

**MINUTES OF THE FARINGDON JOINT ECONOMIC FORUM (JEF)
MEETING HELD ON 26TH JANUARY 2012 AT 7:00PM IN THE OLD TOWN
HALL, FARINGDON**

1. Present:

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

Faringdon Town Council (FTC): Cllr Jane Boulton (Chairman) and Cllr Andrew Marsden.

Other organizations: Eddie Williams (Folly Trust), Mrs Daphne Saunders (FAP), Denise Palmer (Chamber of Commerce - substitute for Paul Brame).

Non-voting members: Cllr Mike Wise (Mayor) and County Cllr Judith Heathcoat.

In attendance: Trudy Godfrey, Secretary.

Apologies: Cllr Ron Mansfield, Sally Thurston, Cllr Jim Halliday, Paul Brame.

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. Minutes of meeting on 6th October 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2011 were accepted as true and accurate record.

4. To discuss the Strategy and Action Plan for Faringdon

Trudy Godfrey advised that projects currently under development included the inward investment fact-sheets to help businesses considering locating in Faringdon; the vacant commercial property database; the Town Maps (final copies were left for the Town Council to install in notice boards in car parks), "Things to do around Faringdon" brochures and footfall surveys. Denise Palmer advised that the Town Maps were now complete and as the Chamber had copyright for the Business Map they could revise this annually. Denise said that the Chamber would like to turn the Business Map into a leaflet that could be distributed to nearby towns and held on stock at the TIC and Esso Garage on Park Road. Cllr Cox proposed that £200 be set aside to pay for printing costs associated with the production of a leaflet. This was seconded by Cllr Kainth. Trudy Godfrey advised that following a meeting on 20th January, some ideas had been discussed for the 2012/13 action plan and this might include some trails (e.g. heritage / culture, important buildings, and food) and these would feature Faringdon wherever possible. A

discussion followed about employment land available in Faringdon and Andrew Marsden requested a map of Faringdon identifying employment land by category.

Actions:

1. Secretary to circulate the draft Faringdon inward investment fact-sheet.
2. Secretary to ask Tanya Lillington (Vale officer) how easily it would be to convert the map into a leaflet.
3. Trudy Godfrey to email map of Faringdon identifying employment land by category to Cllr Andrew Marsden.

5. Progress Reports from:

a. Focus on Faringdon SEEDA Funding and JEF projects

i. **Folly Tower.** Eddie Williams reported that the work to the Tower was now complete. Income for 2010/11 was up 53% on the previous year and this was due to an increase in visitors (because the entry charges remained the same at £2 per adult, 50p per child aged 11-16 and free entry for younger children). The Folly Tower Trust had received an additional funding allocation of approx. £12,000 and had used this to replace bricks on the outside of the tower, introducing new vista boards to explain the views, and installing a new system for Christmas lights. Eddie advised they were considering switching on the lights in the Belvedere Room until Spring. There were now interesting sculptures to see in the woodlands – ‘the bridge to nowhere’ and a Civil War cannon as well as the 24 blackbirds in a willow pie. The Pink Pigeons were considering more artwork such as a sawing man sculpture and a wooden bird that flapped its wings when the wind blew. Eddie advised that private bookings were being taken for the private dining room in the Belvedere room – arguably the quirkiest dining room in the world! And that booking cost was by arrangement. Daphne Saunders suggested that the Folly Tower could be re-entered in the Action for Market Towns awards category for the ‘most creative fund-raising project’ because it had been commended by the Action for Market Towns in 2011 as an excellent project.

ii. **Skateboard Park.** Cllr Alison Thomson advised that the skatepark was now complete (except for final landscaping) and that the Vale were working with various groups and solicitors to finalise the transfer of the Folly Park extension from Bloor Homes to the Council. However, in the meantime, the skatepark was closed to the public as there was a safety issue with the mud being spread onto the park and no liability insurance in place. As the grass wouldn’t grow until Spring/Summer, it would be sensible to investigate an alternative solution to avoid the mud being spread onto the park.

Action: Secretary to ask Faringdon SK8 to look at technical solutions (e.g. grass-crete or plastic) and provide the costs of these solutions for consideration by the Town Council.

iii. **Things to do around Faringdon maps.** No further update from Focus on Faringdon.

b. Faringdon Area Project

Daphne Saunders advised that the Faringdon Young Farmers were celebrating their 80th anniversary. A nationally recognized ploughing match would be held in Hatford in September which was close enough to Faringdon to allow families to have a day out.

c. Chamber of Commerce

Denise Palmer advised that the Faringdon loyalty card scheme would be launched in April 2012 and all businesses who would like to join the scheme should email Denise@presentationgifts.co.uk. So far, 16 businesses in Faringdon have agreed to be part of the scheme – retailers, beauty therapists, hairdressers and builders. The Town Maps project was complete and the maps were with the Town Council ready to be installed in the town notice boards. Sarah Allen-Stevens was continuing to work with the Town Council on the ‘Our Faringdon Our Future’ working group. The Chamber Winter Ball had managed to raise £400 for the Scouts this year and they hoped to raise more for a local charity and the business community this year.

Actions:

1. Secretary to ask Tanya Lillington how to convert maps into leaflets and how the Chamber could continue to do updates as and when required.
2. Paul Brame to speak to Cllr Margaret Barker about joining with the Town Council to organize a joint Winter Ball in 2012.

d. Faringdon Association of Residents

No update.

e. Farcycles

Trudy Godfrey advised that Farcycles had met with County Council and that an engineer had been out to scope a new route that the group was hoping to develop. Cllr Judith Heathcoate had given considerable support to this project and had instigated the officer meeting with Farcycles, and visited on-site with a representative of Farcycles and officers from Oxfordshire County Council. A report was awaited from County Council that would highlight technical solutions and provide indicative costs. It would also outline the consultation requirements. Farcycles were currently working with the National Trust and would begin fund-raising in earnest in order to match fund a grant application they would put to Southern Oxfordshire LEADER.

f. Pink Pigeons

Cllr Mike Wise advised that the Pink Pigeons were thinking about interesting sculptures that could be placed around Faringdon to attract visitors – they were currently thinking about exploiting connections with William Morris and the arts & crafts movement. They were also hoping to do upgrade work on the Highworth lay-by which was a popular ‘beauty spot’ with great views over Faringdon. Abigail Brown (the Vale’s arts development officer) was currently negotiating with Bloor Homes to use the Section 106 agreement to help pay for artworks.

g. Faringdon Twinning Association

Cllr Mike Wise advised that Faringdon Twinning Association had a successful dinner at the Rats Castle and were trying to get all the sports clubs involved in the school visit. Twinning visits: 17th – 20th May (French to Faringdon), 7-14th July (French to Faringdon – youth visit), 21st – 28th July (Faringdon to Le Mele).

Action: Cllr Mike Wise to speak to Jane Haynes about organizing a French Market.

h. Faringdon in Bloom

Cllr Jane Boulton advised that progress had been slow.

Action: Cllr Jane Boulton to speak to Vince Garratt (a former winner of Faringdon in Bloom) to establish what needed to be done.

i. Economic Development News from Abingdon and Wantage

Trudy Godfrey advised that the Choose Abingdon Partnership had finished a production of trails in and around Abingdon and the Abingdon Waterways Walks was a huge success – at £2 each, had sold out and were being re-ordered. The Abingdon Video has collected lots of footage in and around the town and will be used to promote the town at events, and hopefully picked up by the Olympics committee.

Action: Trudy Godfrey to speak to the Faringdon Chamber of Commerce about promoting a scheme that would support retailers in the town. e.g. the ‘Christmas Passport’.

10. Financial Report of JEF

Cllr Sharp advised that in the accounts to January, income was £1,200 (grant from the Vale of White Horse District Council) and £1,000 from Faringdon Town Council. The current account had a credit balance of £3,113.53. However, £250 had been earmarked for the Town Maps and a further £200 towards the Business Map leaflet to be arranged by the Chamber of Commerce.

11. Any other business

Trudy Godfrey advised that Karen Brown (the Vale's community safety officer) had offered to source workers from the probationary service to remove the flower-beds at the Southhampton Street entrance to Budgens. These were currently an eyesore and the source of a number of reports of anti-social behaviour to the police. It was felt that if the flower beds were removed and replaced either by a bench or a community mosaic then it would improve the look of the area and reduce anti social behaviour.

Actions:

1. Trudy Godfrey to ask Karen Brown how much it would cost to replace the flower-beds with a bench.
2. Trudy Godfrey to speak to June Rennie to ask if the Town Council's care taker could provide project management expertise to manage the probationary team.

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

- **Thursday 19th April 2012 in the Old Town Hall**
- **Thursday 19th July 2012**
- **Thursday 18th October 2012**

All meetings would be held in the Old Town Hall, where this was available. Where this room is not available, the meetings would be held in an alternative venue (e.g. the Pump Rooms or Crown Coaching Inn).

Trudy Godfrey
Secretary

APPENDIX A
JEF MEMBERSHIP 2010/11

Voting members:

Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC):

- Cllr Roger Cox
- Cllr Mohinder Kainth
- Cllr Robert Sharp
- Cllr Ron Mansfield
- Cllr Jim Halliday

Faringdon Town Council (FTC):

- Cllr Jane Boulton
- Cllr Margaret Barker
- Cllr Alan Hickmore
- Cllr Andrew Marsden
- Cllr Jack Smith

‘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 Mike Wise)
- Chairman of the Vale of White Horse District Council (Cllr Alison Thomson)
- 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):

- Toby Warren (VWHDC officer)
- Sally Thurston (FTC officer)
- Trudy Godfrey (VWHDC officer and minutes secretary)
- Cllr Elaine Ware