

## **Manager's Report – April 2009**

Actions from minutes of last meeting:

### **The Bicester Green Bag**

As you know we have funding of £6,000 from OCC to produce a reusable fold up bag to sell in Bicester. I am currently sourcing the bag and am hoping that all partners will be able to help with the marketing and selling. In particular we would like to be able to sell them at Wyevale and Bicester Village (in the TIC) so hope that Adrian and Miranda might be able to look into that. Any other ideas welcome.

### **The Courtyard Advisory Committee**

I was at the meeting this week and am now chairing the PR Committee to help the centre spread its message and encourage more users – both young people and commercial organisations who wish to hire the space. The Courtyard were delighted to have hosted the recent Chiltern Railways Evergreen 3 presentation. They will be hosting some events for Arts Week (5-10<sup>th</sup> May).

### **Spring Symposium**

Unable to come to an arrangement with CDC about a joint event for the Leisure Centre launch so having a retail conference instead – more later.

### **Leisure Centre**

The official opening of Bicester Leisure Centre will be on 6<sup>th</sup> June.

### **Marketing and Promotional Activity**

Love Bicester – valentine campaign – musicians were employed to play at Bicester North and in the town on Valentine's Day. We had a half page in the Oxford Times and Bicester Advertiser to encourage people to use Bicester.

Currently looking at a campaign for Father's Day.

Shoppers Guide – a big project – getting lots of help from CDC and applying for a grant from ORCC towards production and research.

Fairtrade event – fantastic support from many partners – in particular Fresh Direct who provided 1000 bananas and Tesco who gave us 500. Great support across the town – most of the schools took part and hundreds of fair-trade bananas were given to shoppers in town and at Wyevale and commuters at Bicester North. Thanks to everyone for their help. We had publicity in both local papers, Garth Gazette and early morning radio interview on BBC Oxford in which Bicester Vision was also given a good plug.

Markets – we are hoping to bring a Green Fair into the town in October. Working with CDC and the Town Council on a plan for the year.

### **Town Centre Action Group**

I have spoken to CDC, the Town Council and the Chamber of Commerce about the notice boards and Tourist Info points. We have finally established ownership and are working on removing or replacing the very old ones.

No progress on the big red signs at the top of Sheep Street – help needed by CDC to push this on.

Bicester in Bloom – supporting the Town Council and CDC to make this year's bloom event even bigger and better.

### **Bicester Retail Conference**

This has the potential to be a real feather in our cap as it is intended to address many of the real issues affecting our traders at this time. I am attaching a draft of the itinerary which is still very flexible and relies on your support.

This is a great opportunity for all parties to consult and inform so if you have any other suggestions for content, I would welcome them.

These are the areas where I need input at the moment:

**Town Centre Development** – ideally we need a presentation about where we are with things – both the Stockdale/Sainsbury scheme and the Market Square. I think we want to reassure our retailers that there is some joined up thinking and that progress is being made. I am hoping that John Liggins and Norman Bolster will be able to give an overview and take questions. Could you confirm that you are able to do this or advise who could please?

**Training** – both ATG and OCVC have indicated that they may be able to offer some input here. What I am hoping for is a very clear explanation of what training is available for retail workers, what funding is available and how it can be accessed. This is very unfamiliar territory for me so would really appreciate some help.

**Cleaner, Greener Bicester** – I am hoping for some input from the County Council on this. I understand there are some initiatives such as Waste Audits that might help a retailer to save money and be a bit greener. Again, I don't know the details but hope that Paul James or Lawrie Stratford might be able to access some information and get the county involved.

**Bicester in Bloom** – would the town council and CDC like to do a short presentation on this?

**Jazz Festival** – would the town council and Bicester Village like to do a presentation on this.

Any other ideas or input very welcome.

It has been suggested that the best way to get retailers along to this event is to bribe them so if any partners were able to offer prizes for a free draw please let me know.

