



ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

2nd July 2009

Minutes of Inaugural meeting of the Bloom 2010 Committee 29th June 2009

Present:

Cllr Ronen Basu – Culverden ward
 Gill Field – TWGGS, Head of School Specialism
 Daniel Bech – Telephone House Neighbours Association
 Alastair Tod – Poona Road Residents Association
 John Wright – Camden Road Traders
 Kate Sergeant – Transition Town
 Nigel Bolton – Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Head of Leisure and Wellbeing
 Christopher Thomas – Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum, Chairman

Apologies:

Cllr Catherine Mayhew
 Christine Davies
 Wendy Thomas – St John's Retailers

Venue: Town Hall, Committee Room B

In the Chair: Cllr Ronen Basu

Cllr Basu opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. He then went on to say that a budget of £15,000 had been allowed for Bloom 2010 for Royal Tunbridge Wells. This was not as large as in previous years and it was intended that there be as much community involvement as possible thereby keeping costs down. Cllr Basu said that Bloom 2010 was not intended to be run by the Council and that the Town Forum would be responsible.

Highlights of discussion were:-

Gill Field suggested that a Horticultural Society for growing vegetables be established in each of the six senior schools in town. This idea was agreed by all and it was further proposed that, once each society was established, they be given a starter pack for growing vegetables. The intention is to have a competition between the schools in growing the best vegetables.

AP1. Gill to speak to appropriate Biology Teachers in the relevant schools concerned and establish what would be required to start off the project and what constituted a starter pack.

Nigel Bolton was asked if the council could accommodate the growing of vegetables by the schools in a public area whereby there could be a plot side by side for each school. Kate Sergeant confirmed that Transition towns would support any project which promoted the growing of vegetables.

AP2. Nigel Bolton to find out where such plots could be and report back.

Christopher Thomas asked Nigel about the triangle of land in front of the Post Office and asked if he could establish ownership as it looked forgotten as an area, which could have some bulbs or plants.

AP3. Nigel Bolton to find out ownership of this area.

Kate Sergeant asked if it would be possible to plant up the area by the library with vegetables rather than having flowers. Nigel said he thought the idea was good but said he would come back with an affirmative at the next meeting.

Cllr Basu reported to the Committee that unfortunately the Commons Conservators were not happy with planting anything that was not native to the Commons and therefore it was felt there was little point in pursuing this further.

Daniel Bech suggested that Retailers be contacted before any other activity be taken so that we would know what support there would be around town. It was agreed by all present that in the initial phase retailers were to be prioritised for involvement, as that is where most footfall is and where most impact could be seen. It was also hoped that retailers may contribute.

AP4. All to actively promote Bloom to retailers in the initial phase.

Daniel asked Alastair Tod if he could engage the support of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society. I am pleased to say that at the time of writing I can confirm that Alastair has already advised this support is confirmed.

Daniel also asked if Alastair could talk to David Brand of the Safer Town Partnerships.

AP5. Alastair to make relevant contact with David Brand.

It was agreed by all present that Cllr Basu should request the attendance of Daryl Jones at the next meeting.

AP6. Cllr Basu to request the attendance of Daryl Jones of TWBC to attend.

Unfortunately, Nigel was unable to bring in a sample hanging basket for all to look at, but indicated that the cost to have a fully maintained basket is £160 per basket. The exact type of basket was currently hanging at The Pantiles. However, it was asked what the same basket would cost if not fully maintained.

AP7. Nigel to find out what a standard hanging basket would cost without being maintained.

Christopher Thomas asked if the baskets on The Pantiles were funded by Targetfollow or TWBC. Nigel confirmed that TWBC were funding the baskets. Christopher Thomas suggested that baskets should in future be provided by Targetfollow as they have increased charges to retailers on The Pantiles quite significantly in the recent months. Christopher Thomas went onto suggest that the monies spent on these baskets should be spent in the town centre.

AP8. Christopher Thomas to speak with Targetfollow to advise this stance and find a workable solution.

Other ideas that arose at the meeting for Bloom activity included having more Art around town and pictures painted by children. Cllr Basu was able to confirm that he had already spoken to the Library Manager, who confirmed she would be happy for pictures to be shown in the children section.

The exact position of where baskets should go is yet to be confirmed and in what shape the baskets should take.

Next Meeting: 27th July at 7.15pm. Venue: Town Hall, Committee Room B.

Christopher Thomas
Bloom 2010