



Bishop Auckland Town Team

22nd February 2018

Notes and Actions

Present: Nigel Bryson, (Chairman) and Alan Anderson, Clive Auld, Lee Brownson, John Campbell, Peter Daniels, Clare Davison, Maureen Davison, Glen Dixon, Fiona Ewing, Gary Ewing, Liz Fisher, Claire Gibbons, Susan Graydon, Hazel Kennedy, Stefa McManners, Chris Percival, Josh Railton, Chris Robinson, Dave Stephenson, Karen Wager, Deniece Wanley, Kathryn Watson, Robert Whitehouse, Ann Williams-Maughan, Dave Wilson, Jean Wombwell and David Anderson

Apologies Raj Devgan, Gill Leach, Dr Bob McManners, Bernie Rush and Charlie Walton

1. Notes of meeting held on 16th November 2017

Notes of the meeting were agreed

2. Presentations

A number of presentations were given along the themes of achievements in 2017 and plans for 2018 and beyond.

The Town Team vision was to have a vibrant, attractive and thriving town centre. This would be achieved by Town Team partners (Auckland Projects, Kynren, Durham County Council and others) creating attractions, such as Kynren, Mining Art Gallery, Auckland Castle, Spanish Art Gallery, Food Festival and other events, which would result in increased footfall in the town. This would create opportunities for new and current businesses and encourage inward investment thereby helping create training and employment opportunities for local people

In addition, Durham County Council, Brighter Bishop Auckland, and others were working to improve the local infrastructure and environment to make the town a more pleasant place to visit.

3. DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL REGENERATION

Kathryn Watson gave an overview of the work being undertaken by Durham County Council including:-

Targeted Business Improvement Fund, which was aimed at improving the design and appearance of business premises to improve commercial vitality and generate investment in the town centre. It would also create a sense of pride and generate employment and training opportunities. In addition it would bring disused premises back into use.

A number of examples of premises that had benefited from the fund were highlighted.

Heritage Action Zone. A successful bid had been made to Historic England for the town centre to become a Heritage Action Zone (HAZ). This would provide a range of Historic England resources and expertise. A five year delivery plan was being developed by a HAZ Action Group with the aim of utilising local heritage to achieve sustainable economic growth. In addition it would seek to remove historic buildings from the Historic England 'At Risk' register.

The HAZ delivery plan would incorporate a programme of skills training.

Public Realm & Highways Work. A range of works were planned to improve the roads and street furniture in the town centre, in particular in Newgate Street.

Wi-Fi & Footfall Monitor. Work was continuing to provide free public wi-fi in the town centre. Along with the free wi-fi a Geo Sense footfall platform would monitor the demographics of visitors to the town centre which would provide useful management and marketing data.

Masterplan A masterplan exercise was being carried out in the town centre. 770 responses had been received on the first round of the consultation. Ryder Architecture were working on understanding the infrastructure requirements. A second round of consultation would take place later in the year.

The presentation also covered improvements to the pedestrian signage in the town centre and also phase 2 of the North Bondgate Car Park which would create an additional 400 spaces.

4. **BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL**

David Anderson, Town Clerk, gave an overview of the activities that Bishop Auckland Town Council was involved in relating to town centre regeneration. These included:-

Bishop Auckland Food Festival
Horticultural and Produce Show
Christmas event

It was also explained that the Town Council was involved in the free wi-fi project, 'Use our Loos' community toilet scheme, Brighter Bishop Auckland partnership and the Heritage Action Zone board. The Town Council also provided free dog bags from the Four Clocks Centre and partnered with DCC to provide hanging baskets in the town centre to improve the environment.

5. **BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN (EVENTS) TEAM**

Clive Auld, Chair of the Bishop Auckland Town (Events) Team gave an outline of the events organised during the previous year. These included:-

- Newgate Street Banners
- Easter Eggstravaganza
- Buskers events
- New Car Show
- Celebrating together event
- Monster Saturday
- Advent Windows project
- Christmas events

Also planned for 2018 was an event to commemorate the centenary of the end of the First World War, a 1940's weekend and a classic car show.

An events booklet had been produced detailing events to be held during 2018, which was circulated for information.

6. **THE AUCKLAND PROJECT (TAP)**

Liz Fisher, Engagement Director TAP, gave an overview of TAP and explained that its purpose was to:-

- Use culture and heritage as a catalyst for regeneration
- Work with the local community to nurture pride, raise aspirations and create opportunities
- Create an environment for businesses to thrive and grow and
- Help reinvigorate Bishop Auckland

It was noted that to date £130m has been committed to achieving those goals, which had resulted in

- 100 staff
- 22 apprentices
- £50m worth of contracts
- 6,000 students 2015-2017
- 30,000 Castle visitors in 2016
- Thousands of event attendees
- No.42
- Mining Art Gallery

Future plans included:-

- Opening of the newly created Auckland Tower (21st July 2018)
- Opening of the renovated Auckland Castle (1st December 2018)
- The Spanish Gallery, Walled Garden and Faith Museum were scheduled to open in 2019.

In addition TAP aimed to create and additional

- 8,000 opportunities for learning and skills development
- 60 apprenticeships
- More than 400 jobs
- More than 400,000 visitors
- £20m p/a for the local economy

7. KYNREN

Deniece Wanley Head of Business Development & Communications, gave an overview of the highlights of 2017 and also what was new for 2018.

- 2017 saw a 90% return rate of cast and crew, which demonstrated the commitment and pride people had in being part of Kynren.
- Exit times had reduced from 2 hours to 40 minutes.
- Kynren was on track to attract 500,000 visitors by 2020
- Kynren continued to attract visitors from the UK and internationally. Links had also been made with the travel trade to encourage coach and excursion visits.

An enhanced pre-show guest experience was planned for 2018. This would include an animal croft, Food Village & corporate hospitality.

A new pricing structure would be introduced which would include family tickets and group discounts. Work would continue to build on the links made during 2017 to encourage take up from the travel sector.

Packages were being created aimed at encouraging visitors to 'linger longer' to increase economic spend in the area. This would be achieved with the establishment of local partnerships so that the locality benefited from the increase in economic activity. Work was also ongoing with destination marketing organisations and also UK inbound organisations to encourage international tourists. Third party platforms were being utilised to increase visibility of Kynren.

A preview of the marketing material, including TV advert was shown.

Kynren was continuing to increase its activity during 2018 to help put Bishop Auckland and the surrounding area on the map.

7. Next Meeting

Thursday, 17th May 2018 at 6.00 p.m. (AGM)