

**MINUTES OF THE FARINGDON JOINT ECONOMIC FORUM (JEF)
MEETING HELD ON 17th October 2013 AT 7:00PM IN THE OLD TOWN HALL,
FARINGDON**

1. Present:

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

Faringdon Town Council (FTC): Cllr Andrew Marsden,

Other organizations: Eddie Williams (Folly Trust), Sarah Allen Stevens (Chamber of Commerce), Mrs Daphne Saunders (FAP).

In attendance: Trudy Godfrey (economic development team leader and minutes Secretary), Mirabelle Mack (Faringdon Town Team Project Manager).

Apologies: Sally Thurston, David Williamson (Farcycles, County Cllr Judith Heathcoat, Cllr David Price, Cllr Julie Farmer, Cllr Jane Boulton Colin Desborough (Faringdon Association of Residents), Paul Brame (outgoing Chairman, and Chamber of Commerce).

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. Minutes of meeting on 17 October 2013

These were agreed to be an accurate report.

4. Election of JEF officers

Chairman – Cllr Roger Cox proposed Cllr Mohinder Kainth as Chairman. This was seconded by Cllr Alison Thomson All voted – all in favour and the motion passed.

Vice Chairman – Cllr Roger Cox proposed Cllr Andrew Marsden as vice-Chairman. This was seconded by Cllr Mohinder Kainth. All voted – all in favour and the motion passed.

Treasurer - Cllr Roger Cox proposed Cllr Robert Sharp as Treasurer. This was seconded by Cllr Alison Thomson All voted – all in favour and the motion passed.

5. High Street Innovation Fund (HSIF) and Portas Funds

Mirabelle Mack presented her update to the group (attached). The JEF discussed the tourism initiative project and agreed this should be called “What to do in Faringdon”. The JEF discussed the markets project and agreed that MM’s focus should be to strengthen the existing Tuesday and Friday markets, getting more people to attend these and increasing the number of stalls at both markets, rather than trying to set up a new market at the present time. Setting up a Saturday market was agreed to be a longer term

project and MM should work with TG on this project. TG had invited Denise Valente to discuss how she had set up an artisan market in the north of England to see if these ideas would transfer to Faringdon. MM would also try and work with existing retailers to get them to open later one day per week as TESCO would be open late several days. MM requested up to £550 to fund a re-print of the loyalty card leaflets. This was proposed by AT, seconded by RC and unanimously agreed by the JEF. Mark from Incredible Edibles was doing work in Faringdon to improve local planting and would present to the JEF in April 2014 when the work would be largely complete.

Actions:-

- **Mirabelle Mack to think about colours from a disability (colour blindness) perspective**
- **MM to approach FTC to see if the notice could also be put into the noticeboard at the War Memorial because this was the board most central in the town and closest to visitors arriving by bus.**
- **RS to write a cheque for £550 for the reprint of loyalty card leaflets (MM to get quote from printer)**
- **TG to include slot from Incredible Edibles on the Agenda for Jan 2014**

6. Economic Development Action Plan for Faringdon 2013/14

TG advised that she was writing an evaluation of the impact of the High Street Innovation fund in the market towns of Wantage, Abingdon and Faringdon and also on Botley. This report was for the DCLG who had granted the Vale Council £100,000 funding. However it could also be used to lobby other government organizations for funding should the opportunity arise. TG advised she had recently met Nigel Tipple (chairman of the Oxfordshire LEP) and the City Deal was progressing. Funding streams were now opening up e.g. EU Strategy (ESIF) and Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). Transport investment was needed to enable, open up and facilitate the four innovation hubs (Harwell, University, Culham, Begbrook) and a wider rural agenda was being developed alongside the Bicester –Oxford-SVUK growth spine. Giles Ingram (CEO of Experience Oxfordshire) was at this meeting, and asked Nigel Tipple if the LEP could acknowledge and support Oxfordshire’s visitor economy which was worth over £1bn p.a. and a huge employer, with untapped potential. Nigel Tipple emphasized that the City Deal promised thematic support e.g. skills development which would clearly benefit the visitor economy (retail and hospitality sectors in particular). TG would liaise to ensure that Faringdon continues to benefit from ongoing support from Experience Oxfordshire. The Oxtails project had received considerable promotional support from Experience Oxfordshire. TG advised that the Vale Council would soon be working with Pink Pigeons art group to remove the flowerbed at the rear of Budgens, and repair and make good the wall and replace with an arts project. TG requested a £500 contribution from JEF towards this project. This was proposed by Cllr Roger Cox, seconded by Cllr Mohinder Kainth and agreed unanimously. TG advised that she was working through the legal team at the Vale to get a license signed by Lord Faringdon to allow the free town-centre Wi Fi system to be introduced. TG advised that she was working with local

company Bybox to install a Bybox Locker in the Southampton Street car park to drive footfall into the town centre. TG presented web-site statistics for www.southernoxfordshire.com which showed that the districts' tourism web-site achieved around 50,000 unique page views every month. The Faringdon page was very popular, and often our 6th most viewed page. It would be good to get some more referrals from Faringdon web-sites.

Actions:-

- **Cllr Robert Sharp to write a cheque for £500 payable to VWHDC towards the flowerbeds project**
- **Sally Thurston and Gene Webb to include more links to www.southernoxfordshire.com from the town web-sites.**

7. Update reports from:-

- Faringdon Area Project:** Daphne attended a recent Action for Market Towns event in Wantage (which was organized by Trudy Godfrey) and it was agreed to pay Daphne a £50 speaker fee. Daphne advised that Lou Smith was holding an afternoon tea dance at the pump house project on 27 October at 2pm. **Action: Robert Sharp to write a cheque for £50 to Daphne Saunders to cover speakers expenses.**
- Chamber of Commerce:** Sarah Allen-Stevens advised the Chamber were still involved in the employment and retail sub-groups for the Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan. They would shortly be commissioning an Economic Development Strategy for the town, working in conjunction with the Town Council. The Chamber were also working with TESCO to improve the marketing of town centre businesses and were involved with a community bank. SAS, PB and MM were attending the Vale's New Homes Bonus grant workshop on 22 October to get some more funding for the town team's projects. The Chamber would soon be relaunching a new web-site www.faringdonchamberofcommerce.co.uk and social media campaign. **Actions: 1. SAS to pass community bank details to TG. 2. TG to meet with SAS, PB, MM to begin working on 2013/14 economic development action plan for Faringdon**
- Faringdon Residents Association:** no update
- Faringdon Farcycles:** no update
- Pink Pigeons:** no update.
- Faringdon in Bloom:** no update
- Folly Tower Trust:** Eddie Williams advised that the Tower would be open twice in October. The 2nd Sunday of the month and a special event for Hallowe'en. EW advised that slacklining sometimes took place in the Folly Woodlands and this was recognized to be one of the best places in the area to do it. EW requested up to £750 to create and print two new brochures promoting Faringdon's Civil War connections and Faringdon's

most eccentric resident (Lord Berners). **Action: Cllr Robert Sharp to write a cheque for up to £750 to support the Folly Tower brochures.**

8. Economic development news from Abingdon and Wantage

The Choose Abingdon Partnership had finalized the Extravaganza brochure with a Cinderella theme. They would be ‘celebrating an indie Christmas’ and encouraging people to use independent shops over Christmas.

9. Financial Report of JEF

Cllr Sharp advised the current balance was £3,254.64 and presented the accounts.

10. **Next meeting dates.** Dates of the next meetings are:

- **Thursday 16 January 2014**
- **Thursday 24 April 2014**
- **Thursday 17 July 2014**
- **Thursday 16 October 2014**

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

Trudy Godfrey

Secretary

APPENDIX A
JEF MEMBERSHIP 2013/14

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 Julie Farmer
- Cllr Andrew Marsden
- Cllr Jack Smith
- Cllr. Karen Draper

‘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)
- Sjoerd Vogt (Pink Pigeons)

Observer (non-voting):

- Cllr Elaine Ware (VWHDC)

In attendance (non-voting):

- Trudy Godfrey (VWHDC officer and minutes secretary)

APPENDIX

Faringdon Town Team Project Manager Quarterly Progress Report

August to October

August 01st to 31st 2013

- FollyFest weekend. Promotion of businesses in the Faringdon Loyalty Card Scheme, and the scheme itself. Sold 60+ cards over the weekend.
- Ran a raffle for the loyalty card scheme to raise awareness and get people talking about it.
- Failed to progress the plan of working with the FCC to develop the Saturday market.
- The Faringdon Market charter allows a market to take place in the market place on a Tuesday only. Further markets would need permission from the county council
 - Due to the existing markets (in particular the Farmers market) pursuing the Saturday market idea could cause more harm than good in terms of the established existing markets.
 - In order to answer the question about when would be the best time and place to have a market and what people's current habits are and how to change them. Worked with Caroline from VWHDC to create a market habits questionnaire.
- Started working on the tourism notice boards for Southampton Street and Gloucester Street Car Parks.
- Working on getting Tesco's engaged to do pay for a third tourist notice board in the tesco car park. Plus large hanging baskets on the lamp posts along Park road for next spring.
- 2 weeks of annual leave.

September 1st to 30th 2013

- Chasing VWHDC re: raised bed and wall that is falling down at the back of Budgens and the Red lion garden in Southampton Street car park.
 - Met the pink pigeons to determine what they would be able to do with the wall if in fact the VWHDC is going to remove / replace / restore the wall once the raised bed is removed.
 - Work to the wall is due to start before the end of the year, with financial contributions coming from Pink Pigeons, Budgens and Punch Taverns.
- Met with VWHDC officer to discuss work with Faringdon Free Food to plant up VWHDC flower beds around the town with edible planting.
- Provided further contacts for Old Theatre group for possible new groups to use the space.
- Starting to promote the markets on Facebook, via pages like 'Faringdon mums support each other' and 'I live in the town of Faringdon'.

- Created a planting plan for the gravel walk to meadow bank cut through. For FFFs to purchase an appropriate number of plants for the space available.
 - Gained permission from the owners of fences and walls to tie back any plants that need tying back.
- Canvassing local people in the area of the Gravel walk to meadow bank cut through about what they would like to see in the cut through and if they will be involved in the planting and maintenance of the plants.
 - Acquired further funding from a local business man for FFFs, through localized canvassing around gravel walk.
- Have interest from a number of new businesses about the Faringdon Loyalty Card Scheme.
 - Now have 533 card holders and 42 business in the scheme.
- Have agreement from businesses for a total of 42 hanging baskets to have winter baskets. To be paid for by individual businesses, to be planted by Severn Acres Nursery again, to be in-situ by mid October.

October 1st to 17th

- Hanging baskets have been taken away for planting up with winter plants and will be returned to all businesses mid October.
- Had meeting with the community officer from Tesco to discuss way that Tesco can help improve the town and the number of visitors.
 - Waiting on a response regarding a number of funding requests.
 - Including expanding the tourism notice boards to include Tesco car park and the Folly country park.
 - Hanging baskets along the park road to be attached to the lamp-posts.
 - Free foods projects, to provide a piece of land within their car park for edible planting.
 - Folly Tower booklet printing sponsorship.
 - Follyfest support, via manpower for stewarding.
- Met with town center managers from all over the Vale and surrounding area. Discussed successful projects running in different towns in the area and how to develop stronger links between the local towns to get transfer of knowledge and experience and roll out successful projects across the region.
- Canvassed businesses in the town regarding the work being done by the Portas money and what affect it has had on business.
 - The general feeling is very positive towards the work that has been done this year.
 - Most businesses say their takings are up on the same period last year. Although I do not have figures to back this up.
 - They would like to see even higher footfall in the town center.
- Did second planting session with Faringdon Free Foods. Preparing the ground for planting berries and currants along the pathway between

- Gravel walk and Meadow Bank. In addition potatoes and kale was planted in towers of tires in the pump house project gardens.
- Further planting sessions planned in the future, including getting the bushes in next month along the same footpath.
 - Plantings planned on the second Sunday of every month from now on.
- Worked with all stakeholders on the final design and wording of the Southampton Street car park notice board.
 - Developing content for Tesco and Gloucester street car park signs. In communication with Sally Thurston and all key stakeholders.
 - Responses back from National Trust, Buscot park, Kelmscott Manor, Folly tower group etc... all positive.

DRAFT