

# Appendix 1

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Notes of a meeting with Traders held in the Council Chamber on Friday 13  
September 2019

The Mayor welcomed those present and explained that BHTC were represented on a regeneration forum with Mid Sussex District Council and West Sussex County Council.

The meeting was asked to identify the problems:

1. Lack of footfall. Rates paid do not reflect what the Town Council is doing.
2. Rocking Horse and New Look are lonely. What is happening to the Martlets? Is there a time line?
3. What can we do to enable businesses to survive? Relief on business rates.
4. Town has lost its purpose and function. Lost specialist and independent shops. Character of town has changed. No free parking. Need retailers.
5. Turn shops into ping pong arenas will bring delinquents back. Why pay for parking if there are only empty shops?
6. Ping Pong could be popular. Station Road is tired and run down. Cycling on pavements.
7. Lack of communication between NReit and tenants.
8. NReit exhibitions are on a Saturday when businesses can't leave their shops to take a look.
9. Previous Martlets manager promised a Market.
10. Have the public been asked what they want?
11. 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.
12. Need someone paid to manage the centre of town. There is nobody dedicated to running the town.
13. Business rates are a killer. Nothing happening at top of the town. Tope end needs some marketing. Looks scruffy.
14. Congestion around McDonalds.
15. Radio is happy to deliver information if it is provided. Could assist with music events.
16. Whatsapp link suggested disseminating information.
17. Try a Christmas market to take over from Brighton's which is dying.
18. We have space. Just needs someone to manage it.
19. Lack of public information.
20. Station Road is tired.
21. Financial backers are holding back which will result in derelict buildings.
22. No security in the evenings. From 6pm the jobs are returning. The pavement from the old Lidl to the bandstand is a raceway for scooters and bikes after 6pm.

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23. Is the hotel going to be a red herring? Orion is a boutique cinema.

24. Mercantile Adventurers wanted to bring something new to BH. They have brought some businesses together. They are working with the cinema to have a pre and post drinks session. People want something different. They have introduced a market in their carpark on the 1st Saturday of the month.

### General Discussion.

There are lottery funds available but it needs someone to apply for it. Other grants are also available. MSDC was given money from Nreit to compensate for the closure of the Martlets and ensure any effects were dealt with.

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 which they may be able to help with? A steering group with Councillors, traders, District and County Council officers, Nreit 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.

The Town Council will try and open doors where possible.

Communication appears to be a major problem.

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. It would be good to include all businesses.

Develop a discount card for Burgess Hill. One trader said she would not be able to further discount.

Be more proactive in "About Town"

Need more independents. BH needs to become a destination with something different to offer.

Notify retailers of events that are to take place. (They did not know about the vintage cars later this month)./

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.

Meeting ended at 18.35