

Minutes of the Bishop Auckland Heritage Action Zone Advisory Group

Wednesday 24th November 2021, 10.00am, St Anne's Church, Bishop Auckland

Attendees:

Bob McManners	BM	Chair
Chris Myers	CM	Durham County Council (online)
Kathryn Watson	KW	Durham County Council
Jules Brown	JB	Historic England
Anne Allen	AA	Durham County Council
Bryan Harris	BH	Durham County Council
Cllr Sam Zair	SZ	Bishop Auckland Town Council
Cllr Andrew Jackson	AJ	Durham County Council (online)
Liz Fisher	LF	The Auckland Project
Andrew Walker	AW	Bishop Auckland & Shildon AAP

Apologies:

No apologies were received.

ITEM

ACTION

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

1.1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. CM and AJ joined the meeting via Teams.

2.0 Review of Minutes and Actions last meeting

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2021 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

2.2 Actions:

2.2.1 AA confirmed that the Research Group had met in June and notes from the meeting had been circulated to the Advisory Group.

2.2.2 CM reported that he had been advised by Historic England to defer the application for de-listing of the former King James School building until redevelopment works had been completed.

2.2.3 Item 3.2 - BM asked if there was an update on the FHSF implementation programme. CM reported that a project cost review had been undertaken on the entire programme and a revised timeline would be drafted within the next couple of weeks. BH reported that physical works on Kingsway had not yet begun, and CM confirmed that survey works were required prior to this.

ACTION: CM to revise FHSF and STF reports and forward to GB for circulation.

CM/GB

2.2.4 Items 6.1 to 6.11 - all actions had been completed.

2.2.5 Item 6.12 – AA reported that capital works at King James I Academy ancillary buildings were not eligible for NHLF funding therefore a meeting with Catherine Pearson to discuss bid timetabling had not taken place.

2.2.6 Item 6.13 – JB reported that discussions between Kate Wilson and the NHLF on co-ordination of town centre scheme funding bids had not taken place as capital works were ineligible for NHLF funding, however co-ordination on other funding bids was taking place.

2.0 Review of Minutes and Actions last meeting (cont'd)

2.2.7 Item 6.14 – CM reported that due to his recent illness he had not yet met with James Etherington to discuss alternate legal routes for the Mechanics Institute, however, he would be arranging a meeting in the next couple of days. JB said that HE was very keen to make progress on a legal solution and would encourage DCC to employ additional legal team resources on this.

ACTION: CM to discuss Mechanics Institute legal routes with James Etherington, DCC

CM

2.2.8 Item 6.15 – AA had been advised by DCC Highways not to pursue the High Bondgate water fountain planting proposal as it would obstruct inspection of the wall.

3.0 Update from the Brighter Bishop Auckland Partnership

3.1 BM gave an update from the Brighter Bishop Auckland Partnership (BBAP) Board meeting which took place on 15th September 2021.

3.2 Future High Streets Fund (FHSF)

A cost review of all projects had been undertaken in response to construction price inflation, due to Brexit and Covid-19.

Avison Young had been appointed to assist with the Programme Management role Asset Planning and Consultation Strategies were currently being prepared in-house to help programme delivery.

The importance of the Marketing & Communications Plan was emphasized; to ensure the key message as to what projects were coming forward and when, was understood by the public. The Property Re-use Fund was currently considering 15 Expressions of Interest for properties within the Town Centre boundary.

A draft Communications Plan report would be presented at the next meeting of the Stronger Towns Fund Board and the importance of all stakeholder groups, particularly residents and business groups, fully understanding the scope of works that are planned and underway and how they come together to provide a wider benefit across the town was emphasized.

CM had reported that there was quite a lot of interest in Railway Street coming forward, which was just outside the town centre boundary, and therefore not eligible for FHSF grants however, he and KW were currently looking to identify other funding to assist businesses in that area.

3.3 Stronger Towns Fund (STF)

PB had emphasized the importance of a joined-up approach by the Future High Streets Fund and Stronger Towns Fund and BM said this should include the BA HAZ too.

DL had explained that although the funding award of £33.2million was less than the original bid of £46.8million, the ST Board had decided not to eliminate projects but to look for other funding streams and prioritise spend.

The next phase of work would be to establish project teams, and DL would be discussing this and the involvement of the Town Council and Heritage Action Zone, with GW.

BM had referred to the Eastern Access Road and Car Park project and asked if the results of the

3.0 Update from the Brighter Bishop Auckland Partnership (cont'd)

3.3 Stronger Towns Fund (STF) (cont'd)

Archaeology, Ecological and Economic studies had been received. GW had replied that a number of preliminary studies had been commissioned; an Archaeology Assessment had been undertaken by Durham University Archaeological Services, a Flood Risk Assessment, Heritage Impact Assessment with the next stage of this being ground investigations and topographical studies. Further background studies would be required to underpin planning applications coming forward.

BM had referred to the Eastern Access Car Park project and said that the HAZ had some concerns that visitors may walk directly from the car park over the footbridge to the Kynren site and by-pass the town centre. He said that visitor flow to the town centre was crucial. DL said that the aim of the Car Park project was to ensure visitors were directed straight to the Car Park to avoid congestion and then be transported via electric buses to the town centre. LF said that TAP's aim was also to ensure that visitors did not by-pass the town centre and it was looking at ways this could be avoided. CM said that DCC had commissioned transport consultants to update the traffic model for the town to ensure traffic flow worked.

BM reported that there were concerns around the Canopy proposal and its legacy, questioning whether, apart from the visual impact, it was affordable, considering security and future maintenance cost implications. DL had said that a transformational solution was needed, and it was crucial that all design suggestions from groups, organisations and the public, were considered

JB asked who HE should be communicating with regarding Town Investment Plan projects and BM said it would probably be with David Land directly, however he would check this and inform JB.

ACTION: BM to provide JB with the contact for the Town Investment Plan.

BM

BM asked who he should contact to discuss progress on setting up of STF sub-groups to review the Project List. CM said he would ask GW for an update and include BM in discussions.

ACTION: CM to ask GW for an update and include BM in discussions

CM

Proposals were to identify a town centre premises where project models could be viewed by all. LF offered TAP's No. 43 Market Place as a display premises and was thanked for her offer.

3.4 Member Updates - BM gave a brief update on recent activity.

4.0 Project Manager's Report

A report had been circulated previously and AA gave an update on further developments:

4.1 Town Building Re-Use

4.1.1 Conservation Area Grant Scheme –

47 Newgate – Planning determination in January 2022

6 Newgate – Planning application submitted

68 Fore Bondgate – Structural survey and schedule of works completed and with owners for review.

4.0 Project Manager's Report (cont'd)

11 Fore Bondgate – designs and specifications for repairs to roof, front and rear facades, windows, doors and shopfront are now out for pricing.

50/50A Bondgate – making good progress with Napper Architects appointed to develop design scheme and pre-planning application.

14 Newgate – Site meeting had taken place. JB said it was important that the Enterprise Agency were aware of the urgency to defray grant funding and that they would be offered support to progress the project.

25 Newgate – AA and KW had site visit today and grant application for new use was to be submitted.

12 Newgate - Planning application being submitted for roof repairs and internal works.

JB referred to 18-22 Newgate and asked whether dialogue on potential further repairs was continuing.

KW said that Napper Architects were working on this including a drone survey and site surveys.

4.1.2 Ancillary Buildings King James I Academy -

Determination of planning applications due this month.

The National Heritage Lottery Fund had rejected funding for capital works but had agreed to funding for the digitalisation of DAFT collection.

The Architectural Heritage Fund was not able to support the King James project but was however, interested in the football story.

HE would consider funding repair work but required the school, as building owners, to work alongside.

4.1.3 St Anne's Church -

The Section 106 grant offer letter for roof repair works had been signed. JB said he hoped repairs would help to address its National Heritage at Risk Register issues.

4.1.4 Masonic Hall -

No progress on this project as owner not responding to purchase offers

JB said that an HE annual review in February may recommend that the budget for target buildings be spent elsewhere if current projects were not progressed, therefore an urgent solution was needed for the benefit of community wellbeing through removing a derelict building from the high street.

4.1.5 Castle Park and Assets

JB reported that HE was liaising with David Ronn and would require a claim submission by the 17th March 2022. LF said she would follow this up with David Ronn.

JB said that a claim submission was also required by 17th March 2022 for Bar Mondo survey work. LF reported that Napper Architects had been appointed to undertake the works and they were aware of timetables. LF said that Napper would also be looking at engagement, and she was keen to involve the BA HAZ in this as well as arranging a public display of Napper's findings.

ACTION: LF to follow up HE claim submissions for Castle Park and Bar Mondo with David Ronn.

LF

4.0 Project Manager's Report (cont'd)

4.1.6 Public Realm – Newton Cap Rail Heritage Interpretation

AA reported that the project had been signed off for installation and she was meeting with DCC's Find & Fit It team on Monday to discuss a new bench and repainting of railings in Spring.

4.1.7 Community Engagement

The Heritage Construction Skills tender was awarded to New College, Durham with a pre-start meeting next week.

HAZ was participating in Hadrian's Wall 1900 Festival with online activity pack and Durham University Archaeology facilitated activities.

Trades4Care was decorating the King James Lodge as part of a training project with Bishop Auckland College which would enable DAFT to use the building in the New Year.

5.0 Nomination of BA HAZ Advisory Group Representative to join Local Listings Panel

5.1 BH explained that it had been decided that the Panel should include local individuals representing key areas, and therefore a nominee from the BA HAZ Advisory Group to represent Bishop Auckland in the final determination of what is local heritage, would be valued. AA volunteered for the role and this was agreed.

ACTION: AA to represent the BA HAZ Advisory Group on the Local Listings Panel.

AA

6.0 Any Other Business

6.1 Regeneration Update

6.1.1 Targeted Business Improvement Scheme (TBI) – KW explained that the scheme was one of three grant schemes in operation in Bishop Auckland and five applications had been completed this financial year so far.

Property Re-Use Fund – KW reported that fifteen expressions of interest (EOI) had been received to date, three of which now had planning consent and two currently in the planning application system. JB asked how many of the fifteen EOI's were related to buildings which were a priority within the CAGS and KW explained that there were five.

6.1.2 Visitor Accommodation – KW had met with Lucy Wearne of Visit County Durham who agreed to facilitate an accommodation workshop in Spring. KW confirmed that Andrew from Hotel Solutions would help facilitate the workshop.

6.2 JB asked if TAP had a solution for No.43 Market Place. LF said that ground floor would be split into two; a communications hub housing the 'Bishop Auckland Big Picture', an exhibition of information on projects from Tindale Crescent to the eastern access road, showing a timeline of the town and proposed development over the next 2-3 years. TAP was working with Curious 12 and community group to prepare information for the exhibition and anticipated that contributions from the BA HAZ and DCC Regeneration would be included. A website was to be created to run alongside the exhibition to show how the various town groups are contributing to development of the town.

The remaining space would be used as a young people's consultation area to discuss their views on town projects. LF anticipated that No.43 would open after Christmas.

JB referred to content for the town timeline and said that HE had produced an Historic Area

6.0 Any Other Business (cont'd)

Assessment and a coffee table style book was being drafted for publication next year which could be referenced.

LF said she would be circulating the draft town timeline to the group for comment.

Action: LF to circulate a copy of TAP's draft Town Timeline to the group.

LF

6.3 BH highlighted the current poor state of three town centre buildings, the Post Chaise, Castle Bar and car park building. LF agreed and explained that remedial works were currently not being considered as the buildings were due to be redeveloped but she would discuss the matter further with colleagues.

Action: LF to discuss the condition of the three buildings with TAP colleagues.

LF

6.4 The meeting had highlighted some difficulties for members joining the meeting via Teams. AW said that DCC had hybrid meeting mobile technology available and he would forward contact details to AA. LF said that the Spanish Gallery had the necessary technology and offered to host January's meeting at the gallery.

Action: AW to send AA contact details re DCC's hybrid meeting technology.

AW

7.0 Date and Time of next meeting

7.1 Wednesday, 12th January 2022, 10.00am at The Spanish Gallery, Market Place, Bishop Auckland.

7.2 Meeting dates for 2022 were discussed and as some members were unable to attend two of the scheduled dates, it was agreed to change them to July 13th and November 16th.

ACTION: GB to resend meeting invitations for the rescheduled meetings.

GB

Note: CM and AJ were unable to fully contribute to the meeting due to the poor online connection.