



Appendix A

How to contact us

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Minutes of the Town Centre Action Group Meeting held in the New Millenium Chamber on Tuesday 5 March 2024 at 6pm

Present:

Councillor Freddie Tandy – Chair (Mayor of Littlehampton Town Council)
Katie King (Arun District Council, Economic Development & Regeneration Officer)
Richard Groome (East Beach Guest House, Business Representative)
Councillor Christine Wiltshire (Arun District Council, Ward Councillor)
Councillor Alan Butcher (Chair of Littlehampton Town Council's Policy and Finance Committee)
Laura Chrysostomou (Littlehampton Town Council, Town Clerk)
Sofia Chittenden (Littlehampton Town Council, Communications and Marketing Manager)
Simon Matthews (Matthews Associates, Consultant)
Sandra Grant (Matthews Associates, Consultant)
Georgia Hudson (Sussex Police)
Martyn Robinson (Sussex Police)
Sophie Cullen (L.Guess Jewellers, Business Representative)
Matt Pollard (Arun Youth Projects, Youth Service Manager)
Elise Bicknell (Littlehampton Town Council, Town Centre Strategy Project Officer)
Miriam Nicholls (Arun District Council, Business Development Manager)
Councillor Sean Lee (Councillor at Arun District Council, substitute for Councillor Mike Northeast)

Apologies:

Councillor David Britton (West Sussex County Council)
Greg Ockwell (West Sussex County Council, Programme Delivery Manager)
Denise Vine (Arun District Council, Group Head Business and Economy)
Simon Armstrong Barnes (Landlord, The Arcade)
Dax O'Connor (Arun District Council, Community Safety Officer)
Carrie Reynolds (Arun District Council, Communities and Wellbeing Manager)
Councillor Mike Northeast (Littlehampton Town Council, Policy and Finance Committee)
Councillor James Walsh (Arun District Council, Vice Chair Economy Committee)
Mike La Traille (Pier Road Coffee and Art, Business Representative)

2024 to 2025

1. Introductions

Introductions were made between the group.

2. Action Plan

It was explained to the group that the tables work as a reporting system to update everyone on the work undertaken in the previous period.

Town Centre

Issues around the occupancy of HMO's was raised, with it being stated that planning cannot control the occupants of these and most have private ownership. Sussex Police added they try to establish communication lines with owners of HMOs. Through the group the Police were made aware of a new HMO in the Town Centre. ADC River Ward Councillors can update the Police with who is operating the HMOs in the Town.

The consultants Matthews Associates discussed the value of residents in the Town Centre, including a presence especially in the evenings that will naturally 'watch over' the High Street.

Retail and Markets

The group noted that the current Friday market license is up for renewal and that, as the Town Centre Action Group, they will be consulted on this decision.

Transport and Linking the Town Centre

It was discussed that the physical parking Discs are still out selling the virtual ones, members of the group raised that the virtual permits are not user friendly. It was noted that the usability and popularity of the disc should be tracked longer term.

The group asked what data was being collected to evaluate parking disc scheme and whether impact on income could be monitored.

It was noted that seafront regeneration project will displace parking and so the Town Centre car parks would need to be used.

Leisure

There were no reported updates for actions in Leisure.

Events

This was the subject of a separate agenda item to be discussed later in the meeting.

Anti-Social Behaviour

It was raised that the Safer Arun Partnership would be helping to fund CCTV in the Arcade. The group discussed that adding a shutter to the far end of the arcade would help support the police when attempting to stop criminals. It was noted that a request for this was denied by WSCC due to being a public right of way, however ADC are querying this with WSCC.

Issues on the Disc Reporting system were raised. Business Representatives expressed that businesses report a crime or anti-social behaviour, and receive a

crime number, but don't always hear anything more. Sussex Police confirmed that businesses will only receive updates if an official crime has been reported, observations are not followed up and they have to be mindful of not jeopardising intelligence gathering. The group discussed that Sussex Police would feed this back to their other teams, and that clarification on how updates work needs to be given to the businesses using Disc.

Street drinkers in the High Street was raised as an issue. Sussex Police noted that they always aim to move street drinkers on, however the Public Spaces Protection Order doesn't ban drinking, it is for stopping anti-social behaviour. It was asked within the group whether alcohol could be banned in the High Street, however it was noted that this would stop any alcohol outside of buildings. The pavement licences granted to businesses would be overruled by a PSPO banning alcohol. Therefore it would affect the trade of the hospitality businesses in the High Street, which the group decided is not effective in supporting them. The Police will and have issued Community Protection Warnings.

The group noted that the planters in the High Street are now being used as a social point for street drinkers as they are empty. It was noted that benches have been moved to try and deter this.

There were discussions of recent incidents of anti-social behaviour and selling to underage drinkers, but these were not reported. The group noted a campaign that aims to provide members of the public with easy access to reporting channels, created by the Safer Arun Partnership, that will be going ahead. Businesses will be able to receive a reporting window sticker, and supply reporting postcards.

Noting that reporting was poor, Miriam Nicholls from ADC, the local PCSO and the Local Action Team (LAT) would explore the idea of a workshop on reporting.

The new laws surrounding the XL Bully dog breed were discussed.

Arun Youth Projects (AYP) expressed to the group that they have been completing detached work in the town centre. They found that a lot of the of anti-social behaviour is not young people but street drinkers and people of an older age. They also found that there are less drugs and more alcohol amongst young people, and that they are getting street drinkers to purchase it for them. AYP expressed their hope to re-open the 'Friday Night Project'.

Marketing and Tourism

The group noted the updates in the table.

3. Arun Youth Projects Update

Arun Youth Projects announced that funding from The National Lottery Million Hours Fund will help them to fund an Arun Youth Projects drop-in space 'AYP Connect', in Littlehampton High Street. This will be a small drop in space that is designed to facilitate connections and provide a safe and welcoming environment for young

people in Littlehampton. It aims to meet young people where they are, fostering positive relationships and providing targeted support to effectively address their needs and signpost them to the appropriate support. It will also provide a hub for one-on-one or small group support, addressing queries from parents/ carers, and for professionals. The group agreed that this will be a great space for AYP to have.

4. Littlehampton Town Council High Street Events Programme 2024

Officers from the town council listed the events that will go ahead in the High Street for the financial year 2024 to 2025. These were the Easter High Street Programme, The summer Love Local Programme, Remembrance Sunday, Small Business Saturday, the Christmas Lights Switch On and the 2025 Pancake Olympics. The team thanked those businesses who were hosting events in their shops as part of the Easter programme and encouraged businesses to contact them if they would like to be involved in future events or had feedback on any of the events.

5. UKSPF Project Update

Matthews Associates (MA) explained to the group that they held a business workshop meeting, and an agents workshop meeting, in January. The aim was to begin building relationships with these groups, and explore how they may formulate a community / forum and how that would interact with the TCAG. The group read through the notes of both these meetings. Matthews Associates highlighted to the group that in both meetings shop fronts came up as a topic. They explained that Arun District Council, Littlehampton Town Council and Matthews Associates are working together to create shop front dressings for vacant units, funded by Arun District Council. It was explained that this will remove the agents' boards from the outsides of vacant units and will place the contact details within the shop window. This will add more colour and artwork to the Town Centre. Members of the group raised whether these could be sponsored, so that they have local organisations logos within the artwork. Suggestions included promoting the Business Support Service from ADC and AYPs youth provision. It was noted that this may result in business rates being applied to the empty units. Planning requirements around advertising would also need to be observed. The group agreed that this was a good idea and noted it for further down the line.

Discussions started on signage within the town, and signs leading to an old information centre. This moved on to questions on how we can get new shops and businesses to the town. MA raised the point that the process is very similar to buying a house, and that the lack of businesses in town centres is a nationwide problem, not just in Littlehampton. MA added that we do have the advantage of being a Sussex destination.

The group sought to understand whether any partner has control of what type of business moves into a vacant unit. It was explained that permitted development allows the landlord to decide who takes on the lease. Other nearby shopping centres have the benefit of one landlord overseeing the offer, but that is not the case in

Littlehampton. Hence the need for MAs to create that relationship with landlords and agents and connection with the TCAG.

6. Feedback from Business and Landlord Representatives

One of the business representatives brought to the group's attention that in discussions with restaurants the feedback was based on what the brand is for Littlehampton, and how do they market that. Matthews Associates picked up that this is something they will be helping to navigate with the businesses in the future.

It was asked what could be done to pick up on the attention arising from the film Wicked Little Letters. The town council would look to optimise search results for the Visit Littlehampton website and the town council's Museum had created content for the website with a trail. This led to discussions about the previous Town map and a desire to see something similar brought back.

7. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

The date of the next meeting was agreed to be Tuesday 18 June 2024.

The meeting closed at 8pm.

Chair