



DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Council Offices, 19 North Square, Dorchester, Dorset. DT1 1JF
Telephone: (01305) 266861

Adrian Stuart, Town Clerk

20 March 2019

You are invited to a meeting of the **DORCHESTER HERITAGE JOINT COMMITTEE** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, NORTH SQUARE, DORCHESTER** on **MONDAY 25 MARCH 2019** commencing at **7.00pm**.

Town Clerk and Secretary to the Committee

Declaration of Interests

Members are reminded that the Code of Conduct requires Members to declare any interest which they have in any matter under discussion. If the interest is regarded as a Personal Interest the Member may remain and take part in the consideration of the item but if the interest is a Prejudicial Interest the Member must withdraw from the Chamber during the consideration of it.

Membership

West Dorset District Council: A. Canning, J. Dunseith, S. Jones

Dorchester Town Council: C. Biggs, G. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger

The following Members may attend and speak but not vote:

Mr S Conibear (Duchy of Cornwall), T. James (Dorchester Civic Society), A Chisholm (Dorchester Chamber for Business), C Copson (The Keep Military Museum), C M Hebditch (Dorchester Local Nature Reserve), J Murden (Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society), T Loasby (Blue Badge Tourist Guides) M Rice (Dorchester Association), A Bright (Shire Hall), R M Biggs (Dorset County Council)

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES

To read, confirm and sign the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 28 January 2019 (copy enclosed).

3. **DECLARATIONS OF PREDETERMINATION**

Members to declare if they consider that they have predetermined or may predetermine in the relation to the following items and to indicate the action they will be taking when the item is considered.

NOTE: It is the responsibility of individual Members to decide whether they have predetermined in relation to an item. Members who make a declaration should leave the room during the discussion and voting.

Members who may wish to take part in the decision making process as a member of another committee, at which the item is to be considered, should decide whether they wish to participate at this stage.

4. **CAR PARKING NEAR NORTHERNHAY**

To consider correspondence received from Anthony Gannon in respect of car parking near Northernhay (location plan attached) – extract from correspondence below:-

“Two years ago this month a group I organised planted trees and shrubs along the access to Lodgers Car Park and along its east boundary with the river northward to the gauging weir. These are growing well and I have weeded regularly. The purpose is to shield the view of the CP and the railings beyond from walkers on the footpath to Blue Bridge. Also to add to the setting of The Walks and Hangmans Cottage. The initial (heavy) ground clearance was done by DCC, the trees paid for by same, and staff of DTC helped plant the verge nearest Hangmans Cottage. Months of co-ordination, but I'm glad I persisted. Since when DCC have not renewed the yellow markings here and up to six cars can occupy the edge of the plantings (the western part having been done by Lidl). The DCC Enforcement Officers are unable to ticket cars under these circumstances. I feel the Heritage Cttee may have an interest, although all my emails sent to DTC, copied to A.Canning, have had no action. A site meeting (with officers ?) may be required.”

5. **NEW MEMBER REQUEST**

To consider a request from the National Trust (for Max Gate and Hardy's Cottage) to become a member of the Committee.

6. **2018-19 BUDGET UPDATE**

To consider the 2018-19 Budget Update (attached).

7. **VICTORIAN FAIR A THOMAS HARDY DAY FOR DORCHESTER**

Further to Minute No. 38/2018 to receive an update in respect of the Thomas Hardy Day and to confirm that the Heritage Committee will become a partner in the event along with the Dorchester Town Council.

8. **THE DEVELOPMENT OF A HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY**

To consider a report by the Town Clerk (attached).

9. **SUPPORTING HISTORIC HIGH STREETS EVENT**

Further to Minute No. 44/2019 to receive the notes by Kate Hebditch on the above event (attached).

10. **QUESTIONS**

To receive questions submitted by Members in writing to the Dorchester Town Clerk and in respect of which the appropriate notice has been given.

11. **URGENT ITEMS**

To consider any other items that the Chairman decides are urgent.

12. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To consider a date for the next meeting of the Committee.

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE

28 JANUARY 2019

At a Meeting of the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee held on 28 January 2019:

PRESENT:

Dorchester Town Council	Councillors: G. Jones F. Kent-Ledger
	Officer: S. Newman
West Dorset District Council	Councillors: A. Canning (Chairman) J. Dunseith S. Jones
Blue Badge Tourist Guides	T. Loasby
Dorchester Association	M. Rice
Dorchester Chamber for Business	A. Chisholm
Dorchester Civic Society	T. James
Dorset County Council	R. Biggs
Dorchester Local Nature Reserve	K. Hebditch

33. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C. Biggs (Dorchester Town Council), J. Murden (Dorset Natural history and Archaeological Society), A. Bright (Shire Hall) and C. Copson (The Keep Military Museum).

34. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2018, a copy of which had been circulated, were confirmed and signed.

35. **DECLARATIONS OF PRE-DETERMINATION**

There were no declarations of pre-determination.

36. **ROMAN TOWN HOUSE**

The Committee received a presentation from Mr S. Wallis, Dorset County Council's Senior Archaeologist updating Members on the project to refurbish and improve the setting of the Roman Town House.

Mr Wallis gave some history of the Town House and the issues associated with its present set up. The issues included patch pointing falling from the ceiling of the covered structure, anti-social behaviour behind the Town House, broken roof slates, poor access etc.

Mr Wallis then gave details of the proposed project which included a new access, work to open up the site, improved interpretation, new amphitheatre for events, removal of old structures etc.

Work had been progressing on obtaining consents which were required prior to submitting a single phase bid to HLF which would hopefully be submitted later in 2019.

Members very much supported the project and the progress made, they also felt that there was a need for improved signage from the front of County Hall and also a need for a couple of disabled parking spaces. In response to a question Mr Wallis felt that the new Dorset Council would be committed to the project.

The Chairman confirmed that the Committee had previously agreed to financially support the project if other funding partners needed to be identified.

The Committee thanked Mr Wallis for attending the meeting and for the very useful presentation.

37. **DORSET ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE WEEK – DORCHESTER EVENT – SUNDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2018 AND PROPOSED EVENT SUNDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2019**

The Committee considered the 'Open Dor' evaluation report which had been prepared to give feedback on the success of the 2018 event and which also included some recommendations for future events.

Members felt that a timetable flyer and central information point might be useful for future events.

The Committee felt that the event had been successful and that it should be undertaken again on Sunday 15 September 2019. The recommendations contained within the evaluation report were also supported.

RESOLVED

That the event be supported again on Sunday 15 September 2019 with the Committee funding the cost of the road closures.

38. **A THOMAS HARDY DAY FOR DORCHESTER**

The Dorchester Chamber representative and G. Jones updated the Committee in respect of the proposal for a 'Thomas Hardy Day'. It was suggested that the event be held on Sunday 2 June 2019 to coincide with the annual Thomas Hardy birthday celebration. A group of interested parties had been established to progress the proposal.

The Committee was supportive of the proposal and agreed that it would cover the cost of the road closures. It was noted that there was a need for an administrative resource to support the group and that there would also be a need for a good number of volunteers to manage the road closures on the day.

RESOLVED

That the event to be held on Sunday 2 June 2019 be supported and that the Committee fund the cost of the road closures.

39. **DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL – HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY**

Further to Minute No 23/2018, the Committee noted that the Town Council Policy Committee had agreed to meet with Heritage partners and potential contractors to explore the potential for commissioning work on a Heritage Strategy for Dorchester.

Members were also circulated with a draft letter on behalf of the Committee to West Dorset District Council seeking funding of up to £50,000 towards the Heritage Strategy project.

RESOLVED

(1) That the Town Council Policy Committee decision be noted.

(2) That the draft letter to West Dorset District Council be agreed and sent.

40. **ROWAN HOUSE BLUE PLAQUE**

The Committee was reminded that it had previously agreed to support the proposal of a blue plaque, to be placed on Rowan House, in respect of Captain G R Sullivan VC who had resided in the property and who was commemorated on the Town's war memorial.

The owners of the property were keen to progress with the blue plaque and to have an official unveiling and had requested that the Committee consider contributing £400 towards the cost of the plaque and installation. The owners were also asking for assistance with the proposed

unveiling ceremony.

Mr K. Wilson attended on behalf of the owners and presented a mock-up of the proposed blue plaque. Mr Wilson also asked that the Committee write to the Duchy of Cornwall supporting the owners suggestion to The Duchy that HRH Prince Charles unveil the blue plaque.

RESOLVED

(1) That a contribution of £400 be made to the cost of the blue plaque.

(2) That the Committee supports the request for HRH Prince Charles to unveil the plaque.

41. **COMMITTEE CONSTITUTION POST LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION**

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that at the present time the Committee constitution stated that there shall be three Councillors from Dorchester Town Council and three Councillors from West Dorset District Council. These Councillors had voting rights. Dorset County Councillors within the Dorchester electoral divisions were also invited to attend but did not have voting rights.

From April, Dorset County Council and West Dorset District Council would cease to exist and would be replaced by the new Dorset Council unitary authority.

The new Dorset Council would need to give consideration to those bodies it wished to be represented on and how it would appoint Members to them.

Members noted that the review of the constitution would therefore need to be undertaken following the establishment of the new Dorset Council but felt that a letter should be sent to the new Dorset Council stating that the Committee did wish to continue and to urge it to appoint Members to it.

RESOLVED

That the new Dorset Council be informed of the Committee's desire for the Heritage Committee to continue and that the new Council appoint Members to it as soon as is possible.

42. **COMMEMORATION OF 1623 EMIGRATION TO MASSACHUSETTS**

The Committee gave consideration to correspondence received from a member of the public in respect of a suggestion for a celebration, in 2023, of the 400th anniversary of the sailing of the first ship taking folk from Dorchester to found a new settlement in Massachusetts.

Members felt sure that the Committee would wish to be a partner in such a commemoration

but felt that it would be more appropriate for the newly constituted Heritage Committee to decide upon following Local Government Reorganisation.

RESOLVED

That a commemoration of the 1623 emigration to Massachusetts be supported in principle but that the newly constituted Heritage Committee give the matter further consideration following Local Government reorganisation.

43. **QUESTIONS**

No formal questions had been submitted.

44. **URGENT ITEMS**

The representative from the Local Nature Reserve reported back to the Committee on the Supporting Historic Highstreets: The Visitor Economy event held recently.

45. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee should be a budget meeting and be held on Monday 25 March 2019 commencing at 7.00pm.

Chairman:

Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee				
Year ended 31st March 2019				
Statement of Accounts				
			£	£
<u>Income and Expenditure</u>				
Contributions in year				
16/07/2018	Dorchester Association - Nappers Mite clock donation		250.00	
15/08/2018	Dorchester Explorer		5.00	
17/09/2018	Dorchester Explorer		21.00	
15/10/2018	Dorchester BID - Nappers Mite clock donation		827.81	
15/10/2018	Dorchester Explorer		2.50	
19/10/2018	Langton Herring Village - Nappers Mite clock donation		35.00	
13/03/2019	Dorchester Town Council - Nappers Mite clock donation		1200.00	
				2,341.31
Expenditure in year				
16/07/2018	Access All Areas - Nappers clock	-	175.00	
16/07/2018	Chris Groves - Napper clock face	-	584.00	
17/09/2018	Eventbrite - hire of 2 SIA Officers for road closure	-	200.00	
09/10/2018	A Chisholm - refund road closure	-	140.00	
10/10/2018	Lam-Art - PVC Banner Nappers Clock	-	42.00	
16/10/2018	SWS - Nappers Mite scaffolding	-	2,065.00	
19/10/2018	Goddire - Replica pair of clock hands	-	510.00	
19/10/2018	Chris Groves - clock hands for gilding	-	80.00	
22/10/2018	Clox on Time - Nappers Clock	-	300.00	
30/10/2018	DCC - High West St road closure	-	1,408.75	
04/11/2018	RS Welding - Nappers Clock	-	507.50	
01/01/2019	Common Heritage	-	125.00	
04/02/2019	Eventbrite - Kate Hebditch, Historic High Streets	-	-80.00	
				- 6,217.25
Deficit in year				- 3,875.94
<u>Balance Sheet</u>				
Balance brought forward as at 1st April 2018				12,349.37
Add: Deficit in year				- 3,875.94
Balance carried forward as at 31st March 2019				8,473.43
<u>Outstanding Commitments</u>				
				-
	Dorchester Boundry Stone		400.00	
	Blue & Pub Plaque (Reduced by £3k only commitment is £400 to Rown Hse Plaque)		2,000.00	
	WWI Trail		0.00	
	Jo Draper Bench (Grant amount not yet agreed by Cttee)		1,000.00	
	Architectural Heritage Event 2019		1,500.00	
	Thomas Hardy Day 2019		1,500.00	
	Roman Town House (Grant amount not yet agreed by Cttee)		1,000.00	
				7,400.00
	Available balance			1,073.43

DORCHESTER HERITAGE JOINT COMMITTEE - 25 MARCH 2019

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY

Background

1. The Committee will be aware that the Town Council has included two tasks in its Corporate Plan over the last four years:

- Develop & Implement a Tourism strategy, with strong Heritage focus
- Carry out an Informal heritage sites audit for the town

A project budget of £70,000 was allocated to support the two tasks, £20,000 of which was allocated to deliver a refresh of the town's pedestrian signage, leaving £50,000 to develop the strategy. The Town Council's funding was conditional on funding being forthcoming from other sources.

While some progress has been made, neither project has achieved significant momentum due to a lack of capacity at both Town Council and partner.

2. In the second half of 2018 fresh attempts were made to identify external resources that could support the project. As a result of this process several possible resources were identified that could support discrete parts of a Strategy Development project. It also became clear that no one resource was available to deliver the breadth of work required, particularly to co-ordinate the whole process.
3. In January the Committee agreed to make an approach to West Dorset District Council for £50,000 of matchfunding for the project. A request was made for detailed information in support of the request and the information submitted is replicated at Appendix 1.
4. Following some additional questions it is very pleasing to report that the District Council have allocated £50,000 to the project and are keen to see it advanced at the earliest opportunity. Their decision is an enormous boost to the project.

Next Steps

5. Hitherto the project has been managed within the Policy Committee of Dorchester Town Council, being the only funders. The West Dorset DC funding has been allocated to this Committee and the two bodies (this Committee and DTC Policy Committee) need to agree an appropriate way forward.
6. The West Dorset grant comes at an opportune moment but also presents some decisions that need to be made
 - Is the Committee content with the Project Specification that was drafted to secure the funding? Is anything missing?
 - How do we reorganise the Committee's Governance arrangements to deliver the project?

- Membership and Terms of Reference for the Committee itself will need to be reviewed as part of local government reorganisation
- The Committee also needs to consider how it will offer opportunities to integrate the wider Tourism community into its structure; the strategy is as much focused on Tourism as it is on Heritage
- The Committee also needs to consider how the voice of the Heritage and Tourism sector from the immediately surrounding area can be heard; several key heritage assets and much tourism infrastructure exists outside the town's boundaries
- Is the Committee content that the Steering Group referred to in the document represents the Heritage and Tourism sectors?
 - The Steering Group (8 participants in total) was established by the Policy Committee of the Town Council, with 3 representatives of the Heritage Community (currently Jon, Murden, Anna Bright and Luke Rake, Principal of Kingston Maurward College) and three members of the tourism community (Sandy Jordan representing retailers with two vacancies for representatives of the accommodation and food hospitality sectors). Supported by the Town Clerk and Trevor Hedger, Economic Development Officer of West Dorset DC
 - It is essential that any Steering Group is small enough to operate effectively but at the same time works to ensure that the wider views of the Heritage and Tourism sectors are taken account of
- Is the Committee content that officers prepare the ground to recruit a Project Manager (to include preparing a Job Description and Person Spec and advert, ready to start a recruitment process once a new Committee has met post elections?)
- Is the Committee content that it should continue to be supported primarily by Town Council officers and its financial affairs managed within the Town Council's financial arrangements?

7. In conclusion

- There is now £100,000 available to make the delivery of a Heritage Tourism Strategy project happen
- A first draft specification is available to shape how that money should be allocated
- There is sufficient funding to recruit a dedicated part time Project Manager to co-ordinate the project
- Appropriately skilled contractors are being identified that could be engaged to deliver specific elements of the project
- The overall governance arrangements for the project need to be resolved fairly quickly in order to progress the project

8. In order to present a more comprehensive proposal on governance to Dorchester Town Council the Committee's views are sought.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

**DORCHESTER (HERITAGE) TOURISM STRATEGY PROJECT
SPECIFICATION****BACKGROUND**

Dorchester Heritage Joint Committee, working with partners from the local Heritage and Tourism sectors, wishes to develop a Tourism Strategy and Action Plan to promote awareness of the town as it continues to invest in and grow its Heritage and Tourism infrastructure.

Dorchester, the administrative and county town for rural Dorset, has a population of 20,000. It has 17,000 jobs, over half of which are in the public sector, with key local employers being Dorset County Hospital and the Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group, Dorset County and West Dorset District Councils, plus a well-developed state school sector serving a wide rural hinterland. Its manufacturing and commercial sectors are, by comparison, modest, while the town's retail sector has traditionally met local needs rather than being a destination for shopping. Unemployment levels are very low and the town is reliant on commuters to fill 60% of its jobs.

Its tourism sector has traditionally been understated, but recent years have seen growth driven by the Brewery Square and Poundbury developments, with lottery/local government investment in key heritage assets. The attached table documents ongoing changes and future ambitions.

Although the town centre is well-defined and constrained the town itself is growing rapidly and now incorporates Poundbury, with a range of independent shops. The town's heritage and tourism offer naturally spills out of the town's administrative boundaries to include immediately adjacent Maiden Castle, Hardy's Cottage and Max Gate (both National Trust) and Kingston Maurward Gardens. It is difficult to separate off the town's heritage offer from that of a wider hinterland.

PROJECT SCOPE

To work with a small group of operators from tourism related sectors (accommodation, retail, catering, heritage, culture) and local Councils to use the town's heritage to develop a distinct identity and brand to support the promotion of tourism in and around Dorchester, dovetailing with the wider Dorset tourism offer.

The project will

- Facilitate workshops of local interested parties, focused on identifying the strengths of, and opportunities to develop, the local tourism offer
- Advocate the outcomes from this work with the wider tourism sector to secure buy in for the conclusions from those involved in discussions, then
- Identify the most appropriate markets to promote Dorchester to and the most appropriate media channels to use
- Prepare a costed Strategy and Action Plan to develop a distinct image for the town and then commence the process of promoting it to new markets
- Identify how any Strategy can be embedded within the Tourism sector for the town in the long term

- Assist agencies to identify a possible programme of public infrastructure and private property improvements to increase the visual attractiveness of the town
- Support liaison with other Tourism bodies in Dorset, including Visit Dorset and the Dorset Tourism Association, who are working on county/national initiatives, to create synergy between their wider Tourism work and Strategy and the integration of the approach for Dorchester
- Identify how young people might be involved in the delivery of the tourism strategy, with a particular focus on creating opportunities to develop careers in the sector, including apprenticeships
- Advise on current exemplars for the delivery of heritage and tourism information effectively and efficiently, then deliver a plan to match these exemplars
- Identify possible sources of external and local, one off and ongoing, funding to support the delivery of the above
- Identify steps to ensure that, while initially focused on Heritage Tourism, the programme developed can also be expanded to incorporate other Tourism related offers, particularly in the Cultural sector

GOVERNANCE

- The Heritage Joint Committee will act in a capacity of overall project sponsor, steering the project to achieve the goals identified above
- A steering group comprising representatives of local heritage providers, the retail, accommodation and food sectors and local authority professionals will make appointments and approve and monitor delivery of a detailed programme. The steering group will also engage with the wider heritage community
- Dorchester Town Council will act as the accountable body for the project and will be the employing body/client with responsibility for management of staff and contractor resources
- A part time project manager will be employed to manage the project throughout the delivery period from conception to implementation
- Individual contractors with specialisms in discrete parts of the programme will be engaged as required

BUDGET

- Expenditure

Resource	£000	Detail
Project Manager (2 years)	50	Employee @ 20hr pw, plus o/c, to manage the programme from start to finish
Specialist contractors	30	To deliver discreet pieces of programme work inc. Heritage audit, Sector engagement, Visitor identification, Brand creation, Promotion and Marketing
Materials and Marketing	20	Branding rollout, Initial Marketing
Total	100	Note: this is the core budget. During the programme it is likely that additional funding might be required to fully exploit new markets

- Income

Funder	£000	Detail
Dorchester Town Council	50	Already approved
West Dorset DC	50	Requested
Total	100	Note: The above would support the delivery of the core programme, but opportunities will be actively sought to secure additional funding to fund new packages of work if they will add value. This might include assisting niche sectors, individual providers or widening the geographical remit of the programme

Steve Newman
Clerk to Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee
01305 266861

DORCHESTER'S GROWING TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

Sub-Sector	Yesterday (5 years ago)	Today (Recent and Current changes)	Tomorrow (Known Changes and Aspirations)
Accommodation	Several small hotels B&Bs	Premier Inn (76 bed) D. of Cornwall (20 bed)	Reopened Kings Arms (30 beds) Weatherspoons (12 beds)
Catering	Local Independent Restaurants	8 chain restaurants (Brewery Square) New (replacement) local Restaurants	
Retail	Traditional High St focused on local needs Wednesday Market	Brewery Square small retail units Poundbury small retail units	Uncertain – aspirations for additional modern retail development on Charles St and Fairfield New Christmas and seasonal Markets
Heritage	County and Keep Museums Free Heritage (Shire Hall, Roman Town House, Maumbury, etc) Attractions (Tutankhamun, Dinosaur, Teddy Bear and Terracotta Warriors)	Shire Hall (opened Spring 2018) Heritage Trails and Information Boards Max Gate	Revamped County Museum (2020) Revamped Keep Museum (?) Revamped Roman Town House (2020)
Cultural	Plaza Cinema Dorchester Arts at Grove Centre	Odeon Cinema Dorchester Arts at Corn Exchange	Maltings Arts at Brewery Square or Refurbished Corn Exchange
Outdoor Entertainment, Events and Festivals	Music and local events in Borough Gardens August Bank Holiday @ Maumbury	Widened Arts/Cinema programme @ Maumbury Rings & Borough Gardens Literary Festival	Additional festival and event opportunities working with Dorchester Arts and other key partners
Transport, Traffic and Parking infrastructure	Town centre surface car parks and on street parking Subsidised bus routes Good Weymouth service	DTEP junction and paving improvements Village bus routes reducing Weymouth service extended to P'bury	Agreed Traffic and Parking strategy with focus on reducing commuter journeys

Supporting Historic High Streets – The Ingredients for Success in the 21st Century: The Visitor Economy

Historic Towns and Villages Forum meeting, 22 January 2019, Kellogg College, Oxford

1. Understanding High Street Signature Types: Research Findings

Jonathan Burnett, High Street Account Manager, Springboard Research

Trends in shopping

Retail parks and shopping centres have peaked and are now in decline.

Changes in shopping since 2017: -2.3% high street footfall, but spending up; shop vacancy rates 9.2% (9.4% in 2017).

Projection: at least 30% online shopping by 2026.

Loss of services (banks, post offices etc) are having an effect on other town centre businesses.

Increase in early evening footfall.

New trends – experience-led retail eg. custom-made items, exercise classes within shops, indoor golf etc.

Previous classifications no longer apply – sub-regional shopping centres no longer different from major towns.

New classifications based on footfall. See <http://www.placemanagement.org/footfall-signatures/>

Springboard provides a benchmarking service which might benefit Dorchester – see <https://www.spring-board.info>

Factors that affect the High Street – opening hours, appearance, local leadership.

Places bucking the trend – Altrincham, revival mainly due to new market.

2. The Role of Communities and Heritage Assets in Town Centres

*Sophia de Sousa, Chief Executive, The Glass House <http://www.theglasshouse.org.uk>
& Government Expert Advisory Panel member on High Streets*

The Glass House is a charity enabling places to work more collaboratively.

Examples of work:

Hereford – Tech Tuesdays – on slow days in coffee shops: gatherings of young people, IT people working in different sectors in the town, older people with tech questions.

Rochdale – had too many high streets for current needs; planning to change some streets to different uses.

Chester Story House – cinema closed, reopened as a hub for 130 organisations including cinema, theatre, library, event space.

Important factors:

Getting the balance right between things that make money and things that cost money.

Connectors – things that people can't get to elsewhere.

Transport – bus companies have huge power over our communities and in shaping places.

Need to re-balance this.

3. Derby Cathedral Quarter Partnership Scheme

Clive Fletcher, Principal Adviser, Historic Places, Historic England

Public and private investment. Conservation area scheme allocated £844,000 from Historic England and Derby City Council. Once off the ground, a further £924,000 was brought in from

private sector investment. This was unexpected and allowed 97 properties to be renovated. Once landlords knew they had worthwhile properties and council was tackling market failure, they put their own money in.

Planned High Street Offer. In shopping centres every inch of the centre is managed. High Streets are not. This project renovated properties, installed high quality shop fronts and helped businesses with design and branding. Town centre managers ‘curated’ the shopping offer by working with local estate agents to find tenants that complemented others in the street.

Advantages of this project were the economies of scale, better help for small businesses, built confidence of the private sector to invest. Needs good heritage for this to work.

Lincoln and Nottingham have developed similar projects.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/in-your-area/east-midlands/derby-cathedral-quarter/>

4. Learning from the findings of the HLF’s Townscape Heritage Initiative

Alan Reeve, Reader in Planning and Urban Design, Oxford Brookes University

An evaluation after 10 years of the THI scheme.

Key findings – improvement in quality of life of residents, modest investments can lead to big changes in attitudes, heritage assets saved. Less successful – economic regeneration, mainly due to external factors and the prevailing national economic climate.

Future – new schemes will focus on improvements to the townscape, high quality conservation and improvements to residents’ quality of life.

5. Place Branding - Finding your Personality

Natasha Grand, Director, Institute for Identity <http://instid.org/10/>

Using archetypes to determine the spirit of a place.

When considering how to brand a place, need to think about:

- How or why did our place emerge?
- What are its main sources of energy (people, resources etc.)?
- What are our myths, legends or symbols?
- What are the do’s and don’ts of being here?
- What does good service look like here?
- What can we take leadership in? (eg. importance, post-Brexit, of taking leadership in promoting values of openness, fairness, welcome to strangers etc.)

Examples:

Norway village: ‘Part-Time Local’ project. Free accommodation offered for 3 months to artists in exchange for building something for the community, teaching new skills etc.

Portugal village: re-inventing rural life for the world.

6. Bringing Art and Culture to ailing High Streets

Dan Thompson, Empty Shops Network <https://emptyshops.wordpress.com>

Significant issue resulting in empty shops – retirement of independent shop-owners who have not found anyone to take over.

Empty shops as art galleries, pop-up shops, spaces for classes and making things together etc.

7. Places from Spaces, Chester

David McKenna, Studio Associate Director, IBI Group

<https://www.ibigroup.com/ibi-projects/frodsham-street-public-realm-works/>

Examples:

Barnsley – new indoor market has brought 11% increase in town centre economy generally.

Altrincham – empty shops fell from 30% to 10% due to investment in the market.

Markets are important incubators of new businesses.

Cheshire – creating new public spaces for events, creating better streets by making them inclusive and accessible, re-inforcing the sense of place by telling stories with public artworks.

8. Supporting existing independent retailers in small towns

Karen Roberts, Development Lead – Vale Towns, Vale of White Horse District Council

Business issues. Business survey of all town centre businesses including sole-traders working from home. Found only 14% of town centre businesses are retail. 17% of businesses are professional services. All businesses had issues with suitability of premises, cost of premises, staff and footfall. Consultant worked with independent retailers, estate agents and landlords to resolve these issues and increase understanding of needs.

Successful elements – pop-up Etsy shop before Christmas involving local online traders, improving the tourism offer, signage, opening hours and the night time economy.

Kate Hebditch

kate@hebditch.org