

**MINUTES OF THE FARINGDON JOINT ECONOMIC FORUM (JEF)  
MEETING HELD ON 24<sup>th</sup> April 2014 AT 7:00PM IN THE OLD TOWN HALL,  
FARINGDON**

**1. Present:**

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

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

**Other organizations:** Eddie Williams (Folly Trust), Paul Brame (Chamber of Commerce), Mrs Daphne Saunders (FAP), David Williamson (Farcycles).

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

**Apologies:** Cllr Alison Thomson, Sarah Allen Stevens (Chamber of Commerce)

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

There were no declarations of interest.

Matters arising:

- TG to ask the Vale's car park team about the on-street car parking survey. [John Backley advised that he had issued the request for proposals and received 15 responses! These were being evaluated and the top 2 would present to Faringdon Town Council for their decision in May / June.]
- RS to ask Town Council for £500 contribution towards JEF expenses for 2013/14 and for £500 contribution towards JEF expenses for 2014/15.
- Poor attendance at JEF meetings. TG to refer to the constitution to see what could be done about this. [The constitution does not say anything specifically about poor attendance but notes that "Each nominating Organization may appoint substitutes (who should be a member of the nominating body and ideally reside or work in the locality of Faringdon) who can deputise for nominees in their absence. Each nominee shall be responsible for arranging a substitute if required, and notifying the Chairman at least 24 hours before the start of the meeting. A substitute shall have the same rights and duties as the member for whom they deputise." Officer advice: to change nominated representatives at the AGM, based on poor attendance.]
- TG circulated the developing action plan for Faringdon 2014/15 for comment from the JEF by 30 April 2014.
- BT to feed back to the JEF on the Free Foods planting of apple trees
- AH to discuss with Marriotts the position with the old Folly Coffee Shop, Faringdon

- Cllr Robert Sharp to pay Faringdon Folly Tower Trustees up to £600 in respect of Folly Tower leaflets
- Cllr Jane Bolton to get in touch with Caroline Bell in respect of the Faringdon in Bloom competition being organized for August 2014.
- Action: Cllr Judith Heathcoat to ask OCC officers how Farcycles can access the Better Routes to School funding.

### **3. Minutes of meeting on 16 January 2014**

One admendment. Paragraph 4 to read “Cllr Robert Sharp advised the current uncommitted balance was £1474.00.

### **4. Financial Report of JEF**

Cllr Sharp advised the current balance was £2,706.64 and he would ask the Town Council for their £500 contribution for last financial year and the current financial year. **Action: RS to ask Town Council for £500 contribution towards JEF expenses for both last financial year and 2014/15**

### **5. Update from the Vale**

Trudy Godfrey advised that the Vale had tendered for the position of market town co-ordinator and had interviewed and recruited two people – Bethia Thomas and Andy Hayter – who would share the role. The Action plan had been circulated prior to the meeting and comments on the draft were welcome by 30 April 2014. At the first meeting with Andy / Beth, a short list of actions had been agreed for the first few months. It was agreed to do: a business survey to gather ideas on how we best support town centre businesses and increase footfall, shoppers survey to gather information about shopping habits and opinions about local shoppers, opening dialogue with agents about the few empty shops in town and whether pop up gallery could be pursued, installing signage in the TESCO car park to promote the town centre, discussions with market stall-holders about ways to strengthen the existing markets, and a series of mini-events to drive footfall into the town centre including ‘Blackbird Day’ on 17/18 May. Bethia Thomas provided more details about Blackbird day which would include the baking of a blackbird pie by Faringdon businesses, with blackbird pie tasting at the Farmer’s Market on 6 May. Bethia said that she and Andy had initial discussions with market stall-holders who were supportive of the idea of increasing the number of stalls on the regular Tuesday market. Trudy advised that contracts and licenses had been signed, and as long as BT were able to install lines during May, the Faringdon WiFi system would be operational by May / June 2014.

Trudy Godfrey advised that Choose Abingdon Partnership were exploring a Business Improvement District in Abingdon. Should a majority of businesses agree at a referendum (held during 2015) then this would be the first Oxfordshire BID. Further updates would be provided.

## 6. Update reports from:-

- a. **Faringdon Area Project:** Daphne advised that the FAP / Pink Pigeons AGM had been a great success and that lots of exciting projects were being taken forward including the Pump House seat and the planting of apple trees around the town. She advised that Caroline Bell had won the best flower arrangement at the Chelsea Flower Show. **Action: Cllr Jane Bolton would get in touch in respect of the Faringdon in Bloom competition being organized for August 2014.** Daphne circulated a brochure from a recent conference – The Farrell Review and extended an invitation from Prince Charles to visit his farm shop.
- b. **Chamber of Commerce:** Paul Brame advised it had been a busy year for the Chamber. Sarah Allen Stevens and Patrick Sharkey were campaigning for more employment land in respect of the Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan. Sarah Allen Stevens was working with Faringdon Town Council to commission consultants to develop an Economic Development Strategy for Faringdon. The Chamber were providing continued support for the loyalty card, thanks to the Vale's New Homes Bonus funding. Frank Pavy forged links with the Fairford and Lechlade Business Club and was shortlisted as business person of the year. Mel Laine was driving new Chamber membership and was responsible for increasing use of social media. The Chamber hope to increase membership and encourage businesses to come forward.
- c. **Faringdon Residents Association:** no update
- d. **Faringdon Farcycles:** David Williamson advised that Farcycles had informed the draft Neighbourhood Plan and we are pleased that the Plan strongly supports better cycling provision for Faringdon. Farcycles will be trying to get access to the s106 monies (we believe £30k) that were earmarked for 'Better Ways to School' which could be used to fund safe cycling routes for children in the town. **Action: Cllr Judith Heathcoat to ask OCC officers how Farcycles can access the Better Routes to School funding.** The 2nd Farcycles Follyfest cycling sportive will take place on 2nd August: 35, 70 and 111-mile routes. Fund-raising from this will be used for cycling initiatives in Faringdon. Beginners / return to cycling/ 'rusty cyclists' rides have started on a Sunday morning at 11am from the Market Place – all welcome! Regular Saturday morning rides continue and are very well supported
- e. **Pink Pigeons:** Eddie Williams advised the group were working with Abi Brown (the Vale's arts development officer) to progress new Portwell Seating. The designs had been subject to vote, and a favourite design had been chosen. The Budgens flowerbeds project had stalled because of problems with funding. Silly signs continue to be produced and installed. Pink Pigeons were developing a flag to represent the town – possibly a Faringdon coat of arms.

- f. **Faringdon in Bloom:** Cllr Jane Bolton was organising Faringdon in Bloom this year – it would be in August. She needed a small financial contribution for advertising and engraving the trophy. Cllr Judith Heathcoat suggested the OCC Community Fund.
- g. **Folly Tower Trust:** Eddie Williams advised that the Tower had leaked due to the exceptionally wet winter. They were getting surveys done to avoid expensive scaffolding. The Woodland continued to attract visitors all year round. The Tower was being used for more parties and celebrations and there was slacklining coaching offered in the woodland. The Civil War booklet that the JEF had funded had been produced but 1,500 copies were ordered as economies of scale meant the costs would be much lower per unit – at a total cost of £602. Cllr Roger Cox proposed that the JEF provide more funding towards this project, up to £602. This was seconded by Cllr Andrew Marsden. All voted in favour, motion passed. **Action: Eddie Williams to advise on the costs of the leaflets and Cllr Robert Sharp to organise payment.** There was now a Folly Tower leaflet on sale in the Visitor Information Centre for £2.50
- h. **Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan:** Andrew Marsden advised the Town Council had engaged consultants to prepare a sustainability assessment and environmental impact assessment. When this was complete there would be a 6 week informal consultation period. The Plan would then be presented to the District Council for their comments and there would then be a further 6 week formal consultation period. It would be sent to the Examiner and out to Referendum at the beginning of 2015. It would be in effect by Easter 2015.

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

- **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 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 Mark Greenwood

‘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 – April report *Town Team Activity Report, April-May 2014*

#### 1. *Farmer's Market Survey, April 1<sup>st</sup>*

- Market stallholders and customers surveyed for opinions on the market and the town centre;
- See report.

#### 2. *Weekly Market Survey, April 8<sup>th</sup>*

- As above; report yet to be finalised.

#### 3. *Business Survey, April 24<sup>th</sup>*

- To be distributed to retailers to gain opinions about their concerns including their opinion on the Loyalty Card Scheme.

#### 4. *Loyalty Card Survey, May 1 – 12<sup>th</sup>*

- Based on the Wantage model, an online survey for cardholders, with £100 incentive from Chamber of Commerce;
- Online results, and survey of shoppers in town centre and Tesco, May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>;
- Initial results to be presented at Chamber of Commerce meeting about the scheme.

#### 5. *Folly Park View Community Event, May 4<sup>th</sup>*

- Opportunity to publicise Blackbird Day, the town centre and what it has to offer.

#### 6. *Blackbird Day Events*

##### *Blackbird Pie, Tuesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>*

- Lesley Holdship from *The Hare in Woods* to make pie and have a stall at the Farmers' Market;
- Currently in negotiations with *Restaurant 56* and the 'Masterchef' at *The Eagle*, Little Coxwell for support and commentary;
- Sjoerd Vogt as the town crier inviting people to the Farmers' Market and to the Pie Stall;
- Advertising Blackbird Day on May 17<sup>th</sup>.

##### *Blackbird Day, Saturday and Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>*

- Colouring competition at Faringdon Infant School – used to decorate shop fronts and businesses participating in town trail; BT will give a talk at Infant assembly about the day;
- Blackbird Town Trail comprising 24 stations around town getting people into businesses and the town centre;

- Currently in negotiations with Friends of the Folly to give free/reduced entry to tower;
- Further culinary offerings tba.

**7. *Other activities***

- April 30<sup>th</sup> – Town Team Meeting, Didcot;
- May 7<sup>th</sup> – Oxtrails Demonstration;
- May 12<sup>th</sup> – Loyalty Card Meeting.