

CHESHUNT OLD POND BUSINESS FORUM

8.00am – 9.00am, Tuesday 23 October 2018

King James Public House, Lynton Parade, Cheshunt

MINUTES

Attendees

(DE) Dawn Edwards – Greggs

(LS) Lee Stiles – NFU Mutual, Lee Valley Growers Association

(KK) Karl Knipe – Kings Group

(JB) Julia Bott – King James Public House

(TM) Terry Morris – Hertfordshire Constabulary

(SM) Siobhan Monaghan – Geegaws

(TC) Tony Cox – BID Manager for Hoddesdon Town Centre

(PS) Cllr Paul Seeby - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Environment and Community

(RM) Rowan Mackay – Senior Urban Design and Conservation Officer, Broxbourne Borough Council

(JE) Julie Everett – Economic Development, Broxbourne Borough Council

Apologies

Ben Burser – Stanley Bridge Cycles

Colin Lock - Mdina International Ltd

1 Welcome and introductions

TC welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the business forum and thanked the King James pub for hosting the event.

2 Update on the Cheshunt Old Pond District Centre Strategy

RM gave a brief overview of the draft strategy. It is made up of 29 projects which include:

- Establishment of a Business Forum – to aid communication between businesses
- Public Realm projects
- Future of the Old Pond fountain – 89% of respondents to the consultation were in favour of keeping the fountain in its current location. The Council is now undertaking further design work and will publish a preferred option in early 2019.

The full document is available at <https://www.broxbourne.gov.uk/resident-planning-and-building-planning-policy/cheshunt-old-pond-strategy>.

3 The 'Hoddesdon' Story

TC gave a presentation on the recent history of Hoddesdon and how local businesses have worked together with Broxbourne Council to improve the vitality/vibrancy of the

town centre, leading to it recently being established as a Business Improvement District.

In 2010 a town centre strategy set out a range of short, medium and long term actions to improve the vitality/vibrancy of the town centre. Over the next couple of years several factors contributed to a change in the direction of the town centre. These included:

- The Council working with developers to secure a major redevelopment of the Tower Centre
- The Council encouraging the development of empty offices, etc for residential development to put people back into the town centre
- The full re-opening of the High Street to through traffic
- Significant public realm improvements funded by S106 funding
- Retailers establishing the Love Hoddesdon Group to promote shop local and provide an increased level of events/activities, which has subsequently developed into a business improvement district (BID)

The town has gone from strength to strength in recent years and now has:

- An effective working arrangement between the Council and Love Hoddesdon BID in improving the town centre over the next five years
- Love Hoddesdon BID is also developing effective networking arrangements with key players, such as landlords and a range of community interests
- An increasing number of restaurants, coffee shops, and cafes alongside some very popular public houses which have produced a busy night time economy
- An extremely popular programme of events which significantly increase footfall in the town centre
- A Love Hoddesdon website and Facebook page, events guide and shortly to be announced mascot to help promote the town

4 OWL Messaging

TM explained the OWL messaging service from Hertfordshire Constabulary. 50% of properties are signed up to the service which aids crime prevention advice and updates, security measures and lets residents know what is happening in the area.

Other services which also allow information sharing are:

- Pub watch
- Shop watch
- Business watch (already established in Hoddesdon. A group could be established for the Cheshunt area).

The Old Pond already benefits from CCTV. However, DE mentioned an issue with shoplifters in Greggs. Crime should always be reported to the police to enable them to build up intelligence on offenders either via 999 (if crime is taking place) or 101 (non priority).

5 Issues for local businesses

To encourage debate TC outlined his initial views about the strengths/weaknesses of

the Old Pond area as being:

What does the Old Pond already have?

- There is a local leisure centre, community hospital, library and local park/open space.
- There are good transport links with bus services serving the Old Pond area and Cheshunt Station within walking distance
- There are a number of short stay on-street parking bays and several pay and display car parks for longer stays. There is also a taxi rank
- There is a local police station and a public CCTV system
- There is a large supermarket, a mix of High Street names and local independent retailers, including a number of restaurants and cafes.

What does the Old Pond need?

- Better traffic/parking management
- More investment in the public realm
- Better promotion and marketing of the Old Pond 'offer'
- Better communication with local business
- A programme of events/initiatives
- A budget to aid the business forum

Business representatives raised the following comments:

Pedestrianisation - There are no plans to pedestrianize the Old Pond area – however there is a desire to re-balance the area between pedestrians and vehicles. Rat running through the area should be reduced.

Special Events/Markets - Currently there are no suitable areas other than Grundy Park, but it is hoped to create somewhere which should encourage more visitors. JB mentioned groups which go the Lee Valley and then come to the King James for a meal and visit the shops in the Old Pond area. These groups should be encouraged. Love Hoddesdon produces a leaflet promoting 'Whats On' in Hoddesdon, which is something that could be emulated in the future for the Old Pond area.

Traffic Levels - LS expressed concern over traffic levels in the Borough and the way they affect businesses and staff getting to work in the Old Pond area. The infrastructure is struggling to cope with the current traffic levels and any proposals should try to make it easier to get around. Additional building in the Broxbourne area and other developments will increase the amount of traffic. RM responded that traffic modelling had been undertaken as part of the Council's transport strategy. Together with proposals in the Old Pond Strategy, measures along the A10 are also intended to manage traffic congestion and the impact of future development within Cheshunt. SM commented that the Old Pond becomes grid-locked in the evening. RM also commented that there are plans to improve the cycle infrastructure.

Pedestrians - The quality of the paving is very poor and needs to be addressed as part of the proposals. The timing of pedestrian crossings also needs to be reviewed.

Linking Businesses = better communication is crucial for a successful area. Could

consider a group app such as SLACK or Whatsapp.

5 Any other business

(i) Useful Guidance

TC advised of a couple of websites designed to aid town centre regeneration, as follows:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/economic-growth/revitalising-town-centres-toolkit-councils>

<http://totallylocally.org/stuff/>

(ii) Ambition Broxbourne Business Centre – Broxbourne Revolving Fund Model Project

TC advised that Herts LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) contributed significantly to the build costs for Ambition Broxbourne Business Centre (ABBC) in Pindar Road, Hoddesdon. In the original agreement a percentage of the profits, relating to the Herts LEP contribution is ring fenced for economic development activity to be rolled out in Broxbourne over the next 4 years. Proposals are in place to appoint an economic development officer who will roll out a series of initiatives in Broxbourne including the following training:

- Enterprise Coaching
- Understanding Finance for Business
- Starting a Business
- Developing a marketing Plan

6 Date of Next Meeting

It was suggested a further meeting be held in February 2019.