

BIGGLESWADE TOWN PLAN STEERING GROUP

Steering Group Meeting Tuesday 21st April 2009
Biggleswade Town Council Chamber 7.30 p.m.

Present: Gerry Lawrence (**GL**) – Chair. Mike Strange (**MS**) – Data Manager, Cllr. Sheila Grayston (**SG**) - Treasurer, Hazel Ramsay (**HR**) – Sec. Jean Simmons (**JS**), Helen Horner (**HH**), Doreen Evans (**DE**), Sam Newhouse (**SN**), Simon Green(**SG2**), Oliver Duncan(**OD**), Alan Dansey(**AD**), Angie Jenkins(**AJ**), Jemma McLean (**JM**), Pam Bagnall (**PB**), Andy Buckley (**AB**), Ian Bond (**IB**).

Apologies: Vic Brunt, Doris Brunt, Ron George, Caroline Broadbent.

Minutes: E mailed to members prior to the meeting
Proposed by **MS** seconded by **SG**

Matters Arising: None

The Group welcomed new members **SN, SG OD** from Kamikaze Magazine, and guest from Langford Pam Bagnall.

Chairman's Reports:

Agenda 5 Town Centre Partnership (TCP)

GL explained the brief of the TCP including Bonds Lane and Riverside development etc. **JM** told the Group that Jodie Slater from Savills would like to attend future meetings of the Group in order to liaise with the Group. The Group agreed. Jodie would be attending the meeting of the TCP on May 18th. **SG** asked if the Cllrs currently on the TCP would still be members of the TCP after the local elections in June.

Sam Cauldbeck has told **JM** that he regards the Group as an important reference group and would like to include the Group findings in the report submitted by Savills.

Agenda 6 Railway Survey

GL reported that, although 300 leaflets had been distributed, probably only 5 responses could be attributed to the event. Group members who had distributed the leaflets reported that on the whole they had been well received but they had been surprised how many of the commuters do not live in Biggleswade. **SG** commented that the same had applied when the Group members had canvassed ASDA customers. Many of the people they spoke to came to shop in Biggleswade and meet their friends because they like the atmosphere and 'coffee culture' in Biggleswade.

Agenda 7 Market Stall

The members reported that they had 50 responses from a wider age range than ASDA but that they had also found that visiting Biggleswade to shop and socialise was a factor.

Agenda 8 Real Event

MS reported that 50 people had attended over the Sat and Wed covering 23 post code areas. The average age range was 60-74 and nearly all of the visitors had lived in Biggleswade for over 25 years. 290 comments had been left on the maps which had been recorded by Group members on to data forms. **SG** said that after dismantling and clearing away they had left the hall at 10pm on the Wed and she asked for a special letter of appreciation to be sent to Jean Strange for the support she had given the event.

Agenda 9 Community Groups

1) **JM** suggested having another Real Event at a middle school in the next week or two to try and widen the age range of contributors. **HH** said that she had already publicised the Group and events in the Holmemead School newsletter.

2) **SN** suggested having a 'drag and drop' feature on the Group web site. **MS** said, whilst it was a good idea, he did not have the time to develop it.

SN offered to contact Holmemead School regarding an event at that school.

3) **SG (2)** said that she was still waiting for a response from the Swimming and Football clubs.

4) **OD, SN** and **SG** suggested canvassing the Biggleswade Youth Club on a Wednesday and Thursday evening as there were different age groups on those evenings.

5) **MS** reported on the feedback from the web site and like/dislike forms:

Responses had been received from 418 people including 125 via the web site and 21 via forms returned to the Town Hall 'post box' 1560 comments had been received covering 120 post codes. The age groups we need more coverage for are the under 13s and those 19 to 24 years old.

Agenda 9A Kamikaze Magazine Group

OD, SG and **OD** are members of the 'Kamikaze Magazine'. They have managed to obtain funding to publish their own magazine to advertise their own and other gigs. The first gig they organised had been attended by 70 people and they were trying to attract more people to their events.

Agenda 10 Programme and Key Event Chart

MS presented the latest Programme and Key Event Chart to enable the Group to follow the progress so far and to check on the work still to be done.

Agenda 10A /11

Focus Groups / Structure of the Steering Group Report

JM said that the purpose of the focus groups was to look at the information received and produce questions for their particular topic to be included in the larger questionnaire which was to be distributed to every household in Biggleswade.

GL asked if members of the Group had any preferences and the Focus Groups were allocated to the areas as shown in Section 3 of the Draft Town Plan structure:

Part 1 Environment:

DE,AJ,GL.

Part 2 Crime, Disorder and Safety:

SG,HR

Part 3 Education and Part 4 Employment:

HH,SG,GL.

Part 5 Traffic, Transport and Parking (to include footpaths):

MS,AB

Part 6 Information and Communication and Part 12 Youth:

SN,SG,OD,AD

Part 7 Community Services and Facilities and Part 8 Recreation:

SG,JS,AB

Part 9 Housing and Development and Part 10 Retail Services:

IB,SG,PB

Part 11 The Business Perspective

AD,MS

JM offered to attend the next meeting and do a presentation on how Focus Groups use the information prior to any Focus Groups working on questions for the questionnaire. The offer was accepted from the Group.

A.O.B

Publicity:

AD suggested advance publicity for the questionnaire using the web site and meetings.

AB suggested a regular item under a separate heading in the Towns and Villages section of The Chronicle.

AB wondered if it would be possible to have a display in the windows of Woolworths.

MS said he had been investigating methods of presenting the detailed questionnaire on-line and had identified 'Survey Concepts' as representing good value-for-money. **JM** said that BRCC had a subscription to the on-line 'Survey Monkey' tool which the Group could use.

HH asked if there was anything the Focus Groups could be doing in advance of the next Group meeting. **JM** said it would be alright to look at the data received so far but not to go any further until after the next Group meeting. **MS** said that surely we should wait until all activity group surveys are completed to ensure Topic Group leaders are given the most up to date sets of comments.

Treasurers Report:

SG reported that to date £631.67 (excluding the cost of hiring the Wetherley Centre on 1st July) had been spent from the £3,000 allocated to the Steering Group by the Town Council.

She thanked those Group members who had incurred costs for materials etc for their patience in waiting to be reimbursed by the Town Council.

SG had asked the Town Council, as Treasurer of the Group (and a Town Cllr) if the Town Council would agree to her having a Petty Cash allowance of £100 from the £3,000 allocated to the Group in order to reimburse Group members immediately 'upon receipt'. The Town Council refused her request and so regrettably the situation regarding reimbursement of costs to Group members remains unchanged.

Group constitution

MS said that the copy of the Group constitution (previously ratified by the Group) that had been forwarded to the Town Council as a matter of courtesy for information purposes only had in fact been treated as an agenda item at a Town Council meeting by the Chairman of the Council Planning Meeting as he permitted the Town Council to vote to have the words '**to act on behalf of the Town Council**' removed from the 'Purpose' section of Steering Group Constitution.

MS said that he did not believe that it was within the remit of the Town Council to vote to amend the constitution of another Group and that he would investigate the matter further.

MS also proposed that the Group should prepare a full written compliance statement on the Group constitution. Seconded by **AB**

Date of next meeting:

Tuesday 19th May. 7.30 pm. Biggleswade Town Hall