

Partnership Manager's Report – January 2010

This will be the first Executive Board Meeting since August and hopefully, a good opportunity for the founder members of Bicester Vision to discuss priorities for 2010/11 and the future of the Partnership beyond the initial 3 year commitment. This will also be very useful for me in ensuring that I am working on projects and initiatives that the board support and endorse.

We have the second AGM scheduled for 23 March which will give us an opportunity to let people know our priorities in the next 12 months and ensure they are in line with wider stakeholder group.

NeW Bicester – Green Bicester

Following the Summit, I have met with Pall Mall – consultants to P3Eco to discuss the existing Bicester issues and emphasise to them the importance of addressing these as part of the plans for the expansion of the town. Plans for the demonstrator project seem to be progressing. At the time of writing CDC had not heard about the government grant and were not expecting to hear until the end of the month.

The CDC team applying for the £500k grant for SMART Bicester expect to hear this week if they have been shortlisted and will then be visited by an assessor. We understand that the assessor will be visiting almost immediately and have been asked to be part of the party to further pitch the proposals.

P3Eco and their partners are keen to find ways to get local businesses involved in their plans and we are talking to them about how we can help to facilitate this.

Young People and Education

This came up as a top issue for most partners at the Full Partnership Meeting. We have launched the Inspiring Women initiative at Bicester Community College. Last Friday I spoke to a group of Y11 girls about careers, motivation, options and why 'it's different for girls'. Vicky Walker from Bicester Hotel is signed up for this week and we have a good programme lined up for the rest of the term that includes Linda Rand from CDC, Chris West from Brita, Clare Brennan from Bicester Review, Emma Gascoigne from Chiltern Railways, and Claire Culkin from Natwest Bank. If you or a member of your staff would be able to take part in the scheme please let me know. It's just 15 minutes and they are quite receptive. One of them wants to be a Forensic Photographer so if anyone knows a female one please could you let me know.

The Courtyard has an Advisory Meeting on Wednesday afternoon and we hope to get some more answers about progress at that time. As we stand, there is still no Area Youth Worker in Bicester – 2 years now! The Centre is run by Polly Foster who also runs the Banbury Multi Arts Project and was supposed to be a temporary secondment. There is a part time Arts Office employed by CDC. The youth club – Jesters – was given a £20k grant for a refurbishment.

The Careers Convention was cancelled in January because of the snow. It may be worth having a conversation about whether there is a need for a Careers Convention as well as Going 4 It – inevitably many companies feel unable to commit to attending both at the same time of the year.

Traffic Issues

You will, no doubt, be aware of the publicity generated by some local residents sparked off by the increased traffic just after Christmas. The heavy traffic was exacerbated by the fact that, for the first time, Tesco opened on Boxing Day and therefore BV shoppers were not able to use their car park.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/oxfordshire/8445687.stm>

For those of you who communicate through facebook, you will know there are now 4000 people signed up to a page called 'I hate Bicester Village traffic'. In the main, the contributors are local people who have found movement around the town difficult. One of the common complaints was how difficult it is to use Tesco at the weekend. Although there is some unnecessary ranting, there are also some useful suggestions and a real sense of frustration. Our meeting with OCC and the subsequent Traffic Advisory Committee indicate that although there are some longer term solutions planned, there is really nothing much planned in the short term to relieve the traffic problems and we can expect to see similar congestion during the next Bank Holiday weekend.

A petition has been started and members of the group have written to everyone they can to find out what can be done.