

HARROW TOWN CENTRE FORUM

THURSDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2014

PRESENT:

Councillor Keith Ferry
Councillor Ghazanfar Ali
Councillor Susan Hall

Harrow Council
Harrow Council
Harrow Council

BUSINESS MEMBERS

Howard Bluston

Darren Harman
Pieter Strombeck

North West London Chamber of
Commerce
St George's Shopping Centre
St Ann's Shopping Centre Manager

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The Reverend Barry Hingston

Churches Together in Central Harrow

SERVICE MEMBERS

Sergeant Marlise Davies

Anthony Wood

Metropolitan Police, Greenhill Safer
Neighbourhood Team
Harrow Public Transport Users

OFFICERS

Mark Billington

ALSO PRESENT

Harrow BID

1. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies were received from Gary Stevenson and Bernard Segal.

2. Declarations of Interest:

RESOLVED: To note that no interests were declared.

3. Minutes of Meetings:

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of 17 October 2014 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising:

RESOLVED: To note that there were no matters arising.

5. Where Does The Town Centre Forum Go Now?:

An Officer presented a report about the original remit and purpose of Harrow Town Centre Forum, and how this remit and purpose was affected by the Business Improvement District (BID) in Harrow Town Centre.

The report included the following:

- That the Harrow Town Centre Forum was originally established to coordinate the work of the Town Centre Manager and agree the budget, but financial contributions ended in 2007;
- It had been agreed to use the remainder of the budget to support the development of a Business Improvement District (BID), following a ballot in December 2013, the BID was established in April 2014;
- Harrow Council had received Round 1 and Round 2 Outer London Funding to employ the Town Centre Management Team and deliver projects in the Town Centre, as well as develop the BID;
- The OLF funding ended in March 2014, and the function of the Town Centre management team was effectively transferred to the BID when it was established in April 2014.

Members of the Forum made the following comments:

- The specific quorum that had been set for Harrow Town Centre Forum meant that sometimes meetings had to be declared inquorate at the last minute, which was not a productive use of time or resources;
- Events in Harrow Town Centre were being arranged by the BID team, and Harrow Town Centre Forum no longer had any budget to hold events;
- The BID Board offered town centre businesses the channels to lobby Harrow Council;
- The three BID Sub-Groups were Environment and Operations, Events and Marketing, and Businesses Against Crime;
- It would be beneficial for Members of the Town Centre Forum to be seconded on to the three BID Sub-Groups, depending on their expertise;

- That market research from the shopping centres would be shared with the BID Board, so that they are aware of the views of residents and customers;
- Events in Harrow Town Centre would be promoted via the shopping centres' websites, as well as via social media;
- The BID would greatly benefit from the knowledge and expertise possessed by Members of the Forum, and the BID Sub-Groups could be a better way for the knowledge and expertise of Forum Members to bring about action and change in the Town Centre;
- Subject to the decision of the BID Board, members of the Forum would be welcome to sit on more than one Sub-Group of the BID Board, if required;
- Since Harrow Town Centre Forum did not hold a budget and did not have the capacity to make decisions, its efficacy could be called into question;

RESOLVED: That Harrow Town Centre Forum would be dissolved, subject to the passing of this resolution at a Special General Meeting of the Forum which would take place on 15 October 2014 at 3.00 pm.

6. Police Update:

A Police Officer presented a verbal report about the police work that had been undertaken around the Town Centre since the last meeting. The report included the following:

- the Police were receiving intelligence as part of their partnership with the Business Improvement District (BID), and the number of Officers had been increased at no cost;
- the Police had been more visible around the Town Centre, and businesses were happy with the Police presence and visibility;
- there had been a lot of abstractions recently, due to nationwide security levels being increased, however there had not been any specific intelligence for Harrow;
- issues with schoolchildren would never be completely eradicated, but Officers had had a strong presence around some schools;
- Anti-Social Behaviour Orders had been changing due to new legislation, and would be replaced by Civil Injunctions;
- officers had been given information about individuals begging, and arrests had been made;
- the numbers of individuals begging had decreased, however it was believed that the individuals were working as a team;

- there had also been issues with street trading and illegal burger stalls, and the Police had been working closely with the BID Team;
- the free Wi-Fi hotspot was not currently operational, but would be used to pass on messages from the Police;
- the Twitter account set up by the Police had been gaining Twitter followers, and the Police were using this to connect with more permanent residents.

After taking questions from Members of the Forum, a Police Officer commented that:

- arrests for begging were rising and would probably continue to rise, however a number of people who were homeless had received assistance;
- Harrow Hotel was due to become a shelter for homeless people, and the charity running the shelter would be cooperating with the Police and providing them with information when required.

RESOLVED: That the verbal report be noted.

7. Harrow BID Update:

A Manager from Harrow Business Improvement District gave a verbal report, which included the following:

- there had been good feedback and good press for the Community Fun Day;
- there had also been a “Pigeon Day” which was a success;
- the BID Team had been working with Highway Enforcement and had been consulting with Harrow Council about the Littering Act, which, once enforced, would allow fines to be imposed on individuals who feed pigeons;
- from October 30, there would be late-night shopping until 20:00 in the Town Centre every Thursday until Christmas, and this would be supported by free parking for a few hours in the evening;
- the Dove of Peace would return on October 23, in time for Diwali;
- the switching on of the Christmas lights event would take place on November 29 2014 12:00 – 18:00, and would take a similar format to last year’s event;
- Santa had been secured for the afternoon, and would be stationed on College Road, Peppa Pig would be returning with her family, and two of the Octonauts would also be attending the event;

RESOLVED: That the verbal report be noted.

8. Date of Next Meeting:

RESOLVED: The next meeting would be a Special General Meeting on 15 October 2014 at 3.00 pm.

The Meeting having started at 3.00 pm, finished at 4.30 pm.