

First draft of Notes from Business Policy Group meeting Town Hall @ 5.45pm 11th March 2004

TS was appointment of Chairman for meeting

Present: Paul Mepham, Rob Smith, Wally Lambert, Ray Casey, Jason Cook, Joanna Beazley Richards, Clive Wilson and TS

Apologies: Paul Kemp, Steve Horton and Di Phillips

Copies of notes to be sent to: Tony Wright, Debbie Anderson, Damon Wellman, Richard Hallett, Brian Whittaker

Copies of notes of future meetings not being sent to: Andrew Moffitt, Martin Stanton unless they specifically ask TS for them

Update on Start-up support

- Article in The Courier asking business people who are considering relocating into business premises produced no response. Through these notes, Paul K is asked not to abandon this approach/project and consider ways in which to achieve greater coverage. Suggested that Paul K asks Tony Wright to work with him and try to get the local Agents together to identify demand/promote use in line with original aims of project.
- TS had written to ESCC. WDC and CTC about available premises in their possession at peppercorn rent; all had acknowledged but nothing definite yet. Correspondence had been copied to Paul K.
- It was agreed that terms/period of lease that were of variable length up to 2 years was a significant factor and was something that needed to be introduced as an integral part of the project aims. There was discussion about the possibility of a local business person being prepared to consider putting in a planning application for conversion of domestic accommodation into business premises if demand could be proven.
- The success of the Prince's Trust in Kent was quoted as good practice and should be considered within this project. Nigel Bullock from Beacon Community College has agreed to make a brief presentation about vocational training opportunities and links with businesses at the April meeting; it was thought that the Prince's Trust concept/starter units could be raised then.
- Need not to lose sight of a businessman who has an interest and experience in variable terms starter units (David Cossington) who has worked with EDEAL.

Update on Retention/Sectors

- A copy of Paul Mepham's notes from the successful 1st Market Sector meeting is attached (will be). Ray Casey and TS to work on developing the Retail Market Sector aspect using the notes/original group of retailers as a basis for action. Paul M will also take this forward for his market sector group. It was agreed that each person who attended the Market Sector meeting would receive feedback from the meeting.
- The cost of that evening was reported as £80 postage; £80 room hire; £11.99 paper/card = £171.99. Remaining balance now £424.92 (o/s invoice - £53 for name tabs)
- Car Parking petition generated just over 5800 signatures 'against' in about a week or so. Handed in to WDC.
- Wally came across a possible funding source for voluntary mentors (Wealden Federation of Voluntary Organisations) –mentors? Meeting held and Funding Officer to report back.
- Meeting last month with Max Goodison (ESEP) resulted in further meeting with Nigel Pargiter (East Sussex Economic Partnership) who confirmed no funding available until

2006. TS and Wally Lambert will take this further to see whether or not it is worthwhile pursuing as it is important to attract funding for future years

- TS made contact with ESCC Economic Strategic Development to see if they have anything to offer by way of more immediate funding for some of our key priorities. Exploratory meeting to be held on 24th March with Phil Tomalin. Others welcome but would prefer to see if it worthwhile inviting business people along bearing in mind our 'Goodison' experience.
- TS has also contacted the section at ESCC involved with funding sources generally re: business related funding of any description.

Update on Web Site

- Rob has continued to have fruitful discussions with Richard Clark who has been made aware that the bid submitted to WDC for the crowborough.biz is most unlikely to be approved.
- It transpired that Richard Clark has made good progress with the site, has seen the database material (1200+ businesses) that Jason has worked on and developed, any further work would be on a different financial basis than the speculative approach that had been originally agreed without costs but progressed at Richard's own pace but it *could* be ready by the 27th April business lunch.
- Jason reported the progress he had made with the database and some work he had done with discussion forums.
- After much discussion on the way forward, it was agreed that Rob remains in charge of the overall Business Web site project and needs to be kept up to date about any web related issues, that Rob would liaise with Richard Clark about him working with Paul Strover (Beacon Community College) over the 'biz' site on the basis the 'biz' site would be accessible through the 'info' site primarily, with the usual option of direct access, that Rob, Jason and Clive would have a meeting with reps from the Web Site Working Party to clear and open lines of communication. Topics will also include: fair allocation of income from business tariff divided between 'info' and 'biz' sites development. (thinking about it afterwards - need also to establish principle of search facility to be offered (free) on the basic 'bronze' tariff and not restricted to 'silver' and 'gold'.

AOB

- Speakers for April Business Lunch (27th April) – TS to contact EDEAL for a 20 minute 'effective networking' as presentation for the 27th April lunch as E-strategies speaker not available.
- Please could Rob invite Richard Clark to speak on that subject at either the July or October lunch?
- March newsletter – draft circulated for comment. Need to reconsider ticket price if 'free' speaker for lunch on 27th April
- Beacon Community College and brief presentation / skills and business links – invited for April 15th BPG meeting to start the meeting and leave when finished
- Partnership to have stand at Summer Fare (July 10th)

Next Meeting. Wally Lambert to chair next meeting and TS to liaise with him beforehand. Both TS and Joanna Beazley Richards gave apologies for that meeting. The date, time and venue for next month's Update meeting on Thursday, 15 April @ 5.45 at Town Hall