

## **Steering Committee Meeting**

### **Rural Arts North Yorkshire**

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2010 at 7.00pm**

## **Minutes**

### **Present**

Peter Walker (Chair); Peter Cole (Hambleton District Council); Freda Roberts (Thirsk Town Council); Ellen Storm (Sowerby Parish Council); Cllr. Gareth Dadd (Hambleton District Council & North Yorkshire County Council); Tony Jordan (Carrs Field Trustees); Jan Marshall (Thirsk Town Council); Bill Austin (Sowerby Parish Council & Safe Thirsk Group); Kelly Teagle (CK Services, Thirsk); Nick Redfern (St. James' Green Resident's Association); Dave McGloin (Hambleton District Council); Cllr. Arthur Barker (Hambleton District Council); Jacquie Boulton (Yorkshire Forward); Mark Faulkner (Carlton Lodge Outdoor Centre); Sgt. Sharon Findlay (North Yorkshire Police & YO7 Divert); Lee Godfrey (YO7 Divert) & Linda Gibbon (Thirsk Clock.)

### **Apologies**

Rev. Canon Richard Rowling; Mark Haynes & Pat Chapman.

### **1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies**

Peter welcomed Cllr. Arthur Barker to the meeting. Cllr. Barker thanked Peter for the invitation to attend.

### **2. Minutes of the Last Meeting held Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true record thereof.

### **3. Actions & Matters Arising**

- **Yorkshire Forward Delegated Funds:** Peter C. confirmed that the following allocations had been agreed and processed since the last meeting:
  - Thirsk Clock: £10,000
  - Carlton Lodge: £8,000
  - Thirsk Town Council: £600
  - Thirsk In Bloom: £749
  - Thirsk Sensory Garden: £10,650
  
- **Long Street Enhancement:** it was confirmed that HDC Environmental Health have enforcement powers only if a complaint from a neighbour is received. It was noted that the Town Council has expressed concerns over the state of repair of the buildings for many years. **Action:** Dave McGloin to clarify HDC's legal position with Martyn Richards and to feedback both at the next meeting of TRI and the Thirsk Area Forum.

- **Thirsk Railway Station:** Ellen confirmed that an email and letter had been sent to Anne McIntosh expressing concerns over access to the station. Miss McIntosh has replied to Ellen's correspondence explaining that she has written to Lord Adonis, Secretary of State for Transport, and Mr Vernon Barker, Managing Director of First TransPennine Express asking that the issues raised by Ellen be addressed.
- **Thirsk Safe Group:** a meeting has yet to be held between the Thirsk Safe Group and representatives from the St. James' Green Residents Association. Peter W. confirmed that Nick Redfern will provide the link between TRI and the St. James' Green Resident's Association and will attend future TRI meetings. Bill confirmed that a second Neighbourhood Watch Scheme event is to be held on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> April between 5pm-9pm at the Thirsk Auction Mart. Scheme co-ordinators from across Thirsk & Easingwold will be invited to attend, along with NYCC Trading Standards and representatives from Farm Watch.
- **Thirsk and Sowerby Past & Present:** Jan confirmed that funding had been secured to undertake a reprint of the Past & Present leaflets.
- **Thirsk Clock:** Linda confirmed that it is anticipated that the move to the Methodist Church will be completed by Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010.

#### 4. YO7 Divert

Lee outlined the purpose of the multi-agency partnership and confirmed that following a recommendation made at the last TRI meeting the Terms of Reference had been amended. YO7 Divert consists of a 'core' group of key partners (the Police, Broadacres and NYCC 4Youth) to co-ordinate diversionary activities for young people along with a wider network of organisations that will be invited to provide professional support as and when required. Lee confirmed that YO7 Divert is not seeking to duplicate existing youth provision but is looking to enhance what is currently on offer for young people across Thirsk, with the emphasis on early intervention. Ongoing activities being undertaken by the group include 'Blue Light' discos and boxing at Allanbrooke Barracks. The results of a survey of students at Thirsk School are being analysed and it was suggested that Carlton Lodge could provide a location for the Group's activities (eg. canoeing and fishing.) Bill congratulated the local police on work undertaken recently to combat anti-social behaviour. **Action:** Sharon, Lee and Mark Faulkner to explore the potential opportunities for young people available at Carlton Lodge.

#### 5. ThiskBusiness.com: An On-line Resource for Businesses in Thirsk

Peter W. presented an overview of the TRI-sponsored project which seeks to provide an on-line source of information for business looking to relocate to the Thirsk Area. Kelly outlined the costs of the project (£2665) and offered to pay the £665.00 as CK Services' sponsorship of the website. The total cost of the project would therefore be £2000. Kelly suggested that as the site develops private sector sponsorship may cover future hosting and maintenance costs for the site. Kelly confirmed that the site will include a 'search engine optimisation facility' to ensure that the site appears high on the list of search engines such as Google. Members supported the project in principal and agreed that the project would

provide a valuable tool for the business community and would also raise the profile of Thirsk as a location for businesses to relocate. It was agreed however that the management of the finance (ie. sponsorship, any surplus income generated etc.) has to be addressed before the project be developed further and that a nominated TRI representative would have to be identified to take initial responsibility for the site. It was suggested that the recently-formed Hambleton Business Forum and HDC Economic Development have a role to play, both in supporting the development of the site and attracting new businesses to Thirsk. **Action:** Peter W., Kelly and Peter C. to consider options, agree a financial management process and identify a suitable nominated TRI representative prior to the next meeting. A further update will be presented at the next TRI meeting.

#### **6. The Hambleton Renaissance Business Plan (including Yorkshire Forward Delegated Funding)**

Peter C. presented an update from Mark circulated prior to the meeting and drew attention to the Thirsk Sensory Garden. Jan reported that although the Land Registry request was once again turned down Thirsk Town Council has agreed to continue with work on the site. Funding has been secured to undertake work to complete the project.

Cllr. Dadd expressed concerns over the process by which submissions from local Parishes to the Yorkshire Forward Delegated Funds had been dealt with and questioned why projects in Carlton Miniott, Borrowby, Thirkleby and Sowerby had been refused. Jacquie confirmed that Delegated Funds were available for small scale capital projects in Thirsk and that whilst TRI represents communities in Thirsk and the surrounding villages capital projects in the parishes would not be eligible for the funding. **Action:** Peter W., Jacquie and Peter C. to explore options as to whether further Delegated Funds can be released to support Parish projects.

#### **7. Meetings & Correspondence:**

- **Yorkshire Forward:** Peter W. confirmed that discussions were underway with Yorkshire Forward with regards to 14-19 learning opportunities across Thirsk and that the issue has been recognised by Yorkshire Forward. An update on these discussions will be presented at a future TRI meeting.
- **Thirsk Museum:** Peter C. reported that he is to meet with representatives from Thirsk Museum and Nicky Smith to explore potential funding sources to support ongoing internal refurbishment of the museum.

#### **8. Any Other Business**

- **The Proposed Relocation of the Tourist Information Centre:** Jan raised concerns expressed at a recent Thirsk Town Council meeting regarding proposals to relocate the TIC to the World of James Herriot and requested clarification of the rationale behind the proposals. It is understood that the Moors & Coast Tourism Partnership, which shares a joint Chief Executive with the Harrogate Tourism Partnership, has indicated to HDC that it no longer wishes to manage the Thirsk TIC. At this point Cllr. Barker declared an interest in his capacity as non-Executive Director of Welcome to Yorkshire.

Jan reminded TRI members that TRI supported the redevelopment of 49 Market Place project with an MTI grant of £24k, as part of Yorkshire Forward's £300,000

investment in the town to deliver priorities in the MTI Action Plan. Jan suggested that although TRI was not on the list of stakeholders consulted on the proposals by HDC TRI should take a view on the proposals. Jan also suggested that should the TIC be relocated the number of volunteers supporting the delivery of the TIC may decline. The following questions were raised:

- Would the sale of 49 Market Place in the current economic climate generate a significant saving for HDC?
- Could the £24k could be reclaimed by TRI should 49 Market Place be sold?
- Can the incremental revenue generated by tourists using the TIC be measured?
- What is HDC's tourism promotion strategy and what real difference does the range of tactical approaches make?
- Is the current method of delivery affordable?
- What is the reason behind the Moors & Coast Tourism Partnership's decision not to manage the Thirsk TIC?
- Is there enough space in the World of James Herriot to allow the TIC to operate effectively?
- What impact would the proposed move have on both visitor numbers to the TIC and to tourist attractions in Thirsk and the surrounding villages?

Gareth confirmed that HDC Cabinet had considered the views of the consultees and that as yet no decision has been made. Gareth reported that he had requested a special meeting of the Thirsk Area Forum to consider the proposals at which the Moors & Coast Tourism Partnership have been invited to give a presentation. The meeting is to take place at 6.30pm on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March in the Courtroom at Rural Arts North Yorkshire.

It was suggested that public sector services will be cut regardless of the outcome of the election. Cllr. Barker explained that efficiency savings are being sought and that alternative methods of service delivery and a reduction in non-statutory services will be explored to make these savings. Cllr. Barker invited TRI members to suggest alternative methods of delivering the TIC Service. Dave indicated that evidence demonstrates that room bookings through the TIC have declined. **Action:** Peter to provide website/TIC tourism data, if available, prior to the Thirsk Area Forum meeting.

- **Visit Thirsk.com:** Peter C. circulated a report prepared by Beth Carss which outlines the position with regards to future costs of hosting and maintaining the visit-thirsk.com website. The site is currently hosted and maintained by Blue Figment with an annual hosting cost of £170. Hosting renewal is due shortly and there is no sustainable public funding source to maintain the costs of the website. The costs must therefore be covered by some private source and the most likely route to secure this would be through a level of sponsorship or advertising. TRI are requested to consider how they wish to fund the visit site in future, in particular whether they wish to explore advertising, putting links into other websites or both. **Action:** TRI members to forward any comments regarding the future of the website to Peter C.

**Date for the next meeting:** Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March at 7pm.

**The meeting closed at 8.45pm**