



Malmesbury Town Team Meeting – Virtual

Monday 15th February 2021 6pm

Minutes

- 1. Present** – Campbell Ritchie, Lesley Wood, John Sunderland, Rob Snedden, Gavin Grant.
Apologies – Ash Scott

- 2. Consider and Approve Minutes from TT meeting 18th January 2021**

The minutes of the meeting 18.02.2021 were agreed and accepted as a true record.

- 3. Update on TT financial matters, including sponsorship.**

RS reported the Treasurer's Accounts as of 31st January 2021 as stated below:

BBF: £8,473

Income: £1,084*

Expenditure: £1,374

BCF: £8,182.61

*Income - Including £ 934 Malmesbury Gift Card sales

LW reported The Old Bell sponsorship payment for Dec 2020, has been paid.

Churchill sponsorship has been paid in Dec for January and LW will follow up February payment with Churchill.

LW noted that Churchill 3 month sponsorship ends in March and there are some possibilities of further sponsorship opportunities via advertising on the Explore Malmesbury website or updated Town Guide.

RS noted that as yet few Malmesbury Gift Card renewal fees have been received.

LW - These will be followed up with emails.

CR commented that in March there should be some income from the Mayor's Ball event via donations.

He also noted that the contract with Malmesbury Marketing is due for renewal.

Renewal and reprint to Town Guide is another sponsorship opportunity. This is being expanded to include the surrounding villages. A grant application for half of the expenditure has been made to Malmesbury Area Board - £1,500 of this £3,000 project. LW and CR to follow up.

- 4. To update the Town Team complaint to Wiltshire Council on matters relating to the Town Team ALDI s106 submission report.**

CR reported that MTC had agreed to a joint MTT/ MTC complaint to Wiltshire Council on the above matter. This has now been sent to the Head of Legal Services at Wiltshire Council.

5. To consider updates to the Discover Malmesbury website during 2021.

CR updated the meeting: Some updates are required, noting that the site hasn't been developed for about 3/ 4 years. A list of update issues has been created by LW and CR including:

- 2020 references being updated to 2021 and graphics.
- Inclusion of Churchill sliding banner.
- Some rebuilding of bits of information and ensuring up to date.
- Updating of projects that have been completed.
- Some areas of functionality need to be developed including the addition of an Explore Malmesbury landing page with buttons to enable access via the Discover Malmesbury site .
- Addition of disability and access information ensuring the site is compliant with current legislation.
- Terms and Conditions Copy and privacy policy areas work to update.
- Easier functionality for adding and removing events, press articles and minutes.

CR informed the meeting that the overall cost of this work will be approximately £1,000. Of which £200 has been allocated for the first two items listed.

LW noted that there is a need to look at some point at the underlying structure of the site as it was built in 2015 some points are getting a bit clunky for easy updating.

Agreement to progress this working proposal was given by those present.

6. Update on all other marketing activity, Great West Way initiative and an overview of priorities.

CR noted that the COVID secure work already done by the TT and MTC should see the town through the next phase of COVID restrictions.

LW provided an update on the focus of marketing activity –The 'Feel Good/ Shop Local' banners are in place.

The campaign has been mainly digital . There has been lots of activity via both Discover Malmesbury Facebook and Instagram, the targeted activity has reached lots of people.

In the past 4 weeks there have been 14 Instagram posts and 36 stories . 31 followers added Av reach 900. Facebook 12 posts average reach 660 to 928 with 650 followers.

Topics included: promoting retailers, promoting Abbey House Gardens, things to look forward to in the Summer, promoting and thanks to Churchill for their backing, tapas, Valentine offers , the OBH competition and the Malmesbury Gift Card.

Also promotion of events: The Greatest Malmesburian, MCAN 2040 Film screening and the Wonder Sculpture kick starter campaign.

GG asked what engagement figures are for local retailers with social media.

LW– Focus on the 34 MGC retailers and of those 20 are very active and now more are engaging and getting smarter, but we need more community engagement.

JS asked if that was the number of followers one would expect? LS – The Instagram account only started in Sept 2020 so 900 followers is a good number and expected to grow significantly.

LW clarified that Discover Malmesbury is run under @ Malmesbury Life.

7. Update on the Vibrant Malmesbury Projects

a. Explore Malmesbury – pre-launch updates.

CR reported that all should be ready for an Explore Malmesbury launch on 27th March.

The Highlights Trail and Pub Trails are more or less complete. Work is ongoing on the Abbey Trail. Work has also started for a Music Trail, where 12 songs relating to local places from 'River to Ruin' will be inserted into the appropriate places.

There are also plans being developed for a community 'Favourite Places Trail' with residents being asked to create a 20-30 second video about their favourite place in Malmesbury.

3 former Dyson staff are continuing their support, on a voluntary basis, on user experience and regular meetings are taking place.

UWE Students are developing a new landing point video.

University of Winchester students are continuing work on adding augmented reality content. CR summarised that there is lots going on and lots to do.

Explore will be given more exposure with the run up to the Mayor's Ball event as it is featured as one of the Mayor's good causes.

b. Malmesbury Gift Card:

- i. Discussion with Miconex**
- ii. Retailer renewal programme**
- iii. Loaded card extension**

GG asked how many High Street retailers are taking part in MGC scheme and who is not. LW informed the meeting that 34 retailers are taking part, there are a few retailers that have not chosen to sign up. The Fabric Shack, new to the High Street in the past year, is a potential new sign up.

LW highlighted the issue of 'hitting a wall' in MGC sales as they cannot be used online. This was the main focus of the meeting with Miconex – The Gift Card can be joined up with a card machine, however there would have to be a reprint of cards and work at the cost of approximately £1,500.

CR New cards connect with Mastercard and have this functionality, but our cards (5,000) were bought before this. CR and LW are still in discussion with Miconex to improve functionality and make the purchase element easier.

CR & LW will report when there is more detail on options available.

CR is due to have a discussion with the Head of Futures Team at Dyson re Malmesbury Gift Card for employee gifts/incentives.

c. Signage

CR reported that Sarah Wilde is continuing work on establishing the final instal arrangements for the signage and the finger posts.

8. To update on discussions with MTC on co-ordination and collaboration opportunities for 2021

CR reported on the meeting with MTC and MTT – The fundamental view was that both MTT and MTC have the best opportunity to contribute most to the overall promotion of Malmesbury's economy and businesses as two separate organisations.

Recognition that TT needs to strengthen it's retailer and small business involvement and that

MTC needs to clarify what its aims are with building some of the promotional aspects, recognising the connections that there are through the TIC as the landing point for lots of activity around visitors into Malmesbury.

MTC is also looking to see how it can improve communicating via its website and Facebook and managing stories in a co-ordinated and accessible way, promoting the town to to the best effect.

CR commented that MTC will probably start to look at developing some dedicated internal communication resource with expertise.

LW agreed that TT needs to consider how marketing is handled – Just engaging Lesley is a bit of an exposed situation commercially.

The core MTC contribution to MTT funding is expected to be received in April 2021.

There will be further discussions with MTC on the points above in due course.

9. To update progress towards increased engagement with retailers and small businesses 2021.

CR – The current lockdown has made the proposed Malmesbury Retailer & Small Business Summit impossible.

CR and LW met with a small group of retailers to consider what is working, what is not and opportunities and important issues.

It was clear that the TT will get most traction if it prioritises issues that are immediately relevant to retailers and local businesses. These include:

- Waste collection and recycling issues
- Collective purchasing opportunities- energy, credit card suppliers etc.
- The possibility of a shared Click and Collect delivery service.
- Landlords and rents
- Concerns and uncertainty about the future.
- Grants – GG will pursue any new developments on grants.

GG reported that those who have applied for grants have received them and an extension was made for application for Discretionary Business Grant Awards. The question is what comes next? There have been some closures of shops in the upper High Street, including the imminent closure of Lloyds Bank, but also some revamps. There are still very many unknowns for businesses and this is a huge challenge.

GG Posing the question - What does a destination town look like? - No empty units on the High Street, flexibility of opening hours (difficult for small independents), electric vehicle charging. Great narrative and beautiful location, but we don't have everything.

CR -Wiltshire Council Retail Report. Malmesbury is perceived as doing reasonably well as a High Street, but some businesses have closed and Aldi will have an impact.

CR commented that we should know more of the next round of announcements soon and these issues will need to be considered again in March.

10. To receive an update from Wiltshire Councillor Gavin Grant

GG reported on;

i. Local Plans 2036 - formal sessions have occurred and discussions continue.

ii. Budget setting – Council Tax modelling from Wiltshire Council assumes no growth in Business Rate income and the administration's position is to levy the full government 3% Social Care levy and a 1.99% Council Tax increase totalling a 4.99% increase.

GG noted that in the small print there is a budget allocation of an annual £1 million fund for

market towns for the next 4 years. What it will be used for is as yet unclear.

iii. Wiltshire Council has not recovered its 5 year land supply. There are a significant number of speculative planning applications. GG has given notice to the planning team that if they are minded to grant any he will be calling them in for deliberation before the Northern Area Planning Committee. The timetable is unclear, the most advanced are the Park Road application and the second Bloor site, noting that they do not yet own the land, but this plan is very likely to include a much needed new nursery and pre-school.

JS asked if there is any work in Wiltshire or nationally as to what high streets will look like post COVID.

GG answered no- at the moment the urgent and immediate is driving out the strategic and important. He commented that the Market Town forum may be revised and partnership between the business community and town councils will be critical.

11. To receive an update from Malmesbury Town Councillor Campbell Ritchie

CR noted that following on from The Greatest Malmesburian event that the significance of Thomas Hobbes on a national and international scale should be highlighted to add to what Malmesbury has to offer as a destination town.

Electric car charging is being explored with talks with a potential provider in progress. The Cross Hayes car park is the preferred site but this is owned by Wiltshire Council. This will need to be discussed with Wiltshire Council as to what can be done. A strategy is needed about how this will happen in the light of the fact that Tetbury and Cirencester are both about to provide electric charging points.

CR reported that the work of GG and Paul Smith on the Cloister Gardens refurbishment is progressing well and along with the picnic tables purchased last year is creating an attractive space.

CR updated the meeting on his attempts to get Lloyds Bank to reverse their decision to close the Malmesbury branch, spurred on by the Financial Services Conduct Authorities statement on bank closures. Lloyds have finally agreed to engage and there is an upcoming meeting.

12. AOB

CR thanked the team members for their work with so much going on at present, stating that the Town Teams work should give the business community a chance of coming out of 2021 in a better position if momentum can be maintained.

Next TT meeting 6pm -15th March 2021