

MEETING OF TOWN TEAM COMMITTEE
11th January 2013

At the Town Hall, Ivybridge at 5pm

Present: Gary Streeter (in the Chair)

County Cllr Roger Croad, District Cllrs Barber and Saltern, Town Cllrs Mrs Silsbury and Vincent; Richard Peachey, Jack Sutcliffe, Steve Hitch, Simon Blacker, Caroline Hodgson and Joanne Parr

In attendance – Richard Sheard (Chief Executive, SHDC); Lesley Hughes (Town Clerk, Ivybridge Town Council) and Tim Bacon (TDA for item 8)

1. Apologies were received from Margaret Punchard.
2. Declaration of interests and permitted dispensations

No new declarations were made in addition to those approved at the meeting on 28th September, except that Simon Blackler mentioned hire of a room at Glanvilles Mill for personal business use.

3. Notes of the meeting held on 2nd November were considered and Simon Blackler reminded the meeting that reference had been made under item 4 to the Lido area which should have also mentioned a skatepark as an option. This was accepted and the minutes were then approved and signed by the Chairman.

In relation to matters arising the agenda referred to signage issues and there had been an exchange of emails amongst the group following concerns expressed by Harford Parish Council regarding the waymarking of trails on Dartmoor, where landowners in that Parish had not been contacted prior to work commencing. Simon outlined the procedure he had followed, including close liaison with the Dartmoor Ranger, Andrea Crisp. The current situation was therefore that 3.5 walks were signposted and no more walking signs would be put up.

The issues arising during discussion were:

- The need for a dialogue with Harford Parish Council and regret that disquiet with the work had been caused (Gary Streeter offered to arrange a meeting)
- Publicity for the signage (Mike Saltern offered the services of the press team at SHDC to ensure this was managed appropriately in conjunction with Lesley Hughes and Simon Blackler)
- Simon explained that he had acted in good faith but had perhaps been over zealous in his actions
- The thanks of the team for the work that Simon had done and confirmation that those in situ in the town, and on the trails, looked good

Simon indicated that once this phase was completed then the phase 3 would be to create the map boards and he was liaising with Keith Rennells on this matter, but reminded that he did have a pecuniary interest in this phase (declared at the 28th September meeting).

4. The appointment of a community representative in place of Chris Passmore was considered. Elizabeth Silsbury proposed Amanda Pellatt (who she had confirmed would wish to be a member) in view of her work on the Arts Festival and general support for the revitalisation of the town. This was supported and the meeting agreed that Amanda should be appointed.

5. (i) Feedback from wider Town Team meeting

Gary Streeter introduced this item and indicated that the meeting in December had brought out some emerging themes, such as hostelling and white water rafting. All agreed that the river was key to the identity of the town and the proximity of the Moor. Sports, Leisure and outdoors were already quite successful. Richard Peachey considered that the meeting was positive and the pressure was now on to deliver the expectations. Jack Sutcliffe confirmed that the tree stump alongside the river at Glanvilles Mill would be sculpted and the work had been commissioned.

(ii) SHDC event – revitalising our streets

Tony Barber had circulated some paperwork and a summary of key points. There were some positive messages about the town as it had lots of strengths and assets, but persuading people to shop in Ivybridge was a challenge. Branding was important – possibly using the village identity as many people still consider it is a village.

6. Town Centre Study Brief – Richard Sheard indicated that bids had been received and there were two preferred consultants and the District was just in the final stages of making the appointment. An inception meeting would be appropriate when the consultant was on board.

In relation to the Leisure Centre update Simon Blacker raised the issue of the outside pool area and advised that he had a meeting at the Leisure Centre on Monday afternoon to look at the community garden aspect.

Steve Hitch referred to the wider Town Team meeting and the suggestion from the girl guides who wanted an informal youth meeting space. He had been thinking about that and wondered if the outdoor pool area could incorporate the water play area, but possibly an outdoor garden space where you walked down a terraced area but it had a static sail type covering and formed a community space where youngsters could sit and talk. Total cost around £75k.

Mike Saltern advised that the garden area had been raised at Scrutiny in the report from Ross Kennerley and it was hoped that it wouldn't be interpreted too narrowly.

Simon reminded the meeting that the community garden idea would depend on what happens between Tone and SHDC in respect of the lease and there were a myriad of ways to approach the issue.

It was suggested that Steve Hitch attend the meeting on Monday and the matter brought back to the next meeting to report progress.

7. (i) Section 106 money (ii) free car parking initiative

Mike Saltern reported on the free car parking initiative which had received immensely positive feedback from traders with an almost 60% increase in the number of motorists using the car parks over that same December period (6925 Dec 2011 and 10945 Dec 12).

Reverting then to consideration of the TESCO 106 money it potentially offered an option for use of the remaining £25,000 if that had proved to be so successful. Perhaps a couple of months free parking, or one day per week for the year. The car parking team would look at that and see what could be possible.

Clarification over the process for approving use of the money was sought and the details of any free parking scheme considered. Jack Sutcliffe advised that the Co-op might be prepared to put ongoing funding into a parking scheme so this would provide some matched funding to help stretch the money further.

Gary Streeter agreed that this would be a main item for discussion at the Town Team meeting on 1st March 2013 and ideas for use of the remaining funds could be considered.

(iii) ATCM and website offer

Lesley Hughes referred the group to the offer from Chris Cornelius, via DCLG, to create a free website for the town. She had referred the offer to Martin Coard who had created the Ivybridge Business one and had spoken to Chris Cornelius to ensure that any new site wouldn't conflict with or lose the benefits of our existing site. With that assurance she was happy to recommend to the group that it would appear to be a good offer.

The website option was approved and Lesley Hughes to follow up.

(iv) Update ref Glanvilles Mill

Jack Sutcliffe advised that one tenant had moved in before Christmas and one moved out. The expectation was that the next three months would be the toughest yet, despite efforts to improve the centre and increase footfall. New

Managing agents would be in place from Monday. In response to a question about the community hub, Jack indicated that his workload had quadrupled trying to support the hub and ensure that tenants could see the benefits. The organisers were very committed. 10 new stalls had been purchased for the market.

Jack Sutcliffe then highlighted the problems in respect of business rates where between 60 and 70% of the ground floor units were paying more in business rates than rent (in some cases significantly more). He gave an example of a case where £10,000 business rates was applied where the unit was rented at £3000-£4000. A real issue

Gary Streeter expressed sympathy with the business rate issue and would take it up again.

(v) Fore Street/Chamber update

In terms of Fore Street Richard Peachey advised that a new furnishings business was moving in next to Gribbles and the Laundry should be opening.

The Chamber would be meeting on 5th February and the AGM was in March. As Chair of the Chamber for the last four years he was expecting to step down and he explained that sometimes the views he expressed at the meeting were not necessarily his own, but had to reflect those of the Chamber.

8. Gary Streeter welcomed Tim Bacon of the Torbay Development Agency who had been commissioned by the Town Council to start work on the development brief for Stowford Mill.

Tim Bacon gave a presentation on his findings and proposals.

Richard Sheard advised that the District was working on a planning brief to guide bidders and that James Doxford would want to include the type of mix that Tim Bacon had outlined. The planning system was the best means available to get development and avoid a derelict site.

Tony Barber agreed that it was important to avoid years of battling and suggested that a copy of the slides were made available.

In terms of access and concerns that a mix of uses would create too great a pressure on highways, it was confirmed that access was being looked at by County highways but Roger Croad reminded the group that large lorries had been delivering to the site for years and it was important to maintain that access.

Steve Hitch liked the ideas but recognised that the person with money would dictate the uses. However it could be a great opportunity for a Leisure Centre. It was an amazing building and working out a package would be needed.

Mike Saltern raised the possibility of health facilities being located there.

Gary Streeter concluded by hoping that Ivybridge Town Council and South Hams District Council would work together on this, along with Devon County Council. It would be discussed in more detail on Friday 15th February.

9. A wider Town Team meeting was proposed for early/mid April and a date would be circulated.

10. A special Town Team meeting to meet the Retail and Leisure Consultants and to consider Stowford Paper Mill (to include a wider group of people) would be held on Friday 15th February, commencing at 6pm.

Date of next Committee meeting – Friday 1st March 2013 at 5pm and Gary Streeter suggested that a 1/2 page vision for Ivybridge should be developed which could be presented at the wider Town Team meeting in April.

The meeting closed at 6.30pm

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....