

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COLNE TOWN CENTRE FORUM
HELD AT COLNE TOWN HALL
ON 22nd MARCH, 2016**

PRESENT –

Graham Wharton (Chairman – in the Chair)

<i>Ian Varley</i>	<i>Colne Markets Manager</i>
<i>Ruth Crompton</i>	<i>The Dressing Room</i>
<i>Ashley Sutcliffe</i>	<i>Live Like the Boy/Colne Town Council</i>
<i>Jim Walker</i>	<i>Jim's</i>
<i>Frank Murray</i>	<i>Pendle Belles</i>
<i>Sandra Fernandez</i>	<i>Pendle Belles</i>
<i>Mark Bateman</i>	<i>The Bookshop</i>
<i>Linda Roberts</i>	<i>The 12 Bar Café</i>
<i>Tracy Jordan</i>	<i>Text Styles</i>
<i>Pete Jagger</i>	<i>Stell's Famous Pet Store</i>
<i>Kannikar Burnside</i>	<i>Tiger Thai</i>
<i>Councillor S. E. Cockburn-Price</i>	<i>Pendle Borough Council/Colne Town Council</i>
<i>Lesley Chronnell</i>	<i>Business in the Community</i>
<i>Dave Parker</i>	<i>Skipton Town Council</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>

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A. R. Greaves and D. E. Lord and Joanne Greenwood (Swankies)).



1. MINUTES

AGREED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19th January, 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Paul Collins introduced Dave Parker from Skipton Town Council to members of the Forum. Mr. Parker had come to talk to members about his experiences in establishing a Business Improvement District (BID) for Skipton. He gave a detailed account of his experience in this field and said that Skipton was now in its second term.

The possibility of establishing a BID in Colne had been discussed by the Forum a few years ago but there had been little interest shown at that time. Paul explained that a BID was a business led partnership which was created through a ballot process to deliver additional services to local businesses. The BID operated within a defined area in which a levy was charged on all business rate payers in addition to the business rates bill.

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It was reported that all business ratepayers who would pay the levy in the proposed BID area would be entitled to vote for or against the BID proposal. The ballot had to meet two tests to succeed:

1. a simple majority (above 50%) of those voting had to vote in favour.
2. those voting in favour must also represent a majority of the total business rateable value.

The maximum BID term was five years, after which a renewal vote was taken.

A levy was then set against the rateable value (usually 1%). This levy would be used to develop projects which would benefit businesses in the local area. There was no limit on what projects or services could be provided through the BID but it could not be additional to services provided by the local authority.

Mr. Parker said the hardest job was convincing people who thought the BID wouldn't benefit them to support it. The Committee which had been set up consulted with people for almost a year before they went to the vote. It was important to get the business plan right and then this could be worked on once the BID had been agreed. The business plan set out the proposals for what the extra tax people would be paying to the BID would be spent on.

It was reported that the vast majority of supermarkets and some of the town centre chains had a national policy to support schemes like the BID. Therefore an advantage of the BID would be that these larger companies, if included within the boundary of the BID, would be donating to the town to assist with; for example, training courses and events, which at the moment they did not contribute to.

From those members present there was a mixed response to a BID being introduced in Colne with some people being totally against it. Through discussion it was established that a lot more information was required in relation to what the benefits of a BID would be to Colne. An area for the BID needed to be identified prior to any consultation work being carried out. Some initial funding would be required to start the process as well as a group of volunteers to form a Committee. Options needed to be explored and it was acknowledged that there needed to be a compelling argument to encourage businesses to sign up to this.

Lesley Chronnel from Business in the Community was introduced to the Forum. She said her role was to work with businesses, voluntary groups and the public sector within a broad remit which included education, enterprise, community cohesion and employment. She gave a brief outline of the types of things she could assist with such as identifying new income streams and skills, support to help businesses grow and to assist with getting people talking and working together. Those present were encouraged to contact Lesley with any issues they felt she could help them with: email: lesley.chronnell@bitcconnect.org tel: 07900 748285

AGREED

- (1) That Dave Parker and Lesley Chronnel be thanked for attending the meeting and for their contributions to discussion regarding Business Improvement District and Business in the Community.
- (2) That Paul Collins be asked to bring more information back to the next meeting on:

- (a) the current rateable values and number of business properties in Colne and the % that could be considered to pay towards a BID;
- (b) the options that would contribute/benefit Colne setting up a BID;
- (c) comparable towns like Colne who were already undertaking a BID.

3. GREAT BRITISH HIGH STREET COMPETITION 2016

At the last meeting it was reported that Colne had been awarded £500 as runners up in the Great British High Street Competition for 2016. The Forum was asked to consider how this money should be spent. A number of suggestions were put forward but it was decided that the prize money should go towards a new information sign the location of which was yet to be decided.

During discussion reference was again made for Colne's website and the need for it to be improved or traffic redirected to the Visit Pendle website. Another suggestion was that Colne should have its own Facebook page. These were all ideas which would highlight Colne Town Centre and all it had to offer.

AGREED

That Paul Collins be asked to arrange for a new information sign to be erected in the town centre, location yet to be determined, and that the £500 prize money from the Great British High Street Competition 2016 be used to fund this.

4. EVENTS

Councillor Sarah Cockburn-Price provided an update on the events planned for the coming months by Colne Town Council. These included an Easter Extravaganza in the town centre, nursery markets in May, June and October, the 1916 Battle of the Somme commemorative event, summer food festival, Colne Grand Prix on 26th July, Queen's Birthday celebrations at Alkincoats Park as well as the Remembrance Sunday service and the Christmas Light's Switch On event.

Reference was made to this year's Blues Festival and the discussion centred on the open air stage and the fun fair. Some people felt that the Festival had changed over the years and that there were in fact two separate events. One which attracted dedicated blues fans at one end of the town and the other which attracted families to the attractions at the top end of the town namely the open air stage and the fun fair. The suggestion of street entertainers and craft stalls on Market Place was again discussed.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

AGREED

That the next meeting of the Colne Town Centre Forum be held at 5.30 p.m. on Tuesday 14th June, 2016 at Colne Town Hall.

Chairman _____