

## **Notes from Business Policy Group meeting Town Hall @ 5.45pm 12<sup>th</sup> February 2004**

**Present:** Paul Mepham, Rob Smith, Wally Lambert, Di Phillips and TS

**Apologies** from Tony Wright, Paul Kemp, Steve Horton, Jason Cook, Debbie Anderson, Richard Hallett.

Copies of notes also sent to: Ray Casey, Clive Wilson, Brian Whittaker, Martin Stanton, Damon Wellman, Andrew Moffitt

### **Update on Web Site**

- Agreed that Rob Smith has produced some first class investigative work, established good personal contacts and made good progress since January. A 'website business group' meeting was held with Chris Grose that clarified key points but two issues remain to be resolved 1) the correct legal registered ownership of Crowborough.biz 2) Although the Town Council preferably to be consistent with the official web site (or Partnership) and to have the legal ownership of Crowborough.biz website, the Business Group to be accountable for total content and development of Crowborough.biz website. Confirmed that there was a discussion about the Business Group developing Crowborough.biz as a separate web site. TS to take up with Chris Grose and report back to Rob Smith
- Agreed that as WDC have only 133 business names in TN6 postcode area on their business database and that any reconciliation with WDC database was complicated by Data Protection issues, the BPG would abandon this joint approach and operate and progress their own database, mailing and development.
- Agreed that Thomson's Business Database was a viable option that would provide up to date information for the TN6 postcode (as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004) plus another 6 monthly update at a cost of £289 (plus VAT). Funding is available. Agreed that use should be made of the 1200+ database ably produced by Jason Cook. Agreed that Rob Smith would liaise with Richard Clark, Paul Strover and Jason Cook before arranging a 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the 'website business group' who would meet to decide the best way forward and report back to the March 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of BPG.
- Following Rob Smith's preliminary discussions with Richard Clark, it was agreed that TS would include an additional sum of £5k in the bid to WDC for funding by 27<sup>th</sup> February 2004. This was the sum that was considered reasonable to have the business section of the web site developed locally on a commercial basis to incorporate the specification produced by Rob Smith and accepted by the BPG as an excellent benchmark (attachment)
- Agreed that it would be made clear to all concerned (Richard Clark, Beacon Community College and any other) that a tender process would be implemented.
- **Update on Start-up support**
- Please see attachment for note of Paul Kemp's conversation with TS in view of Paul's unavailability for the meeting.
- Agreed that TS would contact ESCC, WDC and Town Council to establish ownership of 'office' accommodation in Crowborough that may be made available or released to The Business Group/Partnership for 'starter units' at, say, peppercorn rent as their contribution to enhancing the local business economy.

### **Update on Retention/Sectors**

- Invitations to all businesses issued to attend the Market Sector meeting. As at 11<sup>th</sup> February – 14 acceptances; 4 apologies (Replies given to Paul Mephram). Paul M to make phone calls and to talk with TS about type of questions that would be used.
- Di Phillips agreed to organise coffee/biscuits/crockery and liaise with All Saints Church.
- Agreed that TS would ask Debbie Anderson if she could produce a press release (Sara from The Courier had produced one for the 12<sup>th</sup> Feb at her initiative and Debbie another for the 20<sup>th</sup> February)

### **Update of Partnership in general (Clive)**

Report presented to The Partnership at their AGM was copied to all of BPG

### **AOB**

#### **Feedback from Business Lunch Survey**

- Rob Smith produced a very useful analysis of the evaluation surveys and the information was used to decide speaker topics for the April lunch. (attachment).
- Agreed that Rob would update people on 'our' web site and Rob would also ask Richard Clark (Elysium Ltd) to talk about e-commerce.
- Agreed that the buffet lunch format would be repeated in April with lessons learned from January to be agreed with The Plough and Horse e.g. offer cold buffet as an alternative; start meal at agreed time (1pm); hold 'presentations' before meal ( 2 @ 20 mins max = 10/15 mins talk plus 5 mins Q & A); suggest people came before noon if they wanted to network; advertise aim to finish lunch by 2pm

#### **WDC and Car Parking Charges**

- Agreed Petition to be set up by TS for issue to businesses/retailers (if not done already).

#### **Beacon Community College**

- Agreed TS to invite **BCC** to the April meeting as the first agenda item to give brief presentation about skills and business links (letter circulated with recent notes)
- Agreed to test a more structured approach at **Sherlock's Coffee Shop breakfast meetings**
- Agreed to **circulate the Chair of the Business Policy Group** on a 3 monthly basis. Agreed that TS would continue to undertake minutes etc., Agreed that Steve Horton would be the first to take the Chair (Since the meeting, TS has been informed by Steve that although he was very keen to take on this role he has taken on a potential 9 month contract in Basingstoke so will not be available to take the Chair for a while)
- Reported that a meeting had been arranged with Nigel Pargiter (**Area Investment Framework/East Sussex Economic Partnership**) @ 2pm on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> Feb @ Pavane House, Church Road, Crowborough
  - (PM, PK, SH, CW, DW, WL and TS – invited as before)

**Agreed the date, time and venue for next month's Update meeting is Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> March @ 5.45 at Town Hall**

*For organisational purposes, can I please ask that I have apologies beforehand if people cannot attend or do not want to attend future meetings. Additionally, if there are more suitable days /start times please let me know. I will do my best to make arrangements to suit*

*as I certainly appreciate the commitment being made by very busy people.*