



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

A meeting of the Economic Development Working Group will be held on
Wednesday 29 January 2020 commencing at 4pm at The Walronds

DATE: 22 January 2020

AGENDA

1.	APOLOGIES: To receive apologies for absence.
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS: <i>Councillors are reminded of the requirement to declare any interest, including the type of interest, and reason for that interest, either at this stage of the meeting or as soon as they become aware of that interest.</i>
3.	MINUTES: To approve the Minutes of previous meeting held on 2 December 2020 (Appendix A)
4.	HARLEQUIN VALET SITE: To receive update report on progress to-date (Appendix B,C and D)
5.	WAY FORWARD: To agree future actions and way forward.
6	DATE & TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING: To be agreed.



**Summary of a meeting of the Economic Development Working Group held on
Monday 2nd December 2019 at 4:00pm at the Town Hall**

Present: *Town Council:* Councillors: James Buckowski, Janet Johns, Lloyd Knight,
Martin Smith (Chair) & Judy Morris – Town Clerk
Farmers' Market: Sarah Jones & Jenny Radford

Clerk: Maria Weston (Deputy Town Clerk)

It is noted that this meeting is being recorded.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR: To elect a Chair for this Working Group.

RESOLVED: That Cllr. Smith is elected as Chair for the Economic Development Working Group.

Proposed: Cllr. Buckowski Seconded: Cllr. Knight Vote: All in favour

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT: None.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE: To agree the Terms of Reference for this Working Group.

The Terms of Reference for the Economic Development Working Group were agreed as follows:

- To explore the feasibility of acquiring 19 High Street (Cullompton) in order to improve the economic prospects for the benefit of the whole town.

4. CURRENT SITUATION:

19 High Street, Cullompton (formerly Harlequin Valet Dry Cleaners):

It was agreed to explore the feasibility of options for this site on behalf of the Town Council, for the purpose of facilitating a covered Market area and business start-up venue. The Clerk circulated a plan of the site.

Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) hold a charge over the site and have instructed Thorne & Carter Estate Agents to market this. There has been no interest so far but it is recognised that the situation is timely.

5. WAY FORWARD:

Cllr. Smith spoke about a site called Cobblestones where they have approx. 14 no. log cabins for traders. Each unit, approx. 3-4 metres wide, has an electricity supply. Most of the traders that have had use of a unit have moved into a shop on the High Street - this is therefore a very effective way of getting businesses started.

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Discussion ensued with regard to potential ideas for how the site (no. 19 High St.) can be utilised:

- Having a walkway through the site from Station Road to the High Street with a glass covered area (frontage & roof) containing 'market' units was discussed. It was agreed that using glass would promote an open, airy and welcoming space whilst also ensuring traders would feel their units were secure. NB: A steel framed structure (girders) in place could enable a mezzanine floor to be added at a later date should this be required.
- Cllr. Smith has spoken to the Market House with regard to access to the rear of the site. The Market House currently use 3 no. parking spaces at the rear of the site but are happy to use alternative spaces in the Forge Way/Station Road car park if these can be offered to them by MDDC (specifically for their use). This will enable access all the way through no. 19 from the rear of the site to the High St. at the front.
- An electricity supply would be required.
- WC provision, located outside of the secured glass boundary would enable accessibility at all times and could be utilised not only by traders but by members of the public.
- The condition of the site needs to be explored e.g. condition of the walls of both the Market House and the Baptist Church – do these require underpinning? NB: It was felt that a condition survey would have been carried out when MDDC took a charge over the site and as there are no buttresses in place this would suggest that the walls are secure.

Operating as a Co-operative rather than as a Council run project may prove to be the most effective way to progress, certainly in terms of obtaining grant funding as this would have community involvement. It was agreed that a plan would need to be drawn up for purchasing the site to be run as a community project – this should highlight what income can be reasonably expected and demonstrate the potential benefits to the town.

It may be worth reviewing the agreement that the Council has with MDDC in terms of the existing WC provision. Perhaps asking for capital to be released rather than having a replacement WC facility. This money could be invested into this community project which would benefit the town.

6. SUMMARY/NEXT STEPS:

- Clerk to liaise with MDDC (Legal Services) to confirm the mechanism to progress this project - to establish:
 - i) The exact situation with regard to the purchase of the land;
 - ii) Who owns the site and details of the charge MDDC has;
 - iii) Who is selling the site;
 - iv) If the Council could be offered some time to explore options for the site (time to explore feasibility and to formulate a plan)
 - v) If MDDC has any surveyors reports and if the Council could have copies
- Investigate:
 - i) potential partnership working e.g. MDDC
 - ii) potential income which can be generated from this project
 - iii) forming a Co-operative and whether this would be feasible for this project
 - iv) grant funding streams

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- v) who the 'over-arching' body will be (to administer this project)
- vi) likely installation (structure) costs – Architect

- Liaise with both Local & District Councillors to gauge support for the project - Arrange a site visit.
- Liaise with the Town Team and Culm Valley in Business (CViB)
- Farmers' Market representatives to contact His Royal Highness Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, to request support for this project.

6. **DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING:** Agreed as Wednesday **29th January 2020** at **4:00pm** at the Town Hall.

With no further business, the Chair thanked attendees and closed the meeting.

It is certified these Minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting:

Signed:

Name:

Date:/...../.....

APPENDIX B

19 High Street Cullompton – ex-Harlequin Valet site - 13th January 2020

The story so far



10 years ago, 19 High Street, the “Harlequin Valet” dry cleaners suffered a devastating fire. Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) tried unsuccessfully to get the owners to make good the property. It remained an eye sore until in 2014 the remains of the building began to collapse. MDDC then took action to clear the site and erect the façade shown in the picture. The owner cannot be traced, so now MDDC has put the property on the market for offers around £100,000 through the good offices of Thorne and Carter.

“Fertile Ground”

For about 5 years, amongst thoughts of flats and shops, several people have voiced various visions about using the site as a Community asset with small timber business start-up/incubation units either side of a walkway to and from the Forge Way car park.

Cullompton’s emerging Neighbourhood Plan, MDDC’s emerging Local Plan and the emerging Cullompton Master Plan all call for projects to improve the economics of the High Street by increasing footfall and by stimulating economic growth.

Cullompton Town Council (CTC) has formed a working Group as part of the Town Centre and Economic Development Committee. The brief for the working group is to encourage the Cullompton Community to work together to develop 19 High Street into a Community project for the benefit and enhancement of the community.

Current situation

Thursday 9th January, Cullompton Town Council voted unanimously to support efforts for a Community-led project to develop 19 High Street into a sustainable business incubation/market stall/social enterprise. At a meeting on Friday 10th January, MDDC officers gave encouraging support for this outline proposal in principle as complying with the emerging Cullompton Master Plan and would welcome a proposal by the end of February 2020.

Informal conversations have led to a small **public meeting at 6pm on Monday 13th January** in the Cullompton Community Centre to move this proposal on a few steps by gathering together people who are known to have expressed interest in developing 19 High Street as a community project.

Next steps

The working group plans to present a brief outline of discussions to date to the CTC full Council meeting on Thursday 24th January with a view to finalising a business proposal at the CTC meeting on Thursday 27th February, followed immediately by a formal proposal to MDDC. **A “launch party” is proposed on the site on Saturday 25th January**

Recognising that the timescale is very tight, but do-able, the working group is committed to pressing on with appropriate haste.

Outstanding issues

1) Agreement on project scope; 2) Definition of the project team/mechanism for working; 3) Architects sketch of proposal(s), 4) Agreement with Enterprise (owners of the Market House) regarding public access onto Forge Way; 5) Business Plan etc.!!!

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Notional Costs

Site – offers around £100k, 15 business start-up units and utilities – mix of single and two storey timber lock-ups
£75k – contingencies £25k - £200k total. A 6% return would be covered by £20 per week rental from each unit.

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19 High Street Meeting #1 DRAFT notes – 13th January 2020 – Hayridge

Attendees

John (for Caley Briddick) CB ; Debbie Murch DM; Russell Murch RM; Jenny Radford JR; Iain Emmett IE; Yousuf Qayum YQ; Ashley Hellier AH; Lloyd Knight LK; Debbie Lochhead DL; Justin Lochhead JL; Steve Eastland SE; Alex Eastland AE; Janet Johns JJ; Judy Smith (part time) JS; Martin Smith MS (chair)

Purpose

The meeting was convened at short notice in response to a Cullompton Town Council resolution on January 9th to test whether there was public interest in a community-led project to develop 19 High Street – the ex-Harlequin Valet site, into a sustainable business incubation/market stall/social enterprise. The attached brief was used as a meeting framework.

Item	Subject	Discussion	Action	By
1	Opening brief	The attached “19 High Street” document was agreed as a reasonable starting point		
2	Steve Eastland thoughts	Steve introduced the thought of a community project with inspiration from the award winning Blue House Yard project: www.bluehouseyard.com – Steve has spoken with Jan Kattein, the architect who may help?	Contact Jan Kattein	SE
3	Project scope	Wide ranging discussion – a) stand-alone 1 and 2 storey serviced units; b) 2 storey building with meeting/office space on 1 st floor. Preference expressed for a community build – local families “mucking in” together for a sense of place and ownership. “Men in sheds” – repair shop, artisans, incubation units -	Open – to be addressed at the launch party	All
4	Launch Party	At Steve’s suggestion a launch party on the site and/or with access to indoors if the weather is unsuitable (Market House/Baptist church/Town Hall). Post-It’s, flip chart etc. to capture people’s ideas.	1) Permission sought from MDDC & Thorne & Carter 2) Advertise the party	MS AE
5	Planning discussions	Need to contact Alison Fish and Greg Venn to find out what would be possible	Arrange meeting POST MEETING NOTE: meeting arranged for Tuesday 21st Jan 3.15 on site	MS
6	Funding	Yousuf offered Cullompton Enterprise Partnership (CEP) as an “oven ready” C.I.C. to move things forward quickly. Several people agreed to stand as directors of CEP to give broad credibility and acceptance. Approach MDDC as a funder – payback over a few years?	1) Convert CEP to a CIC 2) Invite cully residents to invest in shares	JL YQ
7	Schools and community	Involve schools and community from the outset		All
8	Fund raising	Contact Steve Keeble?		

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9	Feasibility	Will it be sustainable? Research and data needed to establish feasibility for a business plan. Meet with James at the Nook	Data collection	JJ JL All
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19 High Street Meeting #2 DRAFT notes – 21st January 2020 – Community Centre

Attendees

Jenny Radford JR; Lloyd Knight LK; Debbie Lochhead DL; Justin Lochhead JL; Steve Eastland SE; Alex Eastland AE; Janet Johns JJ; Judy Smith (part time) JS; Martin Smith MS (chair)

Purpose

To establish the next steps and update

Item	Subject	Discussion	Action	By
1	Meeting with planning	Meeting with Alison Fish and Greg Venn 21 st Jan 3.15 on site. SE MS & JS to attend	SE, MS, JS	
2	Launch Party	After discussion, it was agreed to postpone the launch party on site to 8 th March to coincide with the Farmer's Market. To be advertised on social media and with physical posters	Prepare posters, agree and post	RM,SE,AE, MS
3	Planning discussions	Meeting with Alison Fish AF and Greg Venn GV arranged Tuesday 21 st at 3.15. POST MEETING REPORT:- Very productive meeting – great exchange of views and ideas. Common ground:- GV summarised – 1) in principle the contemporary concept sketches from Steve raised no blockages – provided of course it is all done sensibly – permanent stalls – “arcade” feel; 2) support in principle community involvement in definition and construction; 3) vital necessity of public consultation asap (set for Saturday February 8th 11-2); 4) keep AF and GV in the loop as we proceed.	Meet & report	MS, SE, RM
4	Funding	Suitable vehicle required to handle the application, design, construction, running and maintenance. Funding sources to be investigated	C.I.C model, seek funders	JL, DL, RM, SE all
5	Feasibility and business plan	Research required to provide data on potential occupancy, positive response to offers of involvement – JL to lead on creating outline business plan	Data collection Business plan prep	All JL
6	Documentation control	A central “read only” document file is required so that everyone interested can get the latest information. Martin as chair of the working group should receive all the documents though email etc. sending a link for that file to all. POST MEETING NOTE: Link was shared from Dropbox. Any difficulties, please let Martin know	Create Dropbox file and send the link to all	MS

