

Watton and Swaffham Focus Group

Thursday 9 August 2018, 10.30 Swaffham Town Council

Notes prepared by Sue Dent, Watton & Swaffham Project Support

Colin Houghton (Mayor of Swaffham, acting as Chairman), Richard Bishop (Clerk Swaffham Town Council), Tina Kiddell (Mayor of Watton), Jane Scarrott (Clerk Watton Town Council), Judy Anscombe (Director Icen Partnership), Don Saunders (Manager Icen Partnership), Stefan Clifford (Communities Officer Breckland Council), John Mullen (Market Towns Project Co-ordinator Breckland Council), Sue Dent (Watton & Swaffham Town Councils, Project Support)

Apologies: Richard Otterway (Manager Wayland Partnership), Pat Warwick (Watton Town Council)

Agenda Item	Notes
1. Introductions	
2. Breckland Council presence.	Breckland Council local representation moving to libraries. This caused a lot to of comment initially but now much more occasional. Some concerns have been raised about the confidentiality of conversations at Swaffham Library.
3. Town flags	Flags. Swaffham have ordered 25 poppy flags. Watton keen to do the same.
4. Market Towns Initiative	John Mullen now in post as Market Towns Initiative Co-ordinator. Has worked on Market Town / community development projects before so brings a lot of experience. Keen to visit and get to know the towns.
5. Market Stalls Bid	<p>Market Stalls - Don</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have been asked to give more detail on the original proposal. Need to show how get added value beyond the existing market. Need a plan of how they will be used and how that use will increase / enable more events. Looking for events that will be repeated and build for the future. How will they support the market and bring more people into the town. - Stalls will have a different offer for the 2 towns. Watton is concentrating on supporting existing market. More scope at Swaffham to use marketplace on other occasions, evenings etc. Aim to expand market but also give chance to create whole new events. - Don't need fixed event plan but do need to clearly demonstrate what stalls would bring, how would they contribute to the town, what will they achieve. - Still ££ available. Not a deadline.

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Agenda Item	Notes	BC able to support towns to develop if needed.
6. ShopAppy	<p>ShopAppy, SC update.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 15,000 hits in first few months, got off to a good start. - Auditing the online offer from various shops, some better than others. - Launching major promotion before Xmas, update at next meeting. Working on promotion but also with shops to develop and 'own' their own pages. - Swaffham, Attleborough both doing better than Wattn - better take up from shops and use. 	BC able to support towns to develop if needed.
7. Peddars Way Signage / Tourist Guide	<p>Peddars Way / Tourist Guide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expression of Interest for the project was accepted. - Don / Richard O were putting the final bid together. Don has asked for an extension. - Delay gives the opportunity to re-visit project with a more 'digital / interactive' focus. Realise that the project was a little 'old hat' with physical boards etc. - A new focus would fit in with BC project to promote Market Towns virtually. Not launched yet but is coming up. <p>Tourist Guide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently in paper form. Not ready for this season. Focus on getting ready for 2019. - Could incorporate the Tourist Guide - which is currently being done as a booklet - into a wider digital project. 	<p>SC – BC can offer support if need to complete the bid.</p> <p>DS to continue to pursue and update project.</p> <p>DS to progress</p>
8. Strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Judy, need to make sure any new events fit into a wider more strategic diary of events and that keep links with all disparate groups. - Fakenham has a good events programme and has tackled some of the issues. Would be good to visit to see how it works. - Might need an overarching planning 'group' for each town. 	SD to create strategic plan for events for 2019. Involve all groups from the Town as far as possible.
9. Other Projects	<p>BC do have wider resources to support businesses beyond the MTI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rate relief scheme. Cassie Ruffell is contact. BC have publicised widely but not all aware. - Buying / leasing empty shops to offer lower rents for new businesses. <p>Tina. There is an opportunity at Watton to set up a youth café in existing premises. Might attract funding from BC.</p> <p>Swaffham. Does have a similar problem with facilities for teenagers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Also schemes covering social mobility, entrepreneurs, employment officers, transport to work 	TK – project for youth café to BC.

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	<p>Don. Currently EU money for bringing old railway lines into use as paths etc. There is an existing line between Watton and Swaffham. Could be a great opportunity.</p>	Don.
<p>10. Support Officer Report (Sue)</p>	<p>Been taking time to get to know the towns, attending meetings, visiting groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have set up Facebook & Twitter pages 'What's Going On In Watton / Swaffham' and aiming to build these. Facebook in particular should become an 'events' hub for each town. Contacting councils & groups to ask them to feed in information. - Will start to build a diary of events for next year to try and encourage better planning / avoid clashes / encourage synergies. - Picked up events at each team where there was a gap – e.g. Norfolk Day in Swaffham and DIY SOS at Watton. Working with the teams to plan autumn events – Remembrance Day, Festive Market, Fireworks etc. 	
	<p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don – there are opportunities out there if you think outside of the box. E.g. Two Wheel Tuesday. A simple and sustainable event. - Need to look for opportunities to make the most of the facilities that have. - Judy, really need to improve communication / information. - Richard. Need to make sure that post is working for partnerships as well as Councils. 	<p>Book in 3 month review with RB, JS, D & RO.</p>
<p>11. Neighbourhood Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Request from Jane Fountain at WattonTC. Has STC had any support from Susan Hienrich re their NP? WattonTC feel they haven't & are considering a complaint to BC about the lack of support. - Richard, STC did get some informal comments on first draft from SH. SH has a very defined role from BC, has to make sure the plan fits in with national guidance. She won't get involved in writing / drafting of plan. Once there is a draft she can give some input / comment on any issues that might not meet policy. WTC probably at too early stage to get her input. - Colin, the NP process has clarified what proposals are planning policy & what are aspirational or community actions. Feel it has been useful to identify these in the NP. 	TK to feedback to Jane
<p>12. Water fountains</p>	<p>Water Fountains</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WTC looking at water Fountains to refill water bottles. STC have considered the same. STC are encouraging businesses to offer discounts if bring your own bottle / cup. JA – have considered at Town Team but were put off by EH issues. 	WTC – will investigate and share information.
<p>13. Town information Signs</p>	<p>Swaffham Town Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Judy, the Town Team have installed new Visitor Information Boards. Expensive but look good. 	
<p>14. Vacant Shops</p>	<p>Vacant Shops</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Judy. STC only have 2 vacant shops at the moment, vacancies are taken up quickly. WTC have many more vacant shops, centre is beginning to look empty. - STC were looking at using vacant shops for displays. Wayland Partnership have tried to do this but found it was difficult to contact landlords. BC would support this kind of project. Has been a rapid decline in Watton town centre over the last 8 years. - Stefan, the Regeneration Team at BC will be looking at this. They will be open to suggestions. 	
15. Pumpkin events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tina. Proposing a Battle of the Pumpkins next year. Fabian Eagle suggested this to TK. STC arranging a pumpkin event this year. Suggested WTC do as well next year & have a 'battle' between the two towns. - Spalding run a big pumpkin festival each year, might be worth contacting. 	RB. Raise at market meeting STC next week.
16. Town logos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don. Don has had some very preliminary drafts done to bring up to date. - Babes really belong to Griston, appropriate to use? - WTC are reviewing as don't have an agreed logo. 	
17. Breckland Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stefan. John now in post. Get in touch, happy to visit. - Several projects in the air at both towns. Keen to co-ordinate projects that are going on to make sure get the best out of all of them. - BC do have several schemes at the moment which could possibly benefit from. E.g. social mobility, entrepreneur, employment officers, transport to work. 	Arrange for JM to visit.
	<p>Stefan. How to book rooms at STC? They are planning to tour Market Town meetings around the towns. Contact Don for Assembly/Community Centre. RB for Council rooms.</p>	
18. Date of next meeting	<p>Arrange trip to Fakenham (Thursday market) for 18 October. If not possible will be at Watton. 18 October.</p>	JS will book with Fakenham. Ideally AM.