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**Management Committee Meeting
Minutes 25th March 2009
Kings Arms in Shepton Mallet**

PRESENT

Zena Pollard, Rob Gilderthorp, Dave Brown,
Mike Perry, Lorraine Pratten, Jo Christoforides

APOLOGIES

Margaret Robinson, Chris Inchley, Alan Stone, Sonia Pike
Guy Braga, Janet Kinison, Paul Hooper, Dick Skidmore

The minutes of the February meeting were accepted.

MATTERS ARISING

The situation on the TIC was reported – broadly, huge support and ongoing discussions but still the threat that funding will be withdrawn. The meeting felt strongly that Mendip should be fighting our corner. Harvey Sigg's statement that MDC is committed to the Central Somerset contribution was questioned. Fran Whelan's opinion is that money cannot be committed in this way.



It was felt that it is entirely missing the point that tourism is a huge earner for the town and that the TIC functions as an information centre much wider than just tourism.

MP and ZP to lobby councillors.

Regeneration Officers – no firm news

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

MCTN CONFERENCE

A lot of information sharing. Every council in the South West, except Somerset, is becoming unitary and district councils are being abolished.

Many ideas came up at the conference, including organising press trips and garden sharing is a big hit. One group are using one of their graveyards as allotments! Maybe we can consider a co-op scheme.

Any council controlled property can be used as a community space. There are lots of bartering systems going on. Old people can be involved very effectively, as can the redundant.

One town is using Woolworths as a community bowling alley. Needed 200k set up but it is so popular they estimate they can make it back in a year.



A very clear message is that we have to focus on the positive, on balance, on wellbeing. There is a lot of funding available through the EU, though the bureaucracy can be a nightmare.

TRADERS' ACTION GROUP

There had been a very successful meeting organised jointly with the Chamber in the Swan, and chaired initially by ZP and then by Ian Jarmaine. Some 25 people attended and the mood was quite positive. Ideas that came up included the following:

- Cycle racks
- Shop window displays art/artisan or theatre type scenery. Make money?
- Clubs and activities shop.
- Signage both to the shops and to the historic market place itself.
- Get the village schools to come in and take part in activities.
- Market what we are a tourist centre, rambling etc.
- Celebrate and advertise the 90 successful businesses we have.
- John suggested a brochure of all the shops to be delivered locally.
- He had also made enquiries of the Town Council about money for parking and received a positive response.
- Use Bath and West events to advertise. Liaise with B&W more.
- One hour free parking on Saturdays, May to September.
- Find Shepton's unique selling point.
- Regular press releases.
- Advertise the market more widely.

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- A loyalty scheme for marketing Margaret Robinson has done a lot of preliminary work on this.
- Market the empty shops.
- Target the Soul Survivor and New Wine events.
- Have a mid summer food crawl. The winter ones have been a great success.
- The Pigs in Bath event was a great success raising £200k we can do 'Sheep in Shepton' maybe this year for next? (Rowena will take this further and Mike will help any other volunteers? It could be a big one.)
- Arrange a bus from the Glastonbury Festival and any other ways for us to profit from it. (Mike to write.)
- Belinda very generously offered her services as a design and marketing person.

MP is to set up a Google group to facilitate discussion. It is vital that traders take more responsibility themselves and don't expect to have it all done for them.

MAYDAY

A very poor response from the schools; only Whitstone even bothered to reply.

HISTORIC PLAQUES

It was felt these need to be accompanied with walks. (Alan?) We wondered if we can get plaques on private houses. MP to research

ARO BUDGET

What is happening to Guy Braga's budget if he leaves?

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LINKS.

DB reported that we now have permission to use our common sense on the milestones! The conservation officer at County made the eminently sensible suggestion that, that, on all but the most busy roads, a car be parked with its flashers on while the work was going on. He has also said that permission is not needed to restore the listed ones if it is just maintenance.

The meeting agreed expenses for paint and travelling at 40p per mile. This to be reclaimed from the Town Council. There are 36 milestones in our area.

DB and MP are also going to walk the Fosse Way to look at signage and maintenance of the path.

DB suggested a sign in the centre of Shepton showing people the walks.

MULTI USER PATH

RG reported that the obstacles to the route are being sorted out. The Mendip car park problem is nearly solved. There will be a mass bike ride when planning application is received.

SHEPTON MALLETT TOWN COUNCIL

The list of our activities to go to the council was approved, subject to a couple of minor alterations and additions. ZP and others will be meeting with the council to see how we can best operate together.

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OTHER BUSINESS

Young people – seed corn funding is to go to Andrea for £250

Rubbish in the meadows – MR successfully arranged for it to be cleared.

The suggestion was made that old people's lunches could perhaps be once a month. MP to organise.

AGM to be arranged by email in May. (RG is away on 14th June)

JO CHRISTOFORIDES

Very sadly, Jo is moving her shop to Wells. We will miss her.

The meeting thanked her for all her hard work, hoped we would see her again from time to time, and voted unanimously to make her Honorary Vice President.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

April 29th