



# WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

**Notes of a meeting of the Wellington Town Centre Working Group held on Wednesday 2 May 2018 at 5.30p.m. in the Council Chamber, 28 Fore Street, Wellington**

**Present:** Councillor Lithgow (Chairman)  
Councillors Govier, Russell-Cairns and Shepherd  
Richard Coupe – The Edge, Sharon Davis – Interiors and Flowers, Keith Wheatley – Around Wellington, Adrian Hooper, Peter Watts – WBA.

**Also present:** Dave Harris, Manager, Wellesley Cinema

**Apologies:** The Mayor (Councillor James), Emma Ransom-Bellamy (SNOB), Dr. Joanne O'Hara – Wellington Heritage at Risk Officer.

Greg Dyke – Town Clerk, Gill Croucher – Assistant Clerk

## **1. Film Festival**

Consideration was given to the potential for Wellington to host a film festival later in the year/next year. Dave Harris and Keith Wheatley provided helpful information on possible themes, timing and the organisation that would be necessary.

It was agreed that this was a suggestion that should be pursued further, possibly to incorporate arts events at the same time. Volunteers to sit on an Organising Committee would be sought using the various news and social media platforms available. Councillor Lithgow, Adrian Hooper and Pete Watts all agreed to be part of the Organising Committee.

(Councillor Shepherd arrived at 6p.m.)

## **2. Potential Funding Options for Town Centre regeneration**

In the absence of Dr. Joanne O'Hara this item was deferred.

## **3. Town centre building ownership structure**

Councillor Shepherd reported that he was undertaking an investigation into the ownership structure of empty buildings in the town centre. The suggestion was made that there was an opportunity for the Town Council to take a lease of vacant premises with a view to promoting it and using it as a “pop up” shop.

#### **4. TDBC Wellington footfall data**

In the absence of Dr. Joanne O'Hara this item was deferred.

#### **5. Town Centre Street Furniture**

The Town Clerk suggested that the Community Warden be used to carry out an ongoing schedule of works to repaint and refurbish town centre street furniture. He had put together a list of things required for ongoing suggested works – this included bollards, lamp posts, railings, benches, street furniture etc. The cost of providing Hammerite (2 colours green and gold), white spirit, sand paper, paint scraper, various sized paint brushes, wood stain (medium oak), cones and hazard tape was £581.60+vat. This could be funded from the Promotion of Wellington budget. It was hoped that some attention might also be given to the alley between South Street car park and Fore Street which was increasingly being used for anti-social activities. The suggestion of a rolling schedule of town centre works was agreed.

#### **6. Update from Councillor James regarding business rates and car parking discussions**

##### **(a) Business rates**

Councillor James had contacted Councillor Mark Edwards, the appropriate portfolio holder at TDBC, to draw his attention to the disruption caused by the installation of new gas pipes in the Town centre. As a result the shop keepers had suffered. He had asked if it was possible a reduction in business rates could be implemented. It was explained that in these circumstances each affected business needs to contact the Valuation Office Agency. They are required to appeal their rateable values to try and get a temporary reduction.

Unfortunately there is nothing in Business Rates Legislation that covers this for a Billing Authority. The taxpayer must lodge the appeal.

A Billing Authority could look at:-

- Spreading Arrears
- Putting Arrears in to the 2018/19 charge and spreading over 12 months
- Recovery Holds – this would put a temporary hold on action if there are arrears
- Checking each account to make sure all reliefs that can be given are in payment
- An officer to support them

##### **(b) Car Parking**

Councillor James had also asked TDBC Councillor Habgood, who had responsibility for transportation, to consider the following three ideas which would possibly help the town shop keepers:-

1. Allow free Parking every Saturday, this would come at a cost, therefore raise the daily fee (Mon-Fri) by 10p per hour to cover the loss.
2. Allow Free Parking from 1200hrs on every Saturday, with no increased cost through the week.
3. Allow Free Parking on Saturdays

Councillor James recognised that a concession for the 4 Saturdays prior to Christmas is given, but for the traders in shops something further needed to be done to assist their livelihoods and stimulate the High Streets.

Councillor Habgood had offered to discuss this with the relevant TDBC officers as there are practical issues, regulatory and fiscal matters.

Any change would require Traffic Order changes, new signage, different enforcement arrangements and possibly machine changes. TDBC would also want any potential change to be thought through and to be cost neutral.

## **7. Setting outline agenda for the next meeting**

Topic areas to be discussed:

- Potential Funding Options for Town Centre regeneration
- TDBC Wellington footfall data
- Independent Street market (similar to those currently operating in Frome and Bath)
- Town Council taking a shop lease.

## **8. Date of next meeting**

**5.30 p.m. Wednesday 6 June 2018**

The meeting ended at 6.55p.m.

**Members:** Councillors Shepherd (Chair), Lithgow, Russell-Cairns, Govier and the Mayor (Councillor James)  
Richard Coupe, Sharon Davis, Emma Ranson-Bellamy, Peter Watts, Keith Wheatley, Adrian Hooper, Dr. Joanne O'Hara