

Faringdon Town Team

Minutes a meeting of Faringdon Town Team held on Friday 23rd September at 9.30am in the Jubilee Room, The Pump House, Faringdon.



Present:

Mark Blatch	Chamber of Commerce
Cllr. Jane Boulton	Faringdon Town Council
Cllr. Roger Cox	Vale of White Horse District Council
Sally Thurston	Town Clerk Faringdon Town Council
Bethia Thomas	Town Team Coordinator
Dave Cookson	Economic Development Officer, VWHDC
Mel Lane	Faringdon Business Group

It was PROPOSED that Mel Lane be co-opted onto the Town Team as a representative of the Faringdon Business Group. This was SECONDED and CARRIED.

1/5/16 Apologies

Cllr. Judith Heathcoat, Oxfordshire County Council. John Holdship, Hare in the Woods

2/5/16 Minutes of meeting – Thursday 23rd June

The minutes were signed as a correct.

3/5/16 Finance

- The following invoices were APPROVED
- A Financial Update was NOTED. The Current Balance stand at £6194.92

4/5/16 2016 – 2018 Action Plan

Members received a report on progress for the Town Team Coordinator. The following actions were APPROVED:

- Farcycles be approached regarding the possibility of developing a cycle festival - BT
- Jeanette Howse be asked to collate data on markets, to enable success to be measure and trends to be tracked – BT/ST
- NAMBA be asked to carry out a market audit to help to improve markets. BT expressed concern that the Tuesday market was struggling – this is not under the control of the Town Team but it was agreed that it should be promoted. ST/BT
- Action plan to be revised and updated BT/DC
- Fair-trade status to be explored and marketed. BT/ML

Mel Lane presented a brief SWOT analysis of Faringdon prepared by herself and BT (attached). It was agreed that this could be a starting point for a future business plan.

5/5/16 Faringdon Business Plan

- Members were informed that following a recent meeting between VWHDC, Chamber of Commerce and FTC a suggestion had been made that an inclusive, Town Team lead, clear and simple business plan would help all groups to work towards the same economic goals. It was PROPOSED that a Business Plan for Faringdon should be created. This was SECONDED and CARRIED.
- It was PROPOSED that the Town Team request that VWHDC Economic Development team hold a workshop to gather opinion and evidence to facilitate the Business Plan. This was SECONDED and AGREED. Action – DC to coordinate.

6/5/16 Social Media Programme

Members received and considered a social media plan. Members were informed that BT had received criticism from a small number of businesses that the social media promotion was bias towards some businesses. ST reported that she had looked into this and felt that BT was extremely fair in her promotions. There was confusion over which posts were actually generated by BT. It was agreed that the focus of the Town Team was to increase footfall and not promote individual businesses. It was suggested that a social media calendar be created for BT to follow and that this should be available to all businesses. Action – BT and ML to create a social media calendar. Faringdon Business group and the Chamber would distribute the calendar.

7/5/16 Google My Biz Initiative

Members received and considered a report from the Town Team Coordinator following a meeting with Google my biz. It was agreed that this was a worthwhile project but the Town Team did not currently have the funds to employ an outside agency. It was agreed that a sum of £170 should be set aside to deliver this project locally and within the Town Team. Actions ML to approach students to help. Reference guide to be created to enable businesses to improve their own search engine presence BT/ML
Aim to get reference guide ready for next meeting and to work through businesses street by street over the next 12 months. This could also form part of the new Faringdon Business Plan.

8/5/16 Bench Marking

Members received and considered a report from the Town Team Coordinator following a meeting with Mike King, People and Places. It was agreed that a benchmarking programme should be undertaken. DC suggested that he consult with colleagues and other towns to assess the most efficient way of carrying out bench marking. This was agreed. It was PROPOSED that up to £350 be released from reserves to carry out bench marking. It was further PROPOSED that £250 be set aside from the now unused Folly Dollars to fund BT to carry out data collection. This was AGREED.
Actions – DC to carry out research and liaise with BT to get benchmarking under way.

9/5/16 Shop Opening

Members discussed the shop opening hours in Faringdon. It was suggested that it would be much easier for the consumer if these were standardised. It was suggested that businesses were contacted and asked about their opening hours. It was felt that evidence from benchmarking and footfall surveys could influence businesses to standardise opening.
Action: BT to survey retailers to get a clear picture of current opening hours. Simple evidence to be collated and shared with retailers to encourage standard opening.

10/5/16 Your Faringdon Website

JH had been working on creating a landing page for Your Faringdon.
Action: BT to work with JH to create a basic page by the next meeting.

11/5/16 Calendar of Events

Members received and considered a 2017 calendar of events. This was agreed.

12/5/16 Items for Information

- Dave Cookson informed members that he was now a full-time Economic Development Officer and would be the ED contact for Faringdon which was one of his focus towns.

- Members received an update regarding S106 funds for Faringdon Park. A variety of projects were being pursued including signage, Town Centre improvements, bus link and the employment of a coordinator for wider promotion of Faringdon.
- BT reported that Gluck was closing. DC and BT would meet to discuss assessing and promoting vacant shops.
- The next meeting would be the annual meeting and would take place on Friday 18TH November 2016 at 9.30am.