

MINUTES OF THE FARINGDON JOINT ECONOMIC FORUM (JEF) AGM
MEETING HELD ON 22 January 2015 AT 7:00PM IN THE CORN EXCHANGE,
FARINGDON

1. Present:

Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC): Cllr Roger Cox, Cllr Jim Halliday.

Faringdon Town Council (FTC): Cllr Alex Meredith, Cllr Jane Boulton, Cllr Andrew Marsden, Cllr Ian Bell.

Other organizations: Mrs Daphne Saunders (FAP), David Williamson (Faringdon Twinning Society and Farcycles), Sarah Allen Stevens (Faringdon Chamber of Commerce), Eddie Williams (Folly Trust).

In attendance: Trudy Godfrey (economic development team leader and minutes Secretary), Bethia Thomas (Faringdon Market Town Co-ordinator), Andy Hayter (Faringdon Market Town Co-ordinator), Cllr Judith Heathcoat (OCC), Bethan Davies (Faringdon town council – visitor information)

Apologies: Cllr Elaine Ware, Mark Harrison (Farcycles), Cllr Mohinder Kainth (outgoing chairman), Cllr Robert Sharp, Cllr Alison Thomson, Cllr James Gregory, Paul Brame (Chamber of Commerce), Sally Thurston (Faringdon town clerk).

2. Declarations of interest and Matters Arising

None.

Matters arising:

- TG to progress discussions on the marketing and possible meanwhile uses for the old Folly Coffee Shop
- SV to progress Faringdon Coat of Arms with Town Council
- ST to follow up s106 funding to improve cycle routes with OCC officers as advised by JH
- DW and Farcycles to progress the cycling signage proposal with OCC – kerbs and signage
- SAS to circulate the Economic Development Strategy for Faringdon report to JEF members.
- 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.]
- All: to ‘find and follow’ Faringdon loyalty card and Faringdon Markets on Facebook.

- BT/AH/TG to progress proposal to strengthen Tuesday market with ST and Town Council
- TG to circulate guidance on EU LEADER programme funding when available

3. Election of officers: Chairman (FTC), Vice Chairman (other), Treasurer

AM proposed Cllr Jane Boulton as chair and this was seconded by Sarah Allen Stevens and a motion passed to elect Cllr Jane Boulton as chairman of the Faringdon JEF for the next 12 months. RC proposed Paul Brame as vice chairman and this was seconded by Cllr Alex Meredith. Although Paul Brame was not present at the meeting, he had given his prior consent. A motion was passed to elect Paul Brame as vice chairman of the Faringdon JEF. Cllr Robert Sharp was elected as Treasurer.

4. Minutes of meeting on 22 October 2014

Approved as accurate record of the meeting.

5. Actions from previous meeting

TG advised that the ownership of Folly Coffee shop was in the hands of liquidators, and she had no response to official letters inquiring about when the property was likely to come onto the market. She had been in touch with Ed Vaizey MP, and he had contacted the property administrators who provided the following update “This case has been passed onto a colleague, who has appointed a Receiver. We have an interested purchaser but this is all in its formative stages.”

BT had discussed the Faringdon coat of arms with the Town Council and the project was being developed by the Pink Pigeons.

ST was progressing the s106 contribution to improve cycle routes with OCC officers and DW had met officers in Faringdon.

DW progressing cycle signage with OCC officers, and also the positioning and cost of dropped kerbs.

Chamber advised that the Faringdon economic development strategy was nearing final draft and would be circulated and promoted over the next few months.

6. Financial Report of JEF

From the minutes, it appeared that the current balance of JEF was £3,449.42.

In terms of Folly Park signage project, it was noted that Lee Turner (OCC) had quoted a price of £1,900 + VAT for production and installation of 15 cycling signs. Cllr Alison Thomson advised (by email) that she had walked the cycling route and passed a report

with recommendations for dropped curbs to help cyclists access the Folly Sports Park in November 2014 to Cllr Heathcoat as these are the responsibility of the county. DW would take the project forward on behalf of Farcycles and also obtain cost quotes for dropped kerbs. A discussion followed as to how funding for this project might be found, and suggestions included: New Homes Bonus, Town Council, Vale of White horse district council, s106 contributions.

DW requested funding for cycling route cards and would get a quote for design and printing. SV mentioned that Ludlow had a cycling leaflet that was A4 trifold in waterproof material and estimated £500 for production. RC proposed that JEF gave Farcycles £100 to produce a proto-type leaflet. This was seconded by AM.

7. 2014/15 projects

- **Markets and events:** AH advised the market on 6 December (Christmas and Small Business Saturday market) went very well, increasing footfall and attracting people into the town centre. BT and TG had met Jeanette Howse (recently awarded an MEB for setting up the Didcot Christmas street fair and recently appointed by Wantage Town Council to improve their Wednesday and Saturday markets. Jeanette was going to submit a written proposal on how to develop the Faringdon Tuesday market and this would be discussed by the Faringdon town team, Town Clerk and Farmers Market organisers before being taken forward. AH advised that he and BT were developing plans for markets on Saturday 28 February and 28 March. Saturday 28 February was likely to be a charity market, sponsored by Faringdon businesses; and Saturday 28 March was likely to be a more traditional market as a pilot for 2015/16. AH advised that he was working with the Twinning Association to bring a French market in May (25th anniversary of twinning with Le Mele) and this could also perhaps be run in conjunction with Blackbird Day.
- **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

BT advised that the Facebook pages ‘Faringdon loyalty card scheme’ and ‘Faringdon Markets’ were going strong, with several hundred followers on

Facebook. The click and share campaigns had been very successful in terms of generating new followers. Have you found us 'Faringdon loyalty card' and 'Faringdon Markets' on Facebook?? **Action all:** to find Faringdon loyalty card and Faringdon Markets on Facebook.

- **Faringdon Flag / Coat of Arms project:** SV advised that the Pink Pigeons had drafted a very early proto-type of the Faringdon Flag or Coat of Arms. They have so far spent £100 developing this and had taken it to a Town Council meeting. The Pink Pigeons now wanted to develop this project to finished artwork and had written a technical or artistic brief to get finished artwork in landscape, portrait, colour and black and white. This finished artwork would be able to be used in a variety of marketing materials (on paper, on town product branding, printed onto flags, wrought iron town signs). It would be necessary to do a lot of work to simplify the initial design. It would take 3 months to develop the final artwork, consulting with the Town Council and would cost £800. The Pink Pigeons had set aside £300 from their own funds for this project. SV explained that the coat of arms would be the Faringdon brand or logo and could be used by a variety of organisations, and, it is hoped, adopted by the Town Council. AM asked for clarity on who would be involved in the final decision. SV explained that it would be a decision taken by the Pink Pigeons. Most of the town councilors felt that the final design should be agreed by the Town Council if it was hoped that they would then adopt the coat of arms for the town. RC proposed that JEF should match the Pink Pigeons contribution, awarding £300 to develop the final artwork. AM/JH/JB recommended that Faringdon Town Council should have the final decision on the coat of arms and adopt it as their logo. **Action:** 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.
- **Residents pack:** BT advised this had been created using leaflets in TIC and loyalty card leaflets and 'things to do in Faringdon leaflets' dropped off at Folly View estate in 2014
- **Promoting Faringdon sheets:** BT had discussed the Faringdon sheets with Bethan Davies from Faringdon TIC and would complete them before Spring.
- **Loyalty card scheme:** AH advised that the recent introduction of the Faringdon Reward stamp card scheme introduced by the Chamber and rolled out by the Town Team had been incredibly successful. In December and January there were 120 stamped and returned cards for the prize draw (£100 Folly Dollars in December and £50 Folly Dollars in January). SAS explained that the stamp card scheme with prize draw had been funded by the Chamber using grant funds made available by Vale of White Horse district council arising from the New homes bonus grant scheme. She asked if this grant fund was likely to be made available during 2015/16. RC explained that the Vale council would meet in mid February to agree growth funding priorities for 2015/16.
- **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

- **Economic development strategy:** SAS advised she was waiting for Faringdon Town Council to approve the final draft of the EDS, and then the Chamber would meet with its co-sponsors to agree the press release and Comms Strategy surrounding the economic development strategy which contained some exciting recommendations for Faringdon.
- **Folly Tower and Woodlands:** EW advised that one of the oldest trees in the woodlands (from 1780) had unfortunately blown down in the wind but the tree surgeon has identified some exciting work that could be done with it – watch out for something “new” popping up in the Woodland soon! The Folly Tower Trustees had recently commissioned an archeological survey of the Woodlands which was believed to have been the site of a Roman camp. Oxford University were reviewing the first survey and the Trustees would decide whether or not to go ahead with the next stage. EW advised that the Tower was very damp – there was a dehumidifier in the tower – but parts of the Tower urgently needed to be re-pointed. EW advised that income had increased by 75% compared with the previous year. Takings at the door had increased 10%, private function bookings increased 400%, and merchandise sales had increased by 300% largely thanks to the JEF funding projects – civil war and Faringdon Folly booklets.

7. Economic Development projects for 2015/16

BT/AH/ TG to meet and discuss the projects with ST (Faringdon Town Clerk) on 30 January 2015. Projects to be taken forward next year include:

The events calendar:

- 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

Other town centre vitality projects to be taken forward by Faringdon Town Team and other bodies include:

- Faringdon loyalty card scheme
- Strengthen Tuesday weekly market; help promote and introduce Saturday markets
- Make WC a work of art (Pink Pigeons and Vale’s arts development officer Abigail Brown)
- Pop up museum in shops (taken forward by volunteers and businesses)
- Improve Folly Park as a destination – country park / adventure playground
- “Marketing Faringdon” businesses and events campaign

- Improve linkages between TESCO and town centre by using art to improve the walkway (Pink Pigeons and Vale's arts development officer Abigail Brown)
- 800th anniversary of Faringdon's Market Charter
- Retail support programme – Abingdon & Witney College
- Note that LEADER funding will be available during 2015 which will give an opportunity to fund rural tourism projects (Guidance to be circulated once available)

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

- **Thursday 16 April**
- **Thursday 9 July**
- **Thursday 15 October**

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

Trudy Godfrey

Secretary

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)

APPENDIX B

Faringdon Town Team Activity Report



Faringdon Town Team

JEF 16/10/2014

The Town Team reported on their initial period of consultation as well as other events and ideas they had worked on at the July JEF meeting. Since then we have made a great deal of progress on a variety of projects.

1. Events in the Town Centre

Berners' Big Bench Bash: A successful feel good event, which combined the grand opening of the Portwell Bench with a Town Trail and other entertainment to draw a large crowd into the town centre. It gave the Town Team the opportunity to work closely with the Pink Pigeons, collaborating with them and the Folly Park View Residents Association and Faringdon's schools to invite new audiences to the centre of Town.

Faringdon Young Traders' Market: Another successful event in which young people were invited to take their own stall for a day, and market and sell their wares. It was an incredibly busy morning with positive feedback from traders, shoppers and other businesses; another of these events will be planned in the future.

Future Events: Other events are in various stages of planning; a *Community Market* or similar for the Remembrance weekend, and a *Christmas Market* of some sort have been suggested and explored. A more traditional market, similar to the Tuesday offering would be appreciated by many, though it is felt that we need to encourage footfall into the town centre first, before stallholders will be willing to set up on a Saturday morning – this may be explored further in the new year.

2. Loyalty Card Scheme

The new Loyalty Card Reward Scheme will be officially launched Tuesday October 21st. It will work with the existing Loyalty Card Scheme, but will actively reward loyalty as shoppers have the new card stamped every time they spend £5.00 in a Loyalty Card Business; their cards, once full, will be entered into a draw every month for a chance to win a substantial cash prize. The scheme is currently being rolled out and its effect on businesses will be monitored closely over the next few months.

3. Empty Shops and Park Road

Currently there are three empty retail units in the town centre; one is currently being renovated and will soon become a pet food shop. RVs Angling has taken residence in what was the Faringdon Exchange. Empty frontages have been used to advertise Town Team events, and it is generally felt that this usage was an improvement to the look and feel of the town; more permanent displays or pop up shops may be beneficial in the short term while new tenants can be found.

The idea of hanging flags around the town centre and along Park Road was an idea put forward to improve the look and feel of the town. The team's *Faringdon Flag Competition* through the primary schools, the resulting banner was on show at Berners' Big Bench Bash when the winners were announced. Discussions are taking place as to whether we should revive the idea of floral baskets in the town centre, whether it economically viable to do the same on Park Road, or whether the idea of banners would be preferential.

4. Maximising Advertising and Faringdon's Public Profile

Leaflet Distribution and a New Residents' Pack: As part of Berners' Big Bench Bash the team circulated a 'residents pack' to every household in Folly Park View. This included an invitation to the event, a diary of what was on in the town centre, and a leaflet describing 'Things to do in Faringdon'. This estate will also receive the new Loyalty Reward Card through their letterboxes in the next week.

Events Calendar: A monthly events calendar has been produced since August, and distributed online. The October calendar was printed and distributed to the residents of Folly Park View. There has been little feedback on the scheme, and discussion should be focussed on the future of this scheme.

Social Media: The Faringdon Market and The Loyalty Card Facebook pages are now being managed by the team. While no official analysis has been done, it is clear that the numbers of people following those pages are greatly increased since the team took them over, and that the number of page likes is also steadily increasing.

Improving Web Profile: A series of PDFs is planned highlighting different aspects of the town. These would include Faringdon as an Historic Town, a Shopping Town, a Foodie Town, and an Eccentric town, and can be distributed to targeted websites and will be worked on in conjunction with the Tourist Information Centre to develop packages for tourists to the town. The team is working with the TIC to further enhance the town's web presence.

Signage: The new sign advertising the town centre will be installed in the Tesco car park; communications with Tesco continues. Other signage, advertising markets and events will also be investigated.

Faringdon Town Team Co-ordinators

Bethia Thomas: bethiathomas@gmail.com
andy.hayter@gmail.com

Andy Hayter: