

Notes from meeting between representatives from Malmesbury Town Council and Malmesbury Town team on 4.2.21

Present: MTC: Cllrs D'Arcy, Doody, Power and Vandelli, Town Clerk (RSW)

TT: Campbell Ritchie, Lesley Wood

Also invited: Cllr Jones, Grant

1. CR gave a **contextual overview** of the purpose for the meeting;
 - MTC have an 8k stake in the TT.
 - There is a joint interest and focus on the High Street.
 - Both parties have marketing initiatives that compliment each other and could capitalise on this (e.g. work over Christmas)
 - The opportunity for a co-ordinated and shared response.
 - The TT is in a process of review and re-establishing itself.
2. KP – the Tt was intended to be independent of MTC and focus on the High St retailers. It was set up with to involve the High St retailers and assist ion their overall marketing.
3. FV – commented the TT as an independent organisation can act and deliver some things that MTC and the Community and Town Promotions Committee can't. Therefore, MTC and the TT need to stay separate. But work in partnership and in parallel. The MTC 8k funding in effectively commissions these services via the TT.
4. CD – commented that the High St retailers look to the TT in a way they would not to MTC.
5. LW – commented the **TT needs more capacity**. It is very dependent on a sole person for the marketing . The two factors leave it commercially exposed and vulnerable.
6. CR- the TT is in transition financially moving towards a self-funding situation. There is a need to rebuild the retailer base. There is also a need and the potential opportunity to address **collective retailer issues**;
 - Refuse and recycling collection.
 - The re-occupation and utilisation of empty shops.
 - A co-ordinated 'click and collect' set up.
7. LW – reflected back that there are the same challenges in all market towns.
8. KP- there are **two levels of interest and engagement** from retailers;
 1. Decision makers
 - And
 2. Participants
 - A **regular newsletter** could help maintain engagement.
9. CR – Aldi and Waitrose challenge the High St turnover and present a big challenge. Future focus should ensure support for independent retailers. It was agreed there could be possible mileage in engaging with the Co-Op and Waitrose as each have maintain an inherent community value within their business ethos.
10. SD' – suggested to **clarify the towns economic objectives** in a plan and to use this to inform resource allocation. LW commented there is a **need to review and update the existing towns retail plan**. CR supported the suggestion to review the towns retail plan. KP added that the **Neighbourhood Plan Framework** also allows for retail to be included.

Suggested Action to produce an Outline Business Plan 2021 onwards.

11. CR – TT has some **key objectives** linked to MTC's aims;
 - a) Retailer engagement
 - b) Gift card promotion
 - c) Increase in visitors
 - d) Explore Malmesbury
 - e) New signage
 - f) Public toilets
 - g) Workshop events
 - h) Increase sponsorship
 - i) Website
 - j) Town Guide
 - k) Post Covid – High Street and parking restrictions and arrangements
12. KP – Wiltshire Council will have a role in Post Covid recovery and regeneration work.
Press and Media
13. CR/ LW need to **co-ordinate press and media coverage**. KP – Christmas work was good example. Also, a '**Town Centre manager**' or '**Marketing Manager**' type role could be created.
14. MTC capacity to do marketing and press coverage could be better. RSW favoured a dedicated role recruited with right skill set and motivation to do this, suggested **apprenticeship opportunity** could be created. LW advised if this idea was pursued that someone with the right skillset was recruited.
15. SD' – need to **understand the market**. LW suggested there was currently **two focusses** on marketing held by MTC and the TT;
MTC- Community
TT- Visitors
16. It was agreed that **MTC and TT's work to be effective should be co-ordinated and communicated** with each other. RSW suggested a '**co-ordinating body**' could be created to ensure this. KP suggested a '**memo of understanding**' could also help clarify the relationship.
17. **Action** – for **MTC and TT to create their own economic business plans**; and then to cross reference them to **identify common and distinct goals**, and areas of work.
18. RSW stated that for **MTC to formally do this work it would need to be carried out via a 'working group'**- which could come via the Full Council or Community and Town Promotions Committee. **Action-** FV to put on C&TP agenda with proposal to form work group.