

NEWS

from

Upton

TOWN PARTNERSHIP

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At an open meeting of The Upton Town Partnership, last evening 06/05/09, Simon Wilkinson presented the results of The Strategy Group's deliberations and the following strategy was adopted as the way forward for the Partnership.

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, Pepperpot display of the Upton story, museum, Heritage shop, run by UTC (as per Worcester Commandery), sell Upton memorabilia, can also double as TIC in conjunction with MHDC.

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. Coordinate with local schools. 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.

SCW,
with acknowledgements to MDO for
almost all the first part.

26/04/09