

**Annual General Meeting
Rural Arts North Yorkshire**

Wednesday 23rd September 2009 at 7.00pm

Minutes

Present

Peter Walker (Chair); Jan Marshall; Peter Cole; Freda Roberts; Ellen Storm; Bill Austin; Richard Rowling; Mark Haynes; Rosemary Taylor; Linda Gibbon; David Tucker; Mark Faulkner & Pat Chapman.

Apologies

Tony Jordan; Jill Miller; Cllr. Gareth Dadd; Sue Kendall; Jacquie Boulton; Dave McGloin & Alison Scurrah.

1. Election of Officers:

Peter Walker agreed to continue in the role of Chair and was duly elected. It was agreed that in the absence on nominations for the posts of Vice-Chair and Treasurer the election of these Officer posts be deferred until the next meeting. Peter Cole was elected Secretary of TRI following a nomination from Cllr. Ellen Storm, a nomination seconded by Jan Marshall.

[Peter Walker in the Chair]

2. Chair's Report

Peter outlined activity undertaken by TRI over the last twelve months including the review of the Community Plan and the achievement of better understanding of the role of TRI between elected members, Parish Councils and Thirsk Town Council. Peter acknowledged the valuable role of the Thirsk Area Forum and thanked Peter Cole, Mark Haynes and Cllr. Gareth Dadd for their ongoing support. Peter expressed concerns over the support for the LSP from other HDC Officers and elected members and questioned the 'added value' which the LSP provides. Peter suggested that given the current economic and political uncertainty, and in particular the possible reduction in the level of public sector spending, the key priority for TRI was to support projects which seek to ensure the viability of Thirsk, including enhancements to the transport infrastructure, support for local employers and improvements to the existing tourist 'offer'.

Treasurer's Report

It was agreed that in the absence of a Treasurer this item be deferred until such time that a Treasurer is appointed.

Steering Committee Meeting

3. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

Peter welcomed Rosemary Taylor, recently-appointed Chair of the Hambleton LSP, and Mark Faulkner, Carlton Lodge Outdoor Centre, to the meeting.

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting held Wednesday 29th July 2009

Agreed as a true record thereof.

5. Actions & Matters Arising

▪ Employment & Skills Partnership

Peter C. reported that the Richmondshire Local Strategic Partnership, *not* Richmondshire District Council, had agreed to provide financial support for the Hambleton & Richmondshire Employment & Skills Partnership. It was unclear whether this issue had been raised by Dave McGloin at a meeting of the HDC Leadership Board since the last meeting. **Action:** Peter C. to check with Dave whether this issue has been raised at the Prosperity Leadership Board.

▪ Welcome Pack For Businesses

Peter C. reported that work is underway with Jill Miller and Don Moore (Chair of the Thirsk and District Business Association) to develop a web-based resource and invited other TRI members to support the project. Peter reminded the Group that £1000 had been secured from the HDC Regional Pledge pot (to be matched with a further £1000 from TRI's reserves) and that the money must be spent by the end of the 2009 financial year. **Action:** Peter W. to contact Business Link to identify the needs of local businesses to inform the planning process and to invite a representative to attend future meetings.

▪ Police Car Parking in the Market Place

In response to concerns expressed at the last meeting it was noted that the spaces allocated for police cars in the market place are now being used by the Thirsk Safer Neighbourhood Team.

▪ Management of the Market

Peter W. reported that following a conversation with John Proud, HDC StreetScene Manager, it is understood that the review of management guidelines for the market is ongoing and forms part of a national review. It was noted that the management and promotion of the market is being raised at the next Area Forum.

▪ Public Access to TRI's Accounts

Peter C. confirmed that a copy of the accounts for the last three years had been prepared and supplied as requested. An acknowledgement of receipt of these accounts had not yet been received.

6. The Yorkshire Comedy Festival: Evaluation Report

Peter presented the evaluation report on the Comedy Festival held 17th -24th July 2009 (see attached to the minutes.) The report was noted and both Linda and Jan thanked Peter W. for his efforts in co-ordinating the event. The following issues were raised:

- there is a perceived lack of ‘community moral’ in Thirsk, demonstrated by poor ticket sales and little response from the local community
- Thirsk lacks suitable venues for high profile, well-known acts
- the Festival was a hugely ambitious undertaking, the co-ordination of which proved a steep learning curve for those involved.
- there was little physical evidence in the market place of the Festival taking place ie. bunting, signage etc.
- the ‘local’ events (the Ritz Cinema and the World of James Herriot) proved more successful than the well-known acts

Peter asked members to consider the recommendations outlined in the report:

- Members consider the future of YCF and whether future similar events should be held.
- Members consider the support TRI gives to festival activity and whether they are prepared to actively support festival events, or whether TRI should no longer consider the festival to be part of its activities.

It was agreed that these recommendations be discussed at the next TRI meeting to be held in October.

Action: TRI members to email comments with respect to these recommendations to Peter at peter.walker@superskills.co.uk prior to the next meeting.

7. Project Update

- Hambleton Renaissance Business Plan

Mark presented an update circulated prior to the meeting on those Thirsk projects included in the Hambleton Renaissance Business Plan and drew attention to the completion of the RANY development. It was agreed that Project T20(c), the development of a café culture in Thirsk Market Place be signed off as being complete. Mark reported that an ‘Awards for All’ funding bid has been submitted to secure funding to complete work on the Sensory Garden. It was noted that access to vocational learning opportunities for young people across Thirsk should remain a priority for TRI.

Mark confirmed that Yorkshire Forward’s Rural Capitals Business Space Programme is looking to provide a number of managed workspace facilities across region. Thirsk is one location and a potential site has been identified. Yorkshire Forward has undertaken ‘soft market testing’ with developers to determine their interest in taking the project forward. There is positive interest from developers and local authorities alike and the development of the programme continues. Peter W. agreed to raise this with Business Link prior to the next meeting.

Mark reported that £30k of Yorkshire Forward ‘delegated’ funds is available to deliver capital projects across Thirsk. **Action:** Peter, Mark & Peter to meet prior to the next TRI meeting to discuss eligible projects which may benefit from this funding stream.

- Thirsk Safe Group

Bill reported that CI Andy Everitt is to attend a future meeting of Sowerby Parish Council and confirmed that the Thirsk Safer Neighbourhood team is shortly to have a full complement of Officers (including an Inspector, a Sergeant, Constables and PCSO's.) Bill reminded TRI member of the event being held on the 28th September at the Thirsk Rural Business Centre to consider the future resourcing of the Neighbourhood and Country Watch schemes.

8. Meetings & Correspondence

- **Thirsk Music Festival**

Peter C. circulated details of a proposal submitted by Colin Musgrove which seeks to establish a 'Thirsk Music Festival' to be held in August 2010. It was noted that the event will be run as a commercial venture and that although Sowerby Flatts, Carrs Field and the Hillside Rural Activities Park have been suggested as possible sites no decision as to the venue has yet been made. Peter C. confirmed that the possibility exists of working alongside the Comedy Festival to create a 'Culture Festival' and it was agreed that this proposal be noted and considered at the next meeting as part of the Comedy Festival debrief.

- **Thirsk8 Park**

Peter C. presented a letter from Lawrence Monaghan, Chair of the Thirsk8 Park Committee, seeking endorsement for plans to develop a skatepark on Gravel Hole Lane in Thirsk. The total cost of the project is estimated at £100k and it is anticipated that subject to funding being secured the work will start on site early in 2010. It was noted that Thirsk Town Council had agreed to provide financial support for the project. Members questioned whether the site would be included in the existing 'no alcohol' zone. It is understood that further consultation with local residents and the Parish Council is to be undertaken. TRI members endorsed the project and agreed that it should remain in the Thirsk & Villages Community Plan. **Action:** Peter C. to check with Lawrence as to whether the Skatepark will be included in the 'no alcohol' zone.

- **Carlton Lodge Development**

Mark Faulkner presented a project proposal for consideration and endorsement by the Group. Funds are being sought to improve accommodation provision at the Carlton Lodge Outdoor facility and to purchase outdoor activity safety equipment. Other projects include the refurbishment of the toilets and showers and the development of a world class climbing facility. Approximately £4000 is required to finance a number of elements of the scheme including the refurbishment of residential dormitory supplies (bedding, mattresses and storage boxes.) TRI members endorsed the project and agreed that it should be included in the Thirsk & Villages Community Plan. It was also agreed that should funding become available to support the scheme then the project be considered a priority.

9. Dates for Future Meetings:

21st October 25th November 16th December