

**Minutes of Partnership Board  
Meeting**



**22nd March 2010**

- Present:** James White (Chair)  
Cllr Sandy Lovatt (Oxfordshire County Council)  
Cllr Peter Jones (Oxfordshire County Council)  
Cllr Lesley Legge (Abingdon Town Council)  
Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer (Abingdon Town Council)  
Cllr Richard Webber (Vale of White Horse District Council)  
Peter Wiblin (Abingdon on Thames Chamber of Commerce)  
Tony Stephens (Miele)  
Jill Carver (Added Ingredients)  
Paul James (officer of Oxfordshire County Council)  
Matt Prosser (officer of Vale of White Horse District Council)  
Nigel Warner (officer of Abingdon Town Council)  
Toby Warren (officer of Vale of White Horse District Council)  
Suzanne Malcolm (officer of Vale of White Horse District Council)  
Heather Brown (Choose Abingdon Partnership Manager)
- Apologies:** Martin Cox (Culham Centre for Fusion Energy)  
Terry Boswell (Abingdon on Thames Chamber of Commerce)
- Declarations of interest:** Cllr Sandy Lovatt – Personal interest as office-holder in Federation of Small Businesses  
Peter Wiblin – Personal interest as owner and manager of a retail business based in Abbey Shopping Centre, Bury Street, Abingdon.  
Jill Carver - Personal interest as owner and manager of a retail and catering business in Stert Street, Abingdon. Personal interest as a committee member of the Chamber of Commerce.  
Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer - Personal interest as a councillor for Vale of White Horse District Council.
- Presenting:** Simon Ralphs and Andy MacDonald.

A pre-meeting presentation was given by Telematicus about their I-Thame initiative. They will forward a copy of the presentation if it is required.

1. Welcome, apologies and minutes

Revisions were made to the minutes following email request from Terry Boswell.

2. Spring promotion - feedback on advertising and further activity

The Partnership Manager advised that the double page spread and "What's On" leaflet had gone out in Round and About magazine according to the plan presented at the January meeting, reaching over 80 000 addresses in the County. Positive comments had been received from a number of individuals. The plans for the activity in the Market Place designed to draw Craft Fair goers into the town centre were advancing well and Bray Leino had confirmed that they can provide street entertainers free of charge, paid for by their client, Scottish Widows.

The meeting agreed that the follow up edition of the "What's On" leaflet should be published and issued to the OX14 postcode only via Round and About magazine May issue, with another accompanying double page "advertorial". Cost will be between £2000 and £2500.

3. Tourism information - stop gaps and long term strategy

The Partnership Manager advised that she had discussed the need for printed tourist information with the Information Office staff mainly concerned and a two-fold plan had been agreed. In the short term, to provide some form of map that staff can give out, the Partnership Manager had gained the agreement of Bray Leino that their shopping centre guide can include a map of the whole town centre and 2 000 extra copies can be provided for Information Centre use for only £170. In the long term a more considered strategy for tourism should be formulated following on from the work being done on the town maps and a recommendation for various forms of literature will be made.

4. Financial summary

The Partnership Manager presented the estimates for the year 2009-10 – there will be a considerable carry over into the financial year 2010-11 as many project spends are commissioned but not yet invoiced. Final year figures will be made available when the Partnership Manager has been able to meet with the Vale accountant after the year end.

5. Progress on town maps project

The Partnership Manager announced that the local artist Peter Bellingham had agreed to provide artwork for the interpretation boards and that the community group had finalised their brief including a list of all the places that should be mentioned on each of the boards.

6. Feedback from board members on Saturday market proposal

Board members had been given a briefing paper prepared by the Partnership Manager at a previous meeting and were invited to comment on the proposal. Comments were all positive and the Partnership Manager agreed to proceed cautiously with this project, noting that, from her previous experience of markets, she did not expect the project to be free from complexity and problems. The Town Clerk agreed to take the first step as outlined in the paper by enquiring with Thames Valley Farmer's Markets to establish whether they would wish to run a Saturday market themselves.

7. Feedback from board members on website brief

Board members had been given a briefing paper prepared by the Partnership Manager at a previous meeting and were invited to comment on the proposal. The board agreed to one revision: the tourism aspect of the web brief was felt to be probably a step too far and for now the website should aim to just meet the needs of residents and shoppers. The Partnership Manager will amend the brief and instruct the two agencies presently bidding for the work to quote on this basis now.

#### 8. Chamber showcase project

Jill Carver presented a plan for a promotional event to be organised by the Chamber and requested a contribution from the Partnership. The proposal was supported by the Partnership Manager and an amount of £500 was agreed unanimously.

#### 9. Feedback from board members on partnership's role in Abbey Precinct development

The Chairman had not received many written comments on this subject and invited the Board members to consider this further. Matt Prosser agreed to formulate a proposal as to how the Partnership might best perform a useful role in the development of the precinct, whilst confidential negotiations with leaseholders and future anchor store tenants were ongoing.

#### 10. Feedback from board members on how the partnership should connect with community

The Chairman also invited Board members to discuss this matter. There was a suggestion made that the Partnership Manager should compile a list of community organisations and contact details but Board members from County and District Councils with experience of undertaking this task indicated that this was impractical given other project work and would divert the Partnership manager from more important tasks. A community forum to be held perhaps twice a year was suggested and received positively. Further discussion will be held at the next meeting.

#### 11. Newsletter

The Partnership Manager has been working on a newsletter and will send it out electronically for Board members to review prior to its issue.

#### 12. Report on Abingdon Business Alliance

The newly formed Abingdon Business Alliance had held their inaugural meeting at the Four Pillars with around 60 people in attendance and were now recruiting members. Those members of the Partnership Board who had attended were thanked for doing so as this had given a good impression of the open-mindedness of the Partnership regarding future engagement. The Chairman noted that, according to the statement agreed at the last meeting, he was due to extend an invitation to the Alliance to present themselves to the Partnership Board and he proposed to schedule this for the May meeting.

#### 13. AOB

The Partnership Manager raised the issue of confidentiality of some of the projects that she may be working on. She requested that, where a project was either uncertain or would require a carefully co-ordinated and presented sell-in to the retail community, such a project should not be presented to the target audience in advance of any planned formal presentation. This concern particularly applied at present as the Chamber of Commerce were planning to hold post-Partnership meetings in which members would receive a briefing from Jill Carver on the contents of the day's Partnership meeting. Jill noted the difficulty of reconciling this request with the Chamber's stated aim of improving communication with members. It was agreed that it would only apply to particular projects and that the need for confidentiality could be discussed at the time of each project being brought before the Board. The Partnership Manager indicated that, among today's topics, she would only regard the market project as being one that is unsuitable for general consumption at present.

The Chairman noted that this was Toby Warren's last meeting as his reassignment within the District Council means that he will no longer be working with the Partnership. Toby was thanked for all his work particularly in the writing of the constitution of the Partnership. Suzanne Malcolm was welcomed as the new Vale officer to be assigned to the Partnership.

The Board discussed the matter of inviting the manager of Waitrose to attend a board meeting with a view to him being invited to join. It was agreed that the issue of new membership required a general discussion to establish criteria. This should be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

#### 14. Next Meetings

April 19<sup>th</sup> 2010 1pm Abingdon Town Council offices  
May 24<sup>th</sup> 2010 1pm Abingdon Town Council offices

*HB 14/04/10*