

BICESTER VISION. Chairman's Report. July 2009.

Firstly a big thank you to all those who contributed to the success of our June Retail conference at Wyevale – particularly Rachel and our hosts at Wyevale itself. Rachel and her team of volunteers worked extremely hard to ensure its success and this included personal visits by her team to every retail outlet they could find in Bicester.

The proof of the pudding was that we were oversubscribed. We had expected perhaps a maximum of 100 but there were nearer 150 at the event. There was a packed programme and the main comment on this extremely successful event was that we had tried to pack too much into the two hour programme.

We had some useful comments back and no doubt Rachel will pick up on those in her report. The bottom line is that we have provided an environment for the retailers to really establish a strong group of their own in order to market the retail offer of the town; encouraging a higher proportion of people to shop locally and use local suppliers and services. In this way our retailers and businesses can keep abreast of opportunities – including some that Rachel has been progressing this year – with more to come. I am sure the Chamber as well as Vision members will give all the support they can.

I am hopeful that we will have a clearer progress report on the Market Square proposals at our Partners Board Meeting which will include some firm options to put to a consultation exercise for the whole community in the early autumn. Again we need to discuss the most effective way of holding this consultation to ensure that everyone has a chance to comment – with a preferred option coming into play. We had disappointingly few comments or feedback from the Market Square presentation at the retail conference.

Our request for a fresh look at the work of the Bicester Traffic Advisory Committee has been well received and again we shall have an outline of a way forward at the meeting. There are some current and medium term issues which need addressing to deal with pinch point traffic issues, but it is indeed good news to learn that in September work will start on a third lane off Junction 9 of the M40 to help reduce the long rush hour and weekend queues.

It won't be long now before the Board needs to decide whether or not to hold an autumn event. Rachel and I would appreciate some ideas from board members and partners. Perhaps there are some presentations that you would like made on one or more current issues to do with the town.

I am anxious that our website comes up to the mark. Although it contains a fair amount of information, much more needs to be added and we are hopeful of obtaining some part time student help during the summer months in order to beef up the information. We are changing web designers (the same local firm that did our annual report and retail conference material) so we are hopeful of a new look before long. Please do have a look and feedback your comments to Rachel.

For some time now I have felt that Bicester Vision needs a local chairman from the private sector to drive our Vision forward; so it is my intention to retire from Bicester Vision at the 2010 Agm by which time I will be 67+ and feel the need to hand over to younger blood. So perhaps board members would give due consideration to this matter at an early stage so that we can begin a smooth transition nearer the time. I will have had three years in the chair – a time I have enjoyed immensely – but feel it is time to put a local person in the chair.

*Bob Langton, Chairman.
28th June, 2009.*