



Partnership Manager's Report – December 2009

Marketing and Promotion of Bicester

The Christmas in Bicester leaflet was delivered to every home in Bicester by offenders in the Community Payback scheme. We also took copies to most of the large employers, Wyevale and the TIC. The leaflet included a list of events during November and December, invitations to enter free draws at 8 local shops to win prizes all in excess of £100, the offer of free parking at Bicester North, a reminder to take your own bags when you go shopping, and a quiz to win £250 to spend in Bicester shops.

The objective was to encourage people to keep trade local and be aware of what is going on in our town. We have had very positive feedback from the retailers involved and we have had many entries for the quiz. I think this has a very positive impact on people and shows the local retailers that we are supporting them.

We worked with Stockdale and Sainsbury to advertise the refurbished Crown Walk shopping centre – advertisements appeared in the Oxford Times and Bicester Advertiser this week. Funded by Sainsburys but taking advantage of our preferential rates. Copy attached.

We worked with Bicester Toys to help them advertise their new Thornton's franchise in their store towards the top of Sheep Street. Again this was funded by the retailer but booked through us.

We plan to provide more opportunities for retailers to work together on joint advertising initiatives where they provide the funding but I do the legwork and get the best rates.

Courtyard/Youth Service

Following the last meeting, at the request of the board, there was a meeting with Anthony Sayles – Area Service Manager for the Youth Support Service to review the state of play at the Courtyard. Since this meeting, the Centre Co-ordinator has left and not yet been replaced. The position of Area Youth Worker for Bicester has still not been filled and the Courtyard is running with a skeleton staff and no clear vision for what it intends to offer Bicester's young people. This is a frustration that impacts across other bodies including the Neighbourhood Police Team. We hope that OCC may be able to give us some indication of the plan for staffing the Courtyard by the end of the year. The Youth Bus is operating on a more regular basis four times a week but is only used by a small percentage of Bicester's young people.

Bicester Links

There was a meeting of all the relevant parties – Bicester Village, CDC, BTC and the Chamber of Commerce to discuss future plans. Miranda will be able to update. Kym Jones from Applied Landscapes has offered to consult on this project if required. As partners may remember Kym offered to consult on the Market Square but brought into the discussions too late in the day to be able to get involved.

Bicester Crime Partnership

Recently figures reported that shoplifting is on the rise across the country with an increase of 20% year on year. In Bicester we have seen an amazing 27% drop in the number of incidents and this is being put down, in some part to the success of the Bicester Crime Partnership and the storenet radio scheme. Last month we sent our first exclusions to 10 local residents who are known to be persistent offenders. These individuals are now banned from the premises of all members for 12 months.

Good Neighbour Scheme

Successful launch in November – some heartbreaking stories of isolated elderly people who are beginning to benefit. We are now at a transition stage and need to secure longer term administrative support to help match and track volunteers and service users.

Smart Bicester

Both Bicester Vision and the Chamber of Commerce have been approached about support for a CDC bid for government money to pay for Smart metering to be installed in homes across Bicester. There is also a plan to extend the scheme to offer free insulation in selected areas. This ties in very well with the aspiration to make Bicester a carbon neutral town and I hope partners will be happy to support the bid. I have attached the paperwork from CDC.

BCC Inspire Group

I have been at Bicester Community College a couple of times this month to present some awards and sit on a Dragons Den panel. They asked me to come and speak to a group of Y11 girls about my career history. This is part of a programme intended to motivate and inspire girls of 15/16 to believe in themselves. I am now working with the school on developing a programme in the new year where we provide a candidate each week to speak to the girls. I have already had a number of positive responses from partners – thank you to Chris West and Sarah Barefield and will soon be asking you all to put forward volunteers. They need not be managers or graduates. It is just about showing them the range of different opportunities available with a bit of application.

Market Square

Consultation took place at the end of November – very well attended. In the time that I was on duty there did not seem to be one clear favourite which was to be expected. Most concerns centred on timing, two way traffic and parking.

Traffic Group

Bicester Vision now has a permanent seat at the Traffic Advisory Committee and hopes to be able to assist the group in calling for road improvements around the town. Those who attended the Summit will know that congestion is still the primary concern for the majority of residents.

Green Initiatives Conference

We have been asked by P3Eco to consider working with them on a conference in the spring to encourage businesses to think about Green issues/sustainability.

Bags Grant

We still have the grant money from OCC to make the town plastic bag free. Unlike at Marylebone Station, we are not able to simply tell shops to stop issuing them and the requirements from the council are quite time consuming. Working on a plan that benefits local schools.

Town Centre Guide

Still working on the shoppers guide – have a draft on line version being worked up but have not yet confirmed the parameters for a printed one. Miranda is working with CDC on a restaurant guide and the historic guide.

Neighbourhood Action Group

We are working on better ways to pick up the priorities for the NAG to make sure they accurately reflect people's real experience rather than anecdotal evidence. We intend to speak to residents associations in the spring.

I am meeting with the PR people for P3Eco to discuss their consultation process and will see if there are ways to tie some of this stuff together.