

## **Steering Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday 25th March 2009**

**7.00pm in the Old Courthouse at Rural Arts North Yorkshire**

### **Minutes**

#### **Present**

Peter Walker (Chair); Jan Marshall; Peter Cole; Emily Thomas; Ellen Storm; Kathryn Chapman; Alison Scurrah; Sue Kendall; Tony Jordan; Gareth Dadd; Richard Rowling; Bill Austin & Mark Haynes.

#### **Apologies**

Ted Naisbitt; Linda Gibbon; Alison Cramb; Mark Terry; Freda Roberts & John Potter.

#### **1. Welcome & Introductions**

Peter welcomed Sue Kendall, Thirsk Community Care Association, and Kathryn Chapman, Rural Action Yorkshire, to the meeting.

#### **2. Minutes of the Last Meeting held Wednesday 18th February 2009**

Agreed as a true record thereof.

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

- **Guidelines for Market Traders:** it was reported that the revised guidelines are not yet available for consideration.  
**Action:** Gareth to follow up with John Proud as to when the new guidelines will be made available.
- **Millgate Toilets:** Peter C. confirmed that whilst there are no current plans to close the Millgate car park toilets HDC is reviewing service delivery with respect to the provision of public toilets. Members agreed that TRI should continue to support the retention of existing services, both in Thirsk and the surrounding villages.  
**Action:** Peter W. to raise the issue of at the next Area Forum meeting to be held Tuesday 31st March 2009.
- **New Business Welcome Pack:** It was agreed that the production of a 'New Business Welcome Pack' be added to the Thirsk & Villages Community Plan.
- **Comedy Festival:** Peter W. confirmed that Aspire were keen to provide a venue for the Festival.
- **Café Culture:** the reasons behind the refusal of Wetherspoon's application for a café licence are still unclear. It was agreed that TRI should continue to support the concept of a 'café culture' in order to enhance the Thirsk tourism offer.

- **TRI Constitution:** It was agreed that this item be deferred until the next meeting.

#### 4. The Herriot Attractions Group: Tourism Across Thirsk

Alison provided an update on activities being undertaken by both the Herriot Attractions Group and the Moors and Coast Tourism Partnership. The Herriot Attractions Group has launched a redesigned website and is working in partnership with Grand Central Trains to pilot a 6 week trial in June to provide transport between Sunderland/Middlesbrough and tourist attractions in Thirsk (Monk Park Farm, World of James Herriot etc.) Alison indicated that details of TRI's tourism projects had been presented at a recent meeting of the Herriot Attractions Group and agreed to provide updates at future meetings to ensure that progress is made and duplication of effort avoided. Alison confirmed that the museum is keen to become involved in the Comedy Festival and offered the use of the museum as a possible venue.

#### 5. Project Update

- **Hambleton Renaissance Business Plan**

Mark presented an update circulated prior to the meeting on those projects in Thirsk which are included in the Hambleton Renaissance Business Plan:

- **Alleyways Enhancement/Yard Signage Scheme:** almost complete; permissions have been granted for the installation of the archway feature between the NatWest Building Society and the Opticians.
- **Thirsk Station Improvements:** it was suggested that the Herriot Attractions Group and the Moors and Coast Tourism Partnership have a role to play in lobbying Network Rail to address access issues at the Station.
- **Thirsk Sensory Gardens:** a legal issue over land ownership has yet to be resolved and the land transfer has not yet been completed. It is understood that HDC can enforce the land transfer under existing planning conditions.  
**Action:** Mark to seek a resolution prior to the next meeting.
- **Facilities and Retail Expansion:** questions were asked as to HDC's response to the current economic downturn and whether a facility exists to offer business rate support. It was noted that such a discretionary business rate relief scheme does exist. It was agreed that TRI seek to raise awareness of the scheme within the local business community.  
**Action:** Peter W. to raise the issue of at the next Area Forum meeting. Gareth to liaise with Ray Gill (HDC) regarding discretionary business rate relief.

- **The Yorkshire Comedy Festival**

Peter W. reported that individuals/organisations interested in providing support for the Festival will be invited to a meeting to be held in April. A website will support the Festival, booking forms are being drafted and bookings are being confirmed for headline acts. Over the 7 days 21 'slots' are to be filled at venues across Thirsk and the surrounding villages. Jan suggested that the Ritz Cinema could provide a suitable venue (the Cinema has a stage and 200 seats.)

Peter W. confirmed that support for the Festival has been secured from the Yorkshire Society and reported that the Society is keen that Thirsk Town Council becomes a member. Subscription to the Society is £50 per annum. Peter indicated that he would be willing to provide financial support to cover subscription costs if required.

**Action:** Jan to raise this suggestion with the Town Council.

## **6. Action Plan Review**

Mark indicated that there may be up to £30k of discretionary funding per annum from Yorkshire Forward to support community-led capital projects across the RMT towns across the District. Peter C. encouraged members to identify new projects and priorities for inclusion in the Community Plan. It was suggested that environmental enhancements on Ingramgate be a priority and that support continue for Thirsk Clock.

**Action:** Peter C. to forward a copy of the Community Plan Review to Parish Clerks for consideration. TRI members to forward suggestions for new projects to Peter C.

## **7. Thirsk Safe Group: Update**

Bill provided a summary of the meeting held on Wednesday 25th February at Topcliffe Village Hall at which it was agreed that support for Neighbourhood Watch Schemes across Thirsk should be the key priority for the group to ensure that the scheme is effective and that co-ordinators fully understand their role and responsibilities. It was suggested that the current scheme is fragmented and that the Safe Thirsk group has a role to play in providing information and advice to the NWS Co-ordinators. The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday 6th May at a venue to be confirmed.

It was agreed that following a request to attend a meeting in Boltby it is not the responsibility of either TRI or the TRI Safe Group to attempt to influence the delivery of police operations. The invitation to attend the meeting was therefore declined.

**Action:** Peter W. to contact Javid Ali to clarify the Police's position with regards to community consultation and the role of the Safer Thirsk Group.

## **8. Any Other Business**

- Peter reminded members of the forthcoming Thirsk Area Forum to be held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 31st March at Rural Arts North Yorkshire.
- Karthryn circulated details of the Calor 'Villages of the Year' competition and encouraged members to enter. The competition is open to parish councils, village halls and community groups representing their village, which must have a population of less than 5000. Deadline for entries is 15th May, with short listing and judging taking place in June. First prize is £1000 and there will be four further prizes of £500 each.
- Peter reminded members of the Year 5 people's Millions from the Big Lottery Fund launched on 18th March. This year organisations will be able to apply for one-year grants of up to £50,000. Big Lottery are looking for projects across the UK that will improve the quality of life of local communities through transforming the local environment, or provide opportunities or facilities for enjoying the local environment. Application forms are available from our website: [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk) and the deadline for submitting them is Friday 15 May 2009.

- **Comprehensive Area Assessment: Self Evaluation Update**  
Peter reported that an LSP peer review is to be undertaken between 21st and 23rd April. This review is an inspection of how organisations and communities across the District are working in partnership to improve the quality of people's lives in Hambleton

**9. Dates for Future Meetings:**

22nd April	27th May	24th June	29th July
26th August (AGM)	23rd September	21st October	25th November
16th December			