

Minutes of the Design for Public Realm
Fore Street (top end) & St James Place
Tuesday 18th August 2009
5.00 pm Crescent House Hotel, Ilfracombe

Present

Gary Smith – Transform Neighbourhood Management
Janine Whapham - Transform
Sally Nelson – Joint Delivery Team, North Devon+
Peter Quincey – Joint Delivery Team, North Devon+
Liam & Sylvia McGonigle – Crescent House Hotel
Mark Richardson – Terrace Tapas Bar
Martin Cassini – Fit Roads
Paul Mannix – Tea Gardens
Tony Maddison – Maddy's Chip Shop
Tim Cox – Trans-Send
Cllr Mike Edmunds – Ilfracombe Garden Shop
Cllr Paul Crabb – North Devon Council
Geoff & Chrissie Twigger - Eclectick
Cllr Frank Pearson – Ilfracombe Town Council
Peter Draper – Quality Signs Ilfracombe
Cllr John Swann – Ilfracombe Town Council
Claire Hole – Alices Wedding Emporium
Nicola Draper – Douglass & Dean
Ian Bendle – North Devon Homes
John & Suzanne Brown – Wellingtons
Kirsty Doorbar – Harcourt Hotel
Phil Goulding – Ilfracombe Table Tennis Club

1. Welcome

Gary Smith introduced himself as the Neighbourhood Manager of Transform and introduced Sally Nelson and Peter Quincy from North Devon+.

2. Purpose of meeting

Local businesses/residents had been invited to attend this public meeting and had been given details prior to the meeting. Its purpose is to look at the public realm, i.e streets, pavements, lighting, seating, signage and street furniture and specifically looking at the top end of Fore Street and St James Place areas.

GS introduced Sally Nelson (SN) and Pete Quincey (PQ) of North Devon+. SN explained that she and PQ are surveyors and form the Joint Delivery Team (JDT), appointed to deliver the strategic regeneration projects identified within the Development Frameworks for Bideford and Ilfracombe but are separate from the local authorities. She explained that they did not have any capital funding but there is a small budget for design work which if the group agree could be commissioned for the two 'pilot' streets by the end of this year. The JDT had been brought in with high expectations for the delivery of strategic schemes but she added that these will not happen immediately, some might take years. SN stated that the Terence O'Rourke Study 2005 had already identified Ilfracombe as having a lack of pedestrian friendly environment which has a negative impact. SN thought that there was a lack of integration between different areas within the town. She stated that it was important to have a coherent strategy for public realm for the whole of Ilfracombe. SN informed the group that she and PQ had done a walkabout of Ilfracombe with the Transportation Officers of North Devon Council, the Conservation Officer, looking specifically at travel movement and public space. SN commented that Ilfracombe High Street looked 'tired'.

They were looking at the top end of Fore Street and St James Place as 'pilot' projects for detailed design with the intention to roll-out to the High Street and longer term link with the harbour and seafront. PQ said there was a similar scheme in operation at Bideford and this was well supported by the Traders. By linking in with commercial business it is good economic rationale to do this in Ilfracombe. SN stated that it was important not to get into

'consultation overload' but get a project which is deliverable in the short term and able to access funding. SN asked if the group was in favour of commissioning a designer to carry out improvements for St James Place and the top end of Fore Street. She added that the Highways' Inspectors were supportive of these two street improvements. The group confirmed that they were in favour but wanted the following concerns/suggestions noted:

- strategy for the design must be for the whole town
- achieve a brand image for whole of Ilfracombe
- flashing/hanging signs advertising events/giving information on the town
- look at all signage, especially leading to places of interest/food etc.
- ensure work carried out doesn't have to be re-laid for future plans i.e introduction of the ferry
- consider road infrastructure/travel & transport/links to High Street and Harbour
- look at the street scene – antiquity of areas in Ilfracombe are very different
- consider coloured tarmac surfaces
- if funds are available, look at Sommers Crescent area, this will become busier with additional apartments/cars
- don't just go for the 'cheap option'
- conservation must be of high priority where planning is concerned – "a lot of visitors enjoy the diversity of views in Ilfracombe"
- avoid standardising the town, street furniture etc - doesn't have to be the same
- look at shared space with a view to slow down traffic flow
- approach Wetherspoons to make a contribution under the Developer Contribution scheme towards the cost of development outside the premises
- put pressure on the owners of Montebello Hotel to make good the site and repair road surfaces (enforcement is difficult as it's third party ownership) – arrange for hoarding
- look at a pedestrian crossing to Candar

SN said that once a designer has been appointed, there will be a cohesive approach to this project, respecting Ilfracombe's diversity and characteristics.

SN added that the brick pavers cannot be replaced and 'near misses' are used for repairs. Members of the group said that a number of people had suffered falls/broken limbs as result of paving stones which have sunk.

SN asked for people to join a small group representing both Fore Street and St James Place to be involved in choosing the designer. Cllr Frank Pearson, Geoff Twigg and Mark Richardson agreed to sit on the group. SN advised that minutes of meetings will be sent to attendees as further stages take place.

Action: Joint Delivery Team to appoint representatives to group.

It was suggested that minutes should be placed on the Ilfracombe Town Council and Transform website.

Action: Janine Whapham to arrange for Ilfracombe Town Council forum and Transform website to publicise minutes/information.

Gary Smith thanked Liam & Sylvia McGonigle for agreeing to host the meeting at their hotel and thanked everyone for their input.

Meeting closed: 6.10 p.m