



**2nd Open Meeting
Wednesday 5 August 2009 at 7.30pm
Council Chamber, Memorial Hall, Upton.**

Chair, Tim Perry, welcomed everyone to the Open meeting

Present: Gill Newman, Jackie Surtees, Simon Smith, Mike Ostick, Gordon Williams (Treasurer), Andrew Sanders, Simon Wilkinson, Mike Morgan, Peter Webb, Tim Perry, Diane Bellamy, Rosemary Webb, Richard and Karen Line, Andrea Oliver, Simon Yates, Liese Lavers, G Tuttill (I apologise if this is wrong!), Roger Sutton, Alistair Booth (HC High School) and Paul Thomas

Apologies: Peter Booth, Peggy Booth, Reverend Jeff Radcliffe, Grant Mathews (Hanley Castle High School), Grahame Bunn, David & Pam Hodson

1. Minutes of Open Meeting 06.05.09

The minutes were agreed and signed.

2. Reports from the Focus Groups

Simon Wilkinson reported on the **Civic Pride Focus Group**. The group had met twice. The main items discussed had been

- a. The Bridge. It was recognised that although there might be lay doubts about the structure these were matters for the civil engineers. There could be no doubts about the need for urgent cleaning and painting. Suggestions had been made about how the County Council could be shamed into doing something.

The Town Mayor commented on this item that that the sums quoted by the County for "partial painting" were between £97,000 and £126,000. Mike Ostick suggested that the specification was certainly too high. Some work could be done

by the parish lengthsman. (see email attachment for report or link on www.upton.uk.net – in recent additions)

- b. Grass Cutting. There were four separate organisations plus some private individuals, responsible for cutting the grass in “public” areas of the town. There would be clear benefits from co-ordination over timing and possibly some cost saving. It was reported at the second meeting that past investigation of this possibility had shown its difficulties.
- c. Shop Fronts. Shopkeepers should be encouraged to keep their frontages clean.
- d. Car Parking – also on terms of reference of Focus Group “Tourism”, but concern about shopkeepers parking on the roads near their premises was expressed. Might an approach be made to MHDC about those in business in the town being able to use the rear part of the Hanley Road Car Park on preferential terms.
- e. Clutter and cigarette ends on pavements. Gordon Morris, had met licensees about sales of alcohol and also concerning advertising boards and the need for ashtrays at outside tables.

In the absence of **Peter Booth**, Diane Bellamy read his report from the **Cultural and Festivals Focus Group**.

- Work is starting on the **Stewards** database. We are talking to Head of Sixth Form at Hanley Castle High School about involving older students.
- Some universities/Students’ unions have had a number of volunteer students trained to the appropriate qualification(s) to provide **Security** at events. We are investigating.
- A very rough draft of an A3 size Monthly Events Calendar (this one for July 2009) has been prepared as an example of one type of **Marketing** we may use. This could be used as a poster, leaflet/flyer(with additional information on the reverse side), a centre page spread or insert in Upton News, to provide information to local and regional press, etc..
- A meeting with Audiences Central – a not-for-profit organisation which provides advice on **Audience Building** and marketing – has

been arranged. Following the meeting we will decide whether to join the organisation and/or commission a marketing plan.

- A “strap-line” to be used on marketing material has been proposed:

Upton upon Severn - not just a pretty place!

Simon Smith informed us that funding is available to support Christmas events across Worcestershire. Details at present are limited – it is LAA funding accessed via Worcestershire County Council of around £2-3000 for initiatives designed to increase public participation.

Again Diane Bellamy read the report from the **Grants and Fundraising Focus Group on behalf of Peggy Booth.**

Draft copies of a Grants Action Plan and Guidelines were distributed, discussion followed with the decision that the plan could be put forward for approval at the Strategy Groups meeting as a working document. Joel Killer gave an assurance that support would be made available by MHDC Economical Development team and he would feedback any information which is relevant. Discussion was held about resources available, also an update on the European LEADER fund. Further conversation was held about administration procedures for recording Grant applications and the results. All agreed that a copy of the Action Plan and Guidelines should be given to each Focus Group coordinator. The Town Partnership has been successful in securing a small amount of cash from ‘Grassroots’ funding for administration and marketing purpose. A list of funding organisations which match the needs of the Focus Groups were put forward, this, and the five priority areas will be discussed at the next Grants meeting in August 2009.

- Peter Webb is putting together a bid to Village SOS, a BIG lottery and BBC grant for projects that benefit village communities. Up to £300,000 is available and UTTA are applying for pontoons to provide more mooring facilities on the river. The deadline is 14 August.
- Hanley Castle School has submitted a bid to Sport England for promoting sport in a rural area, with the intention of expanding facilities and enabling wider community use. £500,000 is available.

- Both these bids have to go through a first round assessment and if they reach the second round, they will need support from the community.

Both were endorsed by the Partnership.

Peter Webb reported on the **Trade and Industry Focus Group** whose conclusions and recommendations were:

1. Can the Town Partnership obtain a grant for renewal of pavements. Particular reference was drawn with the improvement to Pershore after the renewal scheme.
2. Could we investigate the position with regard to grants for empty shops and could the Town Partnership negotiate with landlords for special low lease rates or free lease for a period.
3. The group was concerned with the number and arrangement of street signs. They are muddled and spoil the town centre. Some photographs should be taken to assess the problem. Improvements including clearer signs to car parks were suggested.
4. Can we obtain a copy of the latest Highways proposal for the High Street?
5. It was noted that Tenbury have a successful food festival could we consider something similar for Upton?
6. A ban on parking in the town was suggested during flood events.
7. A suggestion was tabled to provide for chevron style parking one side only in New Street.
 - It was noted that the proposed resurfacing of New Street would present the ideal opportunity to reconsider parking arrangements there.
8. Is there anything that can be done to prevent the through traffic particularly heavy goods vehicles.
 - It was suggested that Derek Prodder from Worcestershire County Council should be invited to a meeting to discuss these ideas.

Diane Bellamy reported on the **Tourism Focus Group**, which has met three times.

It was felt that the priority is to draw visitors into the town and to develop ways of ensuring that they will spend time here (and money, hopefully).

The Better Welcome project is progressing – there will be refurbishment of the Heritage Centre, ie damp-proofing of walls and floor, new flooring, new reception area, and toilet. New display boards will be produced and a

computerised touch-screen display which will provide visitors with information as well as the history and development of the town.

The group is investigating the following ideas:

- offering coach tour operators a “package” deal
- bicycle hire and the development of cycle routes
- short trips on the river and / or boat hire
- the possibility of Upton’s own minibus which could be used to ferry people into town
- a coach drop-off point
- self-led walks around Upton covering history, natural history, food and drink and local gardens “the hidden treasures of Upton”.
- a site for a pitch and put
- the installation of more pontoons for mooring
- rickshaws
- an entertainment area utilising the old bridge abutment

A lot to be getting on with but we would welcome any further ideas or suggestions as to how to bring visitors to Upton and encourage them to stay for a while.

Our first achievement has been to secure the mail-out of the Upton leaflet to TICs within a 30 mile radius.

Simon Wilkinson appealed for more minibus drivers for the current Shuttle service on Friday mornings. Please contact him if you are interested.

It was suggested that:

- we send Upton literature to Croome Court – Mike Smith is the contact there. **MHDC will investigate.**
- A terminal could be installed at Croome Court with the Upton information on
- Transport links to Croome Court are explored

3. Treasurer’s Report

Starting balance: £2356.38

Paid out to MHDC for road closures: £30

Received Grass Roots grant: £1950

Closing balance: £4276.38

4. Report from Executive Committee

The committee identified the following priorities which will be taken on as issues to be lobbied about or dealt with by the Executive.

- i. Flood barriers
Upton Town Councillors are going to inspect the self-raising flood barriers in the near future.
The Environment Agency (EA) is 95% towards presenting the finalised plans and putting in the planning applications.
There is an EA Fact Sheet (June 2009) available on-line – follow link on www.upton.uk.net (in the Reports and Newsletters box).
Andrea Oliver advised us that there will be a public meeting in September with the EA.
- ii. The Bridge
- iii. Marketing
- iv. Parking in Upton
- v. Funding

The Executive will also monitor and evaluate the Focus groups' projects and actions and are looking into ways of measuring success.

Two ways of monitoring visitor footfall are the number of customers dealt with in the TIC and Heritage Centre and the parking figures for Hanley Road car park. It was noted that a recent record of these shows a peak at the Blues Festival and a two-third increase on the days of the Continental Market.

Simon Smith reminded the Partnership of MHDC's Place Survey which asked residents about whether they are happy with the facilities available and what improvements they would like to see. (To be published soon.) This should be followed up by the Partnership.

5. Any Other Business

A question was asked about the progress of the skatepark (since the meeting notification of planning application has been advertised in the Gazette 14.08.09) and the possibility of having a bowls green somewhere in the town.

PW read an email reference the Continental Market; some traders were unhappy about the goods on sale and the disruption caused by one of the stalls making access to Dunns Lane very difficult.

There were several suggestions as to improvements to be made:

- Communication – more information and notice of event so that deliveries can be brought forward
- Need to negotiate with Market Coordinator and perhaps arrange a “bond” with him.
- Produce a plan of where stalls go for the next market.

There are other comments on the Upton website which need addressing. CSO Sally has produced a report outlining issues and how to put them right. PW will ask her permission to circulate this.

Liese Lavers asked if there were any plans to "twin" Upton with anywhere. Councillor Tim Drake (Upton Town Council) is investigating this. LL expressed her willingness to help.

It was tried some while ago and needs a driving force behind it.

Simon Smith notified the meeting that there was a Twinning organisation that supports places looking to be twinned and that EU funding was available to support this activity. (see email attachment for information)

Hanley Castle School, as a language school, would be a good partner.

There is an Upton, Massachusetts, that chose its name because it was 10 miles south of Worcester, Massachusetts!

Simon Smith informed the meeting that **Business Link** had identified Upton as an area to bring its **Retail Roadshow in March 2010**.

It will offer advice, support etc to local independent businesses and retailers.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.50pm.

The next Open meeting is on Wednesday 4 November at 7.30 in the Memorial Hall.