

**Notes from meeting of Business Policy Group (BPG)
Thursday 15th January 2004 @ Crowborough Town Hall**

Present: Steve Horton, Paul Kemp, Rob Smith, Clive Wilson, Paul Mephram, Brian Whittaker, Di Phillips, Damon Wellman and TS

Apologies from Richard Hallett, Tony Wright, Andrew Moffitt, Debbie Anderson, Wally Lambert and Jason Cook.

Copies to be also sent to Ray Casey, Martin Stanton

Notes from Business Policy Group meeting on 19th November issued to BPG

As a matter of course, TS will keep note of any actions needed and act on them as and when, reporting back to BPG.

Business Breakfasts/review:

- Accepted has been mixed response and decided to let existing informal Breakfasts take their course for a while longer and stop them if and as appropriate.
- Agreed to investigate alternatives with a view to run 'breakfast' and 'evening' pilots with guest speakers. TS to enquire of Blue Anchor, Plough and Horses, Golf Club about breakfast meeting venues/costs, remind WDC about request for list of speakers and costs. Agreed that 'nibbles' and coffee/tea would be adequate for 'evening' event and, if successful, look to running them on a regular basis.
- Agreed important to keep events in Crowborough, ensure that each event satisfied the WIFM principle and essential not to compete with WDC and their Business Breakfasts.

27th January Business Lunch attendance/format

Attendance – (30 as at 15th Jan; could be 35/40) Apologies but continued interest from Millbrook Garden Centre, T&T Plant Hire, Licensing by Design, Hospice in the Weald, Taxassist and Numis. TS to circulate attendance/contact list in advance to BPG

Agreed Format: arrive from noon; start lunch at 12.30pm; presentation from Clive Wilson about the Partnership (approx 1.30 for 15 mins inc Q&A); launch of web site and demonstration (Chris Grose /Paul Strover 10/15 minutes); Steve Horton 4/5+ mins - BPG plans; Paul Mephram 4/5+ mins – Market Sector meeting. Rob Smith to draft evaluation form for use. Need to emphasise 'each person attending to persuade another 2/3 to come to April lunch – Speaker on Disability Discrimination Act implications for businesses. TS to arrange with WDC/ Gail Fenn. BCG

Web Site and Business Policy Group needs

Agreed that the business aspect of web site, the management and development of the database and their use as a dynamic communication vehicle were crucial as was BPG input and direction. Rob Smith would talk to Peter Swan, Paul Strover, Jason Cook (Database specialism) and research the current and intended positions and report back to the BPG before the 27th January to enable BPG needs to be identified. Clive Wilson would talk to Chris Grose about the BPG proposals. BPG members were told that the 1200+ database was available for inspection and comment at any time at The Computer Studio.

Report on meeting with Wealden District Council and Paul Mephram, Steve Horton, Wally Lambert and Tony Slack on 19th December issued to BPG

- Clive Wilson to let TS have copy of potential land availability in vicinity of Army Camp for him to make enquiries.

Follow up action:

- Use of premises in town centre (one stop shop) – TS made enquiries – principle seems acceptable but waiting for more considered response
- Agreed Area Investment Framework is a potential source of funding – preliminary meeting with Max Goodison from East Sussex Economic Partnership on 20th Jan with report back to BPG
- TS to request loan of Retail Impact Study from WDC for Paul Mepham and Steve Horton to borrow. TS to loan Paul Mepham Draft Local Plan.
- TS had made contact with Solicitor (Vance Harris) with commercial/business experience as a local source. Keith McDonald will respond to TS w/c 19th Jan.

Agreed the need to establish central contact point / person to act as first port of call for any local business person needing any kind of business related help, support, direction or information. That person would identify potential sources of help and ensure needs were addressed. If necessary and the need cannot be resolved over the telephone, an appointment would be made to see a specialist/mentor/local businessman.

Agreed the need for a 'one stop shop' (refer to 19.12.03 meeting with WDC) possibly shared with Clued-up Info was not required at this particular stage as it could be a waste of people's time to man the premises and having no customers if promoted as a 'drop-in' centre.

Agreed the need to make effective use of web site, to identify and create a panel of volunteers with a range of different skills and design an appointment facility/process using e-mail.

Session run by Steve Horton to formulate short, medium and longer term aspirations and actions for the Business Policy Group.

Agreed that Steve would provide format of approved action plan. Please see other attachment designed by Steve Horton outlining short term plans.

Report on Market Sector meeting by Paul Mepham planned for Thursday 26th February at 6pm at the new All Saints Church Hall

Format for the evening was outlined and it was agreed that Paul Mepham would circulate his questions by e-mail for consideration and to provoke further questions from BPG. Any further questions should be copy e-mailed to all BPG. It was agreed that Debbie Anderson would be asked to produce a press release for the event. It was agreed that 'homebased' business people would have advance sight of the 4 questions to help them decide their most appropriate market sector. TS to provide any e-mail addresses to Paul Mepham

Any other business

- Agreed that the letter from Chris Hinton of Beacon Community College was worth following up and an invitation should be made by TS for a presentation to be made to the BPG within the next few months.
- Agreed in principle to invite someone from Beacon CC to give a presentation at a separate meeting of BPG about Learndirect, subject to further details by letter from Chris Parker (BCC contact)

Future meetings

Agreed that in the short term, monthly meetings of the BPG were needed as there were so many important topics to be dealt with and agreed actions to be taken and followed up at this formative stage. TS would send out a selection of dates to BPG members for swift responses by e-mail.

26.01.04