

CULTURAL QUARTER STEERING GROUP

Notes of the Meeting held on

2 February 2021

1. Attendance:

Joe Foster, (Chairman), Peter Chapman, Jacky Hilary, Chris Elkins, Richard Light, Janice Henwood, , Sarah Greg , Anne Eves, Robert Eggleston, Sarah Voce

Steve Cridland

2. Apologies: Andrew Barrett-Miles, Hannah Wilson

3. The notes of the meeting held on 16 November 2020 were confirmed.

4. The Chairman summarised the report and explained the reasons for the consultation. A series of literature in the form of leaflets and articles in About Town would be distributed to residents. In addition social media, a website, the annual report, live Q&A's, zoom surgeries etc. would spread the word.

In response to a question about what we hoped to achieve by 29 March, the chairman said that an initial leaflet would be distributed from 22 February followed by a 4 page spread in About Town. The Facebook page had already been launched and the website was being developed. Other social media would be used.

There was concern about the feasibility of this in the time scale given. Who was going to compile all this? There was still negativity in the town about the loss of the Martlets hall and it would take serious persuasion to get some folk to change their mind. The consultation must be done in an organised manner. It should not be rushed and to do a good job takes time.

Robert explained that two officers were working on the material and that the website would soon go live. Procrastination is the thief of time and we are moving apace to ensure the deadline of 29 March is reached. Interest rates are low at present and getting a loan now would have a serious financial saving. A 4 page spread in About Town would go out 22 March. The final consultation leaflet would go out by 29 March. Purdah would mean the loss of April and half of May to publicity. An application to the Public Works Loan Board would follow as soon as the results of the survey are known.

13,500 people had been reached by Facebook so far. There had been some negativity about the past but many of the challenges of the past had been resolved.

What would the questions be? How much does each round cost? How will 4 people be able to vote?

There will be 3 warm up questions focussing on the need for a community facility and the last one would be the main question and would ask whether the respondent supported the project. The questions were still being compiled.

The cost was under 1000 pounds to print each round plus the Royal Mail fee. It is an effective medium and will allow as many people as possible to understand the project.

It would not be a ballot; however there will be checks to try to ensure that people do not vote twice. Additional ballot forms could be printed off the website.

Members wanted reassurance that the website will be up and running ahead of any mail shot. This is a priority.

One comment made was that 2 leaflets would be enough. Social media and the website are very important. The consultation leaflet should be in an envelope. The cost of the consultation is minimal compared to the size of the project.

The leaflet will be on an A3 page and folded down into a Trifold. The motivation for additional leaflets is that it will try to ensure that everyone will have more than one opportunity to see it and would not be able to come back with the excuse that they had not received notification. Additional leaflets enables more information to be distributed. The challenge is to make it stand out.

It was emphasised that the website and leaflets must be able to work together. They should contain all the information necessary for people to understand the project. Leaders of groups would need to be comfortable with what they send to their members. Members asked to see the website that is under development. It was suggested that a walkthrough be held with the group.

A typo was highlighted in the leaflet.

Discussion about the need to use the Mid Sussex Times followed. It was decided that they had given us coverage but that the number of people reading it did not warrant an ad. BHU would be asked to support the project as well. Social distancing was hampering traditional publicity.

It was suggested that a poster be developed to place in windows to promote the project. The front of the Legion building could be used for publicity as well.

There is a need for repetition. The second leaflet would be to distribute the survey. A third could be distributed to encourage people to respond if the initial response was low. It was mentioned that too much could be counterproductive and put people off.

A decision on the third leaflet could be taken once the consultation was underway and depending on response.

An indication of the planned dates for distribution was asked for.

What can members of the various groups do to assist? Community group engagement was suggested. Connect to those communities and invite them to engage.

To do this requires information. A Q&A is under development. A good story attracts interest. The story must be clear and consistent. A briefing pack with timelines was requested. This info should be digital which could be distributed to members. Some groups have over 500 members.

It was suggested that user groups could provide quotes and stories as a way of endorsing the project. Have as many zoom meetings as needed.

The chairman asked for the meeting to agree the recommendations. One member felt that a more defined plan and website was needed and voted against the recommendations. The remaining members voted in favour.

ACTION POINTS:

- provide list of FAQs
- Provide target date for website go live
- Interim fix to website URL so it's not showing an error until website is ready
- Provide briefing pack for CQC members
- Provide high level timeline for the whole exercise
- CQC members to indicate which groups they can make connections with and provide list of suitable engagement opportunities (eg zoom meetings etc)
- Price and consider paper advertising (middy)
- Clarify leaflet 1 folding
- Consider radio stations
- Consider A4 "supporters" poster for people to put up at home

Resolved:

1. That the methods of consultation set out in the report be approved;
2. That the difficulties facing the council regarding the polling of all residents be noted;

3. That separate online and paper ballots be used to conduct the poll and that the results from each be treated independently.
4. That further work be done to identify a suitable independent verifier.

Meeting ended at 19:02