

Notes of Business Policy Group meeting on 15th April 2004 at The Town Hall, Crowborough at 5.45pm

Apologies for absence: Joanna Beazley Richards, Tony Slack, Steve Horton, Paul Mepham. Jason Cook did not attend.

Presentation from Nigel Bullock, Vocational Co-ordinator from Beacon Community College. Nigel indicated there were 3 areas to discuss: 1. Co-ordination of students entering work 2. Curriculum for students entering work 3. Progression into work. In summary, there are 3 documents produced by government that cover these aspects which none of those present had seen or read, indicating that there is little appreciation of these proposals in the business world. We all came to the conclusion that there was a need to learn from each other fairly quickly as some of the legislation comes into effect in September this year.

It was agreed to organise with Nigel a business seminar in the evening, say 2 hours to be held in June / July this year. Nigel indicated that this would greatly assist the College and money and time could be found for this purpose; matched funding would apply. It was proposed we use All Saints Church Hall.

The proposed agenda could be as follows

1. Forum in the middle of the year (Evening)
2. Nigel would produce a synopsis of the papers mentioned
3. The business people attending would discuss what we could do to work more closely with BCC.

It was also agreed that Nigel could be the keynote speaker at one of the business lunches.

One or two issues arose (money and facilities) about Prince's Trust and Young Enterprise and more Work Experience.

Di Phillips mentioned council owned properties under used i.e. Aldene Centre** in Fermor Road which we should pursue which would assist the College in developing such course as Motor Vehicle and Construction training as well as Caring courses. It would also be ideal for Young Enterprise and Business Start Ups. *** Decision already taken by ESCC to dispose of Aldene Centre. TS has made enquiries about plans for the disposal/potential use of former ESCC Depot on the north side of Crowborough behind Feedback.(Update - this is also on the market and very close to an offer being accepted)*

Update on Business Retention

Paul Mepham was absent so there was no report on the non retail section

Ray Casey reported that although he still wanted to be chairman of the retail group, he suggested that the two groups be combined*** and that a joint chairman be appointed. He would not put himself forward. The meeting felt although they had no opposition to the suggestion, the two sectors had different aims and should deal with such issues independently. There was a discussion to examine business membership benefits/costs etc., and Rob would report back on the advantages of becoming a member.

**** Ray Casey and TS had a meeting on the 14th April to agree the merger of the CBA with the Business Group and the practicalities involved; a note of that meeting is attached. At that same meeting, Ray and TS agreed how best to progress action from the Market Sector meeting held in February and that is included in the note. TS has produced a draft outline plan for Ray's approval; any action will involve those who attended the Retail Sector meeting with the intention of inviting all the retailers in Crowborough to become involved and progress will be made shortly. Paul Mephram will be kept informed throughout.*

Wally Lambert reported on the meetings he and TS had with WFVO and the County Council Representative and that we were awaiting reaction. He added that some work, ideas and input was needed on The individual BPG members' part**** with report back to the committee. *An A4 proforma is attached. ****Please could everyone jot down their thoughts on this form –even if it is just the section 'aims of the project etc.) and send it back to Wally through the post before the next meeting. Wally's new address is Stables, Coachmans, Maresfield Close, Batts Bridge Road, Maresfield TN22 2HJ (tel: 01825 768150)?*

Wally informed the BPG about the West Sussex Business Volunteer Mentors organised by Tom Drake. We were willing to join his organisation although we were concerned that operating from West Sussex loses the local identity and we should try to set up a separate group maybe in association but get independent funding if possible. Suggestions on next move are required.***** ******Wally/TS will speak to EDEAL/Ray Mason who is CEO and is addressing the April Business Lunch, as a preliminary step as EDEAL may want to become involved*

The results of the Car Parking campaign were welcomed.

Update on Website

Jason Cook was absent so there was no report. Rob Smith reported his views re the website and has withdrawn from the Group although he would still like to contribute.

There was good discussion to the reasons for the delay and the very different attitudes taken by the people involved.

It was agreed that Jason and Paul Strover should continue with building up the needs of the Business Group and this should be the subset of the main partnership website owned by the Town Council. It was thought it was important to get on with this action quickly as 1. it should be relatively easy to do, and 2. it was the main plank of our Business programme. Clive agreed to talk to Chris about the situation.

It was agreed that Jason should be asked for an update as it was felt that the matter was going off the boil*****. ******only TS attended the website group meeting on 22nd April. The key points that come to mind from that were:1. The 'facilities' identified by Rob will be the 2nd development phase of the official website which will major on their incorporation on to the crowborough biz site in good time for launch at The Summer Fair on 10th July. 2. All band levels, including 'bronze' will have a free 'key word' search facility subject to review in 12 month's time. 3. Paul Strover will liaise with Jason re: outcome of meeting; practicalities of mailing the 1200+ businesses on database, choosing a host for the database, agreeing the scope for 'key*

words' for bronze which would be less than the other 2. 4. All 1200+ database businesses would be included in the 'key word' facility irrespective as to whether or not they were on internet/e-mail and a 'clearing house' arrangement would be offered in the first instance. 5. The domain exchange between 'advertiser' and 'partnership' domain names is operational but cannot be officially changed until anniversary of contracts.

Update on Start Up support

Paul Kemp repeated what had been said at the last meeting about lack of response to the Courier article. The 12 replies to the advert placed in the Friday Ad by a local businessman about hiring an office in his newly acquired business premises was a reflection of demand. Again, it was thought the Council premises at the Aldene Centre could be an option but see ** on previous page. *Since then Paul has made some progress without raising expectations over the enquiry received from Jan Moffitt about premises for a local Artists Gallery in the town.*

Update on the Partnership

Clive Wilson gave a report

AOB

April Business lunch. Paul K considered time should be devoted to networking as that would be more worthwhile than speaking about his project. It was agreed that monthly meetings should be held during May and June