



**BRENTWOOD TOWN CENTRE RENAISSANCE GROUP MEETING**

**29 January 2014**

**PRESENT:**

**Renaissance Group:**

Clive Othen (Chair)	CO	Chair of Renaissance Group
Michael Hardy (Vice-chair)	MHar	Brentwood Resident
Dominique Keogh	DK	Essex County Council
Alan Jeffcoate	AJ	Federation of Small Businesses
Cllr Mark Reed	MR	Brentwood Borough Council
Sue Page	SP	Representative – Brentwood Traders
Kaye Thurgood	KT	Representative – Shenfield Traders
Mike Hawkins	MHaw	Chamber of Commerce
Cllr Nigel Clarke	NC	Brentwood Borough Council
Cllr Phil Mynott	PM	Brentwood Borough Council
Cllr Will Russell	WR	Brentwood Borough Council
<b>Support group</b>		
Kim Anderson	KA	Brentwood Borough Council
Ashley Culverwell	AC	Brentwood Borough Council
Anne Knight	AK	Brentwood Borough Council
Elaine Richardson	ER	Brentwood Borough Council
Jean Sharp	JS	Brentwood Borough Council

**APOLOGIES:**

Adrian Tidbury, Fran Brabham-Neil, Crispin Downs, Andrew Lester, Cllr Chris Hossack, Cllr Louise McKinlay, David Miles, Gloria Passannante, Julien Pritchard, Cllr Mike Le-Surf, Prajay Patel, Tony Pierce, Victoria Robinson, Roy Ormsby, Suzan Hearson-Smith and Natasha Radford

		Action
1.	<b>Welcome and introductions:</b> CO welcomed everyone present and asked them to introduce themselves to the group.	
2.	<b>Minutes from 2.12.2013 and matters arising:</b> The minutes were approved	

	<p>as a correct record.</p> <p><b>Matters arising:</b></p> <p><b>Traffic Lights:</b> DK advised that the issue needed to be referred to the Local Highways Panel via Cllr Parker (Chair of LHP).</p> <p><b>High Street, Footpaths/Highway:</b> An inspection was to be carried out over the new year. MHaw expressed concern regarding the potholes in the Town Centre.</p> <p><b>Weight Limit in the High Street:</b> Enforcing the weight limit was a police issue. CO acknowledged that a review of town centre signage needed to be carried out.</p> <p><b>Lighting Up Brentwood 2014:</b> Discussion of arrangements would be commenced earlier in the year than previously.</p> <p><b>Art exhibitions in empty shops:</b> KA advised there was funding available for this proposal.</p> <p><b>A Boards policy:</b> The guidelines were on the Brentwood Council website as well as that of ECC. MHar reminded the group of the alternative proposal mooted by the RG some years ago to have hanging signs above shops.</p> <p>The Group was advised of a research programme which had been undertaken - Volumes and Values – to ascertain visitor numbers to the town, etc. The information gleaned would be circulated to the RG and was comparable throughout the UK. The payment made also covered research for the next year.</p> <p>KT requested that information previously collected on issues in Shenfield that Stuart Haigh proposed to progress be retrieved. <b>ACTION: ER to pursue.</b></p> <p><b>AOB - Parking Promotion Days:</b> KT reported that the free parking days in December in Shenfield had led to shoppers travelling to Westfield parking all day and had therefore been detrimental to Shenfield. It was suggested that a free parking day should be given in January.</p> <p>The concept of Small Business Saturday was considered beneficial.</p>	ER
3.	<p><b>Formal appointments for area trade representatives:</b> It was considered that trade representatives should be appointed for the following areas and join the RG, some of which had already been identified:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Overarching – Brentwood Chamber of Commerce/ Federation of Small Businesses to speak to all traders - MHaw and AJ</li> <li>2. Brentwood High Street Area – NC, MR and SP</li> <li>3. Ongar Road Area – Natasha Radford</li> </ol>	

	<p>3. Warley Area – WR and Fran Brabham-Neil  4. Shenfield Area - KT  5. Ingatestone Area – Gloria Passannante  6. Pilgrims Hatch Area -</p> <p><b>ACTION: CO would send out guidelines to these representatives and request issues to be reported back to the group.</b></p> <p>WR requested replacements for the hanging baskets previously provided outside Brentwood Station by Brentwood In Bloom. CO proposed that topiary balls be provided.  <b>ACTION – ER to add to the workplan as a Bid</b></p> <p>MHar advised that members of Brentwood in Bloom would maintain contact with churches and schools, also that the High Street planters would be filled.</p>	<p>CO</p> <p>ER</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Lisa Bone for Visit Essex:</b> Lisa Bone gave a presentation regarding Visit Essex which was funded by ECC and aimed to increase the tourism offer in Essex. It was a public/private partnership and worked closely with Visit England. This was governed by an independent board and currently had 305 members. LB requested a steer from the RG on how best to promote Brentwood.</p> <p>RG members proposed ways to encourage visitors to the town and LB suggested a workshop be arranged to decide on a strategy to promote tourism in Brentwood and its environs.  <b>ACTION: AC to liaise with LB to arrange workshop.</b></p>	<p>AC</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Paul Jenner from Ixion:</b> Paul Jenner gave a presentation regarding Ixion – a fully funded not for profit organisation owned by Anglia Ruskin which provided skill support for workforce staff development. This applied to SME's and staff of over 19 years of age. PJ advised a bespoke programme could be devised to support Brentwood businesses and this could be joint-branded. Funds of £2.6m needed to be spent by July 2015 and any recognised course of accredited learning could be undertaken. Contact details were given to RG members.  <b>ACTION: RG members to pass on information regarding the availability of this funded learning and Paul Jenner and representatives of Cof C and FSB would liaise.</b></p>	<p>MHaw/  AJ/All</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>Perry Ashby from Urban Network:</b> PA was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting.</p> <p>CO requested that Laurie Edmonds be invited to the next meeting.  <b>ACTION: ER to invite LE.</b></p>	<p>ER</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p><b>Street Audit:</b> CO and MHar had undertaken a street audit and the results were circulated (also attached herewith) with an indication of within whose remit each issue fell. The Chair requested items marked H &amp; S be actioned</p>	

	<p>immediately and Brentwood's County Councillors take up issues which were the responsibility of ECC.  <b>ACTION: ER to refer matters as appropriate.</b></p> <p>PM expressed concern over the situation with Lion and Lamb Court where vehicles were parking since a planter was removed allowing access. AC advised that an enquiry had been sent to SEPP regarding the issue but no action was taken.  <b>ACTION: AC to email direct to Essex Highways regarding the situation.</b></p>	<p>ER</p> <p>AC</p>
8.	<p><b>2014/15 Workplan:</b>  An updated workplan was circulated and discussed.</p> <p>Some bids or items included in the workplan would be best led by Lisa Bone/Visit Essex and others were agreed to be continued/progressed by the RG or removed from the workplan or had been already completed.  <b>ACTION: AC would arrange for the workplan to be redrafted in accordance with the discussion and circulate it to RG members. Suggestions for other bids were welcomed and would be included in the workplan for future consideration.</b></p> <p>KT requested that a leaflet be produced giving details of car parks and parking restrictions in Shenfield.  <b>ACTION: AC would look into this proposal.</b></p>	<p>AC/All</p> <p>AC</p>
9.	<p><b>Any other business:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The group was reminded that Chatham Way Car Park was to become a 'pay and display' car park on 10 February 2014.</li> <li>2. CO thought the BBC website was not user-friendly and requested that the history of the RG and its achievements be included.  <b>ACTION: ER to arrange for this information to be included.</b></li> <li>3. RG Terms of Reference: SP requested clarification on the RG ToR.  <b>ACTION: JS to forward existing ToR to SP, CO and MHar for consideration.</b></li> <li>4. AK advised that an update on the Economic Development Strategy was to be considered at the 19 March 2014 Strategy and Policy Board meeting.  <b>ACTION: JS to circulate approved Economic Development Strategy to RG members.</b></li> <li>5. AK advised that she was leaving the Council's employ as Economic Development Officer but had produced a workplan for 2014.</li> </ol> <p>MHar welcomed ER to the group and expressed concern at staff members being appointed then moving on so quickly which was not conducive to the work of the RG.</p>	<p>ER</p> <p>JS</p> <p>JS</p>
10.	<p><b>Date of next meeting:</b> Wednesday 26 March 2014, 4.30pm in Committee Room 1, Brentwood Town Hall.</p>	