

TEAM ABERGAVENNY

BETTER, TOGETHER

Update Report to the Bryn Y Cwm Area Committee on 12 October 2016

Since our last report in April this year please find the following update:

1. Communications

- a. The 3rd edition of Team Abergavenny's Newsletter has been circulated.*
- b. Consultation. Over the coming months The Team will be giving greater emphasis to community engagement.*
- c. We are aware of the outline plans to redevelop the Town Hall as a Hub to include the One Stop Shop and Library as one combined entity, the Borough Theatre and the Town Council.
Public engagement: it is important and that Officers when producing the consultation timetable do not limit it just to stakeholders. It is very important, as demonstrated with the recent Public Realm meetings, that a wide range of views should be taken at the outset in order to avoid delays or problems at a later stage.*
- d. We note the report about the constitution of the Programme Board and Area Committee on your agenda. Team Abergavenny has expressed its preference for community engagement to be based on the Bryn y Cwm Area Committee structure because it engages with representatives from the whole of the Bryn y Cwm area. Also we would welcome an opportunity to report direct to this new Committee. We accept that this would mean greater work by the Team, but it would be worthwhile because it would be seen to be more democratic and also it would enable members to be more involved with the Team's activities.*

2. Development

- a. Because there is a lack of clarity by the Officers at County Hall on the direction and role the voluntary Whole Place scheme we asked in June to meet in order to seek clarity. The current approach to dealing with volunteers generate uncertainty and difficulties in managing projects. The uncertain position we believe stems from the frequency of changes in the staff and structure and in communicating policy. Our request was made via the Chairman of the Bryn y Cwm Area Management Committee and the position is still unresolved. The request to meet started in June when £30k capital business plans were rejected. We are extremely disappointed as we cannot be sure of our future direction without this guidance. We also note that despite notification of our monthly meetings no Whole Place Officer has requested to attend for several months, which gives rise to further uncertainty about the future of the Whole Place Plan.*
- b. Abergavenny Redevelopment Fund. As this fund is still in existence we would like to resubmit the rejected projects for your consideration. These projects are still important in helping to redevelop Abergavenny and district.
The schemes were:
*Kitchen equipment for Abergavenny Community Centre £5000
*Improved access to lighting in the Borough Theatre - £15000
*A consultant in order to get agreement from CADW to erect a tensile fabric canopy over the upper Brewery Yard Area. £2500
A contribution to new lighter weight market stalls in the Market Hall £6000
- c. Liaison: We met with a representative from Caldicot Town Team and in consequence we will review our objectives to allow for a wider interpretation of our areas of involvement.*

Also we will be adopting a more formal method to process our annual plan and it will be linked to the 5 year plan and submitted to the ByC Area Management Committee for consideration. We believe that once approved it will enable the Team to make bids for money from suitable sources and hopefully it will reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and achieve less time delays in implementation.

3. *WiFi in the Town*

The scheme to provide public WiFi in the town is progressing slowly. The difficulty arises from getting permission to place the WiFi hubs on the outside of buildings strategically through the town. Absentee landlords and traders who have no interest in helping the business community has made the project more difficult.

4. *Public Realm. (Bridge across the Usk for pedestrians/cyclists)*

We facilitated a meeting of the public realm group recently to discuss the proposed new bridge across the Usk. The proposal to locate it downstream of the existing road-bridge about 300m down, was accepted as the favoured option of the three, but there was some disappointment that this is not being seen as a part of a wider plan for transport across the Usk and through the town generally. There was disappointment that de-trunking of the A40 through town is not being considered.

3 October 2016