

**ED/02/20**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Economic Development Working Group** of Buckingham Town Council held on **Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020** at 7pm online Via Zoom.

**Present:**

Cllr. H. Mordue	
Cllr. M. Smith	Chair
D. Jones	University of Buckingham
M. Simons	Traders Association
Cllr. W. Whyte	BC
Cllr. C. Clare	BC
P. Hodson	Town Clerk
E. Churchill	Tourist Information Centre
L. Stubbs	Communications Clerk

**188/20 Apologies for Absence**

Members received apologies from L. Hutton, Cllr. J. Harvey, Cllr. Newell, Cllr. Stuchbury and Mr. N. Morrison.

**189/20 Declarations of Interest**

Cllr. Whyte declared an interest in agenda item 6 (Buckingham What's On).

**190/20 Minutes of last meeting**

Members **AGREED** the minutes of the Economic Development Working Group meeting held on [Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020](#), to be received at the Full Council meeting on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

**191/20 (19.2/20) Terms of Reference**

Members discussed the existing Terms of Reference and **AGREED** to change the title to Working Group throughout. Members **AGREED** to recommend the proposed changes to Full Council.

**192/20 Action List**

500/19 (Membership) – The Town Clerk noted L. Hutton's previous suggestions for contacting representatives from Stratford Tools, Wipac and MJ Harris Flooring. M. Simons and the Town Clerk **AGREED** to contact additional local business owners to join the Working Group.

**193/20 Buckingham What's On**

Cllr. Whyte reported on the success of the Buckingham What's On Facebook page, noting that since the Covid-9 outbreak the page had morphed into a directory of local services. Members were in agreement that the Town Council's Tourist Information Website should contain a link the Buckingham What's On site.

Cllr. Whyte had explored options for a newspaper style publication in conjunction with LoveBuckingham. If a printed newspaper option was supported, previous discussions with Love Buckingham suggested that we could combine the editorial effort with curated content to highlight some of the best of Buckingham as well as What's On listings for a variety of events for all ages, and this could also include content from the Economic Working Group. This might be something the town council or the community

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Ratified

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board would be interested in supporting. Cllr. Clare spoke in favour of the way Buckingham What's On is fed by the community, thereby ensuring that smaller events were publicised alongside some of the larger, more commercial events. D. Jones cautioned against the sustainability of a printed publication.

Members discussed ideas for a Christmas and Summer holiday publication and **AGREED** to refer the item to the TC&E and CSG agendas for further discussion. Members recorded thanks to Cllr. Whyte for his efforts in creating and sustaining the site.

**ACTION TOWN CLERK**

**194/20 Managing the Town's reopening**

M. Simons had received a request to investigate the possibility of a scheme to provide free rental properties to start-up businesses in Buckingham. Cllr. Smith said it was an interesting idea and that the Town Council were keen to ensure that local businesses are supported during the coronavirus outbreak so that their businesses remain viable and ready to continue and prosper post-pandemic. Cllr. Smith explained that the Town Council did not own any commercial premises in the Town Centre and so any rent relief or start-up schemes would have to be negotiated by individual traders with private landlords.

Cllr. Clare confirmed that free parking in Cornwalls Meadow had been extended until the end of July 2020, with the possibility of it being extended further. The Town Clerk **AGREED** to issue a press release about this.

**ACTION TOWN CLERK**

D. Jones informed Members of LoveBuckingham's continued support of local businesses with a series of business reopening posts with over 2.1k engagements and collaboration with a local photographer.

D. Jones said the University was hoping to reopen from September 2020 with a blend of online and on campus learning. Members said it was encouraging news and expressed hope that a new intake of students would bring trade into the Town Centre.

The Town Clerk reported on the reopening of the Tourist Information Centre, Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre and play areas following government guidance. The Town Clerk reminded Members of initial ideas for reopening the Town Centre, including extending the current free parking arrangements, providing outdoor tables and chairs for people who have purchased take away goods, supporting local businesses to trade or promote themselves online, and provide advice and guidance. The Town Clerk informed Members that a press release had been issued, asking businesses to provide their contact details and any views, and this was also provided through an online survey. Unfortunately, the response rate was low and did not attract sufficient responses for any firm proposals to be taken forward.

**195/20 Buxplore**

Members received a presentation from the Communications Clerk. A copy is attached to the minutes in Appendix A.

D. Jones complimented the Communications Clerk on the way the application had been promoted across the town. Cllr. Whyte suggesting adding a link to the application from the 'Visit Buckingham' page of the Town Council's website, and this was **AGREED**.

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**196/20 COVID-19 Update**

There was nothing further to add to the above discussions.

**197/20 TIC Website Update**

The Tourist Information Centre Supervisor updated the Group on developments to the website and hoped to have it up and running for the reopening of the Tourist Information Office on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020. Members viewed a draft of the website's content, noting the new section for Shopmobility and accessibility. Members complimented the style of the website and congratulated the TIC Supervisor on her hard work.

**198/20 Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman wished all traders and businesses good luck in their efforts during the easing of pandemic measures from 4 July.

**199/20 Date of next meeting**

24<sup>th</sup> September 2020

**Signed.....**

**Date.....**

