



Biggleswade Town Plan Steering Group Minutes of meeting: 15 August 2013

Attendees:

Alan Dansey, Rob Green, , Paul Jenkins (Chair), Gerry Lawrence, Anne Skinner, Nicholas Titley, David Albone, Douglas Hammond

Apologies:

Sheila Grayston, Eric Stewart, Mike North, Madeline Russell, Colin Strange, Hazel Ramsay, Paul Day, Peter Biernis, Andy Buckley

Guest speakers:

Shanine Tannis (Vision to Inspire)

Announcement:

Pamela Bagnell and Mark Ty-Wharton are leaving the area so will no longer be members of the BTPSG. This leaves a gap in the Housing & Economic Growth & the Natural Environment tables G14 – G18.

Agenda item 3: Minutes from previous meeting accepted

Agenda item 4: Paul Jenkins confirmed that after contact with Jane Parker the BTPSG had a stall at the St Andrews Fete taking place 21 September 2013. The theme for this years fete is “Toys” and the BTPSG will develop their stall around this theme.

Agenda item 5: Shanine Tannis and her friend were welcomed to the meeting as guests. Shanine works on the youth project Vision to Inspire. She gave her background as a mother of 3 children who is undergoing teacher training and her concerns having moved to Biggleswade, at the lack of activities for youth and anti social behaviour emanating from this group. Shanine sees the need for the community to come together to empower youth and with a series of initiatives, she hopes to realise an ambition to improve the environment in Biggleswade for the young people of the town. She hopes that a youth centre at Holme Mead School will provide a venue for a range of activities and hopes that regular get togethers with possibly the opportunity for training, will enable young people to contribute to the community.

There is a lack of volunteers currently to assist with the many areas that Shanine hopes to develop, and while there is some funding to pay for any liability, there will be need for further and on going investment if this major

project is to move forward. Shanine acknowledged the huge contribution made by Aragon and the support she has had so far from this company. She has been successfully targeting 8-14 year olds but is also concerned about those aged 16 and over who have a huge influence on the younger group but who lack facilities in Biggleswade and who require a different strategy. The need for youth café for older youth has been identified.

Shanine had walked around Biggleswade during the evening on one occasion and was shocked at the number of young people, some as young as 9, who were out unsupervised and clearly at risk.

Shanine confirmed that members of the Learn Direct Centre are coming to Biggleswade re working opportunities. It is also hoped that young people will run a café which will also assist with their skills. Shanine also intends to go to school assemblies to promote this initiative and raise awareness of the events she is planning.

Paul thanked Shanine and commended her for her fantastic vision. It was suggested that BTPSG could assist by promoting Vision to Inspire through its website. David Albone also mentioned that grants are possible through the Town Council. Grants will be made available from September and David offered to assist with acquiring forms. There is also the need to offer counselling services and Paul suggested the Citizens Advice Bureau and its volunteer programme which runs on a Friday morning.

It was confirmed that youth were consulted when work was being actioned on developing the Biggleswade Town Plan but Gerry Lawrence confirmed that the young people involved had moved on. There may be a need to revisit this and get a youth plan or youth paper actioned.

Also suggested that publicity could go out on Biggles FM and also the free publications delivered to homes in the area such as the Advertiser, The Bulletin and The Villager.

Shanine asked the BTPSG to note 14 December as a date earmarked for a Christmas celebration to which we were all invited.

Agenda item 6: It was agreed that the group who would attend the Fete should meet to confirm what they would be doing prior to the event on 21 September. Those who can assist on the day are Anne Skinner, Rob Green, Sheila Grayston, Eric Stewart and his wife. Alan Dansey will coordinate publicity, Rob Green explained his monopoly board plans. Anne Skinner to work with Douglas Hammond on the town plans and toys area. .

Action point: Paul Jenkins to circulate the date for the pre Fete meeting.

Agenda item 7: Reports from champions

Rose Lane Car park – David Albone was pleased to confirm the acquisition of the Rose Lane car park from the Lord of the Manor after a period of negotiations that have run for 2 years. The offer has been accepted and now finance needs to be raised. Central Beds Council had been keen to acquire the car park and it is seen as a triumph that it has been acquired by Biggleswade Town Council. Work does need to be done on it and it may well

be that a charge for use will be implemented, but it means that the car parking issues for the town are improving as a result.

Green Wheel – Gerry Lawrence stated that currently all is quiet in this area. Archaeology has concluded re Jubilee Wood so there is nothing to hold up the planting in Autumn of 15,000 trees. The community orchard is to feature fruit trees local to the area which will include Laxton apples and Warden Cherry. The linear wood is developing well. There has been some graffiti on oak seating and attempts to remove it have been unsuccessful so far. Cycle path – a strip of land near Jordans Mill will have a cycle path when funding allows. Gerry also informed the BTPSG that over 600 bee orchids had been found around the town and it was also noted that the badger population was increasing.

David Albone queried what is to happen with the farm in Jubilee Wood which is Central Beds property. At this time it is not known. There are power lines in one corner and it was confirmed that only trees of a certain height can be placed there as a result.

£2000 has been made available for developing planters in the town.

There was a query about the possible selling of the Common to the north of Biggleswade. David Albone thinks that its likely that the Lord of the Manor is looking to realise many assets and this may be included as one of them.

Gerry Lawrence believes that the RSPB may be interested in this if it were to become available. It is a unique Common and given its size of great historic significance, it is hoped that it would not become an area for property development.

Rail update – Anne Skinner has made contact with FCC, Network Rail and MP Alistair Burt since the last meeting. Disappointingly only FCC have responded to a series of queries that chiefly concern scheduling, cleanliness and delivery of information during any service delivery problem. Anne confirmed that issues regarding on going rail platform access at Biggleswade Rail station had been so far ignored by Network Rail and local MP Alistair Burt which was disappointing. A more recent update from fellow BTPSG member Rob Green concerning information about improved access, lead Anne to contact FCC who were the source of this information. Her query was passed to Central Beds and information received so far is inconclusive. Anne has passed this information to Madeline Russell.

Agenda items 8: The group need to send Alan updates so that these can be placed on the website regarding their action plans. .

Agenda items 9:

Website – Alan Dansey confirmed that work had been done to improve the website and it is now much easier to manage and work with.

Action point: Alan Dansey to put action plan on the website. Champions need to work on their areas and get these submitted as there are concerns that there are gaps.

Next meeting: Fete Meeting will take place on 28 August at 19:15. Venue to be confirmed.