

Future Oswestry Group

Note of meeting held 7pm Thursday 21st September 2023 at Oswestry Guildhall

Partners	Oswestry Town Council (OTC)	Shropshire Council (SC)	Oswestry BID	Community Representatives
In attendance	Cllr Robert Macey Arren Roberts	Cllr Mike Isherwood Andy Wigley Joe Bubb Samantha Jones Rosie Corner	Adele Nightingale	Peter Lloyd Craig Marston
Welcome and apologies	Cllr Duncan Kerr Cllr Jay Moore	Cllr Chris Schofield	Tim Morris	
1. Notes of the last meeting	Meeting notes were agreed.			
2. Declarations of interest	None.			
3. Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ratify the Vice Chair appointment. <p>Proposed: The Vice Chair to be the other Member from the same FOG partner organisation as the Chair.</p> <p>Unanimous vote in favour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review focus of FOG Group purpose and activities <p>Success to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FOG governance structure strengthened the HSHAZ project through Covid. - Strong partnership working has been recognised by external funders and should provide a good foundation for future bids. <p>FOG's purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members discussed the need to establish FOG's purpose following the completion of the Future Oswestry Plan. Shared purpose suggestions: delivering the Plan, collaborating on larger projects, providing support to partners, collating evidence for funding bids and working together to remove project roadblocks. - Question of whether FOG's role is just to focus on Oswestry's economic development or for more general improvement. This requires decision-making on where to focus resources. <p>Forward thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Important to identify a focused list of 3 to 4 projects to progress. - Consider targets e.g. increasing footfall, more shops, more experiences, better public realm, more visitor accommodation, vibrant night time economy. - Support for projects that unlock investment. 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FOG needs money to build an evidence base which is ready to go for future bids including business cases, feasibility and public engagement. Following Shrewsbury's Big Town Plan model. - Essential to determine Oswestry's economic needs: identifying key issues and where funding would have the most impact e.g. regeneration, cultural capacity building, public realm, active travel, supporting high street retail, service office accommodation. - Ambitious plan for Regal/B-Wise needed? - Cultural Consortium could have a role in defining the USP. - Issues with graffiti and run down shops. <p>● Structure and purpose of meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noted that group is still too SC heavy. SC officers should be invited to attend only for specific items. - Updates can be written and shared either in meeting agendas or in e-mails between meetings. - Consider inviting external partners to FOG meetings or Task Group Meetings on specific projects e.g. Oswestry Borderland Tourism. - Option to reduce meeting to every two months. - Benefit to having some officers appear in person/on Teams to facilitate discussion. - Project meetings should have maximum 3 projects as focus. - FOG officers to continue to meet fortnightly. <p>● Refresh of Governance Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)</p> <p>Noted. Joe Bubb will circulate the draft for comments.</p>
<p>4. Project priorities</p>	<p>● FOG partners to identify key projects</p> <p>Members highlighted some potential key projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restore the Railways - Transport Hub (interim improvements and other stages) - Cambrian Building <p>Suggestion of an aspirational list which goes beyond 2024.</p> <p>Members discussed outsourcing priority projects to Task and Finish groups which can then report back to FOG.</p>
<p>5. High Street Heritage Action Zone</p>	<p>Update from Sam Jones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Bin store is being fabricated and installation scheduled for late Nov. Highways have been notified to remove bin etc ready in time.</i> - <i>Working with two business (one bar, one shop) on Cross Street for shopfront grant. One application is with SC Planning Department. There will be strict timescales for delivery.</i> - <i>SC will now arrange installation of remaining metalworks. Arranging temporary storage and collection. Engineer has suggested fixings as SC now liable for them.</i> - <i>Technical surveys due to start for Llwyd Mansion. Buttress Architects have been awarded contract to work with OTC to look at end uses. Existing hoardings will be replaced with aluminium barrier with interpretation panels when purchase is complete.</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2023 Summer of Art ART-efact Residency very successful. Attracted 600 people over 9 days. - UKSPF bid put in to continue the Cultural Consortium for another 18 months. Future plans included another ART-efact Residency, grants for neighbouring villages and Love Oswestry festival in 2024 and 2025 and capacity building through research trips. Intention is to keep cultural consultant on board. - Interim HSHAZ Evaluation is very positive. Supports the Cultural Consortium as a successful output of the project and recognises the value of Heritage-led interventions. - Shopfront Design Guide is going to SC Cabinet in order to be ratified as a Supplementary Planning Guidance document. Press and photography planned for launch. - 14th October – Day school on the town’s historic buildings and archive.
<p>6. Update from Property and Development Team</p>	<p>Update from Steve Law:</p> <p><i>The Council had proceeded with the best intentions of trying to do a fix on the corbels in order to drop the scaffold but this plan has not worked out due to the heritage nature of the asset and complications with the abutment to the roof. Unfortunately it is vital for it to remain in place as it stands, however the Council will consider options available to them in the interim including subsuming the costs into the contract.</i></p>
<p>7. Church Street</p>	<p>Update from Adele Nightingale:</p> <p><i>Bolt down kerbs have been delayed but will be installed next week. Tarmac will be poured, then needs to be vented and epoxy resin laid. The hoggs can be removed once the area has been assessed for trip hazards. After 28 days the planters can be installed on top of the resin. SC Highway will use part of Festival Square temporarily for storing the aggregate and planting up the planters. Due for completion by November. Comms will explain the process and the 28 day waiting period.</i></p>
<p>8. Bus Station</p>	<p>Update from Zoe Mortimer.</p> <p><i>The removal of the cantilever on the Beatrice Street side of the bus station is proposed to start on w/c 9th October. I am planning a site meeting so please if anyone would like to attend please drop me a line, this includes the removal of the brick planters. Additional quotes are sought for the painting. Painting can begin once the cantilever has been removed.</i></p> <p><i>The bus shelter repairs have been ordered and includes all new PET panels.</i></p>
<p>9. Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review engagement opportunities in light of projects discussion. ● <p>Peter Lloyd has brought some observations and ideas and will discuss these further with officers.</p>

10. Date of next meeting and agenda items	9:30-11am Thursday 26th October 2023. Formal decision needed on daytime vs evening meetings.	
ACTIONS		
1	Establish task and finish groups to come back the main FOG group with options for specific projects.	FOG officers
2	Circulate new draft of Memorandum of Understanding.	JB