get eating local’; ‘unlocking the potential of woodland’; ‘vibrant villages – creating more economic activity to stop villages becoming dormant’. Discussion followed about whether Faringdon would be considered a village. TG sought advice from Amanda Holland (LEADER project officer) and was advised: “Vibrant villages forms part of the four themes that the LAG agreed as a way of communicating what Defra funds. So it will be up to the LAG to interpret it. However, Faringdon is a market town that has been included according to Defra’s rules regarding what is rural and so it is perfectly reasonable to consider projects from Farringdon. There are caveats which may come into play – this is very much a post-recession LEADER and so any project will need to demonstrate that it CREATES jobs and economic growth. Projects that have a verifiable, rather than just a projected, number of jobs associated with them are likely to be the most successful. Also, the LAG’s priorities are about promoting LOCAL food, and so if this project is associated with national supermarkets then it is unlikely to be successful.”

**9. Next meeting dates.** Dates of the next meeting are:

- **Thursday 9 July**

- **Thursday 15 October**

**All meetings will be held in the Old Town Hall at 7pm.**

*Trudy Godfrey*

Secretary

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**APPENDIX A**  
**JEF MEMBERSHIP 2014/15**

Voting members:

Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC):

- Cllr Roger Cox
- Cllr Mohinder Kainth
- Cllr Robert Sharp
- Cllr Alison Thomson
- Cllr Jim Halliday

Faringdon Town Council (FTC):

- Cllr Jane Boulton
- Cllr Andrew Marsden
- Cllr James Gregory
- Cllr Ian Bell
- Cllr Alex Meredith

‘Other Organizations’:

- Paul Brame (Faringdon Chamber of Commerce)
- Sarah Allen-Stevens (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 David Price)
- County Councillor for the Faringdon Division (Cllr Judith Heathcoat)

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

- Alison Moore (Women’s Institute)
- David Williamson (Chair of Faringdon Twinning and Farcycles)
- Sjoerd Vogt (Pink Pigeons)

Observer (non-voting):

- Cllr Elaine Ware (VWHDC)

In attendance (non-voting):

- Trudy Godfrey (VWHDC officer and minutes secretary)

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