

Appendix 1

BRIDGE-THE-GAP

IDEAS & ISSUES

from Meeting of 13th Sept 19

Adventure Avenue
Lack of footfall; High Rates not reflecting low levels of Service
Rates paid do not reflect what the Town Council is doing.
Can we enable businesses to survive? Relief on business rates.

ACTION NOW: What flexibility on rates?

Rocking Horse
Lack of Information / Communication from NRR
What is happening to the Martlets Theatre? Is there a time line?
Rocking Horse and New Look are lonely.
Whatsapp link suggested disseminating information.

ACTION NOW: Briefing to Traders re NRR plans / BtG agreements

Present Company
Need for free parking; was forced to go solely internet-based
Loss of the town's independent & specialist traders over recent years
Town has lost its purpose & function. Character of town has changed.
No free parking. Why pay for parking if there are only empty shops?
Need retailers.

ACTION NOW: What flexibility on interim / longer term parking charges?

Holland & Barrett
Need for advance warning of planned changes to the centre
Happy to help Bridge-the-Gap; Shops looks run down & scruffy
Lack of communication between NRR and tenants.
NRR exhibitions on Saturdays when businesses can't leave their shops

ACTION NOW: as above *Briefing to Traders re NRR plans / BtG agreements*

Picture Framing
Need to apply for grants – from developers; from Govt. etc
Need to appoint a full-time dedicated organiser
Need someone paid to manage the centre of town.
We have space. Just needs someone to manage it.
There are lottery funds available but it needs someone to apply for it.
Other grants are also available. MSDC was given money from NRR to
compensate for the closure of the Martlets and ensure any effects
were dealt with.

ACTION NOW: Dedicated staffing / grant application

Flavour
Need to reduce rates; need for improved promotion of BH Traders
Business rates are a killer. Nothing happening at top of the town.
Top end needs some marketing. Looks scruffy.

ACTION NOW: Promotion of BH traders / beautiful B. Hill

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BH Radio	<p>Need for more local communication re the developments Happy to lead in providing musical entertainment (any grant money?) Lack of public information. Radio is happy to deliver info if provided.</p> <p>ACTION NOW: public briefing re Town Centre redevelopment progress</p> <p>ACTION NOW: use of Bandstand on Saturdays</p>
Disco Carpets	<p>Investing in new shop front, but not helped by economic uncertainty. Congestion around McDonalds. Station Road is tired. Financial backers are holding back resulting in derelict buildings.</p> <p>ACTION NOW: as above <i>Promotion of BH traders / beautiful B. Hill</i></p>
Karate Club	<p>No security guard after hours (working to 10pm) From 6pm the jobs are returning. The pavement from the old Lidl to the bandstand is a raceway for scooters and bikes after 6pm.</p> <p>ACTION NOW: Town Centre security</p>
H J Stoner	<p>NRR offering unsuitable for BH; need for a Traders Committee as an interface with BHTC. Have the public been asked what they want? Is the hotel going to be a red herring? Orion is a boutique cinema. Need more independents. BH needs to become a destination with something different to offer.</p> <p>ACTION NOW: establish Traders group / set up Steering Group of 9</p>
Mercantile Adventurers	<p>Wanting to develop an outdoor market, but need BHTC support. Previous Martlets manager promised a Market. Want to bring something new to BH. They have brought some businesses together. People want something different. Working with the cinema to have a pre and post drinks session. Have introduced a market in their carpark on the 1st Saturday of the month. Try a Christmas market to take over from Brighton's which is dying.</p> <p>ACTION NOW: outside market / Christmas market</p>
Boomerang barbers & Anthony Hole Bikes	<p>Uncertainty killing business – customers need reassurance; the shop may not last; developing a SMILE card on Facebook. There is a Community Interest Group named SMILE (Supporting My Independent Local Economy) which uses Facebook to promote the traders and advertise what they do. Should include all businesses.</p> <p>ACTION NOW: support for SMILE</p>

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Station Rd Undertakers	Pavements in the evening dangerous from skateboarders etc Station Road is tired and run down. Cycling on pavements.
<i>ACTION NOW:</i>	<i>as above Town Centre security + Beautify BH</i>
Market Place	Supportive to B-t-G
<i>ACTION NOW:</i>	<i>as above set up Steering Group of 9</i>
Carnabys Estate Agents	Shops looking downbeat & scruffy; not a good offering for customers. Disappointed with the way the town looks. Chinese whispers abound. Misinformation and gossip due to lack of communication. Feel of the town has changed and people are going to HH to shop.
<i>ACTION NOW:</i>	<i>as above Beautify BH + Briefing to Traders re NRR plans / BtG</i>
Ping Pong	Happy to organise ping pong sessions to draw in customers Turn shops into ping pong arenas will bring delinquents back. Ping Pong could be popular.
<i>ACTION NOW:</i>	<i>any empty shop space available for Ping Pong?</i>
LJ's Café / Munchies	(prior to the meeting) Organise an outdoor market in Church Walk
<i>ACTION NOW:</i>	<i>(as above) outside market / Christmas market</i>
BHTC Actions	What can TC do? We cannot control parking or rates. There is a limit on what we can do from a financial position. We can lobby and make a noise but we need to be realistic about what we can do. Notify retailers of events that are to take place. (They did not know about the vintage cars later this month). Be more proactive in "About Town" The Town Council will try and open doors where possible. Develop a discount card for Burgess Hill. One trader said she would not be able to further discount. Town boundaries need adjustment which would increase the precept the council received. It was hoped that CIL would bring 25% of development contributions to the town to use as they please but this is not going to happen. These two factors would increase the amount of money which the Town Council could use. We can help as Town Council but are limited. We will need volunteers from the traders. Are there ideas on the Dare to dream document

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which they may be able to help with? A steering group with Councillors, traders, District and County Council officers , NNR and Market Place representative. Ideally this should be trader run rather than Council run. The group could advise the Council/s on issues in the town.

Communication appears to be a major problem.

ACTION NOW: mostly covered above, but additionally:
Notify coming events; BH discount card (the Beehive?);
redefine town boundary; Dare to Dream;

Councillors attending: Anne Eves; Robert Duggan; Janice Henwood; Graham Allen;
Toffojul Hussain; Roger Cartwright (chair)