

Future Oswestry Meeting

Notes of meeting held Thursday 9th June 2022 via Teams

Attending

Oswestry Town Council (OTC): Councillor Mike Isherwood (Chair) & Councillor Duncan Kerr.

Shropshire Council (SC): Councillor Rob Macey.

Oswestry BID: Adele Nightingale & Ian Follington.

Community Representatives: Peter Lloyd & Craig Marston.

Officers: Arren Roberts (OTC), Joe Bubb, Rosie Corner, Rose Dovey, Ffion Horton, Sam Jones, Steve Law, Hayley Owen, Laura Pell, Andy Wigley (SC).

1. Welcome and apologies

CLlr Duncan Kerr proposed CLlr Mike Isherwood to Chair this meeting. The decision on a Chair moving forward will be made at the next meeting.

Apologies received from Councillor Steve Charmley, who has stood down from the group.

2. Notes of the last meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting held 19/5/22 were approved.

3. Declarations of interest

None.

4. Update from Property and Development Team

Matters arising:

Update from Steve Law:

- The team has initiated marketing of the former Morrisons site.
- Conceptual design work is taking place for Castle View. Purpose is to protect it for the future and ensuring that it does not remain under-utilised. There will be a smaller working group for this project.
- There is an ongoing dialogue with Cambrian Railway Building Trust about the Cambrian Railway Building. SC is keen to unlock the building and would appreciate any support from FOG members.

Attendees agreed that there is opportunity for more dialogue with the TC on alternative uses for the Guildhall and the use of the Youth Centre for back office work.

The Festival Square Jubilee Event was a great success. In person feedback was positive and members of the public had ideas for further uses of the square. Excellent social media activity. Feedback on numbers is forthcoming and all feedback is useful to support future public realm activities and funding bids. Festival Square forms part of the Action Plan and the long-list of projects and is one of the locations covered by the public realm element of the Levelling Up Funding bid which is currently in development. The other elements are high streets and the Innovation Park.

Actions:

- Steve Law to report back on progress on Cambrian Railway Building at a future FOG meeting.
- TC to consider placing a public suggestion box at events.

5. Police and Crime Commissioning Support

Joe Bubb has contacted Ian Bartlett (SC Crime Prevention Officer) regarding possible funding opportunities via the Police and Crime Commissioning body.

Actions:

- This issue to stay on the agenda.
- Rosie Corner will report back any response from Ian.

6. Communications and Engagement Plan

Laura Pell will be the Comms team contact until a replacement is found for Andy Morris who left SC last month. Feedback on comms strategy from FOG is welcomed.

Rosie Corner will be working on the FOG website alongside Comms. It requires an update and more images. BID are happy to provide images.

Actions:

- Rosie Corner and Laura Pell to arrange meeting to discuss website direction and provide an update at the next FOG meeting.

7. Updates on Priority Projects

a) High Street Heritage Action Zone

Update from Sam Jones:

- **Alleyways project.** 80% of the paving is now in place in the alleyways. Clae Glas Park will be complete enough for the upcoming events and the contractors will be removing the hoarding. The blocked drains on Herbie Roberts Way are being fixed. The new interpretation boards are now only waiting for TC sign off. There is ongoing work to sort out the bin situation on Clawdd Du where quotes have also been received for new lighting.
- **Enhancement grants.** These grants are in addition to the existing HSHAZ grants and are designed to improve the appearance of shop fronts and contribute to the public realm. The intervention rate for these is 90% as opposed to the HSHAZ 60%.
- **Cultural Audit.** The Cultural Consortium have requested that the consultants look again at the tone of the report. Some concerns that the first draft of the Audit was too broad and repeated a lot of the Masterplan research. The consultants are now working on the final draft. The Cultural Audit should be a useful tool to support our applications to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and other funding sources.
- **Cultural Consortium:** Corrie Davis, Joe Bubb and Rosie Corner will be supporting working with the Cultural Consortium to establish how it can continue to integrate the work of the HSHAZ and Love Oswestry projects. Hopefully FOG will be able to continue to support this work. All of the Love Oswestry events were booked out and the Cultural Consortium are keen to focus on Love Oswestry (February) and Heritage Open Days (September) moving forward.

Actions

- Sam Jones to arrange tour of alleyways for FOG group once complete.

b) Indicative Masterplan and Movement / Access Strategy

The Masterplan consultation feedback will be hosted on the website and the projects list that will feed into a Delivery Plan which will require effective stakeholder engagement.

FOG needs to do more to communicate its purpose and engage local people. This could include workshops, public meetings, more Facebook and Twitter presence and establishing a panel of community groups. The focus needs to be partnership working and using Future Oswestry as an umbrella organisation covering a range of projects.

Actions:

- Rosie Corner to speak to Peter Lloyd about FOG's engagement strategy.

c) Transport and connectivity Update

Update from Ffion Horton/Adele Nightingale/Rose Dovey:

- **Church Street one-way system:** The experimental system will be made permanent now the consultation has ended. Designers are working on a concept design for Church Street.
- **WSP:** The consultants are working on design options for alternative uses for Festival Square, pedestrianisation of the Town Centre and a contiguous 20mph zone so that the speed limit is not constantly changing.
- **Double yellow lines on Mile Oak.**
- **Night bus:** Awaiting data on the current route to determine the success of this project to date. Important to Oswestry's night time economy.
- **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP):** Workshop has just taken place with key SC staff, Town Clerks from the seven towns covered by the Plan (which includes Oswestry) and infrastructure bodies. Approach is to establish priorities for each of the towns and for the County as a whole. Once a long list of projects is identified this can be assessed based on key metrics such as health and deliverability.
- **Air quality:** There is currently limited pre- and post- air quality monitoring for new schemes.
- **Active Travel funding:** The next Active Travel funding bid will include a package of schemes for Oswestry. There is also scope for using CIL funding for cycle infrastructure on Shrewsbury Road and Middleton Road.

Actions:

- Rose Dovey to circulate slides from LCWIP workshop.

d) Wayfinding including signage for the industrial estate.

Almost of the signs are now in place and more locations for signs are being identified. Upgrade to LED required.

Actions:

- Adele Nightingale to take photos of overhanging foliage and send to SC team.

e) Review of the Taxi Provision

Not many companies could attend the first meeting but feedback was positive. Clear actions and a new policy will be published.

f) Co-working space pilot at the Memorial Hall

Update received from Hadleigh Works. Regular bookings are in place, with the 4-day programme being the most popular. Users are mostly female and representing marketing, coaching and nutrition businesses which launched during Covid. More marketing is required and support from FOG on this would be appreciated. Keen to develop as a community hub and a Diversity and Inclusion event will take place in October.

Attendees supportive of advertising the space in Parish Magazines to the wider area. There is a need for meeting spaces and Hadleigh Works may develop their downstairs room in the future.

g) Capital Infrastructure Projects - Innovation Park

Update from Joe Bubb:

There is progress on the infrastructure for the Spine Road and on utilities, though it may take 18 months for electricity to reach the site. There is a range of interest coming forward and it is important that there is a clear timescale for work to be completed on serviced plots.

A 3D drawing of the pedestrian/cyclist bridge has been shared with FOG members.

Concerns from FOG members about the appearance and its suitability for cyclists and wheelchairs accessing the Innovation Park from the town. Concern that a poor design could prejudice a future Active Travel funding bridge. The funding for the bridge is from Homes England and attached to the Mile End road junction improvements, thus has a very tight timescale. FOG members took a vote on their course of action.

Actions:

- The relevant Portfolio Holder to be invited to a future FOG meeting to hear these concerns.

h) 'Restore your Railway' bid update

457 responses received to initial survey. An adapted survey has been sent to the Orthopaedic Hospital's patients, staff and visitors and 47 responses have been received so far. Feedback so far is that restoring the line is a high priority. FOG members asked to encourage more people to complete the survey.

8. Governance

Governance to be refreshed to reflect changes, masterplan and representation.

Actions:

- Terms of Reference regarding structure and capacity to be reviewed by Arren Roberts and Joe Bubb.
- Appointment of SC representative to be followed up and election of new chair to take place.

9. Any Other Business

- **Levelling Up Fund (LUF):** Hayley Owen requested that FOG, BID and the TC provide letters of support for the next round of LUF funding (as they did for the first round).
- **Geography of FOG:** Agreed that the FOG area covers the town centre and the BID area (which includes the Masterplan areas).
- **Town Council update:** TC has agreed to improve the exit and toilets at the Central Car Park.
- **Toilet facilities for bus/coach drivers:** Cambrian Railway Building and the former Morrisons site could both offer a potential sites for toilets and an indoor break area. In the meantime a portaloos could be a temporary solution.
- **Active Travel England:** Active Travel England is an off-shoot of the Department for Transport and will be launched at the end of the year. It will be a statutory consultee on all major planning and highway applications and will act as an auditor for all active travel schemes over a certain funding threshold.

10. Date of next meeting and agenda items

Thursday 14th July at 10.30am