

# FoHT MEETING MINUTES

## FRIENDS OF HIGH TOWN JULY 2012

### DETAILS

The meeting was held at Methodist Church Hall, High Town High Street on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2012. The meeting started at: 7pm and finished at 8:30pm.

### ATTENDEES

People present at the meeting:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Email Address</i>
<b>Fiona Martin</b>	
<b>Martyn Godden</b>	
<b>Russell Cartright</b>	
<b>Annie Bygrave</b>	
<b>Simon Barrow</b>	
<b>Roger Dixon</b>	
<b>David Landau</b>	
<b>Linda Farrell</b>	
<b>Clive</b>	
<b>Andy Malcolm</b>	
<b>Jeremy Williams</b>	
<b>David</b>	

### APOLOGIES

People who were not present at the meeting:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Email Address</i>
<b>Abbey Brown</b>	
<b>Fiona Morton</b>	
<b>Judy Dixon</b>	
<b>Chris</b>	

### KEY FINDINGS AND DECISIONS

The following key findings and decisions were made:

- Railway Tavern planning application – objection to Council Planning Office to be raised regarding style of proposed buildings
- Guerilla gardening - enthusiam was shown for gardening of untidy plots in High Town to be carried out

The following meeting actions were agreed:

<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Person responsible (email address)</i>
<b>11<sup>th</sup> July 2012</b>	Submit online letter to Planning Office	Annie Bygrave (see above for email address)
	Gardening plots to be confirmed	Jeremy Williams
	Dates for the gardening to be proposed	Jeremy Williams

Key:

[anything in square brackets] = assumed meaning of dialogue that was not actually spoken

*Italics = a general direction of dialogue that was unrecorded or an action that was taken by a person or group.*

### Minutes From July 2012 Meeting

Apologies given (persons as in above table).

#### **Topic 1: Talk by Jeremy Williams on Guerilla Gardening was introduced by The Chair**

Jeremy explained what Guerilla Gardening was – i.e. the transformation and maintenance of public /private neglected spaces into mini-gardens by the action of volunteers. Jeremy told us about Richard Reynolds in Elephant & Castle area <http://www.guerrillagardening.org/> who has gardened numerous public spaces over several years with the help of volunteers, introducing wild flowers, bulbs, shrubs and vegetables.

Roger Dixon: The strip behind the church hall used to have daffodils but doesn't seem to any more. There are just a lot of cans thrown there.

Jeremy: A resident stopped me from planting daffodils in that space.

Jeremy proposed sites in High Town for guerilla gardening:

Charity Rainbows – the office is located just past the Empress of India restaurant – it has an untended front garden. The charity do not have the time to do the patch. Would like to plant lavender or something else good for bees. Will seek permission first from the charity.

Midland Rd – area other side of the car park. Behind their premises gets ignored. Small patch at the top proposed rather than the whole thing.

Proposed ideas:

- Commuter gardening club - few minutes each on their way home or after work.
- High Town in bloom competition- window boxes/pots fronting the High Street.

Russell Cartright : Is there is any advice taken.....consideration given to biodiversity, sustainability, low maintenance?

Jeremy: Yes. Shrubs and bee friendly plants will be used

David: 'Groundwork' may be interested

Fiona Martin: The Hat Factory built a trellis and boxes and planted them up. But they were destroyed. So we (SNAP) put artwork up instead and that's still there.

Linda: Fundraising groups may be interested in doing some gardening in High Town

Fiona Martin: The Youth Community Group maybe. Slightly off subject here but we need more recycled materials for quirky artwork so if anyone has any please can they let me know.

Clive: Back to Elephant & castle gardening – did Health & Safety get interested and try to stop him?

Jeremy: It took 2 years of hassle with the local council until they actually talked it through with Richard and realised he knew what he was doing.

Fiona Martin: The council is very interested in the Hat Factory. They need to see a mini version or pilot of a project first to feel comfortable with changes.

Simon Barrow: Can we make a decision on the Rainbow plot?

Jeremy: I will speak to the Rainbow people and ask them. I'll send an email 'round with a date for the gardening once arranged.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Topic 2: The Portas Bid was introduced by The Chair

David Landau: *Mary Portas - improvements to local High Streets. To kick start this grants will be awarded. High Town did not win the bid. It was a short deadline and the bid for High Town was hastily put together. A second round of bidding has been allowed so the High Town team was reconvened. Met at the council offices and revised the bid. It was narrowed down to help the businesses that are here already to stay longer. Turnover is very high in High Town, about 35% per annum. [Mentioned help from the Chamber of Commerce here]. We did a survey of local businesses and got some ideas of how to attract business to them and hold them there - free parking, higher footfall, Christmas or other types of market. [Mentioned barrier to that – the Market Charter]. Want to try to get a market set up here. Don't know how many more bids have gone in. £100,000 could be awarded. Could possibly get someone in to do a job [enough for a salary] for High Town if we win a regeneration bid. Will send bid out to members by email. Have received about 50 expressions of support. 5-10 interested in being part of the team.*

Linda: Are FoHT putting the bid in and will we be receiving the grant if won? Or will someone local be put in by the council to administer it?

David Landau: As I understand it FoHT will be accountable. (Asked Annie Bygrave to remind him to double check that is correct).

Fiona Martin: Will there be another bid in future?

David Landau: I think it's unlikely

Simon Barrow: When will we know if we've won?

David Landau: I don't know

\*\*\*\*\*

## Topic 3: The Railway Tavern Proposed Redevelopment

Russell Cartright: There is planning permission [submitted] to turn this into two retails [units] on the ground floor, a door [put in] at the cut off corner, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors will be turned into offices, they will knock down the old kitchen block and rebuild that as toilets and put an extension over the car park/beer garden to form a café. Should this be in keeping with Victorian architecture? One response of someone to application was it would be an improvement on what's there. Full length glass windows [to the café] are proposed, and a clock tower.

David Landau: How many days are there left to object? One? All are free to comment online . You can make up your own minds.

Roger Dixon: The Scandinavian café lady [owner] organised a petition. 10 pages, 25 signatures per sheet, anti the planning permission for this.

The oldest property in the road was built in 1824, so it [the new development] should be sympathetic in character. It's the wrong type and colour of brick [in the picture], and [the café] has full length glass windows.

Linda: Is the frontage going to be changed?

Simon Barrow: No it's where the car park is.

Fiona Martin: Is the original pub going to stay?

David Landau: the doorway in the cut off corner will be put in place to give access to the new unit next door. The building is Grade 2 listed.

Roger Dixon: what about the red telephone box outside – there is only one like that left in Luton and it must be left. It [the land it is on] belongs to the council. The other factor is behind the telephone box is a tree and it should be conserved.

Davis Landau: If it is in a conservation area it can't be taken down without permission.

Fiona Martin: What are we objecting to? A modern building?

David Landau: I have no objection to buidling a café or to knocking down the [old] extension. Just because it is a modern building doesn't necessarily mean it should be rejected. The proposal says the brick will be matched to the original.

Linda: The plot of land is owned by the solicitors [Alexanders].... *[ Did not get word for word but Linda's opinion was that they would have no respect for High Town, since they took down the artwork that the young people/SNAP made and put up]*

Simon Barrow: The Scandinavian Café probably objected because it was another café.

Linda: Can we sign the petition?

David Landau: It has gone already

Roger Dixon: Does it comply with the requirements? The plan overlaps into the conservation area.

Simon Barrow: The impression is that they will match the bricks.

Roger Dixon: I think it will be sand bricks not matching bricks.

David Landau: Luton greys can be obtained. They are available, they are still made and supplied.

*People have a look at the plans and artist's impression.*

David Landau: Conservation [Area] requirements are that all modifications, alterations or extensions in any manner that changes the character of the building [are not allowed without permission]

Roger Dixon: It is locally listed but is not a Listed Building

David Landau: It says in the planning application that it is Grade II listed does it not?  
*David is checking online on his iPhone. We have got a list of Listed Buildings on that street.... High Town Rd.... no it doesn't look like.... according to this it is not a Listed Building. #2 High Town Rd is on the draft Local Listed List.*

We could do a compromise letter that we object on the grounds of [that] a better type of building [should be proposed] – [that they need to] come back with a better plan.  
That it should be completely in keeping with the existing character of the building  
That it should be an exciting landmark extension to the building  
That they should keep the tree, the roof and the telephone box

....council land understood but due care to be taken. Sash windows in wood, cast iron pipes alike [the originals], Luton grey bricks used etc. Proportions of windows and doors [kept] and [the same or similar] materials used.

Clive: What is shouldn't have is a glass wall.

Russell Cartwright: It should be like a Victorian stoop frontage.

Jeremy Williams: It looks like a very bottom drawer plan, spend some money on an architect and you'll get a better plan.

David Landau: Something with more thought in it, a modern building that reflects the Victorian character of High Town Rd.

Russell Cartwright: I recognise that it will be changed from a public house, but any redevelopment should be enhance and complement it's surroundings

David 2 (not Landau): On the roof – the chimney stack joins together both properties. Any work doen will affect the building next door. One side is taller than the other. All the buildings down the street were done in different styles and made at different times to the others.

Roger Dixon: Once you give in on anything then.....

David Landau:

Shall we take a vote? Show of hands for

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| (a) No - in keeping with character only: | <i>2 votes received</i> |
| (b) Compromise - revised plans – better: | <i>4 votes received</i> |

The Secretary will write a few lines to the council – ‘this plan does not address the requirements of the area.....’

\*\*\*\*\*

#### Any Other Business

David Landau:

1. We have a 17 year old intern from Germany coming over for 3-6 weeks. Do you have any work for her to do to help her improve her English? Let me know please. Her name is Mia.
2. Walks – all dates times and venues of local walks are on these if anyone is interested *Gives out posters.*
3. There is a litter pick next Sunday, Scandie Café 10:30am, please bring work gloves, bags etc.
4. The date of the next meeting will not be in August but will be the 11<sup>th</sup> Sept 2012
5. The Planning Application site has an associated documents tabs – check on this for further information [on the Railway Tavern application].

\*\*\*\*\*

END OF MEETING FOLLOW UP: SECRETARY'S LETTER TO COUNCIL RE: THE RAILWAY TAVERN

PublicAccess for Planning - Application Comments (12/00477/FUL)

"Annie Bygrave (Secretary of Friends of High Town)", you have been sent this email because you or somebody else has submitted a comment on a Planning Application to Luton Borough Council using your email address.

A summary of your comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 11/07/2012 12:26:28

Application Summary

-----

Application Number:  
12/00477/FUL

Address:  
The Railway Tavern  
2 High Town Road  
Luton  
Bedfordshire  
LU2 0DD

Proposal:

Change of use of public house to two A1 (Shop) units on ground floor and A2 (Solicitors Office) on first and second floors, with part demolition of rear kitchen area to provide a single storey rear extension for one A3 (Coffee Bar) unit.

Case Officer:  
Dimple Ambhir

Customer Details

-----

Name:  
Annie Bygrave (Secretary of Friends of High Town)

Address:  
5 Havelock Rise  
High Town  
Luton

Postcode:  
LU2 7PS

Email:  
[abygrave@googlemail.com](mailto:abygrave@googlemail.com)

Phone Number:  
01582 523607

Comments

-----

Submission Type:  
Customer wishes to comment on the Planning Application.

Comments:  
Written on Behalf of the Friends of High Town

RE: APPLICATION 12/00477/FUL, 12/00478/FUL

Dear Sir or Madam

The Friends of High Town wish to make our opinions known with regards to the planning applications above to convert and extend the building currently known as The Railway Tavern which is situated on the corner of High Town Rd and Midland Rd, LU2 0DD. We wish for any redevelopment to enhance and complement the original building and its surroundings.

We recognise that the building will have a change of use from a public house to retail units, offices and a cafe. Although we do not object as such to the renovation and conversion of the building, the addition of an extension nor to the change of use, we would urge the planning committee to consider requesting a revision to the plans to include the following:

- a. Plans should ensure that the proposed changes are completely in character with the existing building; to include keeping a similar style and colour of brick (Luton Grey), also a similar style and material of roof, windows, guttering and downpipes, and keeping the proportions of additional windows and doors in the same proportions as that of the original building.
- b. Plans should ensure that the extension is an exciting, landmark building that although built of modern materials, is a building that continues to reflect the essentially Victorian (and earlier) character of High Town Rd.

Particular objections were raised in our meeting against the proposal of full length glass windows for the cafe extension which were considered to be out of character for a building likely built in or around 1825.

Friends of High Town wish to also add that the tree in front of the current building and the red telephone box adjacent to it are valuable additions to our local heritage and should this be within the remit of the planning committee we would ask that they be offered full protection from any building works.

Yours Sincerely

Annie Bygrave  
Secretary of the Friends of High Town  
[abygrave@googlemail.com](mailto:abygrave@googlemail.com)

David Landau  
Chairman of the Friends of High Town  
[landau1973@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:landau1973@yahoo.co.uk)

PublicAccess for Planning. (c) CAPS Solutions Ltd.