

**MINUTES OF THE FARINGDON JOINT ECONOMIC FORUM (JEF)  
MEETING HELD ON 18<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2013 AT 7:00PM IN THE OLD TOWN HALL,  
FARINGDON**

**1. Present:**

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

**Faringdon Town Council (FTC):** Cllr Julie Farmer, Cllr Jane Boulton.

**Other organizations:** Colin Desborough (Faringdon Association of Residents), Eddie Williams (Folly Trust), Paul Brame (Chairman, and Chamber of Commerce).

**In attendance:** Trudy Godfrey (economic development team leader and minutes Secretary), Mirabelle Mack (Faringdon Town Team Project Manager), Abi Brown (Arts Development Officer).

**Apologies:** Sally Thurston, David Williamson (Farcycles), Cllr Mike Wise (Mayor)., Cllr Mohinder Kainth, Cllr Andrew Marsden, Sarah Allen Stevens (Chamber of Commerce), Mrs Daphne Saunders (FAP), County Cllr Judith Heathcoat, Cllr David Price.

**2. Declarations of interest**

None.

**3. Minutes of meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> April and 17<sup>th</sup> January 2013**

Both were agreed to be an accurate report.

**4. Arts projects in Faringdon**

Abi Brown, the Vale's Arts Development Officer provided an update on the Folly View art fund. Bloors had funded on-site art-work. Karen Vogt (a Faringdon-based sculptor) had been commissioned to carve finials for the Bloor Homes gate-post. These would be on display on 20 July from 10-12 at the Bloor Show Home, and Karen Vogt would be there to discuss the art. Abi was also commissioning an artist to produce fencing for the pond. Cllr Alison Thomson suggested the design should include the Folly Tower and pink pigeons. An exhibition of the fencing would be in the Bloor Homes Show Room and the TIC in September (tbc). Abi advised that a small amount of s106 funding was left over and she was working with the pink pigeons to commission another artist – a stonecarver – to create a seat to replace the broken seating at the Portwell area in Faringdon. The JEF unanimously supported Abi's suggestion to update the group about how this project had progressed at the next JEF meeting on 17 October 2013. [Now postponed until January meeting]

## 5. Faringdon Neighbourhood plan

Andrew Marsden was unfortunately delayed and sent his apologies. **Action:** Andrew Marsden to give dates for the next steps for the FNP.

## 6. High Street Innovation Fund (HSIF) and Portas Funds

Mirabelle Mack presented her update to the group (attached). The JEF discussed the tourism initiative project. It was unanimously agreed to support the tourism notice-board project (instead of a town-based app). This would be placed in Southampton Street car park, Gloucester Street car park and on the TESCO site (Paul Brame was liaising with TESCO). Mirabelle updated the JEF on the Faringdon Free Foods project and requested £500 funding as match funding for plants. Cllr Roger Cox proposed that the JEF grant £500 towards this project. It was seconded by Colin Desborough.

**Action:- Mirabelle Mack to request £500 funding from JEF treasurer (Robert Sharp)**

## 7. Economic Development Action Plan for Faringdon 2013/14

JEF had not commented on the Action Plan and all remarked it was a good report. Oxtail town itineraries for Faringdon were circulated and all said they were well written and looked good. Trudy advised that the council's tourism web-site was generating over 8,000 hits every month and that Oxtails was a popular page. Trudy advised that in respect of the town Wi Fi service, she had drafted a contract with Solvings (the Vale's Wi Fi contractor) and was drafting a license to install the equipment in the Pump Rooms. It was anticipated that the town would have a Wi Fi system by August. Bybox were installing a parcel delivery locker in the Southampton Street car park in week beginning 23 July so that people can collect parcels from a central source in the town.

**Action:-** Trudy to circulate google analytics from the tourism web-site

## 8. Update reports from:-

- a. **Faringdon Area Project:** no update received.
- b. **Chamber of Commerce:** Paul Brame advised that both he and Sarah Allen-Stevens have both continued to work closely with the central steering group for the Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan and with Mirabelle Mack (the Faringdon Town Team project manager). Sarah is commissioning an economist and planner to write a 20 year economic development strategy for Faringdon and was acting in close co-operation with the Vale and the Town Council. The Chamber met with TESCO recently and they would be working closely with the Chamber to make sure the town centre benefits from the TESCO store from initiatives such as notice boards, signage, access / exit routes, lighting and improvements

to the alley-ways and through supporting local charities and community groups via their Community Liaison Officer.

- c. **Faringdon Residents Association:** Colin Desborough advised the Residents Association had been involved in discussions with the Steed Farm housing development.
- d. **Faringdon Farcycles:** Farcycles had planned a 70 mile cycle ride to support Folly Fest 2013 on 3 August.
- e. **Pink Pigeons:** see earlier update from Abi Brown.
- f. **Faringdon in Bloom:** Cllr Jane Boulton would speak to Sally Thurston about having Faringdon in Bloom next year.
- g. **Folly Tower Trust:** Eddie Williams advised that the tower was now open on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of every month, and both Sundays were proving popular with visitors. An exhibition involving paintings of the Queen would be installed on Sunday. Eddie Williams and Peter Wentworth had appeared on BBC South promoting the Tower.

#### **9. Economic development news from Abingdon and Wantage**

The Choose Abingdon Partnership had been very busy progressing the High Street Innovation fund and Portas fund projects. CHAP had relaunched their new Community shop, were planning to trial a business hub in the community shop and had invested in new software to promote the loyalty card scheme. In Wantage the number of empty shops had reduced from 23 (March) to 15 (July) and there were 15 live expressions of interest on those properties. Trudy circulated the 'Wantage – Come and Join Us' brochure for comment.

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

Cllr Sharp advised the balance was £3,754.64.

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

- **Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2013**

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

*Trudy Godfrey*  
Secretary

**APPENDIX A**  
**JEF MEMBERSHIP 2012/13**

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 – April to June 2013

April 01<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> 2013

- Designed logo for the Faringdon Town team to allow consistency in communications and identifiable brand to projects.
- Designed new Faringdon loyalty card leaflets, retaining original artwork but re-focusing leaflets to be about how the scheme works and selling the idea and benefits to the people of Faringdon.
  - Continued to update the Faringdon business map with new businesses as they appear.
  - Selected the right printer to do the loyalty card printing. Agreed to pricing ready to send artwork over next month.
- Sent Landlord register letter via Marriotts Chartered Surveyors to all commercial landlords in Faringdon.
- Started to collate a list of current businesses in Faringdon with contact details to allow easier communication about up and coming projects and grant possibilities.
- Followed up on Floral displays competition with Town council. Due to town council being required to fund the plants for the existing flowerbeds and boxes they are unwilling to progress the competition idea. Therefore the town council will be planting up the beds that they are responsible for in May 2013 as normal.
- Send photographic evidence of the Vale of the White Horse flowerbeds to the parks department to encourage work to be done especially in the Southampton Street car park.
- Easter Weekend and 1 week of on holiday.

May 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>

- Started working on ways to improve the look of the town centre, flower beds and shops.
- Set up an online petition to find out how much people think improving the Southampton street car park would make a difference to the town centre.
- Provided contacts for Old Theatre group for possible partners in use of the space.
- Have final proofs of FLC leaflets and other materials.
  - Have permission from finditInFaringdon and Dentons directories to use their info on the leaflets.
  - All FLC scheme printing agreed and ready for order to be delivered mid June.
- Booked stall for August FollyFest.

- Have preliminary agreement from FCC to work on Saturday market project.
- Got 3 new businesses to join the FLC scheme.
  - Now have 426 card holders and 42 business in the scheme.
- Due to the set backs with the floral displays projects last month have started looking into other ways to improve the planting in the town centre.
- Asked a number of local, regional and national companies to tender for the hanging baskets in the town.
  - Ordered 56 hanging baskets for the town centre shops to be delivered at the start of June and started work on a possible winter baskets project. Using a local business.

#### June 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>

- Handed out a business information capture form to local businesses to fill in and return to feed contact data back to finditinfaringdon and to use to communicate more effectively with local businesses.
- Final written agreement of HSIF £5,000 grant for the Old Theatre group to allow them to finish building work by first week in July.
  - For opening event on 12<sup>th</sup> July.
- FLC newsletter and website updated for leaflet drop at the end of the month with the what's on magazine to 4005 homes around Faringdon and the surrounding area.
  - Contacted businesses in FLC scheme about assisting with the follyfest stall, providing information about their business at the follyfest.
  - Asked for prizes for a raffle style prize draw for the cost of buying a loyalty card over the follyfest weekend.
  - Set up the first of the monthly prize draws on the FLC Facebook page. Successfully reaching an audience of over 600 people.
- Hanging baskets were installed and paid for in time for the June farmers market on the first Tuesday of June.
- Followed up plan to introduce Faringdon in Bloom to the community awards scheme, as discussed with Sally Thurston in March but due to the current workload of the town council it is not possible this year.
- Invited members of the Town Council, VWHDC and the chamber of commerce to be part of a virtual panel of judges to help allocate the funding available on the Shop front grant scheme.
- Finalised the wording of the guidance notes and application form for the shop front grant scheme.
  - Sent out to all businesses who have expressed an interest through the business info capture form.
  - Advertised the shop front grant scheme through the Faringdon Folly. Faringdon.org and the town councils website.
- Had first meeting with M3i regarding the creation of a tourism mobile app for Faringdon to provide easy activities and entertainment for locals and

tourist to enjoy when the tourist information centre is closed in the afternoons.

- Approached Faringdon History Society to assist with the collation of data for the Faringdon mobile app Faringdon trails. They have agreed to provide old photographs and check historical waypoints if I collate the information first.
- Following a twitter exchange of ideas workshop in Wantage. A series of social media workshops have been booked to develop the online presence of Faringdon and try to improve the inter business relationships in the town.
  - Found the most appropriate trainer to run the workshops, Booked venue and booked workshops to run on Tuesday evenings throughout July.
  - Advertised events.
- Signed the Old Theatre groups lease contract as a witness and collected all relevant paperwork to allow HSIF to be paid and building work to be completed for opening event in July.
- Following some mis-communications, it has been agreed that the town council should be copied in on quarterly reporting.

July 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>

- Chased all businesses with hanging baskets to make sure that they are watered and deadheaded regularly. Sadly we have lost 2 baskets through neglect.
- Have a number of businesses interested in the shop front grant scheme. With one return already in and at least 4 more anticipated back before the end of August.
- The opening event for the Old Theatre group was held on July 12<sup>th</sup> and was a great success.
  - Classes are running through the school holidays for dance and Parkour.
  - The centre will be being used by a number of different groups and has a great variety of classes available already.
- I have been chasing up businesses in the loyalty card scheme to provide prizes for the Follyfest stall. Doing all the usual admin for the scheme and running the second month of the Facebook monthly draw. We have not got many new likes on Facebook, even though we have reached up to 1573 people at the peak of the month.
- I have been keeping all FLC scheme administration up-to-date and asking for direct feedback from businesses and card-holders.
- Feedback from the Faringdon Loyalty card is not as positive as I had hoped for. Please see additional document: Faringdon Town Team Project Manager Quarterly Advice Request for further information.
- July has seen a series of three social media workshops run by Gail Gibson of True Expressions and Mary Thomas of Concise Training.

- Two workshops have run already and have had 12 attendees.
- Numerous other businesses have shown interest, but have not been able to attend these workshops due to other commitments.
- The feedback has been very positive so far. Especially from those who have attended both workshops.
- The objectives for the three sessions were as follows:
  - Help build a stronger sense of 'community ' among local Faringdon business owners.
  - Raise awareness of the importance of integrating social media into a marketing plan – to blend traditional and digital channels to successfully promote a 21st century business.
  - Encourage an improved level of support, inspiration, motivation, open communication and collaboration among the local business community.
  - Introduce the power & benefits of social media marketing as an excellent B2B tool via various platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Slideshare.
  - Explore the pros & cons, etiquette and security concerns around using social media for business.
- I have been researching the possibility of running a market in the town centre and have a preliminary trial run of an Italian market to run on either Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October, or Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> November.
  - I would prefer to run the market on the Friday as I think it would be more successful. Plus I could help promote the weekly Country market at the same time.
  - I am in touch with the secondary school. But I am still waiting for a meeting date to discuss how if at all the school can help with the development of the market.
- I have been looking into the possibility of creating an app like the Oxtrails app, but just for Faringdon. For a number of reasons this is not possible at this stage.
- As an alternative tourism initiative I would like to do a number of notice boards around the town. To be placed in the following locations:
  - Southampton street car park. Two sided if possible.
  - Tesco's car park when complete.
  - Gloucester street car park.
  - The reason for this being the following:
    - The tourist information centre is only open in the mornings
    - Tourists often do not know where to go or what to do in the town.
    - It would remove the horrible notice board that is regularly vandalized in the Southampton street car park with something a lot less easily vandalized.
    - I could showcase areas of the town in photographs that are otherwise not visible.

- It could encourage people visiting Tescos to explore more of the town.
- I have joined forces with Mark and Albania Crane and Sjoerd Vogt to create Faringdon Free Foods. A charity with the following aims:
  - To promote a culture of ecologically sustainable food production in the Faringdon, Oxfordshire area.
  - To increase whole community skills in ecologically sustainable food production.
  - To develop new links and urban-rural partnerships to benefit local resilience.
  - To enhance the local environment to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents.
- We will be using the FollyFest as a launching event, with a presentation by Mark Crane at the Old Theatre from 1.30pm and planting from about 2pm in the Old theatre garden.
  - We will then move through to the market square to plant up the town councils raised planters that they have kindly donated to the charity to use for as long as they are successful in maintaining them. Herb gardens and strawberry plants will be planted in these to start with.
- We have some funding from Mark and Albania Crane, who are passionate about improving their surroundings and creating a sustainable project that will help provide a better environment for their children.
- I am now looking to find match funding for their contribution to make an immediate impact on the town and show the local people of Faringdon that it is possible to make a genuine difference if you care enough.
- I still need final permission from the VWHDC to take on places like the small walled garden at the end of park road (opposite the Swan Pub).
  - Once permission has been given, we would like to plant up the garden to help improve the possible walking route from Tescos car park into town. Along with various other areas of green.
- The Catholic Church has offered it's small front garden on Marlborough Street to the group for planting. Again improving the route into town from Tescos.
- Once up and running we are hoping people will come forward with further areas of land that need some TLC.
  - I will then find out who owns the land and try to get the right permissions to plant on it.