

**Minutes of Partnership Board
Meeting**

24th May 2010



Present: James White (Chair)
Cllr Peter Jones (Oxfordshire County Council)
Cllr Sandy Lovatt (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)
Terry Boswell (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)
Heather Brown (Choose Abingdon Partnership Manager)

Apologies: Martin Cox (Culham Centre for Fusion Energy)
Suzanne Malcolm (officer of Vale of White Horse District Council)

**Declarations
of interest:**

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.
Terry Boswell – Personal interest as owner and manager of an accommodation business in Oxford Road, Abingdon.
Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer - Personal interest as a councillor for Vale of White Horse District Council.
James White – Personal interest as a Member of both Abingdon Business Alliance and Abingdon on Thames Chamber of Commerce

Presenting: Nick Addison, Mel Innes, Martin Bowes

Pre-meeting presentation by Abingdon Business Alliance, followed by main meeting.

1. Welcome, apologies and minutes

Declarations and apologies as above.

Revisions were made to the April minutes following request by Terry Boswell. After discussion it was agreed that the last sentence in section 4b should be deleted as it had not been clear to all members that it had been agreed that Toby Warren was to assist the Partnership Manager in the website procurement process.

2. Discussion about ABA presentation

All agreed that the presentation had been excellent and Jill Carver felt that perhaps the Chamber of Commerce should also present to the Board and give an update of the work they have been doing recently.

Councillor Webber noted that whilst he applauded the existence of ABA, the timing was not particularly sensible to be offering them place on the board when the Board was considering its structure and a potential reorganisation might be agreed in the Autumn. Councillor Mayhew-Archer agreed that whilst she would like to see them on the board they should be encouraged to act as an equal relation to the Chamber and therefore she would like to see them make a contribution to the funding of the Partnership. An amount of £500 was agreed as this represented the net funding contribution of the Chamber in 2010. (£1000 funding agreement and £500 returned to assist in mounting the "Showcase" event.)

The Chair proposed a motion to offer a co-opted seat on the Board to ABA, conditional upon a contribution of £500 to the 2010/11 budget of the Choose Abingdon Partnership. The motion was seconded by Councillor Mayhew-Archer and the motion was agreed (4 votes for, 4 votes against with one abstention; motion carried on the casting vote of the chairman),

3. Car Parking

Terry Boswell had asked that this be put on the agenda for this meeting. She notified the Board that she, Peter Wiblin and Steve King had made a representation to Matt Prosser at the DC offices on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce and had given him a report on the Cardiff parking scheme. Matt Prosser confirmed that he had undertaken to explore some of the implications of a BID scheme as a possible route towards providing limited free parking. Councillor Webber confirmed that at present the Vale District Council are concerned that any free parking schemes are not affordable, are not proven to deliver the economic benefits that are claimed for them, and that current proposals do not ask for any contribution from the entities that will most benefit. The Partnership Manager explained that she is working through the ramifications of a loyalty card scheme that may meet this last point, in that it could allow the retailers to be involved in delivering

the free parking to the consumer as part of the rewards structure. There is still work to do to be sure that the scheme's technology can deliver as the company representative has claimed and therefore she will be holding a meeting to look into this in more detail. Jill Carver indicated that she would like to attend on behalf of the Chamber and the Partnership Manager agreed to send details of the meeting. Jill Carver said that she has noticed customers responding to the after 4pm free parking but felt it could be more actively promoted.

4. Project List Summary

The Partnership Manager presented a project list which will be updated regularly and issued to Board members so that they can check project status. Due to the number of projects now active, the Partnership Manager will only highlight key points in the meeting and direct the Board's attention to projects where approval for action is required.

a. Empty Shop Community Uses:

The Partnership Manager proposed that the Partnership took up a licence from Scottish Widows which would give the Partnership responsibility for an empty shop in the Abbey Shopping Centre, for several months. Community groups would be able to take the shop for a week or two at a time to publicise their activities, increase membership and raise awareness. The Partnership Manager would "check-in" and "check-out" each group according a pre-arranged calendar. There are many groups keen to use this facility and it would enable the Partnership to provide a valuable service to the community and help to increase awareness about activities and events in the town. The Board agreed that the licence should be taken up and a budget of £300 was also agreed to cover public liability insurance, electric, etc. The district council would provide some basic furniture.

b. i-Abingdon

A local web designer has approached the Partnership Manager and is willing to develop an i-abingdon application for the Partnership requiring only that his registration costs with Apple are covered. (£70). Whilst his abilities are to some extent an unknown quantity it was felt that approval for such a small sum could be given so that this opportunity could be explored.

c. Website tender and communications to the public

The Partnership Manager had been able to make a more detailed assessment of the proposals being made by the two website design companies and the recommendation was that the contract should be awarded to Bray Leino on the grounds of value for money, higher level of commitment and stronger account management. The Board agreed the recommendation and requested that the technical specification was circulated.

Councillor Legge suggested that a holding web page should be published, pending the launch of the web site. The Board agreed that there should be holding page and the text for the page should be agreed by email.

The Partnership Manager advised that the newsletter had been signed off by the Chair as agreed at the last meeting and has gone to the printers. It would be circulated to individuals

and organisations with an interest in the Partnership and copies would also be sent to information centres and libraries.

d. Tourism literature

A breakdown of the proposed budget of £11,000 for tourism literature and other media was presented by the Partnership Manager. The Board noted that other groups were developing tourism literature and the Partnership Manager would be collaborating with these groups. The Board agreed a budget of £11,000.

e. Town maps

The artwork for the new town maps was in hand and presently with the cartographer.

5. EGM : resolution to move AGM to an alternative date.

The Chair advised that this part of the Board meeting would be the Extraordinary General Meeting (or special meeting) as advised at the April meeting and as officially announced in the communication from the Partnership Manager on 12th May 2010.

The Chair proposed the following motion:

That, in the calendar year 2010 only, the AGM will be held in the month of October 2010 rather than the month of June as prescribed by the constitution.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Legge and agreed unanimously.

6. Strategy Day

The Chair advised that he had interviewed several facilitators for the Strategy Day and had selected John Gloster-Smith. His fee would be approximately £2,500 which will include some work in advance of the day collating responses from Board members. The Chair requested that Board provide him with 50-70 words about what they wanted the day to achieve. He was planning that the day would cover the following questions:

What is the fundamental purpose of the Partnership?

What is the broad domain of the Partnership's objectives?

What is the plan of action?

What will the structure of the Board be?

7. Next meetings:

June 28th 2010 - Board Meeting - 1pm Abingdon Town Council offices

July 26th 2010 - Board Meeting - 1pm Abingdon Town Council offices

September 13th 10.30am -3.30pm Strategy Day. Venue to be confirmed

September 27th 2010 - Board Meeting - 1pm Abingdon Town Council offices

October 11th 2010 AGM 11am Roysse Room? (to be confirmed)

October 18th 2010 - Board Meeting - 1pm Abingdon Town Council offices

November 29th 2010 - Board Meeting - 1pm Abingdon Town Council offices

8. AOB

JW explained that Suzanne Malcolm would not be joining the board in full for some months due to illness. Toby Warren will continue to liaise with the board until she is ready to take up her duties. The Board sent their best wishes for her safe and speedy recovery.

LL reminded the board that the Bath Street triangle project was an important one and should not be forgotten. HB queried whether she should pursue projects where there was a low likelihood of finding funding but it was agreed that she should continue to work towards a design statement so that funding could be sought. A budget for the design work will have to be agreed.

TB noted that Board member Jill Carver had received a business award at her shop Added Ingredients in Stert Street. JC was congratulated and reminded to send details to the Partnership Manager in case an opportunity for free PR occurs.

JW noted that he has received a letter from Steve King and will reply to him before going on holiday later in the week.

LIST OF ACTION POINTS:

- HB - April minutes to be amended and re-issued
- HB – ABA to be informed of Board decision respecting the offer of a seat on the Board
- HB - inform Jill Carver of details of car parking/loyalty card meeting
- HB – circulate draft copy for web holding page
- JW – notify facilitator that Board has approved his fee and liaise with him to prepare strategy day
- HB – obtain quote for design work for Bath Street triangle area
- JC – forward details of her award in case the Partnership Manager can gain free space in local magazines to publicise this
- JW – reply to Steve King’s letter

