

Newport Town Team

Notes of the Business Meeting held on Tuesday 2nd September 2014

Present: Karen Woodcock (Vice Chairman & All About Newport), Maria Sindhu (NTT Director & Daisy Chain), Margaret Woodcock (Director & Newport League of Friends), Barrie Kay (Nova News), Nigel West (Five Ways Insurance), (Fiona Ward (Cups & Wands), Charlotte James (Lottie's), Amanda Simpson (Appleby & Shaw), Cllr Ian Perry (Ian Perry Stamps & NTC Rep), Katie Foster (Tourism & Heritage Advisor), Mike Atherton (Town Team Manager)

1. Apologies: Sue Tranter (Director & Newport Cookshop), David Parker (NTT Treasurer), Hannah Tranter (Newport Cookshop), Terry Spooner (Ultimate Taxis), Ellen Windsor-Crewe (Duignan & Phelps), Pam Edwards (Waitrose).

2. Updates on Activities & Initiatives

○ **Marketing & Promotions Sub-Group**

A majority of the meeting was dedicated to a proposition made by Charlotte James (Lotties) to hold a pre-Christmas launch event for Newport town centre. Initial proposals centred on an "All Under One Roof" type Christmas fair encouraging collaborative working by traders with opportunities for events such as a fashion parade, or similar illustrations / demonstrations.

Discussions held at the M&P sub-group and developed through the business meeting developed CJ's ideas into proposals for a St. Nicholas Christmas Town Fair with a proposed date of Friday 14th November.

Scheduling of the event was important to avoid clashes with the Christmas Lights switch-on and proposals from Newport's Chamber of Commerce to hold a Dickensian evening during early December – the three linked events would create an opportunity to actively promote the shop local campaign.

Actions agreed from the wide-ranging discussion are set out on the attached action sheet.

○ **Markets Sub-Group**

MA briefly summarised actions arising from past sub-group meetings including provision of a promotional banner and attempts to find a carrier bag supplier that can use the designed logo for the market hall.

A number of traders in the indoor market are struggling to stay viable and there has been some turnover with new traders emerging. Whilst this is a good indicator there continues to

be a need to improve the physical environment of the indoor market, attract new traders, and to actively promote it to local people and visitors.

- **HLF Consultation & Bid Preparation**

The consultation process had now concluded with MA/KF now working to submit a bid by the end of September 2014.

- **Membership**

NTT membership now stands at ~30% (60 members) which is a tremendous achievement compared to many other town teams around the country.

- **Awards**

MA informed those present that NTT had been recognised with a 'highly commended' award in the Towns Alive awards for a paper on developing commercial partnerships to introduce on-line technologies to Newport's high street.

MA also advised that he had recently submitted a bid under the Great British High Streets Award scheme.

- **Benchmarking 2014**

Newport's second benchmarking exercise is due to be carried out during October & November 2014.

Discussion centred on the role that local traders / businesses would be asked to play, securing resources & volunteers to carry out the surveys, and on the value of producing an interim report as an early indicator of progress prior to the main AMT 'comparator' report.

It was suggested that students from HAU may be able to assist with this work – various contacts to be pursued via CJ/KF.

- **Planning: NDP and proposed developments**

An overview of progress on community consultations as a key component of NTC's work to develop a Neighbourhood Development Plan was provided. NTT contribution on 'town identity and character' was noted.

Similarly, an update was provided on the four proposed supermarket developments and major housing sites was provided with a summary as follows:-

- Aldi (former Focus site) – planning permission granted, due to start development soon;
- Morrison's (former Classic Furniture site) – planning permission granted, unlikely to commence before outcome of the Sainsbury appeal is known;

- Sainbury (Station Road West) – subject to planning inquiry which starts on 20th January 2015,
- Lidl (Mere Park Garden Centre) – existing use has consent to operate a supermarket but any change to the building will require planning consent;
- Planning consents already granted (full and/or outline) for over 1,000 new homes in and adjacent Newport's boundaries – mostly but not exclusively in an arc from Wellington Road around the southern edge of town through to town cemetery and A41.

- Town Centre Profile & Media Coverage

MA commented on recent efforts to increase the profile of Newport town centre by generating articles for the local media.

Agreed: need for all businesses to seek out opportunities to promote the town centre as a good place to shop and visit.

3. Finance Reports

In the absence of the Treasurer MA provided an update on current balances (£5,209.16), and on financial planning including a visit on 5th September of the ATCM regional advisor to discuss funding streams and on sustaining town teams.

4. Any Other Business

Fiona Ward announced that her business 'Cups and Wands' will be returning to the indoor market where she will be sharing a stall with Rachel Udal (Jewellery)

5. Future Meeting Dates

7th October 2014 - The Phez
4th November 2014 - ditto
2nd December 2014 - ditto