

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
COLNE TOWN CENTRE FORUM  
HELD AT COLNE TOWN HALL  
ON 19<sup>th</sup> JANUARY, 2016**

*PRESENT –*

*Graham Wharton (Chairman – in the Chair)*

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| <i>Ian Varley</i>                      | <i>Colne Markets Manager</i>                     |
| <i>Mark Bateman</i>                    | <i>The Bookshop</i>                              |
| <i>Ashley Sutcliffe</i>                | <i>Live Like The Boy</i>                         |
| <i>Sandra Fenrandeze</i>               | <i>Pendle Belles</i>                             |
| <i>Frank Murray</i>                    | <i>Pendle Belles</i>                             |
| <i>Jim Walker</i>                      | <i>Jim's</i>                                     |
| <i>Pete Jagger</i>                     | <i>Stell's Famous Pet Store</i>                  |
| <i>Councillor S. E. Cockburn-Price</i> | <i>Pendle Borough Council/Colne Town Council</i> |
| <i>Dorothy Braithwaite</i>             | <i>Allen Braithwaite</i>                         |
| <i>Kannikar Burnside</i>               | <i>Tiger Thai</i>                                |

***Also in attendance***

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <i>Paul Collins</i> | <i>Regeneration Officer, Pendle Borough Council</i>           |
| <i>Jane Watson</i>  | <i>Senior Committee Administrator, Pendle Borough Council</i> |

**1. MINUTES**

**AGREED**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**2. MATTERS ARISING**

Paul Collins reported that the Council's Executive had felt that the cost of installing free Wi-Fi in the town centre was too expensive. Officers had been asked to obtain another quote which they did but this had proved to be even more expensive therefore free Wi-Fi would not be installed in the town centre for the foreseeable future.

**3. GREAT BRITISH HIGH STREET COMPETITION**

It was reported that Colne had come runners up in the Great British High Street Competition in the Market Town category. Fifty percent of the votes were from the judges and the other fifty percent from online votes. Colne had received 22% from online votes along with scores of nine out of ten for collaboration and innovation and ten out of ten for outcomes. Although Colne didn't win, the scores from the judges were fantastic and the Forum felt these comments should form the basis of a press release.

The judges overall comments were:

*“High Street, Colne should continue to develop their innovative market stall initiative. Their unique selling points and their late night opening may be offset by the retention of the half day closing which may not be understood by visitors. They would benefit by channelling their creativity and local commitment to develop the use of digital methodologies across the High Street.”*

A prize of £500 had also been awarded and the Forum was asked to consider how they wanted to spend this money. Some initial suggestions were put forward such as installing additional electricity points in the town centre for use by market stall holders or at events, additional prize draws for the Loyalty Scheme (although it was noted that extra draws had been held in December and January), production of a town centre map in leaflet form (a type of business directory).

## **AGREED**

- (1) That everyone involved in the submission of the bid for the Great British High Street Competition be congratulated in helping the town to achieve 'runner up' status and the judges' comments be used to publicise the results of the competition.
- (2) That ideas on how to spend the £500 prize money be submitted to Paul Collins and these be considered further at the next meeting.

## **4. 2016 PLAN AND IDEAS**

It was reported that Colne Town Council had a number of events planned for 2016. This included ten nursery markets, a plant and seed swapping event in April as well as the annual Easter and Halloween events and the Colne Grand Prix. A World Music and Food Festival were also planned.

## **5. EVENTS**

Reference was made to the Independent Retailer Month which was an annual campaign run throughout July to highlight the important role smaller, local, independent retailers play in the communities they serve, the local economy they contribute to, and in the retail sector as a whole. It was suggested that perhaps some of the prize money from the Great British High Street Competition could be used to promote the benefits of shopping locally particularly during the month of July.

## **6. SIGNAGE INTO THE TOWN CENTRE**

The Colne and District Committee considered a report which outlined possible signage solutions to encourage footfall and vehicle movement into Colne Town Centre from edge of town retail parks and peripheral routes. They asked that both Colne Town Centre Forum and Colne Town Council be asked for their comments and to put forward suggestions for consideration.

The Forum discussed various options and it was felt that there was more scope with the banner type of signage which they felt caught people's attention more. They were also easy to replace and could be used to advertise different events at various times of the year. Some suggestions put forward were to advertise "Free Town Centre Parking" and to advertise "Colne – Runners Up in the Great British High Street Competition 2015".

A question around the ownership of the 10 old gateway signs and where funding had come from for them was raised. The Forum felt that these could also be improved upon.

It was reported that Colne Town Council had set up a Working Group to look at signage in the town centre. Reference was made to the banner which was to be erected outside the market advertising the Loyalty Scheme. This had been agreed some time ago but the banner had not yet been erected.

**AGREED**

- (1) That Colne and District Committee be advised that the banner type of signage was the Forum's preferred type of signage.
- (2) That the possibility of improving the 10 gateway signs in the town be investigated and options be submitted to the next meeting.
- (3) That enquiries be made to find out when the banner sign advertising the Loyalty Scheme was to be erected.

**7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Updates on the future of the Blues Festival and the empty Blockbuster store were requested. Unfortunately there was nothing further to report.

Reference was made to the transfer of services from Pendle Council to Town and Parish Councils. Colne Town Council was undertaking visits to other Town Councils who had already taken on services and had recently been to Penwortham, Hebden Bridge and Skipton.

Sandra Fernandze said that she was no longer staying open late on a Thursday evening. Although she had persevered over a four month period it wasn't proving to be worthwhile. There were now only a handful of shops staying open late on a Thursday. It was felt that there was a lack of appetite for people in Colne to shop in local independent shops in an evening. Councillor Cockburn-Price put forward the suggestion of evening markets. This was something the Forum felt could be considered at the Colne Grand Prix.

The Forum discussed the benefits of advertising using social media and reference was made to the Town Centre website. Paul Collins reported that the site had not been regularly updated and there followed a discussion about how this site could be maintained and improved upon. There was a clear distinction between social media and the website and it was acknowledged that not everyone had access to these forms of communication. Reference was also made to Colne Town Council's website and the Visit Pendle website.

Paul Collins referred to a Combined Authority for Lancashire. A consultation was currently being undertaken and this could be found on the Council's website [www.pendle.gov.uk](http://www.pendle.gov.uk)

**8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**AGREED**

That the next meeting of the Colne Town Centre Forum be held at 5.30 p.m. on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2016 at Colne Town Hall.

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_