

ED/03/20

Minutes of a meeting of the **Economic Development Working Group** of Buckingham Town Council held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 7pm online via Zoom

**Present:**

Cllr. J. Harvey	Vice Chair
Cllr. H. Mordue	
Cllr. R Newell	
Cllr. M. Smith	Chair
Cllr. R Stuchbury	
Mr. N. Morrison	The Buckingham Society
D. Jones	University of Buckingham
M. Simons	Traders Association
J. Watson	Dandy Lion's Boutique
Cllr. W. Whyte	Buckinghamshire Council
P. Hodson	Town Clerk
Cllr. M. Walsh	Mayor of Princess Risborough

No members of the public attended and so there was no public session

**790/20 Apologies for Absence**

Members received and accepted apologies from L. Hutton and Buckinghamshire Councillor Clare.

**791/20 Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

**792/20 Princes Risborough Town Council**

Councillor Matthew Walsh explained to Members that the Risborough Basket scheme was a phone ordering initiative set up by Princes Risborough Town Council to bring together high street shops, as well as those from the local villages under one virtual platform to create an online high street & delivery service. The initiative proved extremely popular with residents, keeping many shops alive during some of the most challenging times the high street has ever faced. During the first national lockdown the platform processed £10k worth of orders, the equivalent of 1.2 orders per household and managed to ensure the high street didn't lose one business. Within a matter of days, the scheme built an online portal to help residents find and contact stores that were operating and available for home deliveries. The Town Council repurposed local public transport vehicles – such as minibuses – to courier orders from local businesses to residents' doorsteps. The scheme was modified and relaunched through the Shopify platform in November 2020.

Members congratulated Cllr. Walsh on the successful initiative and asked several questions (responses in italics).

Cllr. Harvey: How was the scheme financed? *In total it has cost the Town Council £20,000 excluding staff time. The initiative has also received funding from High Wycombe's New Homes Bonus Fund and the Town Council redeployed funds from the town centre events budget.*

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J. Watson: How do individual retailers receive payment for their products? *Using the Stripe platform each product is allocated a brand owner so any sale is then transferred (minus the card processing fee) to the relevant retailers at the end of the week. Products can be searched by shop or product type.*

Cllr. Whyte: How do you get retailers on-board? *The success of the Risborough Basket during the first national lockdown paved the way for the updated model – Risborough Basket 2.0. At some point the scheme must become self-sustaining and retailers will have to cover the cost of delivery drivers and promotions.*

Cllr. Stuchbury: Have Buckinghamshire Council had input into the scheme? *We are pursuing funding from our Community Board to expand the scheme and it is hoped that the Economic Development Team in Buckinghamshire Council will express an interest in the initiative.*

D. Jones: Were there strong ties with local traders before the creation of the first Risborough Basket? *Yes; the Town Council took over control of town centre events from the District Council and reconfigured some of the income from markets to employ a Town Centre Coordinator.*

M Simons: Did all of the local businesses have an existing online presence? *The majority had websites but none of them had an online delivery service or click and collect and this wasn't something they were previously doing.*

*Cllr. Walsh left the meeting at this point in the agenda.*

#### **793/20 Minutes of last meeting**

Members approved the minutes of the Economic Development Working Group meeting held on Thursday 24th September 2020.

#### **794/20 Action List**

BNDP Design – The Town Clerk **AGREED** to report back at the next meeting.

#### **795/20 Creating a Culture & Arts Strategy for Buckingham**

The Town Clerk explained that if the group wished to bid for arts funding then it was important to create a Culture & Arts Strategy for the town, aligning cultural organisations/partnerships; creative industries/artists; local authorities; the business sector/ economic/health/education/community organisations, and residents. The Strategy needed to identify and map current cultural assets; cultural capacity/knowledge/expertise; activities and events. It was a means of identifying current levels of participation, any trends, and the demographics/diversity of audiences in Buckingham.

D. Jones stressed that a strategy should be aligned with the economic recovery of the town, creating town centre events that bring customers into Buckingham.

Cllr. Whyte spoke in support of a new cultural arts centre for Buckingham in conjunction with Buckingham University, Stowe and other local organisation that may wish to partner in the initiative.

D. Jones informed Members of the Royal Latin School's third phase of the 600 Campaign – scheduled to launch in 2020/21 – to secure sufficient funding to create an accessible new arts facility at the heart of the school site. D. Jones proposed an outdoor events space, such as a pavilion or bandstand.

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**796/20 Community Board Funding**

The Town Clerk informed Members of a successful bid to secure £1,780 funding from the Buckingham and Villages Community Board to promote shopping in Buckingham. The Tourist Information Coordinator was working on a pack of branding including a shopping advent calendar, Retailer Raffle and town centre selfie board. The Town Clerk explained that branding would be 'winter' themed so as to encourage shoppers throughout the Christmas and New Year period.

The Town Clerk **AGREED** to revisit Discover Buckingham's Facebook posts asking for retailers to advise the Town Council of what services they were offering through the second lockdown. **ACTION TOWN CLERK**

**797/20 Buckingham Health Hub**

Members received and discussed a written report from Mr. N. Morrison. Mr. Morrison reported that a considerable number of people wanted the New Heath Hub to be in Town centre as opposed to out of town at Lace Hill, for two main reasons;

1. Easy Accessibility for all and Convenience for our elderly and
2. To regenerate our Town centre at a time of a potential and permanent retail demise.

Mr Morrison added that the only known site capable of a development of this size (minimum space of 25,000ft<sup>2</sup> and some 100 car spaces) was the Waitrose Car Park. He said that engineers have assessed that a new building on stilts could be built over the existing car park, thus maintaining the existing parking and not interfering with the flood plain. Additionally, there could be a mix of quality residential and both key worker and shared ownership homes, together with a huge improvement to the riverside, creating a 'destination'. Mr Morrison concluded that a committee should be appointed, incorporating Buckinghamshire Council representatives, to pursue a course of action which achieves an 'Option' to either purchase the site or enter into a Joint Venture, such that the people of Buckingham are the beneficiaries.

Cllr. Stuchbury said the first conversation needed to be with the land owners, Buckinghamshire Council.

Cllr. Whyte complimented Mr Morrison on his ambition and enthusiasm and said he wasn't sure if there was appetite for a multi-storey development on the car park. Cllr. Whyte advised Mr Morrison that the idea should, initially, be considered within the redraft of the Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan and advised Mr Morrison to investigate further with the Town Clerk **AGREED**

**798/20 Promoting Shopping in Buckingham**

Discussed within minute 796/20

**800/20 Chairman's Announcements**

**801/20 Date of next meeting**

11th February 2021 @7pm

Meeting closed at: 20.27

Signed.....

Date.....

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*EQUALITIES ACT 2010/CRIME AND DISORDER ACT, 1988: the decisions made during the course of the meeting were duly considered and it was decided that there were no resulting direct or indirect implications in respect of crime and disorder, racial equality or diversity.*

Initial.....