



**1st Open Meeting
Wednesday 6 May at 7.30pm
Council Chamber, Memorial Hall, Upton.**

Chair, Tim Perry, welcomed everyone to the first Open meeting of the Town Partnership.

Present: Peter Booth, Peggy Booth, Gill Newman, Jackie Surtees, Simon Smith, Mike Ostick, Gordon Williams, Gerald Savine, Andrew Sanders, Simon Wilkinson, Mike Morgan, Peter Webb, Tim Perry, Diane Bellamy, Rosemary Webb, Grant Mathews (Hanley Castle High School)

Apologies: Rowan Thomas, Paul Thomas, Reverend Jeff Radcliffe

1. Update on progress so far: (Tim Perry)

There has been a lot of talking done since the Inaugural Meeting!!
But we have made progress:

- The Terms of Reference were amended and signed by the officers
 - We have agreed a logo for the Partnership
 - The funds from the Feelgood Festival of 2007 and the profits from the Flood DVD have been handed over to the Partnership
- The Treasurer gave a brief synopsis of the financial situation:
We have received £708.88 from the Feelgood funds and £2300 from Malvern Hills District Council.

The Feelgood monies were used to fund the Star Promotion – publicity, collection boxes and prizes – leaving £56.38

The MHDC monies are for match-funding £2000 and secretarial support £300.

- Peter Webb reported on the successful event on Easter Monday which ended the Star promotion. There had been 3 weeks publicity on Star Radio about Upton upon Severn, culminating in a live broadcast on Monday when shoppers and traders were interviewed. Between 6-8000 entry coupons went in to the Shoppers Draw. Star Radio are now building a data base of shoppers and which shops they use.
- A grant-funding sub-group has been set up to explore possible funding for the Partnership and it's associated projects
- The Partnership has been joined by Hanley High School, the Library, the Surgery, Churches Together and the Youth Club
- A new forum is being set up for the Entertainment groups of the area
Peter Booth explained that he had contacted 30 groups, venues and individuals and had a very positive response. The following ideas / issues had been raised:
Festivals need more volunteers to help with stewarding, first aid and security – a database could be set up of those people willing to help out at any of the festivals.
The pooling of resources – both physical and human – would help all the arts events. As would combined marketing and using the Upton Diary on the town's website www.upton.uk.net .
A strap line "Upton upon Severn is not just a pretty place" has been suggested.
Another suggestion is that one person be responsible for applying for road closures in the town.
Simon Smith informed the meeting that Malvern Hills District Council were also bringing together a directory of resources available in South Worcestershire which will complement Upton's efforts.
- A working party was set up to develop the proposed strategy which is being presented to you this evening by Simon Wilkinson
- Most importantly, it has brought together the disparate groups within the town who have the aim of maintaining Upton as a thriving community.

2. Report from the Strategy Working Party

Simon Wilkinson emphasised that the Town Partnership will not run activities but will encourage, coordinate, work with, identify and lobby. He went on to present the following document for the agreement of the meeting:

Upton Town Partnership

Strategy Development.

Strategy.

Whilst the Town Plan and Simon Smith's Strategy document are strong documents, they necessarily spread their interests over a very wide spectrum of Town issues. The Partnership's Strategy, however, must address, with a clear focus, those key actions to provide the strong economic base needed in the current environment and which will enable Upton to survive as a vibrant and economically viable Market Town.

Other worthwhile visions and developments, to improve the quality of life and services for all generations, can be addressed after this, or at the same time if specific funding is available, but must be subservient to it until Upton is seen again to be growing in strength as a Market Town.

The key issues to be addressed in the strategy are the security and improvement of the infrastructure, the support and development of visitor/tourist attractions, and the stabilization and growth of retail and hospitality resources.

More Specifically.

No more flood events. The flood bund and waterfront defences must be built. Seek out all dissenters in the UTC, UTP or noted private individuals and counsel them on the real issues, and ensure total support.

Clean pavements, clean streets, clean bridge, clean shops. Need standards, inspection, enforcement. Eliminate indiscriminate and obstructive parking.

Develop Coach/visitor reception route. Easy and free car parking, Information displays, attractive signage, flowers, leaflets/sketch plan of attractions and shops.

Exploit Heritage, Old Church Tower display of the Upton story, museum, TIC, Heritage shop to sell Upton memorabilia.

Support from UTP, UTC, T&T, WCC & MHDC for all the festivals, Blues, Jazz, Folk and Water. Bring in more visitors. Create a common core organisation structure to support festival planning to be more consistent and professional. The four festivals cover the tourist season, with one a month, May through August. Develop this strong asset.

Develop schemes of Rural Rate relief, phased/profit related renting, for new retail and hospitality start up enterprises. Make this a focus of external funding. Plan for a suitable range of retail outlets, and address the commercial issues of meeting these goals. Work through the local Banks (Lloyds/HSBC) to ensure commercial financing for the High Street outlets.

Establish an Upton Arts Commission, who would work with all groups offering Theatre, Music, Choral, Art, Film, and Lecture/talk events, to optimize on the use of venues, advertising, scheduling, and promotion. These events, added to the four summer festivals and the Heritage Story, will provide a year round attraction to the “Upton Experience” for visitors, town and area residents alike.

The Town Partnership will therefore....

1. Lobby the relevant statutory authorities to fulfil their responsibilities, always remembering that the Partnership is itself a “quasi-statutory” body within the context of County and District partnerships.
2. Encourage shopkeepers, who traditionally kept the pavement in front of their premises clean, residents and visitors to act responsibly – someone has to make the mess which the D.C. is then responsible for clearing up!
3. Identify the availability of grants and either apply for them itself or help others who qualify to do so.
4. Identify the partners who are best able to deliver aspects of the strategy, encourage them to do so and ensure liaison with others who may be involved.
5. Endeavour to co-ordinate the demand for, and availability of, resources for the festivals.
6. Co-ordinate the activities of cultural and artistic groups within the town.
7. Work with the Economic Development Department of MHDC to ensure that businesses, both new and established, in the town, take advantage of any grants or reliefs which are available to them. This may include help with the process of application.
8. With the Economic Development Department of MHDC lobby Banks and Landlords to be realistic in their relationship with clients and tenants.

To facilitate this there will be 5 focus groups with specific terms of reference:

- a. Civic Pride: the built environment, the street scene, the bridge, the riverfront, the rural setting of Upton, helping Upton In Bloom. **Coordinator: Simon Wilkinson**
- b. Culture and Festivals: the “cultural” societies, the Festivals. Marketing, sharing of information and resources. **Coordinator: Peter Booth**
- c. Tourism: transport, car parking, information panels, leaflets, booklets and guided tours, TIC, Heritage Centre, the Better Welcome programme. **Coordinator: Diane Bellamy**
- d. Trade and Industry: involvement of local manufacturing companies, the retail, service and hospitality industries, seeking grants and reliefs, promotion of the exchange of information and of co-operation, seeking out and encouraging the use of external advice e.g. Business Link **Coordinator: Peter Webb**

- e. Grants and fund-raising: pro-active in seeking out grants and drawing them to attention of the other sub-committees, re-active in trying to meet requests from other sub-committees. **Coordinator: Peggy Booth**

Each focus group is to draw up action plans (see Simon Smith's Strategy Document pp10 & 11), and act on them! The Strategy Group, expanded to include the focus group leaders, is to monitor progress and then, with all focus groups, to report to the quarterly Partnership meetings.

The Strategy Group will be made up of the five coordinators, the Chair, Treasurer, the Rector, Mike Ostick (as representative of the satellite parishes) and a trades person.

Each of the five Focus Group leaders were to invite members to join their groups. (*If you are interested in being part of one of the focus groups please contact Diane Bellamy and she will pass on your details to the relevant coordinator.*) Dates of focus group meetings are to be relayed to the Secretary so that there is a central record of all meetings.

Simon Smith volunteered members of his team to be MHDC representatives on each of the focus groups: Joel - funding, Simon - Trade and Industry, Malcolm Salisbury - tourism, Manda Graham - cultural and festivals, Gordon Morris - Civic Pride.

It was felt that there was a need to broaden the membership of the Partnership and include Festival Housing. Both Education and Housing had interests in Civic Pride,

The focus groups were to meet and discuss an action plan and report back to the main committee in early June - date to be arranged.

The consensus was that this was a positive step forward and the strategy was agreed upon.

3. Any Other Business

Graham Bunn suggested that a maypole could be purchased for the town which could be used by the schools as well as at events in the town. It was proposed that this could be included in the waterfront development scheme. Approximately £600 would be needed for it.

Pedestrianisation of the river front was a popular option - as per phase 3 of the original plan - this would allow for specialist market days, the festivals and other activities to take place.

A Continental Market is booked for 24/25 July and a Tunisian Market is being discussed.

Concern was expressed about bringing in "outside" traders but as an attraction it does bring in other shoppers.

A market for local growers and suppliers is in the pipeline.

It was felt that using the riverfront for the market did not necessarily encourage people in to the centre of town – the position of a market should be considered carefully, especially if they were to become a regular event. Perhaps it would be better to have a street market in town.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.45

Next Open Meeting: Wednesday 5 August 2009 at 7.30pm

NB. Any Member of the Partnership is welcome to attend any of the committee meetings, where they can bring up items for discussion under Any Other Business.