

Haslingden Task Force

12 September 2017

Minutes

1. In attendance:

Cllr Alyson Barnes (Chair)
Cllr Ann Kenyon
Marilyn Proctor – First Choice Credit Union
Renate Ormerod – Haslingden Civic Pride
Rob Carder – Haslingden Community Link
Guy Darragh – Rossendale Borough Council
Alison Wilkins – Rossendale Borough Council
Lydia Williamson – Graham Jones MP office
Stephen Anderson – Valley Heritage
Megan Eastwood – Rossendale Borough Council
Phil Smith – Rosso Buses
Sham Kareem - Beautylicious

Apologies: Cllr Morris

2. Welcome and introductions

Cllr Barnes explained the background to Haslingden Task Force, which has been focussed on tackling some of the issues in the town including litter, parking, untidy shop fronts etc. Work has been undertaken to address these issues through clean ups, changes to parking and improved signage, planters and hanging baskets, plus the development of a branding, website and promotional materials for the town. This has been done using some of the £100,000 allocated to the Task Force for improvements to Haslingden.

Cllr Barnes explained that the shop front scheme has provided a small amount of money with the aim of lifting the town centre shops. At the last meeting in July, it was agreed to energise the project. However, since then it has been agreed to look at Townscape Heritage funding which has the potential to bring in up to £2m to the town for improvements to historic buildings and public realm, i.e. the Task Force funding could be used as match funding to bring in a much larger pot of funding.

This meeting was arranged to see if there is support for this and to get an idea of what people think are the key historic buildings.

3. Townscape Heritage Initiative (Heritage Lottery) Grant funding application for Haslingden Centre

Guy Darragh, RBC Economic Development Manager explained that the scheme would be for Haslingden people and the Council's role would be to work with local

residents and businesses to find out what the community wants from such a scheme, e.g. in terms of public realm.

Megan Eastwood, Bacup THI Project Manager explained that the scheme in Bacup is enhancing the heritage of Bacup town centre and improving the open space for pedestrians. The first stage for Haslingden is the first round submission for £50k to develop the full bid. The timetable is tight as the last ever round is in December. As part of this process they would be talking to businesses etc. The aim is to keep everyone in mind of the heritage and to retain the market town feel of Haslingden, and restore pride in the community.

If successful a project team will be put together including many partners, to make up the decision making board. Architects, construction engineers etc. would be involved and there could be grants available for businesses of up to 90%. The scheme would have a wide impact beyond shops fronts through involving local schools, groups and residents and there would also be courses offered on subjects including stone masonry, lime pointing etc.

The scheme could look at parking, the market, dilapidated buildings, public realm, and has been very well received in Bacup. Megan offered to give Task Force members a tour of the scheme in Bacup. Rosso Bus agreed to provide transport (off peak).

The bid would include a conservation area appraisal and Megan explained that the development of a conservation area is about protecting the assets and sympathetic developments. Stephen Anderson advised that he has been involved a lot in THI projects and it is about recognising that Haslingden is a special place, but needs investment, which is what THI would bring.

Feedback from Task Force members was requested. Issues raised included:

- Haslingden Civic Pride highlighted the dilapidated state of wrought iron railings and bollards in the town.
- Fly tipping is an issue – keeping the town clean and tidy.
- Manchester Road / Blackburn Road is the main through route and therefore is quite visible. Suggested that the 4 buildings at the cross roads could be a focus.

It was explained that THI could focus on a particular street, or take a pepper pot approach and focus on different buildings, however, Heritage Lottery would be looking for a focus to provide maximum impact.

There are certain documents that have to be provided with the bid, including a conservation area appraisal, for which there is a cost to produce. The Task Force was asked to provide £6,000 funding for such professional reports.

Funding of £6000 was agreed from the Task Force budget. There was unanimous support for the Townscape Heritage bid for Haslingden.

Action: Guy Darragh and Megan Eastwood to develop the TH bid.

4. Future Task Force actions / projects

Traders group – this was touched on at the last meeting in terms of how best to support them and it was noted that work is ongoing to re energise the traders group. A drop in session has been held at the library and Council officers have visited shops in the town. It was also noted that the market traders are working well together as a team.

5. Updates from Task Force Members

Credit Union - planning application for new shop front submitted.

Haslingden Civic Pride – suggested Winfields be approached to see if they will sponsor planters on railings. The group are hoping to have a Welcome to Haslingden sign on the grass verge opposite Tesco.

It was suggested that the Task Force could look at funding some of these ideas as a future project. It could also link into the Living Well Living Better project and volunteering as the group always need volunteers to do gardening.

Rob Carder mentioned the R Awards which are open for nominations until 27 September. There is an award for the best community group.

Haslingden Community Link can now open up the whole building giving a capacity of 180 people. They have started running family events and are looking at developing a social enterprise for older people.

6. Next Steps / date of next meeting

It was agreed that a future meeting would be held in a couple of months to update on progress with the TH bid etc.