

Friends of Castle Green Visioning – 9 August 2014

Where do we want to be in Five Years

Participants: FOCG directors – Amanda Attfield, Mark Hubbard, Paddy Nugent, Annabel Oxford, Lisa Richardson, Jonathan Sheldon.

Facilitator: Heidi Macdougall

Objectives of session

- To achieve a common understanding of where we are going to be in five years
- To link this strategic goal inextricably with a nuts and bolts timetable (an action plan) of how to get there
- To identify the resources needed to implement the action plan and reach this goal
- To harmonise with other FOCG documentation requirements (e.g. CAT plan)

Aims of session from Directors

- Turn broad ideas into no more than c three main tasks (Paddy & Lisa)
- Cement everything together (Annabel)
- Clear direction going forward (Lisa)
- Crystal clarity on strategic goal (Amanda)
- “Place to be” - generate ideas, consider feasibility and narrow down (Amanda)
- See physically how far we want to go: Pavilion AND the parks? Aspiration vs affordability (Jonathan)
- Common understanding (Mark)
- Matching vision with what’s out there and what support we can get and what’s expected of us. How do we respond? (Mark)

Summary of outcome of session

Excellent participation by all and a high degree of agreement about the longer term vision: the absolute agreement to progress the Community Asset Transfer for the Pavilion and develop a thriving community within Castle Green. In addition, the strengthening of the desire for the developments within the Pavilion and the parks to be of direct benefit to the disadvantaged within our communities. The goal of restoring the Pavilion within 5-10 years was agreed, however it was accepted that stronger rationale for this will be required, through consultation.

When considering barriers to achieving the vision, it was clear that Directors are feeling under massive pressure – as part timers and a considerable amount of time was spent determining that a part time employee is needed to take away the day-to-day tasks that are bogging several Board members down and preventing them from effectively completing the strategic role required of them. It was agreed that a part time Operations Manager would be recruited, initially on a one year fixed contract. Amanda Attfield has processed all actions associated with the job description and recruitment process.

A second session is proposed for autumn 2014 to review progress of immediate actions and develop next stage actions. This could be a shorter session on one evening.

Immediate Actions Agreed

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1. Write article for newsletter inc. advert for job by Aug 26 meeting | AA/ AO |
| 2. Draft notes concerning resourcing, job description and recruitment process | AA |
| 3. Organise PAYE for employee: | |
| a. Research | AA |
| b. Implement | JS |
| 4. CAT approved and in place for Pavilion by Dec 2013/ Jan 2014 | PN |
| 5. Write to Geoff Hughes and Tony Featherstone ref CIC / charity | PN |
| 6. Get legal advice – research who to approach | PN |
| 7. Info for CAT application to PN for 28/8 | All |
| 8. Corporate structure determined and in place – actions to be agreed | c/fwd |
| 9. Awards for All applic. for kitchen inc consultation events completed by end Sept | HM/ SS/ AO |
| 10. Feasibility study required – proposal inc. where to get funding by Sept 25 mtg | HM/ SS |
| 11. AGM 18 Sept to include sharing of vision – discuss at August meeting | All |

Next Steps

Progress all agreed actions and then meet again in the autumn to review progress and generate more detail behind:

- **Why** do it and who will benefit? (e.g. replace failing public services, restore and make use of historic central venue, serve citizens - especially vulnerable people, strengthen community, build bridges between sections of the wider community, etc)
- **Longer term actions to reach five year goal**
- **Define more specific outcomes** (e.g. more vulnerable people have jobs or volunteering opportunities, more small businesses are set up, improved health and wellbeing through ...)?
 - Identify SMART indicators
 - Who will do what and when to achieve these?

Detail from Visioning Session 9 Aug

Introduction

Heidi shared headlines from 'Understanding Herefordshire Needs Assessment' published by Hereford Council in May 2014. *See separate summary.* Main needs:

1. **Skills shortages:** 'Technical or practical skills or job specific skills', 'planning and organisation skills' and 'team working skills' were the most common skills that needed improving.
2. **Poverty:** one in five households live in poverty and some areas of south Hereford, Leominster and Ross are amongst the 25% most deprived in England and have become more deprived relative to other areas. This is likely to be exacerbated by the swingeing cuts in working tax credits and welfare payments over the coming years.
3. **Isolation and loneliness:** currently 28% of households comprise one person – half of whom are over 65. The highest proportions of lone pensioner households are found in Hereford and the market towns.
4. **Ageing population:** social care demand already rising; dementia diagnosis remains a challenge; co-ordination of service; provision of appropriate housing.
5. **Wages and economic growth:** second lowest earnings in Great Britain.
6. **Strengthening communities:** one in three volunteer; one in five are carers, **but one in 20 feel lonely most of the time - social isolation and loneliness affect vulnerability.**
7. **Inequalities:** gap between most and least deprived areas widening; poorer health outcomes for those in most deprived areas; looked after children, those with special education needs

or English as an additional language don't do as well at school; people with mental health problems or learning disabilities are less likely to be in employment; one of the highest gender pay gaps in the country; only a third of estimated dementia cases have been diagnosed. **Action: Heidi to do more research into mental health issues in Herefordshire**

Where do we want to be in five years? FOCG Vision

From Paddy's draft for Community Asset Transfer (CAT) application:

"We are an active community group committed to respecting the heritage of Castle Green, making more use of the building and associated space for today's community and improving and protecting it for future generations".

"Community-led "bridge" building between: affluent & deprived communities; the statutory, voluntary and private sectors; historic, environmental, & social uses will be combined to create a cutting edge rural county regeneration project".

What will it look and feel like?

Include the physical/built environment, activities (eg offer training and skills, cultural opportunities) personnel, and finances.

- **Pavilion restored: in five years, the funding is raised and in 2020 the building is closed for restoration**
- **Income consistently exceeds expenditure (and we are a viable, stable, secure enterprise)**
- **Site seen as strategically important economically and socially for Hereford(shire)**
- **Bustling with lots of activities**
- **Counterbalance: new and old / heritage within Hereford city**
- **A true hub**
- **Restoration – a vehicle for:**
 - **Creating employment**
 - **Tackling isolation/ other social issues**
- **Park more used**
- **Riverbank restored**
- **21st century pleasure garden with lots of people**
- **Three to four income streams**
- **Cafe**
- **Market garden**
- **Taking up ALL available gardens: Mill St/ Castle St/ Cantilupe/ Quays**
- **Everyone uses it**
- **River offer**
- **Forward thinking – development for a purpose**
- **Practical, usable event space – inside and outside**
- **Providing employment including for vulnerable people**
 - **To address local needs**
 - **Always for a living wage**
- **Employing people between directors and general employees**
- **Consider franchises**
- **Historical story well publicised and known – fully accessible**
- **Restoration and conservation through occupation**
- **National recognition for successful regeneration**

Barriers to achieving Vision

Directors' personal stresses and strains

- Capacity – I am barely coping with what I have to do now
- Keeping our focus and energy
- Ambition way beyond capacity
- We (Directors) may fall out
- Seen as elite clique
- Our own authority and power to reach people and make it happen
- Our ability to stay focused and not get distracted
- Personnel issues: Directors haven't the time
 - To manage
 - To write bids
 - To market
 - To coordinate volunteers
- No paid support
- Daunting for Directors
- Are we (Directors) clear about what we are doing, when and by whom and why?
- Lack of some key skills on the Board
- Being an employer – not done that before
- Skills mix of Directors and volunteers – do we have all the skills needed in a team?
- Lack of skills eg business skills, and funding to deliver
- Our confidence to make it happen
- Directors feeling able to do what's needed
- Pulling together
- Resilience of Directors
- Just six part timers!
- Mark's new business
- Maintaining the balance of development between achieving income, stimulating awareness and demand and "managing expectations"
- Lack of project resource in start-up phase
- Fear of growing
- What happens and when?

Resourcing

- Shortage of volunteers
- Competing with many other organisations for volunteers in this area eg Cathedral
- Attracting volunteers and Director replacements where needed

Governance

- Status of organisation: Community Interest Company (CIC) and / or charity?

Awareness/ Image/ Marketing

- Selling our offer – to whom? – and what is the offer?
- Not sure how to access and involve the communities we need to reach
- Green perceived as a bit scary
- Seen as part of Cathedral/ St James elite
- Nothing to draw people to Castle Green
- If we stay as we are will it be seen as complacency – I fear perception of us as middle class people putting on events

- People don't know Castle Green exists or what's here on offer
- People don't know our vision
- Perception that it's too posh prevents people coming
- Project looks boring to outside world
- Community does not understand our vision
- We're middle class, middle aged
- Profile of Board – middle aged, middle class
- We don't really know what people want
- People don't know we're here and what we're doing
- The historic story isn't accessible

Physical/ Parking

- (Poor) Condition of the building may force the plan
- Pavilion not fit for purpose
- Limitation of the current building eg fire safety in upper floors
- Park maintenance – minimal support from council and as appearance deteriorates, appeal of the place as somewhere to visit will diminish
- No Tourist Info Centre in town to direct visitors to the available routes
- Actual and perceived lack of parking
- Location not en-route from or to anywhere
- No river walk this side of river
- River only accessible to canoeists

Funding

- Money to fund pre-development stages
- Limited opportunity to generate income at the moment
- Competition for funding
- Lack of money generally
- Too many similar and bigger projects nationwide
- Competing interests of statutory bodies
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interests (SSSI) & Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
 - Scheduled Ancient Monument
 - Conservation Area

Competition

- Surrounded by a large number of meeting room rental space
- Competition from Left Bank when re-opened
- Other local Community Asset Transfer (CAT) competition

Other

- Problem of noise and neighbours
- Antisocial behaviour on the green
- People not wanting anything to change – NIMBYism
- Public inertia
- Uneasy relationships with bowlers
- Insularity of Directors/ volunteers – need other partners/ partnerships
- Concerns about council capacity, understanding, motivation, direction, and engagement
- Integrating events so they join up
- Not clear what the 'bustling range of activities' will be
- Franchises – if we go down that route will we compromise our value to pay living wages?

Opportunities

- Hereford Improvement District – can this help us?

Questions / Issues

- Herefordshire Needs analysis states older people feel isolated – and yet they are not coming to FOCG events
- What about young people “NEETS”? How can we support them?
- Similarly, people with mental health issues
- Why do we need to restore the building? Where do we all stand on this?
- Competing needs of Green incompatible with our vision

Capacity – ideas for improvement

- Get funding for manager
- Get advice on charity vs CIC
- Get legal advice
- Set up charity
- Research funding and put in bids – check Heritage Lottery deadlines and others
- Consider employing someone in role that will pay for itself
- Need two roles – manager and volunteer coordinator NB See separate notes from Amanda.

hm aug 2014