



WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Notes of a meeting of the Wellington Town Centre Working Group held on Wednesday 30th October 2018 at 5.30pm in the Council Chamber, 28 Fore Street, Wellington

Present: Councillor Shepherd (Chairman)
The Mayor (Councillor James), Councillor Lithgow
Sharon Davis, Adrian Hooper, and Keith Wheatley (Around Wellington), Peter Watts
Kathryn Hemensley– Town Clerk
Gill Croucher – Town Clerk’s Assistant

Apologies: None

1. Town Centre Working Group Report

Councillor Shepherd had circulated a draft report of the Town Centre Working group which would be presented for consideration by the Wellington Town Council at their next full Council meeting on 12th November.

2. Updates from the last meeting

2a. Film Festival – update

Further progress had been made in the planning of a proposed Film Festival. Councillor Lithgow and Keith had attended several meetings and there was considerable enthusiasm for the event and a number of individuals willing to help. It was proposed and agreed that Rowan Wilde could be engaged on a self-employed basis and at a cost of £5,000 to run this event. She in turn would be able to apply for grants to help reduce running costs, which would also be subsidised by ticket sales. It was agreed that the first year for this event should not be over ambitious, but it was hoped to include one outdoor event in the Autumn. There was also the possibility of linked activities such as fancy-dress linked to film themes.

Councillor Lithgow stated he was willing to be the Councillor liaison for the Film Festival and suggested that he and Keith could form a sub-group to the Town Centre Working party, which would additionally oversee Rowan. Adrian volunteered to join this sub-group.

It was agreed to present a bid for the Film Festival for the Council to consider a financial contribution at its budget setting meeting on 19th November.

2b. Rental of property in town for community/small business use

Investigations had progressed regarding the proposal for Wellington Town Council to take a lease on an empty premise in town to act as a 'pop-up shop'. This would be for fledgling local businesses wishing to test the waters for retail viability, or a free-of-charge temporary High Street space for charitable organisations wishing to promote their services. As summarised in Councillor Shepherd's report, and following Greg's visit to the premises information to date is:-

- A monthly rent of £575.00 has been initially suggested but is open to negotiation.
- There is some interest from other businesses.
- Due to previous use the premises is in poor condition and would require repairs and a professional clean before being fit for the intended use.

Discussions followed which identified essential further considerations :-

- There would be set-up costs including legal fees to enter into a lease and also to subsequently rent the property on to prospective tenants.
- Wellington Town Council would need to be clear on the full scale of its legal responsibilities as the formal leaseholder, and ensure financial costs were appropriately covered. This would include energy, telephone, broadband contracts as well as many other costs arising from running a business.
- It was unlikely that a one year lease would be available as leases tend to be longer (often 6 years), and the preference would be to seek a 2-year lease with a one year break-clause. This would necessitate seeking approval from the full council for a 2-year financial commitment to this proposal.
- There was a need to re-appraise likely costs for the project as the initially suggested sum of £10,000 per annum was likely to be under-estimated. Sarah offered to share her expertise re likely costings for the Council.
- It was suggested that it would be helpful to draw up a list of possible ongoing costs for potential retailers so they could have a real sense of likely outgoings in running their business. Also to set a realistic rent.
- It was noted that some interest from potential retailers had already been shown.
- Given the lack of capacity within the Town Clerk's role it would be necessary to set up a working party sub-group to assess applications for renting, and to administrate the rental process. Councillor Shepherd and Peter Watts expressed an interest in taking this on.

The proposal and a request for funding up to a maximum of £8,000 will be presented to the Council's budget-setting meeting on the 19th November.

3. Continuation of the Working Group

Although the Group had reached the end of its original, planned timetable it was agreed that it would like to continue in order to progress the above items.

4. Any other business

A query was raised about any known plans for the future of the town's Post Office. It was noted that the intention of the Post Office was to seek an operating space within an existing shop, but that no further detail was known.

5. Date of next meeting

5.30pm Tuesday 28th November 2018 at the Council office.

The meeting ended at 6.45pm

Members: Councillors Shepherd (Chair), Lithgow, Russell-Cairns, Barr and the Mayor (Councillor James) Richard Coupe, Sharon Davis, Emma Ransom-Bellamy, Peter Watts, Keith Wheatley, Adrian Hooper.